Learning by doing: An impact study of the MCLS Kapitbahay (Outreach) program

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to determine the outcomes of the Miriam College Lower School (MCLS) Kapitbahay Outreach Program which integrates the social action project with co-curricular activities of the students in Grades 4 and 5 students, particularly its effect on the stakeholders---beneficiaries, students, and volunteer teachers. With related literature on community service and service learning programs for elementary grades as bases, Kapitbahay's program structure was also assessed to maximize opportunities for students’ and beneficiaries’ learning experiences. Grounded on the aim to strengthen the MCLS’s mission to develop young girls with a heart geared towards love and service to others, this study is a significant step towards assessing the unit’s progress towards that goal. Results would also give credence to the endeavors undertaken while guiding the next steps that could be taken to further the program. Using a qualitative design, insights gathered from the participants through visual techniques and focused-group discussions were analyzed. Findings showed encouraging implications for the Kapitbahay program wherein the beneficiaries--both the children and mother coordinators expressed appreciation for the activities they experienced and intent to continue in their participation. MCLS students and teachers were likewise candid in sharing their insights about their motivations and learnings from the activities. Given proper conditions, Kapitbahay's potential to contribute to character development, cultivating social awareness and community involvement of the young students was also deemed promising. Considering the proposed best practices from previous studies on service learning together with the existing realities of MCLS curricular structures and resources, feasible recommendations for improving the programs were mentioned.

Keywords: Service learning, community service, social action.

INTRODUCTION

Miriam College's institutional thrust for social involvement is aligned with the pillar programs of youth empowerment and responsible citizenship of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP).

In school Year 2013 to 2014, the Grade School was formally split into the Lower School (Grades 1 to 5) and Middle School (Grades 6 to 8), and the Grade School's social action program called Kapitbahay was continued by the Lower School through the Committee on Student Affairs (ComSA).

“Kapitbahay” is a Filipino word that means neighbor. A neighbor in the olden Filipino context is someone who lives nearby, one you share your joy with and one you care for in their times of despair. There is also the essence of
sharing not only of material resources but more importantly the gift of self. This is the framework of Kapitbahay, the outreach program of the Lower School.

For students of Grades 4 and 5, this program aims to develop social awareness among the young students of the lower school. Together with their club moderators, students of each club interact with community children during assigned Saturdays of the year, from 8:00 to 11:00 A.M. Here, students simply share the skills that they know and give however they can.

Through Miriam College’s Institutional Network for Social Action (INSA), the unit modified the existing identified two partner communities as beneficiaries of the unit’s social action program: Marytown and Daang Tubo in Barangay Loyola Heights, Quezon City. The school hopes that the experience derived from this activity will enkindle the “person for others” attitude in students, a virtue that Mother Mary Joseph, the foundress of the congregation of the Maryknoll Sisters, exuded in her lifetime.

The Kapitbahay Program of the Lower School has been in existence for two years: SY 2013 to 2014 and SY 2014 to 2015; to evaluate this endeavor, this study aims to answer the question: How does the MCLS Kapitbahay Outreach Program impact its stakeholders--the beneficiaries, the students and faculty?

More specifically, the researchers aim:

- To determine what activities and experiences are appreciated by community beneficiaries;
- To determine the value of the Kapitbahay Program to its community beneficiaries;
- To determine what mother coordinators appreciate from the Kapitbahay Program;
- To determine the attitude and opinion of volunteer students and teachers toward the Kapitbahay Program;
- To identify the activities that the participants appreciated and enjoyed;
- To generate recommendations or suggestions for the next year of implementation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Incorporating community service as part of the academic learning process has long been advocated by renowned educator John Dewey, who firmly believed that students would learn best if they are engaged through active social participation. He stressed the importance of social development and “actions directed towards welfare of others” (Dewey, 1916; NCES, 1999; Kraft, 1986; Meinhard and Foster, 1999).

The past couple of decades have seen conscious effort from the American government to strengthen emphasis on students' involvement in their local communities through school-initiated service learning programs. The National and Community Service Act of 1990 along with Learn and Serve America have provided support for service-learning activities in elementary and secondary schools. This was the government's response to observed detachment of the youth from society as they were noted to be less likely to do volunteer work and participate in polls when compared to other age groups. Service learning was then seen as a potentially strong teaching strategy to address this apathy as well as reinforce learning from their subjects in school (Conrad and Hedin, 1991; Billig, 2000).

At around the same time, in Canada, there was also a growing clamor to revive the spirit of volunteerism. Traditionally, extending help to the needy beyond giving alms had been taken on by religious institutions before professional social workers and non-profit organizations gradually took over. For a long time, social welfare institutions had delivered services to the citizens as Canadian government fulfilled its obligation to fund the public services agencies. Current political and philosophical climate, however, has led the government to substantially decrease their funding for social welfare institutions. Aside from this, another challenge that they are facing is the limited public awareness about the vital role of voluntary organizations in their daily life. From food banks to immigration services and sporting societies, Canadian NPOs and charities offer an array of services that are not easily accessible through mainstream markets or other government branches.

IMPACT OF SCHOOL-BASED SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAMS

Since then, community service and service learning began to evolve and take on different meanings among existing studies and practitioners. Certain hallmarks however were noted by the US National Center for Education Statistics and Corporation for National Service to define these two terms wherein Community Service (CS) activities are “non-curriculum-based and are recognized by and/or arranged through the school.” “It may be mandatory or voluntary; generally does not include explicit learning objectives or organized reflection or critical analysis activities; may take place within or outside school grounds. Moreover, community service activities may be carried out as school-wide events, separately organized school programs, or projects conducted by school-sponsored clubs” (NCES, 1999).

Service Learning (SL), on the other hand, is defined as a curriculum-based community service that integrates classroom instruction with community service activities. An initiative could be considered as an SL if these features are present: organized by a school in coordination with the community and aligned to an academic course or
curriculum; have clearly stated learning objectives; aids in fostering positive civic values; addresses real community needs; and provides means for critical analysis and reflection on the service experience (Billig, 2000; NCES, 1999).

Literature has shown that both approaches give significant contributions when applied in the educational setting. Meinhard and Foster's study (1999) on the impact of community service on high school students in Toronto, Canada shed more insight to a non-curriculum-based volunteer work program. The "social pillars"—home, school, and religious institution, are looked upon to help raise awareness about volunteerism in their growing generation and the larger community as a whole. These three are deemed to have enormous influence over students' interest in community service (Prudential, 1995; Sundeen and Raskoff, 1994; Meinhard and Foster, 1999). Furthermore, parental example and religious affiliation were found to be the best predictors in determining if teenagers will participate in volunteer work. Teens whose parents work as volunteers and are members of some form of religious group are more likely to do the same (Independent Sector, 1990; Meinhard and Foster, 1999). Tapping volunteer workers are expected to boost the delivery of services or help in raising funds for their projects.

A thorough evaluation of eight community service programs in high school and university levels led by Moore and Allen (1996) and Meinhard and Foster (1999) concluded that such volunteer programs helped "reduce failure and dropout rates while increasing reading skills, self-concept and attitudes toward society." On the downside, other relevant areas such as social competence, career exploration, problem-solving abilities, school responsibility, leadership or individual responsibility for other people's welfare were not developed.

Survey results from Canadian secondary schools yielded similar findings with students reporting generally positive experiences from their volunteer work. Particularly, the participants reported exerting more effort and focus on their community service activities than in school and feeling happy while working and planning as compared to a regular school day. The opportunity to do volunteer work seemed to increase the high school volunteer students' self-esteem and stir a sense of social responsibility with 65% indicating their continued commitment to community service. Further investigation revealed that 54% of those who expressed commitment already undertook volunteer work beyond their previous school-initiated activity.

These encouraging findings regarding the potential benefits of social involvement activities in schools has been linked with the mandate of Ontario's Minister of Education to introduce compulsory community service for students prior to their high school graduation. This directive took effect in September, 1999 and aims “to encourage civic responsibility and promote community values.”

Similarly, for service learning, National Youth Leadership Council (2008) compiled a report on the nationwide evidence-based efforts towards standardizing SL in K-12 schools. They cited the benefits on middle and high school students who were noted to perform better in school. Students particularly did better in Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies/History compared to students who did not participate in community service learning activities. The approach was also credited for decreasing incidence of student dropouts and disciplinary concerns as well as an increase in students' motivation for attending school. Students in the elementary and early grades who were active in their school's service learning program were observed to have "greater behavioral, affective, and cognitive engagement in school."

National Collaboration for Youth's brief report (2011) echoed similar achievements for SL wherein concentration levels, academic marks in reading, spelling, history, science and social studies increased together with positive sense of self, perceptions about school, the future, and their elders. Decrease in students' tendency of engaging in risky behaviors such as early pregnancy (for females) and absenteeism are likewise attributed to the participants' involvement in SL.

Billig (2000) detailed the evidences pointing to the effectivity of K-12 school-based service learning initiatives ranging from the personal and social development, civic responsibility, academic learning and career exploration of student participants to the improved work climate and perceptions in schools and communities. In reviewing the previous documented results, several other mediating factors were deemed to be influential in determining the popularity and impact of SL. Among those noted were the intensity and duration of the project as well the amount of responsibility delegated to students wherein an increase in these factors reportedly led to stronger outcomes. The importance of reflection activities or certain teacher qualities were also determinants in the success of an SL initiative. The need for deeper evaluation of who are the students most influenced and what specific programs are most powerful was emphasized.

Celio et al. (2011) pursued an investigation on the impact of Service Learning on K-12 though a meta-analysis of numerous earlier studies about the topic. The review primarily sought to examine possible student gains related to engaging in SL. They found support for their hypotheses that all five outcome areas (attitudes toward self, attitude toward school and learning, civic engagement, social skills and academic performance) will have significant gains in comparison to the control group. Four critical elements that contribute to program quality were also identified. To increase the success rate of a school-based SL program, the
Researchers recommended that these be: (1) linked to school curriculum, (2) allows for students to communicate their ideas, (3) community involvement, and (4) providing opportunities for reflection. It was emphasized though that not all elements be present in order to show significant positive effect in any of the outcome areas implying the need to further assess the possible importance of some practice over the others and how interaction between recommended practices with characteristics of participants yield various results.

Service Learning also found its way to the Philippine educational setting with schools like Miriam College consciously taking steps to adapt SL programs in their courses in the higher education level. Reyes-Laureano and Rapadas (2013) noted that while there are a number of initiatives undertaken to promote SL and that the benefits have been recognized and observable, there is still work to be done in improving the SL structure in terms of maximizing the benefits for the students and community members. The authors also warned that poorly-managed SL programs could become a disservice to the community members instead of being a vehicle for social justice.

TEACHERS AS FACILITATORS

As frontliners in delivering SL to students, Wade et al. (1999) found that although teachers tend to be overwhelmed with responsibilities especially in their novice year, they uphold this pedagogy primarily because of the perceived positive effects on their students. Among those anticipated benefits are: learning about the “real world”, developing self-worth and efficacy, relevant, active, interesting, and enjoyable for the students. Teachers’ gauge for the success of their implemented SL activity is also largely student-centered wherein if the students have shown enthusiasm, excitement, learned more about themselves, or becomes aware about community issues, their project has served its purpose. Majority has also expressed willingness to continue with their SL projects even in the face of challenges such as limited time to plan and execute activities. Support from school administrators, co-teachers, and parents, funds, and community agents usually come in the form of training, budget allocation or mini-grants for SL projects (Westat and Chapman, 1999).

These assertions appear to be supported by anecdotal claims about the value of students’ involvement in their community. Educators’ website www.educationworld.com lists a number of articles on the importance of community service and/or service learning. Kathie (2004), a middle school instructional coach, shared that from her 30 years of teaching experience, she has seen how service learning made education more “personalized” for each student and how they appreciate the relevance of what they learn through this instructional strategy. She also claims to have seen how her students honed their positive civic values, leadership and goal-setting skills, as well as, develops a sense of optimism, resilience and personal responsibility.

CONCERNS ABOUT COMMUNITY SERVICE/SERVICE LEARNING

As with any idea, there are those who see community service and/or service learning in a different light. In some US states, especially where CS/SL is mandatory, there are those who say that it interferes with learning the basics and burdens the students by obliging them to take on “voluntary” work comparable to slave labor (Newquist, 2008). Critics claim that compelling students to do participate could result to an aversion due to undesirable experience. Moreover, those who oppose mandatory CS/SL believe that it is the parents’ responsibility to direct their children’s moral and ethical growth. The same article noted that if service learning projects are well-integrated with the school curriculum, it is much less likely to be disputed. A student was quoted, "schoolwork is slavery. This (community service) is fun."

However, not all students feel the same way. A student opinion published in Hartford Courant in December 1st, 1998 was quoted by Hopkins (2004) for an article in Education World, “What is the purpose of community service? To increase pride in the community? To increase an individual’s sense of accomplishment? Or is it to feel the human connection by helping those in need? Unfortunately, none of these happens when community service is mandated in high school. Students cannot feel pride in something they do not want to do.”

In the field of research, Reyes-Laureano and Rapadas (2013) also mentioned that a major challenge in researching about service learning is that even those who practice it does not fully agree on its definition. Also, if not aptly executed, service learning could do harm instead of building up the supposed beneficiaries. Instances wherein objectives are not clearly communicated leading to false expectations among the beneficiaries or students arriving at the community unannounced to look around and take pictures around the area disrupts the community leaders’ own tasks just to accommodate them.

There are also those who raised concerns about authentic assessment of the service learning outcomes. According to Michigan State University professor, Arden Moon, service learning is “learning experientially through structured integration of service and subject matter” and goes on to acknowledge its potential in teaching about teamwork, problem-solving, diversity, and interpersonal skills. However, a valid tool to measure if an actual learning has occurred is yet to be established.
METHODOLOGY

In an effort to live out the "person for others" virtue that Mother Mary Joseph espoused to the Maryknoll Sisters Congregation, and eventually to Miriam College, MCLS has implemented the Kapitbahay Outreach Program in partnership with INSA. Through this initiative, Grades 4 and 5 MCLS students and volunteer teachers interact with selected children from nearby communities through structured activities integrated with the school’s club offerings.

Design

This study employed a qualitative design in presenting research data. Responses gathered through focused-group discussions were summarized and drawings were presented to better illustrate children’s responses.

Participants

Twenty-seven (27) Kapitbahay kids and three (3) mother coordinators from Marytown and Daang Tubo communities comprise the responses from beneficiaries of the Kapitbahay Program. Twenty-nine MCLS students from Grades 4 and 5 joined the activity as part of their club activity. Ten volunteer teachers participated either as volunteer teachers or as club moderator.

Instruments

Guide questions, pie drawings and coloring materials were used to draw out responses from the participants. The questions used in the focus-group discussions were based on the Participatory Impact Assessment of INSA’s Programs on its Partner Communities in Quezon City in 2012, modified by the ComSA.

Procedure

The data gathering process was scheduled during the culminating activity of Kapitbahay program for school year 2014 to 2015. Attendees were the Kapitbahay beneficiaries (children and mother coordinators), volunteer students and students who were absent during their club’s assigned Kapitbahay schedule were invited to attend. Volunteer teachers and club moderators were also asked to participate through their respective Grade Level Coordinators.

Upon the recommendation of the INSA Director, Ms. Malou Turalde-Jarabe, the ComSA opted to use modified participatory techniques in drawing out changes that can be attributable to the Kapitbahay Program. Specifically, the following were used:

1) Visual techniques
a) Modified ranking, to indicate the favorite experiences of beneficiaries using a prepared activity sheet;
b) Ethno-classifications, to relay or narrate an example of an experience of beneficiaries using a blank piece of paper and coloring materials.

2) Group method
a) FGD group 1: Kapitbahay children from Daang Tubo;
b) FGD group 2: Kapitbahay children from Marytown;
c) FGD group 3: First batch of MCLS volunteer students;
d) FGD group 4: Second batch of MCLS volunteer students;
e) Photo and video documentation of activities and experiences;
f) Compilation of evaluation forms after each Kapitbahay session.

Selected members of the MCLS Committee on Student Affairs were tasked to facilitate the simultaneous FGDs among: (1) Kapitbahay Children (2) Mother Coordinators (3) MCLS Students and (4) Teachers. Volunteer teachers assisted the FGD facilitators in noting down, transcribing and consolidating the participants’ responses. Relevant and common themes were noted and presented.

RESULTS

Kapitbahay Children

Guide questions for Kapitbahay Children

1. When did you start participating in the Kapibahay Program of Miriam College Lower School?:
   • Grade 1 or 7 years old – 18 Children
   • Grade 2 – 7 Children
   • Grade 3 – 2 Children
   – Approximately three years in the Kapitbahay Program.
2. How often did you participate?:
   • Every Saturday – 5 children
   • 1 absence – 11 children
   • 2 absence – 4 children
   • 3 absence – 3 children
   • 4 absence – 1 child
3. How do you feel when you are absent and unable to participate in a Saturday activity?:

i). Sad
ii). Not able to meet a new friend

4. What do you remember about Kapitbahay Program activities?:

- playing volleyball
- playing tennis
- playing zumba
- planting / calabash / radish
- Basketball
- Making a salad / sandwich
- playing soft ball
- playing badminton
- Playing piano and gymnastics
- Arts - drawing
- Watch "How To Train Your Dragon"
- went to Library
- making hangings for home decor
- make a costume out of newspaper
- speed stacks
- playing on the playground
- playing football
- eating
- making a puppet
- dancing
- going to PAWS (Philippine Animal Welfare Society)
- playing ballet
- playing a piano
- drawing

5. (Activity Sheet) Which Saturday activity did you like? Color the hearts of your choice:

- All hearts were colored (all activities) - 21 children
- Almost all hearts were colored (1 activity is not colored) - 1 child
- Mini-theater, Jr. Glee, and Angels Ensemble
- Most of the hearts were colored (2 activities are not included) - 2 children
- Speed Games and Badminton / Food Fanatics and Earth Savers
- Speech and Sign Language / Basketball and Gymnastics
- (3 activities are not included) - 2 children
- Creative Writers and Foreign Language / Dance / Food Fanatics and Earth Savers
- Mathematics and Science / Mini-theater, Jr. Glee and Angels Ensemble / Speech and Sign Language
- Only 4 hearts were colored (4 activities only) - 1 child
- Mathematics and Science / Speech and Sign Language / mini-Theater, Jr. Glee, and Angels Ensemble / Tennis and Volleyball.

6. (Activity Sheet) How important is Kapitbahay in your life? Shade part of the pie.

- Shaded the whole pie - 25 children (Figure 1).
- Shaded ¾ of pie - 1 child (Figure 2).
- Shaded 1/2 pie - 1 child (Figure 3)

7. (Activity Sheet) What do you do in the Kapitbahay program? Draw your experience:

- Games (basketball, volleyball, swimming, tennis, pick-up sticks) - 19 Children (Figure 4)
- Playing piano - 1 (Figure 5)
- Ballet - 4 Children
- Watching "How to Train Your Dragon" - 1 child.
- Scouting (planting) - 4 children (Figure 6)
Figure 3: Spotting of 1/2 of pie.

Figure 4: Games.

Figure 5: Playing of piano.
Mother coordinators

**Guide questions for mother coordinators**

1. When did your child / community member join the Kapitbahay Program of Miriam College Lower School?:
   - 1998 – Since the start of Kapitbahay, I’ve been in.
   - 2005 – as Mother Coordinator, up to now
   - Since 1998 up to 2014

2. How did your child / community member join the Kapitbahay Program?:
   - I am a member of INSA. I was tasked to handle the Kapitbahay group.
   - I joined because I like it.
   - I was already a Member Area Coordinator.

3. In the activities, your child / community member had experienced, what did he/she tell you about? Which one did he/she like? Was there anything that he/she did not like?:
   - During their field trip, it was the first time they saw animals and they did not really forget because the children were happy
   - To introduce the Daang Tubo children and meet Kapitbahay at Miriam College.
   - Physical movement.

4. Did they gain anything from the activities they have experienced?:
   - There is, to learn words to a song.
   - Yes, because it brings them joy.

5. What did they learn about joining the Kapitbahay Program?
   - Became more patient
   - Become more loving to the children.
   - Supportive of their every move.
   - Discipline and good behavior.
   - A Kapitbahay who from a nearby community who helps and bond with fellow children.

6. Are there changes to them that you can attribute to the Kapitbahay Program? Why?:
   - Yes. They became more understanding, patient and they treat them as a true friend.

7. Given the chance would you still want to join your child / community members to join the Kapitbahay Program? Why?:
   - Yes, because I still want our relationship to grow. Because it is a great thing for kids, as well as us as mother coordinators.

**Miriam College Lower School Students**

**Guide questions for Miriam College Lower School Students.**

1. When did you start joining the Kapitbahay Program of Miriam College Lower School? How often do you join?:
   - Others started when they were in Grade 4 and others joined the Kapitbahay at Grade 1. Some students joined Kapitbahay once and others twice because they volunteered to join again.
   - Some students started Kapitbahay session during Grade 1, Grade 3 and Grade 4. Five students said that it is their first time to join this program. There are some students who said that they volunteered to join for the second time.

2. Before joining the Kapitbahay Program, what do you do every Saturday?:
   - Before joining Kapitbahay, they stayed at home doing things like caring for their pets.
   - Before the MC students joined the Kapitbahay sessions, they mostly do the following: Eat breakfast, stay at home, pack things, rest, do family activities, study at home and finish homework.

3. Why are you joining this day as a volunteer?:
   - They volunteered because they missed the children, their experience at Kapitbahay was fun and someone else joined them because they could not do anything at home.
   - Four students volunteered to be part of the outreach. Some students wanted to be part of it because they want to get to know their Kapitbahay partners.
4. What do you hear from your companions or friends that they liked from the Kapitbahay Program?:

- The Kapitbahay Program is fun, you can help young children learn new experiences and teachers join the activity as well.
- MC students learned about the Kapitbahay from their teachers and sisters. They shared that Kapitbahay will help them meet and play with their Kapitbahay kids.

5. Do your parents or relatives have comments about your participation in the Kapitbahay Program?:

- "What's Kapitbahay?"
- "Why is it so early?" "Will you wake up early?"
- "Bring something like food to your partners."
- "It's okay."
- Their parents always support them when they join Kapitbahay.
- Sometimes, a student can not attend due to family activity like weddings. That's why, their parents would say no.

6. (Activity Sheet) What do you think is the impact (positive and negative) of a program like the Miriam College Lower School Kapitbahay to the Daang Tubo and Marytown communities?. The positive and negative responses by the students of Miriam College Lower School are shown in Table 1.

7. (Activity Sheet) What do you think is the most important contribution of the Kapitbahay program to your life? Did you benefit from joining the Kapitbahay Program? Choose a word to describe it, and explain (Figure 7).

8. (Activity Sheet) If you will compare yourself THEN when you have not yet joined the Kapitbahay Program and NOW you are already involved, how would you describe yourself? What change happened to yourself? The answers are shown in Table 2.

Miriam College Lower School Teachers

Guide questions for Miriam College Lower School Teachers

1. When did you join the Kapitbahay Program of Miriam College Lower School?:

- During my first year at MC: 2006
- July 5, 2014
- During the first Kapitbahay session for this school year (SY 2014-2015)
- November 15, 2014
- Nov. 8 - Dance Club, Feb. 28 - Basketball and Gymnastics Club
- Jan. 24, 2015
- I joined the Kapitbahay program when the orientation for children washeld.
- We joined the Kapitbahay program on January 26th.
- December, 7?

2. How did you join the Kapitbahay Program?:

- June, 2014

- My GLC invited me / she sought for a volunteer.
- We were invited by the APSA to join the Kapitbahay program.
- We were told and invited to choose our preferred Kapitbahay session.
- Asked the APSA for available.
- I am willing to participate by writing my name on the sign-up sheet.
- We’ve signed up with Pet Lovers Club and that’s the date that was provided.
- I am a teacher in the first grade.
- I volunteered.
- I was invited to join the Kapitbahay program in June because it was my first year to join this program. I also chose the schedule (Saturday) I wanted to join.

3. Why did you join today as a volunteer?:

- I read the invitation; I do not have to do anything to do and it’s the last Kapitbahay session.
- I joined today to see what’s happening here and to learn more about it.
- I joined the Kapitbahay program because I wanted to help MCLS. I also wanted to meet other Grade 4 & 5 students.
- To help the moderators and share my knowledge.
- I love to dance and I know gymnastics. I’m sure I can help the moderators.
- I want to see the improvements because I was a former moderator.
- I am interested in arts and crafts.
- This is my chosen schedule.
- I was assigned to join as a new teacher.
- I joined because I wanted to help the kids, MC students and my co-teachers today.
- This is my available schedule for the month.

4. Among the activities that were experienced in the Kapitbahay Program, which one/s was most discussed or talked about?:

- The way the children showed their concern to their Kapitbahay partners.
- The prepared activities.
- Joy in helping.
- The importance of helping other children.
- When I asked about what the Kapitbahay program is, it is often said that it is a day to help the community in Q. C. They said that during a Kapitbahay session, teachers and MC students will have many activities for less fortunate children.
- (There is an) exchange of knowledge between MCLS students and Kapitbahay kids. The partner Kapitbahay kids are blessed that they were chosen by MCLS.
- Various activities done by children.
Table 1: Response by the students of Miriam College Lower School on the positive and negative impact of Kapitbahay to Marytown and Daang Tubo kids.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• So we could help the children on the street</td>
<td>• We learn a lot from each other and the Kapitbahay kids gain beautiful memories or experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• So the children will be satisfied</td>
<td>• It will affect our plans on Saturday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They will be happy because they can feel that they are also important.</td>
<td>• We won’t have enough energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It helps others and it shows love to others.</td>
<td>• If the Miriam student is shy or did not come the Kapitbahay student does not (have) a partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It helps the kids in daang tubo and Mary town and its like donating because we give.</td>
<td>• Sometimes, it has short time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They could study</td>
<td>• Sometimes the kids should listen because sometimes they need to listen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They could eat</td>
<td>• If we don’t do well they will feel sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They could have a lot of fun</td>
<td>• If they’re not interested in the topic they won’t learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• So that they don’t really get bored</td>
<td>• If they don’t like food they won’t eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We learn a lot from each other and the Kapitbahay kids gain beautiful memories or experiences</td>
<td>• They have to wake up early.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They learn more.</td>
<td>• The kids wake up early and sometimes it’s hard to go to school early, even for the Kapitbahay kids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We help people in need.</td>
<td>• They will wake up early.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We respect the creations of God.</td>
<td>• Sometimes we don’t help or give people something they need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They learn about different lessons.</td>
<td>• We sometimes care for our own family and not poor people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We became happy, more playful. We have many friends.</td>
<td>• We wake up early.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naggingmasayatayo mas nagging palaromeryontayongmadamingkaibigan</td>
<td>• If it’s not fair, the kids will be jealous if for example, the other student got a bottle of minute maid for her partner, but the other Kapitbahay likes minute maid but the one she got is c2, they will/might fight for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They will learn new things.</td>
<td>• Sometimes our Kapitbahay keeps on running around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The food and materials given by the students are helpful.</td>
<td>• MC is a school only for girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Makakatulong ang mgapagkain/gamitnaabinigay ng mga students.</td>
<td>• They might get injured during the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We are helping students from other schools.</td>
<td>• It might affect our important plans on a Saturday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We can make them happy and experience themselves here in MC</td>
<td>• Nothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The others can study in Ateneo.</td>
<td>(3 students did not have any comment on the negative column)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They will be happy and satisfied.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Also, we get to help the Kapitbahay kids.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Play with them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I feel that it’s OK.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We talked.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They tell us stories.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Which activities did you like? Were there activities you did not like?:

- About art.
- Coloring and drawing.
- Voluntarily to the Kapitbahay participants.
- The activities they have done that day and their new friends they met.
- Singing the Kapitbahay Song with movements and actions.
- The fellowship of students and Kapitbahay children.
- Talk about the proper petting of dogs. We were in PAWS and the children went around the area to see dogs and cats.

(3 students did not have any comment on the negative column)
Figure 7: Miriam College Lower School students’ artwork describing the important contribution/benefit of joining the Kapitbahay program.

- Teaching from one child to another.
- The Tasks I like if club officers help their Neighbor in coloring and answering tasks.
- I liked almost all activities like the Kapitbahay dance number and stemzone because I found the children excited.
Table 2: Miriam College Lower School Students response to comparison of how they were before and after joining the Kapitbahay program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOON</th>
<th>NGAYON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Not friendly</td>
<td>• Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sad every Saturday</td>
<td>• Happy Saturday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Before I like pink</td>
<td>• Now I like purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Before I like to watch movies</td>
<td>• Now I likes (like) shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Before I’m clumsy</td>
<td>• I am in one student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Me and my seatmate was in one student</td>
<td>• Now my partner is a girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Before my partner was a boy</td>
<td>• Now my partner is taller than me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Before my partner is smaller than me</td>
<td>• It was 100% fun today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was fun but it is not exiting (exciting)</td>
<td>• EJ is happy and kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nothing</td>
<td>• We are in the playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Before there were a few activities that I can do at home</td>
<td>• EJ is happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sad; there’s nothing to do at home</td>
<td>• Kapitbahay programs are fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gets up late</td>
<td>• Now, I have more things to do even if it’s not a house activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Kapitbahay kids only wants something in return</td>
<td>• Happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We didn’t get to sing with them</td>
<td>• There’s something like helping and we’ve got a lot of friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There were less activities</td>
<td>• Wake up in the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I always play</td>
<td>• The Kapitbahay kids became nicer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I don’t play with kids</td>
<td>• We get to sing to them the Kapitbahay song.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I didn’t know about daan tubo and marytown.</td>
<td>• There are more fun activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Before Kapitbahay I do not want to come</td>
<td>• I seldom play. I always with my friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I did not think that going to mall is better that going to Kapitbahay</td>
<td>• Now I know about Daan tubo and Mary town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Before I don’t like playing with children</td>
<td>• After Kapitbahay, I want to come everyday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Before my Saturdays is just me eating and having a movie marathon</td>
<td>• Now I know that joining Kapitbahay is more fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I was nervous before and before I just stay at home during Saturdays</td>
<td>• Now I learned that it doesn’t matter who I play with. It matters the person I play with is kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yes</td>
<td>• Now I become more active (sort of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It has small activities</td>
<td>• I love gymnastics and I play with my brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I’m happy and now I spend my Saturdays on Kapitbahay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• They have happy activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• They made a better schedule. They had it more fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Now, they come all the time and it always fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• But not that I attended the Kapitbahay, I already thought of other people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• I’m happy and now I spend my Saturdays on Kapitbahay. 
• They have happy activities. 
• They made a better schedule. They had it more fun. 
• Now, they come all the time and it always fun. 
• But not that I attended the Kapitbahay, I already thought of other people. 
• Art activity headed by Mrs. Bautista which will show the children’s appreciate and love their mothers. 
• Likes: Dance Club and Gymnastics 
• Interaction between MCLS students and Kapitbahay children. 
• The time Kapitbahay kids and young artists worked together. 
• Likes: coloring 
• I like all the activities especially the first day of the Kapitbahay with the many prepared activities for the session. 
• The club officers going with their Kapitbahay partners at the stations is one of the fun activities. 
• All, especially when they danced the Kapitbahay jingle. 
• I liked all the work. This ensured that club officers and children from the community would have a great deal of interaction. The flow of the program is organized and implemented. 
• (-) There was a teacher who did not seem to understand the flow of activities so it was hard for the children to learn a song. 
• (-) Lack of planning and coordination for moderators and PAWS people. 
• (-) There was a problem with coordination. LS and MS got
the wrong beneficiaries.
  • (C) Dislike: Understanding the place of residence and which beneficiary is for LS or MS.

6. Did you benefit from the activities you experienced.

• Yes, I happy that I was able to shared.
• Yes, I gained a lot from my experiences in this program.
• This activity has helped me. I learned a lot from children. At a young age, they can help and guide their other children. My Saturday is more meaningful because I was able to enhance my skills in facilitating activities for children like in the games.
• Yes.
• I had another an idea on how to teach dance and gymnastics to children.
• Yes, I lost my fear of dogs and cats.
• Yes, it is a reminder that art / art is a means of relaxation and pausing from the fast pace of the world.
• It made me more helpful to the children and made my kapitbahay session more meaningful because I am a teacher not only in the classroom but also every time I join.

7. What did you learn from participating in the Kapitbahay Program?:

• More than giving material things, it’s better to share oneself.
• It is important to continuously help other to show goodwill to show goodwill.
• I learned to interact with teachers and students from other grade levels. I know more about what Kapitbahay. It is a social fellowship with needy.
• Appreciate the knowledge and resources that we have.
• Be more patient with children.
• Fun to socialize with Kapitbahay children. They are given the opportunity to experience things to expand their knowledge.
• It’s fun to be a part of this outreach activity.
• Be patient with something unexpected incidents.
• I learned to be open to children’s experiences and help them in any way.
• I learned to appreciate every creature that God created. Stray animals should not be mistreated because they also need care.
• I became more acquainted with students, Kapitbahay and the community.

8. Are there any changes in you that can be attributed to the Kapitbahay Program? Have you observed changes among the students of Miriam that could also be from the Kapitbahay Program?:

• I have always been into this kind of activities but because of Kapitbahay. I have new ideas on how I can best help others. Children became more giving.
• Miriam students became more thoughtful about planning the program.
• My Saturday is more meaningful because I am more able to give my time and talent to each activity. I’ve observed that the MC students more like big sisters and active in building friendships.
• There are changes. MCLS students now realize and appreciate the things they have.
• Children learn to socialize with Kapitbahay kids.
• MCLS children become more humane and helpful.
• I just volunteered once. It is difficult to observe this except that I see the MCLS students really tried to speak in Tagalog.
• For me, there are changes as much as I am cheerful with my students and I am more appreciative of what I have now.
• With Miriam students, they become more helpful and willing to share without expecting anything in return.
• For students, coming from a different background became aware that there are children in this situation.
• I love and care for my pet cat now. I also noticed that Miriam’s student learned to interact / communicate with a dog they just saw.
• When I joined, it was the first day of the program. Although I have learned a lot, change is not immediately observable.

9. Are Miriam College Lower School students able to practice what they learned from the Kapitbahay Program? Give examples:

• Yes, they are more aware of the social situation and share it with the class. As a result, they learn to value what they have.
• I think students are practicing it because they are more conscious of what they can do for other people.
• MCLS students are able to practice what they learned because on the last day of the Kapitbahay program, there are students who volunteered to join again.
• Yes, by being simple, humble and appreciating the things they have.
• Be more caring for others.
• Children are more willing to donate now than before.
• Yes, especially with how they interact with others in the school.
• Yes. The young artists themselves made the templates we painted for the Kapitbahay kids.
• They are not my students so I cannot be certain.
• Yes. They can use it in daily life, which when they see people in need of help, they will not hesitate to join.
• Yes. Through good fellowship, the students are more likely to accept differences.
• Yes. Students are encouraged to share their blessings with those in need.
• Not observed.

10. If so, do you still want to join the Kapitbahay Program? Why?:

• Yes, because I am happy to help and I am glad that I could guide students as they share with other children
• Yes, it’s a fun and wonderful experience as a teacher to see how Miriam’s students are helping each other.
• I’d like to join again! I want to participate to help and fully share the purpose of loving through service.
• Yes, this is a way I can share my knowledge that without anything in return.
• Yes! Because I can give children joy even for a short time.
• Yes, it is also a great help to open our mind to the realities of the Kapitbahay kids.
• Yes, this work is very meaningful.
• Yes. This is a great opportunity to help others.
• Yes, because I believe there are many needy children from the community.
• That the program can help. Miriam’s students also have the opportunity to interact with their fellow children.
• Yes, this is a good program that deserve support.
• Yes, because it is good to be a part of the program that will not only help other people, but will also lead to learning.

DISCUSSION

As an institution, Miriam College has always found its roots in service for others by way of its strong link to the Maryknoll missionaries who founded the school nine decades ago. This legacy is being continued through conscious integration of social action activities in every unit. At the MC Lower School, the Kapitbahay program is one of the concrete ways, wherein students have an opportunity to reach out to the neighboring communities of Daang Tubo and Marytown. This is the MCLS’s take on community involvement for its students through a structured interaction planned and facilitated together with their club moderators.

This research aimed to examine the impact of the Kapitbahay program from the vantage point of all the stakeholders—the MCLS students, the community members and the volunteer teachers. It also hoped to identify the most appreciated activities and generate recommendations for improving the program in the coming years.

The results of this study indicate that there is a generally positive experience for all those who are involved in the Kapitbahay program. Majority of the MCLS students, Kapitbahay kids, Mother Coordinators and volunteer teachers cited various benefits as participants of the said social action initiative.

The attendance seems to validate these claims because most participants have been with MCLS Kapitbahay for the past three years and only six students have had more than two absences within a school year. The Kapitbahay kids, who started out with the program when they were between Grades 1 to 3, have expressed feeling sadness and missing out on a chance to make a new friend whenever they miss a session. 25 out of 27 participants have expressed that KB is “100%” important for them by shading parts of a pie. Moreover, 21 participants also said that they liked all the activities they experienced. When asked to enumerate the activities that they remember joining, among those often mentioned are related to physical activities such as dance, sports, and games. Gardening, arts and crafts, music, videos and food preparation were also mentioned. These most-liked activities are aligned with the KB kids and MCLS students’ developmental milestones wherein the children within their age group (middle childhood) are able to learn and practice life skills while enjoying their newly-mastered physical development through play and sports activities (Center for Disease Control, 2016; Oregon State University, 2001).

The mother coordinators are the adult representative from the community who accompanies the Kapitbahay kids during their activities in MCLS. Some of them have been with Kapitbahay since it was conceptualized in 1998 together with INSA. Through their experiences, they say that that they have learned to be more patient and caring towards the KB kids. They also learned how to monitor the children’s behaviors and instill discipline. Based on the recent stories they hear from the KB kids, they seem to have enjoyed activities that allowed them to physically move around and interact with the MCLS students. The field trip to PAWS was also memorable because they enjoyed seeing the animals. They also hope that that the partnership between MCLS and the communities will continue because it is a “big thing” to both the kids and mother coordinators.

This research also looked into the experiences of the MCLS students who participated in the outreach program by helping plan and facilitate the club-based activities to the KB kids. Some students have first tried joining KB when they were in earlier grades and although they are only expected to join once every school year during their club’s turn, there were students who volunteered participate again. When asked about their reason for volunteering they said that they enjoyed interacting with the KB kids and didn’t have anything to do at home. Their family members also expressed support for the activity by preparing their food to share and bringing/fetching them to and from school. Concerns only arise when there is a conflict in schedule for family activities. It is also interesting to note the observations noted by the students about how they were before and after their KB experience:

Before Kapitbahay, “I didn’t know about daan tubo and marytown…I do not want to come.” But after joining a Kapitbahay activity, “now I know about Daan tubo and Mary town…I want to come everyday.”

The MCLS students were also candid in sharing the pros and cons of joining the outreach program. They identified concerns about having it conducted on a Saturday morning thereby affecting their family’s weekend plans and having to wake up early. The boisterous behavior of some KB kids was also noted (Sometimes our Kapitbahay
keeps on running around; Sometimes the kids should listen because sometimes they need to listen). Several other comments, however, were more emphatic:

- If the Miriam student is shy or did not come, the kapitbahay student does not (have) a partner.
- If we don’t do well, they will feel sad.
- Sometimes we don’t help or give people something they need.
- We sometimes care for our own family and not poor people.
- If it’s not fair, the kids will be jealous if for example, the other student got a bottle of minute maid for her partner, but the other Kapitbahay likes minute maid but the one she got is c2, they will/might fight for it.
- They might get injured during the program.

These encouraging feedbacks are also reflected in their responses when asked to summarize the most significant learning they had from the Kapitbahay program. As a group, they agreed on key words to write down and design as a decorative poster or slogan. The students wrote: Respecting the creations of God, Be generous, Kindness, Friendly, Fun, Wonderful, Selfless, It teaches us how to give. In reviewing the brief explanation that were given for each statement, the general idea that came across seems to be that they have learned that they have realized that there are people who needs help and that they could do something about it. They also found it “fun” and “wonderful” to meet and interact with other children who come from a different background because they learned to appreciate diversity and acceptance of God’s creation.

The MCLS teachers, as co-facilitator of the Kapitbahay program and the adult guide during every activity were also asked to give their insights about program. The teacher respondents were relatively new to the program, having attended only a couple of activities at the time and were invited by the Assistant Principal for Student Affairs through their Grade Level Coordinators. Others volunteered because of their interest in the area of dance, gymnastics, and arts and crafts. They also hear students talk about how they interacted with KB kids--the chance to help out others and the new experiences they had such as riding the jeepney and visiting animals at PAWS. As with their students, the MCLS teachers found KB as an effective outlet for sharing their personal blessings, utilizing their skills and interests to help others. Moreover, it gave them new learning experiences as teachers in facilitating activities and adjusting their classroom management practices for a varied group of learners. The teachers said that they enjoyed facilitating as well as attending the activities while giving recommendations to improve the logistics and coordination. As was cited in the study of Wade et al. (199) the teachers were supportive of school-based community activities because of the perceived benefit for their students. The teachers agreed that it is a significant opportunity for the MCLS students to interact with other children because it makes them practice the values taught in school (humility, simplicity, generosity) and even language skills such as speaking in Filipino. Moreover, it opens their eyes to social realities and hopefully, stirs awareness and sense of responsibility for others. MCLS teachers also saw the benefit of the program for both students and teachers because of its ability to contribute to the children from the neighboring communities while giving all who participate, KB kids, KB mothers, students and teachers an opportunity to learn from each other.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was undertaken to determine the impact of the Kapitbahay outreach program of MCLS to its stakeholders. Overall, the results have shown that, the Kapitbahay children, as the primary beneficiaries, enjoyed all the facilitated activities by the club moderators and MCLS students. This may be assumed from the 21 out of 27 Kapitbahay children who said that they liked all the activities, while the rest mentioned one to four activities which they did not like as much.

Activities that were most appreciated are those that were aligned with their developmental skills and interest involving gross and fine motor tasks such as music and movement, sports, arts and crafts, gardening and the like. These weekly sessions with the MCLS teachers and students were deemed to be significant to the Kapitbahay children as they have manifested through the pie-shading activity. While 25 out of 27 participants expressed that KB is “100%” important to them. The consistent attendance of the beneficiaries also seems to imply that they enjoy being a part of the MCLS-initiated program.

Mother Coordinators from Daang Tubo and Marytown likewise echo the positive feedback for the program saying that the children enjoy physical movement activities and the trip to PAWS. Being adult guide who accompanies the KB children going to and from MCLS every time there is an activity, the Mother Coordinators also found themselves gaining lessons on patience, caring for and disciplining the children.

MCLS students shared similar positive responses about their experiences in attending Kapitbahay activities. They also candidly spoke of their personal observations about themselves before and after they had attended Kapitbahay and their most significant learning from it. It is worthwhile to note that the lessons and values being taught in the classroom can be seen in practice through the interactive sessions with the KB children as shown in their output (poster/slogan) and teachers’ responses. The volunteer teachers affirmed the positive impact of the
The Kapitbahay program on their profession for the students' holistic learning outside the classroom. As they observed, their students are involved in planning, facilitating, and interacting with the KB kids, the students get a concrete application of the discussion they had in class.

These data are especially encouraging because it supports the findings of 2011 study of Canadian children between the ages 9 to 12, wherein this developmental stage was said to be a critical transitional period in which crucial developmental changes occur. To emphasize, it is at this time that children's personalities, behaviors, and competencies crystallize and persists towards adolescence and adulthood. In the same study, Schonert-Reichl identified school experiences as one of the five critical areas influencing development during middle childhood.

Considering this important premise together with the numerous literatures supporting the growing significance of service learning in educational settings, it clearly shows that the Kapitbahay program is a very relevant element of the Miriam College education. Given the roots of the Maryknoll/Miriam College as an institution established by missionaries, the Kapitbahay outreach program does what John Dewey theorized, which is "learning by doing". And by applying the skills and lessons that the growing child has started to master, they are able to learn the other essentials of life in the real world--connectedness, collaboration and empathy.

To maximize the socio-emotional development in the middle childhood stage, it is recommended to create structures that will connect strongly with parent, peer, or community (Schonert-Reichl, 2011). Specific learning structures are also emphasized by service learning standards; however, in consideration of the MCLS students' developmental tasks and school thrusts, it is more realistic to work with what would best fit the needs and purposes of the learners.

The recommendations for the continued improvement of the Kapitbahay program are:

1. To identify a specific workable need of the beneficiaries in the community.
2. To empower the students in planning and facilitating the activities for Kapitbahay kids.
3. To encourage a reflection time or activity, wherein the students and teachers can express their insights about their experiences in Kapitbahay.
4. To regularly assess the impact of the program on the stakeholders.

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