

Theorizing Participation within the Juvenile Delinquency Discourse: A Critical Systemic Analysis on Children in Conflict With the Law in Davao City

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ABSTRACT

Despite the existence of juvenile justice and rehabilitation programs, Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) continue to experience unmet needs, limited participation, and systemic disadvantages while undergoing rehabilitation. This study theorizes participation within the juvenile delinquency discourse through a critical systemic analysis of CICL in Davao City, Philippines. Using a qualitative critical ethnographic design, data were gathered from 17 CICL residents of Children's Village Bahay Pag-asa, five parents, and one psychologist through interviews, focus group discussions, demographic profiling, and thematic analysis. Findings reveal that CICL experiences are shaped by intersecting deprivations, including gangsterism, absence of parental care, school disengagement, drug use, poverty, and adverse community environments. While rehabilitation services exist, participants reported unmet health, nutritional, psychological, educational, and skills-training needs, compounded by overcrowding, limited personnel, and weak participatory mechanisms. The study proposes a child-centered, rights-based, restorative, and multidisciplinary social planning system that strengthens case management, family engagement, education, psychosocial care, livelihood preparation, and community reintegration.

Keywords: Children in Conflict with the Law; juvenile delinquency; critical ethnography; participatory rehabilitation; restorative justice; social planning system

INTRODUCTION

Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) are among the most vulnerable children in society because their offending behavior is often connected to poverty, family instability, poor supervision, school disengagement, peer influence, abuse, neglect, and weak community support. In the Philippine context, CICL are not only legal subjects but also children whose life circumstances reveal gaps in family care, child protection, education, social welfare, and community intervention. Studies in the Philippines show that CICL commonly come from low-income families, broken homes, and disrupted schooling, which means that juvenile delinquency must be understood as a social and systemic problem rather than merely an individual act of wrongdoing (Palomares, 2018). Research on Filipino CICL also shows that dysfunctional family relationships, poverty, lack of education, peer influence, and community neglect are recurring conditions behind juvenile offending (Ayeo-eo, 2025). In Davao City, these realities make it necessary to examine CICL not only as children who violated the law but as children whose voices, needs, and lived experiences must be included in the analysis of juvenile delinquency.

Although Philippine juvenile justice laws promote restorative justice, diversion, rehabilitation, and reintegration, the actual experiences of CICL inside rehabilitation centers reveal continuing institutional and systemic challenges. Studies on Bahay Pag-asa facilities show that children may experience loneliness, homesickness, social problems, adjustment difficulties, and the need for more individualized interventions while undergoing rehabilitation (Urbano et al., 2023). Research on child detention in the Philippines also shows that there remains an implementation gap between the protective intent of juvenile justice laws and the actual practice of child detention (Forones, 2020). Studies on Bahay Pag-asa personnel further reveal that staff encounter behavioral complexity, resource limitations, safety concerns, and work-related stress in handling CICL (Gomonod et al.,

2025). These findings support the need to investigate the challenges experienced by CICL while living in Children's Village Bahay Pag-asa and to examine whether existing programs truly respond to their developmental, psychological, educational, social, and reintegration needs.

This study is also anchored on the belief that CICL should not be treated as passive recipients of services but as active participants in understanding and improving the systems that affect their lives. The participation of CICL is important because children's own narratives can reveal how family problems, peer influence, poverty, school exclusion, substance exposure, and institutional experiences shape their pathways into conflict with the law. Research on drug-related cases among Filipino CICL shows that lack of parental attachment, violence at home, peer influence, and absence of guidance can push children toward risky and unlawful behavior (De Luna et al., 2020). Research on CICL in Koronadal City also shows that peer influence, lack of family support, personal choice, and economic pressure are among the reasons children become involved in crime (Derla et al., 2025). Research on parental involvement in CICL rehabilitation in the Philippines further emphasizes that family engagement, parental education, and stronger parent-child relationships are crucial in creating a positive rehabilitation environment (Donato, 2025). Thus, participation becomes a necessary element in theorizing juvenile delinquency because it allows CICL, parents, social workers, psychologists, and other stakeholders to contribute to a more grounded and humane understanding of the problem.

Given these concerns, this study seeks to examine the lived realities, needs, and systemic conditions of CICL at Children's Village Bahay Pag-asa. Using a qualitative research design through critical ethnography, the study gives importance to the voices of CICL and stakeholders while critically examining the social, institutional, and policy systems that shape juvenile delinquency and rehabilitation in Davao City. Critical inquiry is appropriate because rehabilitation programs for CICL require holistic, collaborative, and individualized approaches involving families, communities, government agencies, and civil society organizations (Ayeo-eo, 2025). Case management studies also show that rescue, rehabilitation, aftercare, and community-based reintegration must be connected to restore peace, healing, and reconciliation for CICL (Solmayor & Embornas, 2025). Therefore, this study aims to answer questions on the challenges of CICL in the rehabilitation center, their socio-demographic profile, the factors that drive them to commit crimes, their needs, and the ideal social planning system that can support their transformation and reintegration in Davao City.

Statement of the Problem

This participatory research involved the participation of Children in Conflict with the Law and other stakeholders in Davao City. It sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) while living in the rehabilitation center?
 - 1.1 What is the socio-demographic profile of CICL at Children's Village Bahay Pag-asa?
 - 1.2 What drives CICL to commit crimes?
 - 1.3 What are the needs of CICL? And
 - 1.4 What is the ideal social planning system for CICL in Davao City?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design using critical ethnography to examine the situation of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) in Davao City. The qualitative approach was appropriate because the study sought to understand the lived experiences, needs, meanings, and social realities of CICL and their families within the rehabilitation setting. Qualitative inquiry is useful when the researcher aims to explore how participants interpret their experiences and how these meanings are shaped by context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Critical ethnography was also appropriate because the study did not merely describe the experiences of CICL but also examined the power relations, institutional practices, social inequalities, and systemic conditions that

shape juvenile delinquency and rehabilitation. Critical ethnography gives attention to ethics, voice, justice, and the politics of fieldwork, making it suitable for studies involving marginalized groups such as CICL (Madison, 2020). Since the study involved children and other vulnerable participants, ethical safeguards were embedded throughout the research process. Permission was first sought from the Director of Bahay Pag-asa, and the purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature of participation were explained to the participants and concerned stakeholders. Consent and assent procedures were observed, and participants were informed that they could refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the study without penalty. Thus, this approach allowed the researcher to examine the push and pull factors of juvenile delinquency while protecting the dignity, safety, privacy, and voice of CICL as research participants.

The participants and data sources were selected through purposive sampling because the study required participants who had direct knowledge, experience, and involvement in the phenomenon being studied. Purposive sampling is appropriate when participants are selected based on their ability to provide rich and relevant information connected to the research objectives (Campbell et al., 2020). The main participants were 17 CICL housed at Bahay Pag-asa in Davao City, while five parents of CICL and one psychologist were included through a focus group discussion to strengthen triangulation. The research instrument had two parts: the first gathered the demographic profile of CICL, including type of offense, educational attainment, ethnicity, parents' occupation and income, and place of commission of the offense; the second explored what drives CICL to commit crimes, their social, psychological, economic, political, cultural, and environmental needs, and the ideal social planning system for CICL in Davao City. The research process began with the identification of the problem and the sending of a formal request letter to the Director of Bahay Pag-asa, followed by the administration of the instruments, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, transcription, coding, and analysis. During data gathering, the researcher used a respectful, nonjudgmental, and child-sensitive manner to avoid emotional harm or distress. The real names of the CICL were not used, and codes such as CICL1, CICL2, and other archive codes were applied to maintain confidentiality. The demographic data were analyzed using frequency count, while the qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and themes across participant narratives. Thematic analysis is useful for organizing and interpreting qualitative data because it helps researchers identify meaningful patterns within participants' accounts (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Through these ethical and methodological procedures, the study generated a critical systemic understanding of CICL participation within the juvenile delinquency discourse in Davao City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the context, particularly the crime profile involving the youth in Davao City and the profile of *Bahay Pag-asa*, and the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data based on the statement of the problem.

Socio-demographic Profile of CICL

In 2016, the Davao City State of Women and Children Report provided the data on the number of CICL, which totaled 504 cases for the year 2015 alone. Davao City is located in the West Central area of Region XI, occupying the Southeastern portion of the Island of Mindanao and the Southern point of the Philippine archipelago.

Table 1 shows the type of crime committed by the CICL under the Revised Penal Code. The highest number of cases committed by CICL were crimes against property, which accounted for 322 cases or 63.8 percent of the total number of cases. Crimes against property include theft, robbery, and malicious mischief. Crimes against persons were the second-highest offenses committed by the CICL, totaling 158 cases or 31.3 percent. Crimes against persons are criminal offenses committed against a person, such as physical injuries, murder, and homicide.

Table 1. Number of Children in Conflict with Law (CICL, by Sex)

Type of Crime	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Crime Against Persons	129	29	158
Crime Against Property	259	63	322
Crime Against Moral and Order	2	5	7
Crime Against Chastity	17	0	17
Total	407	97	504

Source: Philippine National Police-Women and Children Protection Desk Lamdag sa Kabataan for Boys

On the other hand, crimes committed by the CICL against Special Laws reached 114 cases in 2015. The most common crime was vagrancy, accounting for 41 cases. This was followed by Alarm and Scandal, with 26 reported cases and violations of the Dangerous Drugs Act with 22 cases as of 2015.

Table 2 shows the crimes committed by the CICL under Special Laws of the Philippines or those crimes committed outside the Revised Penal Code. The highest number of cases committed by CICL is Vagrancy, which comprised 35.96% of the total number of crimes committed. Vagrant is defined as any person found loitering in public places or wandering around the streets without visible means of support under Article 202 of the Revised Penal Code. However, under Republic Act 10158(t. C. Congress of the Philippines, First Regular Session, June 7, 2002). The anti-vagrancy law is now decriminalized. The law was passed to discourage the idleness of the population and was created bearing the concept of criminality. Over time, human rights organizations questioned the concept behind the law, while some countries had struck down vagrancy as unconstitutional.

Table 2. Crimes Committed Against Special Laws by Sex

Type of Crime	Male	Female	Total
Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act/Dangerous Drugs Act	21	1	22
Concealment of a Deadly Weapon	3	0	3
Illegal Possession of Firearms	7	0	7
Illegal Possession of Deadly Weapons	4	1	5
Firecracker Ban	2	0	2
Illegal Selling and Possession of Minors of Volatile Substances	6	2	8
Child abuse			
Alarm and Scandal	25	1	26
Vagrancy/Curfew	32	9	41
Total	100	14	114

Source: Philippine National Police- Women and Children Protection Desk (PNP-WCPD).

The second highest crime committed by CICL is Alarm and Scandal, which comprised 22.80% of the total number of crimes committed. Alarm and scandal is defined as any person who within any town or public place, shall discharge any firearm, rocket, firecracker, or other explosives calculated to cause alarm or danger or who shall instigate or take an active part in any charivari or other disorderly meeting offensive to another or prejudicial to public tranquility or while wandering about at night or while engaged in any other nocturnal amusements, shall disturb the public peace; or any person while intoxicated or otherwise shall cause any disturbance or scandal in public places (Art. 155 of the Revised Penal Code).

The third highest crime committed by CICL against special laws is the violation of the Dangerous Drugs Act under Republic Act 9165. It accounted to 19.29% of the total crimes based on the data.

Table 3 shows that the top five (5) common offenses committed by the CICL in the facility were Rape, Robbery/Theft, Republic Act 9165 or Dangerous Drugs Law, and Murder.

Table 3. Crimes committed by CICL in *Bahay Pag-asa* for the last Quarter of 2017

Data of CICL at <i>Bahay Pag-asa</i>			
Period covered			
October-December 2017			
Number of CICL/CAR Cases	12 to 14 years old	15 to 17 years old	Total
A. Crimes Against Person			
1.) Rape	5	18	23
2.) Incest	1		1
3.) Acts of lasciviousness	1	1	2
4.) Sexual Harassment		2	2
5.) Murder	1	3	4
6.) Attempted Murder	1	5	6
7.) Frustrated Murder		3	3
8.) Parricide	1		1
9.) Homicide		1	1
10.) Attempted Homicide		1	1
11.) Direct Assault		3	3
12.) Physical Injury	1		1
13.) Robbery		18	18
14.) Theft		3	3
15.) Malicious Mischief		3	3

16.) RA 9165		7	7
17.) RA 10591		4	4
18.) RA 1780		1	1
19.) Illegal Gambling		1	1
20.) CAR- Repetition of Offense/Theft	5		5
Total	16	74	90

Source: Bahay Pag-asa data of CICL on the last quarter of 2017.

Table 4 shows that the majority of the parents of CICL were mostly laborers, with a total of 25 persons or 36.23% of the total number of parents. Laborers are those workers employed in construction doing blue-collar jobs, such as carpenters, masons, plumbers, electricians, ironworkers, and concrete laborers. This was followed by vendors accounting for 9 persons or 13.04%. These vendors sell vegetables, fishballs, and are engaged in the *sari-sari* store business. Third were farmers, who totaled 8 farm workers or 11.59%. The highest paying occupation of parents of the CICL were those employed as teachers whose salary ranges from P20,000 to P 30,000, but only comprised 2.8% of the total number of parents.

Table 4. Occupation and Income of Parents of CICL at Bahay Pag-asa

Occupation	Income Per Day	Income Per Month	No. of Parents
Laborer	P300-500	7,800-13,000	25
Farmer	P92-288	5,000-7,500	8
Vendor	P250-500	6,500-13,000	9
Taxi Driver	P300-500	7,800-13000	4
Pedicab Driver	P300	7,800	2
Trisikad Driver	P300	7800	2
Janitor	P269	7,000	1
Laundry	P300	7800	5
Manicure Service	P300	7,800	2
Honorarium/Barangay Police	P115	3,000	1
Massage Service	P400	10,400	2
Dress maker	P700/job		1
Teacher		P20,000-30,000	2
Security Guard		P8,000	1
Caretaker		3,000-5000	2

Scavenger	300-500	7,800-13,000	2
Total			69

Source: Bahay Pag-asa, data last quarter of 2017.

Table 5 shows that the level of education of the CICL at *Bahay Pag-asa* is not age-appropriate. Most of them were out of school when they entered *Bahay Pag-asa*. They continued their schooling under the Alternative Learning Program conducted by The EMAR Learning Institute. Based on the above data, 44 out of 90 CICL, or 48.88%, are still in Grades 4 to 6 when their ages are from 12 to 14 years old. In the regular education curriculum, children, ages 12 to 14, must be at the Grade 7 to 9 level, while ages 15 to 17 must be Grades 10 to 12 level. For Grades 7 to 10 in the regular curriculum, children in this educational level belong to ages 12 to 14, but only three CICL belong appropriately in the group. Thirty-one percent or 28 out of 90 CICL whose ages range from 15 to 17 years old are at this level when supposedly, they should be in Grades 11 to 12.

Table 5. Educational Attainment of CICL at *Bahay Pag-asa*

Educational Level of CICL at <i>Bahay Pag-asa</i>			
(Last quarter of 2017)			
	Ages 12 to 14	Ages 15-17	Total
Grade Level			
Grade 1-3	6	5	12
Grade 4-6	7	38	44
Grade 7-10	3	28	31
Grade 11-12	0	3	3
Total	16	74	90

Source: Bahay Pag-asa data, last quarter of 2017

Intersectional of Deprivation and the Drivers of Crime Commission

Gangsterism. The lived experiences of the fifteen CICL revealed several recurring themes, with gangsterism and absence of parental care emerging as the two dominant factors that influenced their involvement in crime. In this study, gangsterism is understood as youth involvement in a group that encourages collective delinquent behavior, violence, territorial conflict, retaliation, and loyalty to peers involved in deviant activities. Recent studies show that gang involvement is strongly associated with delinquency because gangs provide young people with criminal learning opportunities, peer approval, protection, identity, and a sense of belonging (Walters, 2019). Research also shows that youth gang membership is connected to violent behavior, organized group activity, weak social bonds, and affiliation with deviant peer networks (Chui et al., 2020). In addition, adverse childhood experiences, substance use, and difficult temperament have been found to increase the likelihood of gang involvement among juvenile offenders (Wolff et al., 2020). This was supported by the interview with the in-house psychologist of Bahay Pag-asa, who confirmed that children who belong to gangs may feel less afraid to commit offenses when they act together with a group.

During the in-depth interviews, most CICL participants disclosed that they had been involved in gangs or groups of deviant peers in their communities. CICL1 stated:

“Gubot among komunidad mam kay taga Boulevard man ko ug nag apil-apil pajud ko og gang” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL1)

“Our community is in chaos, ma’am, since I’m living in Boulevard, and I also joined a group of deviant young people.”

This statement shows how community disorder, peer affiliation, and group identity can shape the child’s pathway toward delinquency. Studies confirm that gang affiliation can strengthen delinquent thinking and increase future offending because children learn criminal attitudes through group interaction (Walters, 2019). Buchanan and Krohn (2019) also found that gang and delinquent peer-group membership can influence how young people understand themselves after justice-system contact, especially when group belonging becomes more important than outside social approval. Likewise, Kennedy et al. (2019) found that peer influence, gang involvement, neighborhood factors, substance use, and academic achievement were significant risk factors linked to repeated juvenile offending.

Another account was shared by CICL2, who was charged with murder together with another male companion in connection with a gang-related conflict in the community. He narrated that after lunch, he would leave home with his group, stay outside until dawn, and engage in smoking, alcohol drinking, and drug use despite repeated warnings from his parents. He stated:

“Pagka human paniudto, laag na hangtod sa 4:30 na sa kadlawon. Ang katong natira kay wala jud to sya sala, nadamay lang to kay niapil siya ug backride sa motor nga gisakyan sa among kalaban. Namatay sya after one week didto na sa hospital. Resback mi ato kay namatyan mi ug una ang uyuan sa akong tropa. Katong uncle sa akong kauban na tripan lang to nila” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL2).

“After taking lunch, I roamed around until 4:30 in the morning. The one who got hit was innocent. He only got involved because he was riding the same motorcycle as our target. He was declared dead after one week in the hospital. We retaliated because they attacked my friend’s uncle just because they wanted to.”

His statement reflects how gang retaliation, peer loyalty, substance use, and community violence can push a child into serious offending. Studies show that gang membership is a significant predictor of violent justice-system outcomes among youth offenders (Walker & Cesar, 2020). Pardini et al. (2020) also found that gang membership, peer delinquency, drug dealing, heavy drinking, and gun-related risks predict future violence among male juvenile offenders. De Luna et al. (2020) similarly found among Filipino CICL that lack of parental attachment, violence at home, and delinquent peer influence were connected to drug-related offending and other forms of risky behavior.

The interviews further revealed that CICL members involved in gangs often felt stronger, braver, and less fearful when committing offenses with companions. This supports recent findings that gang membership can provide young people with group identity, emotional security, social protection, and a sense of power, especially when they experience family neglect, community disorder, or limited opportunities. Berdychevsky et al. (2019) found that youth gang involvement and violence may be addressed through structured recreation, mentoring, supervision, and programs that expose young people to positive role models. Chui et al. (2020) found that weak parental attachment, weak belief in the legal system, and organized crime affiliation were associated with delinquency among youth street gang members. Wolff et al. (2020) also emphasized that childhood adversity and substance use are important pathways linking juvenile offenders to gang involvement. Thus, the gang involvement of CICL in this study should be understood not only as a behavioral problem but also as a response to unmet emotional, social, familial, and community needs.

The current practice and discourse surrounding juvenile delinquency also appear to limit the participation of CICL in decisions affecting their welfare. This was expressed by CICL4, who said:

“Dili man ko ginapangayuan ug ideya kung unsa, musonod ra man mi” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL4).

“My idea is not sought, whatever it is; we merely follow.”

This statement shows that CICL may feel excluded from planning, decision-making, and idea generation while staying inside Bahay Pag-asa. Recent literature emphasizes that young people at risk of offending need supportive, respectful, and participatory services where their voices are heard and their agency is recognized (Zuchowski et al., 2020). Sowerbutts et al. (2019) also noted that young offenders often need communication support to participate meaningfully in youth justice processes because the system requires language, understanding, and confidence. Walden and Allen (2019) further argued that rehabilitation becomes more meaningful when staff provide rights-based information, emotional safety, and encouragement for youth to succeed beyond detention. Therefore, excluding CICL from participation may weaken rehabilitation because it prevents children from expressing their needs, aspirations, and proposed solutions.

Isolation may also be connected to the educational disadvantage experienced by CICL. As shown in Table 5, most CICL had educational levels that were not appropriate for their age, suggesting school delay, dropout, or interrupted learning. Education is a critical part of rehabilitation because it gives children structure, self-worth, future direction, and alternatives to delinquent peer involvement. Borela (2020) found that Alternative Learning System programs for juvenile delinquents in the Philippines provide hope, direction, and opportunities for young people to continue learning despite justice-system involvement. Kennedy et al. (2019) also found that academic achievement was one of the important factors related to juvenile recidivism, together with peer influence, gang involvement, substance use, and neighborhood conditions. Barnert et al. (2019) further emphasized that youth leaving detention have multiple reentry needs, showing that rehabilitation should include preparation for community life, health, education, and social support. Hence, the educational isolation of CICL must be addressed as part of a broader social planning system that supports their rehabilitation and reintegration.

Absence of Parental Care. Another dominant factor that emerged from the lived experiences of the CICL was the absence of parental care. Children need emotional support, supervision, guidance, and protection during their formative years. When these are absent, they may seek belonging, acceptance, and identity from peers or groups outside the family. Ripley-McNeil and Cramer (2021) found that higher parental involvement is associated with reduced juvenile delinquency, suggesting that parental presence can serve as a protective factor. Mwangangi (2019) emphasized that parental attitudes, family cohesion, physical violence, and uninvolved parenting are family-related factors that influence child offending. Dako-Gyeke et al. (2020) likewise found that parental neglect and abuse contribute to delinquent behavior among young offenders. In the case of the CICL at Bahay Pag-asa, several participants narrated that parental separation, abandonment, abuse, poverty, and lack of emotional attention pushed them to look for comfort and companionship outside the home.

Table 6. Family structure of CICL

Family Structure	Frequency	Percentage
Living with both Parents	34	42
Living with either mother or father	33	41
Living with any close family member other than parents	12	15
Living without any family members	1	1
Total	80	100

Source: Bahay Pag-asa, Second Quarter of 2017.

The data on the family structure of the CICL show that many children did not live in complete or stable family arrangements. Out of the 80 CICL, 34 or 42% lived with both parents, 33 or 41% lived with either their mother or father, 12 or 15% lived with close relatives other than parents, and one or 1% lived without any family member. Mwangangi (2019) explained that poor family cohesion and uninvolved parenting can influence juvenile delinquency. Dako-Gyeke et al. (2020) similarly reported that parental neglect, abuse, financial constraints, and peer influence shaped the delinquent behavior of juvenile offenders. Otte and Simiyu (2023)

also found that poor parenting, neglect, and abuse were associated with youth criminal behavior. This was reflected in the statement of CICL3:

“Ako mam kay wala kaayo ginatagad sa akong ginikanan kay bulag naman sila 2016 pa” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL3).

“I am being disregarded by my parents since they have been separated since 2016.”

His statement shows how parental separation may create feelings of neglect and emotional distance in children.

The story of CICL17 further illustrates how parental loss, poverty, and abuse can create a painful and unstable childhood. He narrated that his family could hardly eat three meals a day, that his mother died when he was five years old, and that he often stayed away from home because of his abusive father. He stated:

“Kinahanglan na ko mag inusara, magsuroy-suroy sa ako mga amigo sa silingan para malingaw ko. Kinahanglan nako malimtan ako mga problema kay huot kayo akong dughan ug libug kayo ako isip pirmi tungod sa dakong kalisud sa among kinabuhi. Pobre na gani, wala pa gyud koy inahan, abusado, palahubog ug adik pa akong amahan” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL17).

“I need to be alone and roam around with my friends in the neighborhood so I will forget my problems because I feel pain and my mind is always confused because of the big problems in my life. We are poor, I don’t have a mother, and my father is abusive, alcoholic, and a drug user.”

Parental substance misuse and harsh parenting are linked to youth substance misuse among justice-involved youth (Bosk et al., 2021). Shong and Bakar (2019) found that poverty can influence delinquent behavior through miserable family conditions, school failure, and association with deviant peers. Dako-Gyeke et al. (2020) also reported that parental neglect, abuse, financial hardship, and community exposure to social vices influenced juvenile delinquency. These findings help explain why CICL17 sought companionship outside the home as a way of coping with family hardship.

Table 7. Monthly income of families of CICL

Per capita Monthly Income*(in pesos)	Frequency	Percentage
P0-1,000	29	36
P1,001-P5,000	47	58
P5001-P10,000	4	5
Total	80	100

The income data of CICL families also reveal the depth of economic hardship experienced by the participants. Among the 80 CICL families, 29 or 36.25% had a per capita monthly income of only ₱0 to ₱1,000, while 47 or 58.75% had a per capita monthly income of ₱1,001 to ₱5,000. Only four families, or 5%, reached the ₱5,001 to ₱10,000 range. This shows that most CICL families were living in severe economic difficulty. Shong and Bakar (2019) found that poverty contributes to delinquency by creating family misery, school failure, and closer association with deviant peers. Gunuboh (2023) reported that parental poverty and neighborhood conditions are predictors of juvenile crime rates. Otte and Simiyu (2023) also found that juveniles from low-income homes with poor education and limited employment opportunities were more likely to engage in criminal behavior. Thus, the economic condition of CICL families at Bahay Pag-asa must be understood as part of the broader social context that shapes delinquent behavior.

The family structure and caregiver data further support the finding that many CICL came from broken or unstable family environments. Before their stay in Bahay Pag-asa, 34 CICL or 43% lived with both parents, 33 or 41%

lived with either their mother or father, 12 or 15% lived with close family members other than parents, and one or 1% lived without any family member. Ripley-McNeil and Cramer (2021) found that greater parental involvement was linked to lower delinquency among youth. Bosk et al. (2021) showed that harsh parenting can mediate the relationship between parental substance misuse and substance use among justice-involved youth. Mwangangi (2019) also emphasized that uninvolved parenting, family violence, and weak family cohesion can influence juvenile offending. These findings help explain why many CICL viewed their family situation as a painful part of their life history.

Table 8. Caregiver of the CICL while outside *Bahay Pag-asa*

	Frequency	Percentage
Living with both parents	34	43
Living with either mother or father	33	41
Living with any close family members other than parents	12	15
Living without any family member	1	1
Total	80	100

This pain was evident in the story of CICL7, who narrated that his mother left when he was still three years old. He stated:

“Gibiyaan mi sa akong mama mga three years old pako. Kami nalang tulo sa akong kuya ug papa. Nagminyo ug lain akong mama naa na sya karon sa Iloilo sa iyang lain na pamilya. Miadtong 2015, nanawag siya sa amoa pero dili ko gusto tubagon siya kay nabuhi man mi nga wala siya” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL7).

“My mother left us when I was three years old. There were only three of us left, me, my brother, and our father. My mother married another man and now lives in Iloilo with her other family. In 2015, she called us, but I did not want to answer her because we survived without her.”

Mwangangi (2019) noted that poor family cohesion and uninvolved parenting can contribute to delinquency. Dako-Gyeke et al. (2020) found that parental neglect and abuse were among the conditions that influenced juvenile offending. Ripley-McNeil and Cramer (2021) emphasized that parental involvement may protect youth from delinquent outcomes. CICL7’s account reflects the emotional effect of abandonment and the possible weakening of parent-child attachment.

A similar experience was shared by CICL6, whose mother left for Manila and failed to return for him as promised. He was left with his abusive father, who frequently drank and physically harmed members of the household. He narrated:

“Naghulat ko sa akong mama kay ingon niya kuhaon mi niya. Niadto man sya ug Manila kay akong papa dili na sya ka agwanta kay mangelata. Pirte nko hinulat sa iya pero wala jud ko niya balika. Akong papa suko mi tanan sa iya. Palahubog man siya ug mosipyat gamay, kulata dayon. Nilayas ko sa amoa kay nasuko ko sa akong papa, unya wala pud koy mama. Tanan kaipon niya iyang ginakulata” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL6).

“I waited for my mother because she said she would take me to Manila. She went to Manila because she could no longer endure my abusive father. I waited for her, but she never returned. We are all angry with our father. He is a drunkard, and if we make a small mistake, he beats us. I ran away from home because I was angry with my father and I did not have my mother.”

Bosk et al. (2021) found that parental substance misuse and harsh parenting are linked to youth substance misuse among justice-involved youth. Dako-Gyeke et al. (2020) reported that parental neglect and abuse contribute to

delinquency among young offenders. Otte and Simiyu (2023) also found that poor parenting, neglect, and abuse were associated with criminal behavior among youth offenders. CICL6's narrative shows how abandonment and violence at home can push a child to leave the household and seek refuge elsewhere.

Another painful narrative came from CICL5, who did not know his father and lost his mother at the age of seven. He was placed under the care of an institution for abandoned children until he reached adolescence. He narrated:

"Wala ko kaila sa akong parents kay namatay akong mama 7 years old pako. Wala pud koy papa kay ingon akong lola, akong mama kay amang ug gi rape sya unya namatay gilabay siya sa sapa. Sa SOS nako nagdako ug gipa eskwela ko didto. Pag Family day, suya kayo ko kay wala koy ma feel na love sa mama ug papa" (Archive Code: IDI_CICL5).

"I don't know my parents because my mother died when I was only seven years old. I don't have a father because according to my grandmother, my mother was mute and was raped, killed, and thrown into the river. I grew up at SOS and they sent me to school. During Family Day, I felt envious because I did not know what it felt like to have the love of a mother and father."

Ripley-McNeil and Cramer (2021) emphasized the protective value of parental involvement against delinquency. Mwangangi (2019) identified uninvolved parenting and weak family support as family-related influences on child offending. Shong and Bakar (2019) found that poverty-related family misery and lack of support can shape children's delinquent pathways. CICL5's story shows how parental loss and emotional deprivation may intensify a child's longing for belonging and care.

The narratives above show that lack of parental care, broken homes, poverty, and family violence were among the factors that pushed CICL toward delinquency. Dako-Gyeke et al. (2020) described juvenile delinquency as being shaped by parental neglect, abuse, financial constraints, peer influence, and exposure to community vices. Otte and Simiyu (2023) found that socioeconomic hardship, inadequate parenting, peer pressure, and substance misuse influenced criminal behavior among youth offenders. Shong and Bakar (2019) explained that poverty can create miserable family conditions, school failure, and deviant peer association. These findings suggest that the absence of parental care should be viewed not only as a private family issue but also as a systemic problem requiring family-based intervention, community support, social protection, and psychosocial services.

The case of CICL14, here referred to as Ben, further illustrates vulnerability caused by abandonment and unstable family care. Ben was 16 years old and an out-of-school youth. His mother left him when he was only ten months old and placed him under the care of elderly grandparents. His mother later had different live-in partners and moved to different places for work, leaving Ben longing for parental attention and emotional security. When Ben told his mother,

"Ma nganong ginapalabi pa nimo ang uban tao kaysa amoa imong mga anak" (Archive Code: IDI_CICL14).

"Ma, why do you prefer other people rather than us, your children?"

He expressed a deep feeling of rejection and abandonment. Mwangangi (2019) emphasized that weak family cohesion and uninvolved parenting can shape delinquent behavior. Dako-Gyeke et al. (2020) found that parental neglect and abuse are important influences in juvenile offending. Ripley-McNeil and Cramer (2021) showed that parental involvement may reduce the likelihood of delinquency. In Ben's case, his vulnerability led him to spend time with peers, loiter at night, and learn vices such as smoking and drinking.

Ben's experience also shows how the absence of parental care interacts with poverty, school disengagement, and peer association. His mother had limited education and unstable work, which affected her ability to visit and provide for her children. Ben eventually associated with friends in the neighborhood and was later charged with robbery, together with another minor. Shong and Bakar (2019) found that poverty influences delinquency through family hardship, school failure, and association with deviant peers. Gunuboh (2023) reported that parental poverty and neighborhood conditions predict juvenile crime rates. Otte and Simiyu (2023) found that low-income background, poor education, inadequate parenting, peer pressure, and substance misuse were

associated with youth criminal behavior. Therefore, the case of Ben and the other CICL participants shows that rehabilitation should not focus only on correcting the child's behavior but should also address parental involvement, family restoration, poverty, education, and community reintegration.

Out-of-School Youth. This refers to young people who have dropped out of school, stopped attending formal education, or remained outside structured learning and skills-development programs. In the context of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL), being out of school may increase vulnerability because school provides daily structure, adult supervision, positive peer interaction, and opportunities for personal development. Gerlinger and Hipp (2020) found that high school dropouts were associated with increased juvenile violent crime, particularly aggravated assault and robbery. Borela (2020) emphasized that education programs such as the Alternative Learning System (ALS) are important for juvenile delinquents in the Philippines because they provide hope, direction, and a second chance to continue learning. Zakaria et al. (2022) found that weak family support and peer pressure were major influences in youth delinquency, showing that children outside school may become more exposed to negative peer groups.

For CICL, being out of school may create idle time and reduce exposure to positive adult guidance. When children are not engaged in school, they may spend more time in the streets, in unstructured activities, or with peers who are also disengaged from education. Alias et al. (2024) identified parental disengagement, peer pressure, unfavorable living conditions, and weak social support as risk factors that influence adolescents to become involved in crime. Islam et al. (2024) found that lack of access to education, financial instability, limited parental supervision, and peer influence contributed to juvenile delinquency. Gerlinger and Hipp (2020) also explained that schools function as important institutions of social control because they organize young people's time and reduce opportunities for delinquent activity.

This condition was reflected in the experience of CICL2, who narrated:

"Madamay jud ko sa barkada mam kay among mga silingan kay wala man pud nag-eskwela" (Archive Code: IDI_CICL2).

"I was influenced by a circle of friends who, like me, were out-of-school youth, ma'am."

His statement shows how school disengagement and peer association may work together in shaping delinquent behavior. Zakaria et al. (2022) explained that peer pressure becomes a strong factor in delinquency when family guidance is weak or inconsistent. Alias et al. (2024) reported that adolescents become more vulnerable to crime when peer influence is combined with poor living conditions and weak support systems. Islam et al. (2024) also found that lack of access to education and peer influence are important factors that push young people toward delinquent behavior.

Out-of-school youth should not be viewed only as idle, problematic, or unproductive. Young people can contribute to community life through household responsibilities, care work, helping neighbors, participation in local activities, and leadership in collective action. However, when their capabilities are not supported through education, training, mentoring, and community participation, they may become vulnerable to exclusion and risky behavior. Borela (2020) found that ALS programs for juvenile delinquents help learners regain direction and continue their education despite previous school interruption. Gerlinger and Hipp (2020) showed that school dropout is connected to juvenile crime, suggesting the importance of keeping youth attached to education or alternative learning pathways. Zakaria et al. (2022) emphasized the need for guidance, counseling, school support, and social-emotional development to help youth avoid delinquency.

Thus, being out of school is one of the factors that may contribute to CICL involvement in crime because it weakens routine, reduces supervision, limits opportunities, increases idle time, and strengthens exposure to peers with similar risks. Borela (2020) showed that alternative education can serve as a second-chance pathway for juvenile delinquents in the Philippines. Alias et al. (2024) emphasized that protective factors such as family support, school involvement, and community guidance can prevent young people from engaging in crime. Islam et al. (2024) recommended community-based programs, stronger family support, improved access to education, and mental health services to prevent and address juvenile delinquency. Therefore, a responsive social planning

system for CICL in Davao City should include school reintegration, ALS access, vocational training, life skills education, mentoring, counseling, and structured community activities for out-of-school youth.

Drug Addiction. During the interviews, several CICL admitted that drug use was one of the factors connected to their commission of offenses. Although some participants were charged with crimes other than drug-related offenses, they disclosed that they had used dangerous drugs before or during the alleged crime. This suggests that drug use may not always be the formal offense charged against the child, but it can still be part of the background condition that increases risk-taking, weakens judgment, and contributes to delinquent behavior (Sekar & Bhuvaneswari, 2024). Substance abuse and substance dependence were also found to be highly prevalent among juvenile offenders (Wahab et al., 2021). Substance use among delinquent adolescents has been associated with school attendance, economic status, mental disorder diagnosis, and type of offense (Arabacı et al., 2022). This experience was reflected in the statement of CICL5, who said:

“Tungod sa drugs mam. Mga 2 years nako diri mam” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL5).

“I was involved in illegal drugs, ma’am. I have been here for two years.”

His statement shows that illegal drugs were not only part of his personal history but also part of the pathway that brought him into the rehabilitation system. Peer influence and school dropout were found to have a substantial influence on drug-dependent behavior among children in conflict with the law (Sekar & Bhuvaneswari, 2023). Peer or sibling victimization was also found to predict substance abuse among juvenile offenders (Wahab et al., 2021). Social determinants of health, including violence exposure and social support, were shown to be meaningfully connected to substance misuse and recidivism risk among incarcerated youth (Fix et al., 2022).

Drug use among CICL should also be understood in relation to family conditions, peer influence, school disengagement, and emotional support. When children experience weak parental supervision, harsh parenting, poor communication, family conflict, or lack of guidance, they may become more vulnerable to substance use and delinquent peer influence. Problematic family relations, low family cohesion, poor family communication, and parental absence have been linked to adolescent substance abuse and criminal behavior (Saladino et al., 2021). Parental involvement was viewed as critical in youth substance-use treatment and in reducing substance-use behavior (Ingel et al., 2022). Harsh parenting was found to mediate the relationship between parental substance misuse and youth substance use disorder among justice-involved youth (Bosk et al., 2021). Thus, the narratives of the CICL participants indicate that drug addiction is one of the factors associated with offending behavior, especially when combined with poverty, trauma, weak supervision, school dropout, and risky peer association. Timely psychosocial interventions may help address substance use and mental health concerns among delinquent adolescents (Arabacı et al., 2022). Therefore, a responsive social planning system for CICL in Davao City should include substance-use screening, counseling, family-based intervention, peer support, school reintegration, vocational support, and community-based aftercare.

Poverty. Poverty emerged as one of the major conditions associated with the commission of crimes among CICL. As shown in Table 1, crimes against property, such as robbery and theft, were among the most commonly committed offenses by the CICL. This suggests that economic hardship may push some children toward survival-based or peer-influenced offending, especially when their families cannot adequately provide for their basic needs. This was reflected in the statement of CICL3, who narrated:

“Nadala ra ko sa barkada mam. Gahi mam gud ko og ulo, nagmahay ko mam ngano ko wala nagtuo sa akong ginikanan. Daghan baya mi sa among pamilya mam, 10 mi kabuok” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL3).

“I was only influenced by my friends, Ma’am. I always disregarded my parents’ guidance. My parents could not provide for our needs since there were 10 members in the family.”

His experience shows how poverty, large family size, unmet needs, and peer influence may combine in shaping delinquent behavior. Poverty was found to influence juvenile delinquency through miserable family conditions, school failure, and association with deviant peers (Shong & Bakar, 2019). Economic problems and poverty were identified as major causes of juvenile involvement in crime, particularly theft and related offenses (Tesfamichael

et al., 2020). Poverty, peer influence, and family dysfunction were also identified as major causes of delinquent behavior among juveniles in a remand home setting (Mlay & Mpeta, 2023).

The poverty experiences of CICL and their families should be understood not only as lack of income but also as deprivation that affects family stability, education, health, safety, and participation in community life. The data in Table 4 on monthly family income and Table 7 on family structure indicate that many CICL came from households experiencing economic strain and unstable family arrangements. These conditions may expose children to vulnerability, isolation, powerlessness, poor health, and dependence on peers or community actors who may not always provide positive guidance. Parental poverty and neighborhood conditions were found to predict juvenile crime rates, showing that economic deprivation should be addressed as part of crime prevention (Gunuboh, 2023). Material deprivation was found to be a criminogenic factor, especially when it reaches severe levels that limit people's ability to meet basic needs (Torres-Tellez, 2023). Relative deprivation was found to increase the risk of both property and violent crime, suggesting that the experience of being deprived compared with others may shape criminal behavior (Itskovich, 2024). Therefore, poverty among CICL families in Davao City should not be addressed through short-term assistance alone; instead, it requires a systemic social planning response that includes family support, education, livelihood opportunities, psychosocial services, community protection, and meaningful participation of CICL and their families in programs that directly affect their welfare.

Environmental Factor. Lastly, one of the emerging themes during the interview was the environmental factor, or the kind of community where the child lives. For CICL, the neighborhood may either protect the child or expose the child to gossip, stigma, disorder, violence, peer pressure, and weak community supervision. CICL4 narrated:

"Ang mag silingan namo mam kay nagachismis, usahay idamay—dapat e-miting na sila sa barangay" (Archive Code: IDI_CICL4).

"Our neighbors have been gossiping about us; hopefully the Barangay council will call them for a meeting."

His statement shows that the child's environment is not only physical but also social, because neighborhood gossip, labeling, and conflict may intensify the feeling of exclusion among CICL. Neighborhood disadvantage was found to reduce the accumulation of positive childhood experiences among justice-involved youth, which suggests that disorganized communities may limit protective opportunities for children (Craig et al., 2021). Neighborhood poverty and environmental conditions were found to predict juvenile crime rates, which means that community-level deprivation must be considered in understanding youth offending (Gunuboh, 2023). Neighborhood disorganization was also found to influence student delinquency by interacting with family adversity and delinquent peer association (Khan & Tang, 2023).

The experiences of CICL further suggest that children from poor and disorganized communities may face multiple risks at the same time, including weak social support, exposure to delinquent peers, public judgment, and limited access to safe spaces. A neighborhood that lacks strong social cohesion may weaken the capacity of families and barangay institutions to guide, supervise, and protect children. Neighborhood disadvantage was found to influence adolescent substance use through neighborhood cohesion, parental monitoring, and association with antisocial peers (Booth & Shaw, 2022). School dropout and neighborhood crime were also found to be connected to juvenile violent crime, showing that community conditions and institutional disengagement may shape youth offending (Gerlinger & Hipp, 2020). Neighborhood context was found to affect juvenile reoffending risk, particularly when youth lived near certain justice-related facilities or organizations after court completion (Thompson-Dyck, 2021). Therefore, the environmental factor in the lives of CICL in Davao City should not be treated as a minor background issue; rather, it should be addressed through barangay-level child protection, community mediation, safe recreational spaces, family support, school reintegration, and programs that reduce stigma against CICL and their families.

Social Planning System for CICL

A responsive social planning system for CICL should be anchored on a multi-disciplinary team that can assess, plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate individualized interventions for every child staying at Bahay Pag-asa.

The team may be composed of a social worker as case manager, a psychologist or mental health professional, a medical professional, an education or guidance counselor,, and a representative from the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children., This structure is necessary because the needs of CICL are not limited to legal supervision; they also include mental health care, education, family reintegration, substance-use support, health services, and community-based aftercare. Holistic defense and multidisciplinary service models for juveniles were associated with improved outcomes such as greater mental health assessment, improved educational attainment, and lower odds of recidivism (Phillippi et al., 2021). Juvenile justice staff training in youth mental health was found to improve staff responsiveness to distressed young people in justice settings (Anderson et al., 2020). Youth substance-use and psychosocial needs are better addressed through integrated, multi-agency, and multidisciplinary service programs rather than single-professional or isolated interventions (Moensted et al., 2024). The need for an organized team-based system is also supported by the social worker's account:

“Ang ideal nga bata nga ma accommodate sa center kay 50 lang gud pero karon naabot sila ug 98. Daghan mosulod gamay lang ang mogawas. Ang tendency modaghan sila. Sa pagkakaran naa koy 15 cases nga gi handle sa Intensive Intervention Program. Sa Intensive intervention jud dapat one is to ten kay intensive man gud sya” (Archive Code: IDI_SW1).

This means that although the ideal capacity of the center is only 50 children, the facility had already reached 98 residents, and the social worker handling the Intensive Intervention Program had 15 cases despite the ideal 1:10 ratio.

The narratives of the social worker and psychologist show that Bahay Pag-asa faces a serious staffing and caseload challenge that affects the quality of intervention, monitoring, and rehabilitation planning for CICL. The facility has no simple option to refuse court-ordered admissions or children covered by the Intensive Juvenile Intervention Program under RA 10630, which makes crowding and staff overload a continuing institutional problem. Heavy workload and role overload were found to predict burnout among juvenile detention and probation officers, showing that staffing conditions directly affect the capacity of personnel to deliver quality care (Rhineberger-Dunn & Mack, 2020). Staff-youth relationships were found to be central in juvenile correctional facilities because trust, mentoring, and rehabilitative interaction shape the experience and outcomes of young residents (Magidson & Feinstein, 2022). Structured observation tools for residential social workers were found useful in supporting assessment and professional practice in juvenile justice institutions (Lampe et al., 2023).

This concern is reflected in the psychologist's account:

“Naa koy 49 case load sa Senior. Total cases sa center kay 98. Gihati lang namo sa akong kauban ang cases. Ideal sa guidance is 1:15. Last year ang average admission is 15 per month. Ang average discharge is 7 to 8 per month” (Archive Code: IDI_PSY1).

This means that one psychologist handled 49 senior CICL cases, while the ideal guidance ratio was only 1:15, with admissions exceeding discharges each month. Therefore, the ideal social planning system for CICL in Davao City should strengthen staffing ratios, institutional capacity, mental health services, case management, education, family engagement, barangay coordination, and aftercare programs so that rehabilitation becomes individualized, humane, and sustainable.

Health and Nutrition. Health and nutrition emerged as basic needs of the CICL inside the institution. The participants' narratives show that food sufficiency, ventilation, sanitation, and access to usable facilities affect their daily comfort, dignity, and well-being while staying at Bahay Pag-asa. CICL4 stated:

“Ang ako mam unta naa mi meryenda sa hapon kay usahay kulang man gud, maong gutom usahay” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL4).

“For me, ma'am, we hope that afternoon snacks would also be served, since there are times when we feel hungry.”

This statement suggests that nutrition should not be treated only as food provision but as part of the child's right to adequate care, health, and humane rehabilitation. Basic needs in detention settings, including food, sanitation, ventilation, clothing, safe spaces, and access to medical care, were found to be essential components of young people's health rights (Van Hout & Mhlanga-Gunda, 2019). Access to primary care after juvenile detention was associated with lower likelihood of future detention, suggesting that health services are part of broader rehabilitation and reintegration support (Aggarwal & Will, 2023). Physical activity and life-skills programs in juvenile detention were also shown to promote healthier lifestyles and positive development among incarcerated youth (Wahl-Alexander et al., 2024).

The CICL also identified poor ventilation and inadequate comfort-room facilities as concerns affecting their health and dignity. CICL2 stated:

"Tinuod jud mam kay igang kaayo diri" (Archive Code: IDI_CICL2).

"I agree, ma'am, since the room is not well-ventilated."

CICL1 also stated:

"Unta naa pud tarong na CR ug liguanan kay usahay maghinulatay mi" (Archive Code: IDI_CICL1).

"Hopefully the Center can provide a good comfort room and shower room, because we need to wait for our turn most of the time."

These statements show that health inside Bahay Pag-asa is connected not only to medical care but also to physical space, ventilation, hygiene, sanitation, and the availability of basic facilities. Poor living conditions and inadequate medical services were identified as barriers to health and rehabilitation among detained youth (Atrey & Singh, 2024). Juvenile confinement can intensify adversity because youth are separated from family support and may be placed in restrictive environments with limited enrichment resources (Orendain et al., 2022). Mental disorders are also highly prevalent among adolescents in juvenile detention and correctional facilities, which means that health planning must include mental health as well as physical care (Beaudry et al., 2020). Therefore, the health and nutrition needs of CICL in Davao City should be addressed through adequate meals, safe drinking water, ventilation, clean comfort rooms, bathing facilities, regular medical checkups, mental health services, recreation, and rights-based care consistent with the child's dignity and reintegration.

Psychological Needs. These are central to the rehabilitation of Children in Conflict with the Law because many CICL experience emotional distress, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, trauma, poor family attachment, difficulty adjusting to institutional life, and problems in social relationships. Under Section 46 of RA 10630, rehabilitation, training, and confinement areas for CICL are expected to provide a home-like environment where children can receive quality counseling, treatment, care, and guidance. In Bahay Pag-asa, these needs are addressed by social workers, house parents, and psychologists who work as a multi-disciplinary team in preparing individualized intervention plans with and for the child. However, the increasing number of CICL in the facility has overloaded staff and weakened the quality and consistency of intervention services. Mental disorders are highly prevalent among adolescents in juvenile detention and correctional facilities, showing the need for accessible and responsive mental health care in rehabilitation settings (Beaudry et al., 2020). Juvenile justice involvement is associated with poorer physical and mental health, weaker family relationships, lower graduation and employment outcomes, and long-term negative consequences, which supports the need for mental health treatment and family services inside youth facilities (Dragomir & Tadros, 2020). Children in conflict with the law may hesitate to access mental health services because of stigma, fear of privacy violations, and distrust of institutional staff (Ahmed & John, 2023). Staff-youth relationships are important because trust, mentoring, and supportive interaction can influence whether the facility becomes rehabilitative or merely custodial (Magidson & Feinstein, 2022). The voices of youth in custody should be included in improving services, facility climate, and treatment because youth feedback can lead to more responsive and trauma-informed systems (Reed et al., 2020). Therefore, the psychological needs of CICL in Bahay Pag-asa require adequate staffing, regular counseling, mental health assessment, trauma-informed care, family involvement,

individualized intervention planning, and a supportive environment that promotes dignity, emotional recovery, and reintegration.

Educational Needs. While inside Bahay Pag-asa, CICL follows structured daily activities such as waking up early, preparing breakfast by the assigned group, attending morning meetings, and participating in Alternative Learning System classes. The elementary distance education program is scheduled from 10:00 to 11:30 in the morning, while the high school distance class program is held from 1:30 to 3:00 in the afternoon in a clustered arrangement. However, the educational program is limited by the availability of only one teacher for the elementary level and one teacher for the high school level, which affects the quality of instruction, individual attention, and learning support that CICL receives. Access to education remains a fundamental right of youth in correctional facilities, yet implementation may be weakened by regulatory limits, institutional capacity, lack of innovation, and insufficient educational access (Prayitno et al., 2023). Educational and vocational programs are important in rehabilitation because they help young offenders develop technical skills, self-esteem, positive adjustment, and readiness for community reintegration (Hassan & Rosly, 2021). Life-skills and career-readiness programs for juvenile offenders were found to improve knowledge and skills, showing that CICL benefit from learning opportunities beyond basic classroom instruction (Dickerson et al., 2020). In the case of Bahay Pag-asa, the only livelihood program mentioned was gardening, where residents plant vegetables in assigned lots and sell the harvest to staff, with proceeds used for savings or basic needs such as bath soap. While this activity provides practical learning, the limited range of livelihood options suggests the need for broader skills training that matches the interests of children and the needs of the local labor market. Institutional rehabilitation becomes less effective when facilities lack adequate funding, trained personnel, and sufficient programs to prepare young offenders for reintegration (Okah et al., 2024).

The educational concerns of CICL also include the lack of proper classrooms and learning spaces. CICL14 shared that Grades 1, 2, and 3 were grouped together, Grades 4, 5, and 6 were grouped together, and high school students had only one teacher while holding classes on the center stage. When asked whether the setup was acceptable, he answered,

“Dili gud,”

meaning,

“It’s not,”

and added that it would be better to have a school and classroom inside the facility. CICL1 also stated:

“Unta mam naa mi tarong na room kay usahay daghan naman gud mi sa kwarto, dili kaayo mi komportable pag-study” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL1).

“Hopefully, the center will provide us with a conducive learning room, because we are not comfortable inside the room during our study.”

These accounts show that education inside the facility is affected not only by the number of teachers but also by the absence of a dedicated learning environment. Juvenile facilities need adequate educational, psychological, recreational, and motivational programs to support genuine reformation and rehabilitation (Birech, 2020). Vocational education can support the transition of young offenders back to society by improving self-confidence and increasing employability after release (Hassan & Rosly, 2021). Barriers such as poor facilities, low program content, insufficiently trained staff, and weak funding can limit effective rehabilitation and reintegration among juvenile residents (Okah et al., 2024). Therefore, the educational needs of CICL in Bahay Pag-asa should be addressed through sufficient teachers, proper classrooms, individualized learning support, expanded ALS implementation, varied vocational training, life-skills education, arts and recreation, career readiness programs, and market-responsive livelihood activities that can help children regain normal social functioning and develop a positive outlook for reintegration.

Skills Training. This is an essential component of rehabilitation because it helps CICL regain normal social functioning, develop productive habits, strengthen self-confidence, and prepare for reintegration into their families and communities. Under the program delivery of Bahay Pag-asa, children should be provided with meaningful activities such as sports, arts and crafts, academic sessions, spiritual formation, and livelihood skills based on their interests and the needs of the local labor market. However, the narratives of the CICL indicate that skills training inside the facility remains limited. CICL3 stated:

“Unta mam ma enhance pud among hilig mam like dula og volleyball ug drawing-drawing” (Archive Code: IDI_CICL3).

“We’re hoping, ma’am, that our interests will be enhanced, like playing volleyball and also in the arts.”

His statement shows that children want activities that are not only corrective but also developmental, creative, and connected to their talents. Vocational education and training were found to help young offenders develop technical skills, improve self-esteem, adjust positively, and increase their chances of successful community reintegration (Hassan & Rosly, 2021). Career-readiness and life-skills programs were found to improve knowledge, goal-setting, and work-related preparedness among juvenile offenders (Dickerson et al., 2020). Educational and vocational programs were identified as important parts of institutional rehabilitation because they help offenders prepare for work and reintegration after release (Birech, 2020).

The lack of basic facilities, such as a volleyball or basketball court, arts materials, and diversified vocational programs, limits the ability of Bahay Pag-asa to provide holistic intervention for CICL. While gardening is a useful livelihood activity, it may not be enough to respond to the varied interests, abilities, and future employment needs of the children. Rehabilitation becomes more effective when programs are individualized, meaningful, and connected to community reintegration rather than limited to routine custodial activities. Barriers such as poor facilities, low program content, lack of trained personnel, and weak funding were found to affect the effective rehabilitation and reintegration of juvenile residents (Okah et al., 2024). Released juvenile offenders were found to face educational and employment challenges after detention, showing the need for skills-based preparation before they return to the community (Bosomprah, 2023). Youth rehabilitation requires individualized strategies, education and skill development, behavioral support, family engagement, and post-release services to support successful reintegration (Saadati & Saadati, 2023). Therefore, the skills training needs of CICL in Davao City should include sports development, arts and crafts, vocational training, livelihood education, digital skills, life skills, career readiness, entrepreneurship, and market-responsive programs that can help children build confidence, redirect aggression, and lead productive lives after release.

Ideal Social Planning System for CICL in Davao City

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study, the ideal social planning system for CICL in Davao City should be child-centered, rights-based, restorative, family-oriented, and community-supported, to reduce stigma and discrimination while helping CICL renew, transform, and reintegrate into the community as socially and morally responsible individuals. This system should not only respond to the offenses committed by children but also address the deeper family, school, peer, community, economic, and psychological factors that contribute to their involvement in crime. Diversion, vocational training, livelihood skills training, sports development, formal and non-formal education, and follow-up programs were found to help rehabilitated youth develop better life perspectives and cope with problems after intervention (Manuel, 2019). Self-stigma among children in conflict with the law may affect their sense of worth and reintegration, which shows the need for education and supportive programs that help children rebuild a positive identity (Hidayati et al., 2022). Psychosocial interventions for children in conflict with the law should address cognitive, emotional, social, educational, family, and community needs through counseling, mentorship, education, vocational training, and positive discipline (Deepa et al., 2024). Parental education, flexible family engagement, and stronger parent-child relationships were found to be crucial in the rehabilitation of CICL in the Philippines (Donato, 2025). Collaborative governance involving government agencies, civil society, and community stakeholders was found to improve service delivery, rights protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration of CICL (Setyawan et al., 2025). Therefore, the proposed ideal social planning system for CICL in Davao City should coordinate Bahay Pag-asa, families, schools, barangays, social workers, psychologists, health workers, law enforcers, local government

offices, and community organizations in one continuing intervention plan that provides counseling, education, skills training, family strengthening, community awareness, aftercare, and reintegration support so that children are guided toward ethical behavior, social acceptance, and productive community life.

Table 9. Ideal Social Planning System for CICL in Davao City

Advocacy Title: Ideal Social Planning System provides social and psychological needs for Children in Conflict with the Law.				
Rationale: The purpose of the Ideal Social Planning System for CICL in Davao City is to enhance the capability of children in transforming themselves before their reintegration to the community. Through this intervention program, the CICL and their families will consider the renewal process in making the children's lives more productive after undergoing rehabilitation.				
Issues Gathered from the Results	Activities	Objectives	Responsible Persons	Timeline
Health and Nutrition	Health is Wealth Program	Provide the basic needs of CICL, such as food, education, and shelter. Promote physical, mental, and social well-being needs as a resource for living a full life of CICL	Center Head and Support Staff of Bahay Pag-asa	June 2026 to May 2027
Psychological Needs	Saving Our Selves (SOS) Program	Engage CICL in an effective renewal and transformation process before reintegration into the community. Boost the intrapersonal and interpersonal skills of CICL as members of the community	Center Head and Support Staff of Bahay Pag-asa	June 2026 to May 2027
Educational Needs	Numeracy and Literacy Program	Involve CICL in some transformative and learning tasks before reintegration into the community Develop the knowledge and learning of CICL through the numeracy and literacy program.	Center Head and Support Staff of Bahay Pag-asa	June 2026 to May 2027
Skills Training	Learning by Doing Program	Enhance the CICL interests and needs through skill-based training Train CICL to regain normal social functioning, develop skills, and lead a productive life.	Center Head and Support Staff of Bahay Pag-asa	June 2026 to May 2027

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study related to the children in conflict with the law's (CICL's) socio-demographic profile, dominant drivers to commit crimes, and the ideal social planning for the CICL:

1. Based on the socio-demographic profile of the CICL, the most common offenses committed were theft, robbery, and malicious mischief. Also, crimes such as physical injuries, murder, and homicide were committed by these CICL.

2. From the series of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the dominant drivers of children in conflict with the law to commit crimes are gangsterism, absence of parental care, being out-of-school youth, drug use, poverty, and environmental factors.
3. While inside the Center, the resident CICL want the following: to finish their elementary and secondary education; to develop their special skills in the arts, music, and sports; to improve their ability in the livelihood program, such as soap making and gardening; and to strengthen the management of their individual cases. With the use of critical systemic analysis, the resident CICL becomes hopeful and positive when services such as strong management of case, health and nutrition, psychological and educational needs, and skills training are well provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were directly taken from the conclusions of the study:

1. This study would help children who have been in Conflict with the Law by involving them in the basic participation capability in the decision-making process, since they have been deprived of some basic rights and opportunities, such as nutrition and health, education, and skills training. Through their involvement, the children who are in conflict with the law can express their ideas and opinions, having an inferior social status and soiled integrity for being offenders. Also, this study strengthens the capabilities of the CICL through participating in the effective decision-making platform with their parents for a better understanding of their problems while preparing the CICL to become transformed members of the community.
2. The families of the CICL are strongly encouraged to actively participate in the decision-making process for the improvement of the basic services in the rehabilitation center. With the help of the *Bahay Pag-asa*, as the new residence of the CICL, the parents ought to be active partners in monitoring the social and psychological behavior of their children as part of the renewal process and transformation before their reintegration in the community.
3. This study would provide substantive arguments to the staff and officials of the *Bahay Pag-asa* in improving their services for the CICL. As the residence of the CICL, aside from strengthening the management of the cases, the center is expected to satisfy the health and nutrition, psychological and educational needs, and skills training of the children in conflict with the law. Thus, the Bahay Pag-asa would consider opening its door to taking part in the rethinking process, which addresses their priority and fund availability, and would expect a closer collaboration with other stakeholders, like the University of Southeastern Philippines, to come up with projects that would develop the lives of the CICL.
4. Future researchers may consider an exploratory or explanatory analysis, which is a mixed-method approach, to have a more in-depth investigation of the thematic statements of the study, such as gangsterism, absence of parental care, being out of school, drug use, poverty, and environmental factors. The future challenge is to explore the landscape of juvenile delinquency and criminal justice at the community level to better understand the dominant drivers of children in conflict with the law.

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Declaration Of Conflict

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