

**FIELD RESEARCH REPORT:
NIGHT CARE FOR CHILDREN OF WORKING
MOTHERS IN TAYTAY, RIZAL**

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I. Objectives and History of This Initiative

“Night Care for Children of Working Mothers” is a pilot project of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. This project was an off-shoot of a study made by the University of the Philippines Center for Women’s Studies which assessed that children left at home without their mothers are at higher risk of child abuse.

The UCWS study showed that job opportunities for women more than doubled from 4.8 million in 1973 to 10.1 million in 1994. The positive development on equality for job opportunities also required high production quotas from female workers that required them to work even at night. This puts at risk thousands of children left home at night. Through this project, the DSWD hopes that providing a care facility for children of mothers working at night may reduce the incidence of child abuse.

The Night Care for Young Children Project aims to provide supervised care to children of working parents especially at night to protect them from abuse and neglect through provision of

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opportunities to promote the children's physical, mental, spiritual and emotional development; ensure the safety of young children aged three months to six years of parents who are out working at night time; provide temporary shelter to mothers working on night shift where they can stay after their work until it is safe enough to go back to their homes; allow women to have more opportunities to accept jobs on the night shift without sacrificing their roles as mothers.

The Night Child Minding Project has the following components: social preparation; training of child care givers; care management that includes child care services and support services; monitoring, evaluation and documentation.

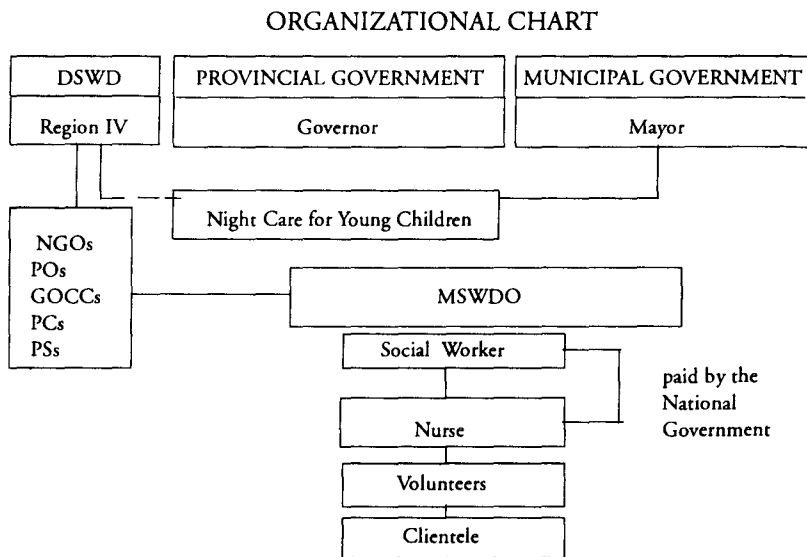
The manufacturing zone of Rizal was identified as the potential pilot site. DSWD National and Region IV offices sponsored an Advocacy Forum that was attended by representatives from local government units, NGOs, religious groups and industry sector. Taytay was chosen to be the first place to implement this project due to its being home to many who work in nearby Cainta's industrial zone. The industrial zone produces Ready-to-Wear (RTW) garments for export, sashes, bags, and other products. The large demand for these products created job opportunities for parents, even mothers, expecting them to work on night shifts to meet production quotas. Many parents are unable to care for their children while on night shift. They hire neighbors to care for their kids in their absence or just leave them unattended.

II. Role of the Taytay Municipal Government in the Implementation of the Night Care Project

The DSWD as a national agency provides assistance to local government units, non-governmental organizations, people's

organizations, government-owned or controlled corporations and other members of civil society in effectively implementing programs, projects and services that will alleviate poverty and empower disadvantaged individuals, families and communities for an improved quality of life. As such, the DSWD National and Region IV offices organized an advocacy forum to discuss their plan of putting up a night care center. Vice Mayor Adelina Tamayo, Mrs. Zapanta, the First Lady of Taytay Municipality, members of the Taytay Municipal Council and its Health Department were among the members of many local government units of Rizal that attended the forum.

Figure 1.
The flow of service delivery for the Night Child Care Center



It was the Municipality of Taytay that significantly responded to the call of the advocacy forum. Several meetings were organized by the Taytay Municipality through the coordination of Mrs.

Teresita Dotado, head of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office. Through her efforts, consultations were facilitated among the following stakeholders: Taytay's mayor, vice mayor, councilors, key barangay officials, Municipal Engineering and Health Departments; the Parish of St. John the Baptist, represented by its parish priest, Fr. Ben Guevarra; leaders of the Taytay Methodist Church; several factory heads; and residents of Taytay who were the confirmed beneficiaries of the project.

Supervision of the delivery of child care services by the Taytay Night Care Center is directly under the Office of the Municipal Social Work and Development as seen from Figure 1. This is in consonance with the role of the local government unit as highlighted in the memorandum below.

The Memorandum of Agreement between DSWD-National, DSWD-Region IV, the Provincial Government of Rizal and the Municipal Government of Taytay outlined the various roles of the various proponents.

A. Department of Social Welfare and Development-National

- Develops guidelines in the implementation of the project
- Conducts capability building/training of social workers/caregivers involved in the project in coordination with the DSWD Human Resource and Development Bureau
- Provides technical assistance to social workers and caregivers on project implementation
- Allocates and releases funds needed in the operationalization of the project

- Conducts monitoring, evaluation and documentation of the pilot testing

B. Department of Social Welfare and Development- Field Office IV

- Identifies and validates target areas/clients and assists the bureau in the conduct of pilot testing.
- Provides direct supervision and technical assistance to Social Welfare Officer II and night caregiver implementing the project.
- Conducts regular monitoring and assessment of the project and submit quarterly report to PSPB.

C. Local Government Unit of Taytay, Rizal

- Over-all supervision/management of the Night Care Center
- Identifies/recruits working mothers/clients who wish to avail of the night care facility
- Provides other support services/logistics needed in the center
- Identifies and provides a night care center and other fixtures/furniture and physical requirements for the children in case the industries cannot provide for such
- Conducts advocacy activities in factories/establishments on the creation of Night Care Center in other barangays
- Coordinates with LGUs/NGOs, GOs, POs and industries for other support/resources e.g., medical services etc.

D. Provincial Government of Rizal

- Conducts advocacy activities with organizations, LGUs, NGOs, GOs, at the provincial level and in other municipalities and factories for the establishment of Night Care Centers
- Provides other support resources services as needed for the implementation of the project
- Assists in identifying other potential areas for project implementation
- Conducts regular monitoring/coordination with Night Care Center implementors

Mrs. Dotado continuously mobilizes the stakeholders. On December 14, 1999, a few days after the center opened, the DSWD Region IV office held a “Parents Orientation” at the Manila East Golf Club, Taytay. This was attended by 32 mothers, LGU heads, National and Regional DSWD Representatives, Night Care (NC) care givers and volunteers. A Parents’ Organization for the Night Care Center was also formed.

III. Operation of the Taytay Night Care Center

The Night Care Center opened on December 6, 1999 in a 30 square meter room at the St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Taytay. The Taytay Municipal Government provided funds for partitioning the multi purpose room of the church to create a room for the Night Care Center. The church provides the space and utilities such as water and electricity. The center is open from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

The center is staffed by a social worker, a nurse and two volunteer child care givers. On peak seasons such as months

nearing Christmas, volunteers from the Taytay Health Center and regular day care centers also help out. Prior to the opening of the center, the staff were given seminars and training on child care management.

The Night Care Center is equipped with cribs, mattresses, shelves, tables and chairs, an airconditioning unit donated by National-Panasonic, a refrigerator, a gas stove, a purified water dispenser, a 21 inch television set, a video compact disc player, and a cassette tape player. The shelves are filled with supplies of diapers, night clothes, slippers, books and toys. Most of the toys, clothes and slippers were donated by the Taytay United Methodist Church. Many of the children's books, educational cassette tapes and activity or game sets were donated by UNICEF. The supply of diapers, milk and other food items used during feeding time are from the budget that comes from the DSWD. Blankets, folding beds and kitchenware were provided by the DSWD disaster management unit.

The Night Care Center caters to children three months to six years old and can optimally accommodate 15 to 20 children. On most nights, 6-25 children are served by the facility; however, during the peak season, it has accommodated up to 40 children and even those aged up to 12 years. The Night Care Center has served children of factory workers; children of parishioners who attend late church activities (such as those of the El Shaddai); children of commercial sex workers; children with court cases; children of parents with marital problems; mothers who prefer to stay at the center rather than go home after a late work shift; and families who are victims of typhoons.

The main service given by the Night Care Center is providing supervised care to children of working parents at night time and a temporary shelter to mothers working on the night shift until it is safe for them to return to their homes. However, there are

other services provided by the Night Care Center such as a supplementary feeding program for the attending children and referrals to the Health Center for free medical consultations for sick children. Also, it has become a temporary shelter for lost children that were referred by the Taytay Police authorities.

Taytay residents and families wishing to avail of the services of the Night Care Center have to comply with the eligibility requirements: children aged three months to six years who are children of working parents on night shift, have no responsible adults to take care of their children while mothers or parents are at work, and have undergone medical and physical examination at the Taytay Health Center for admission to the center. The eligibility requirements of the center does not prohibit even children of working parents who earn above the poverty line to avail of its services.

On Table 1 is the daily schedule that is followed by the Night Care Center from Mondays to Fridays. Activities in the center include grooming and toilet training, feeding, social interactions, learning exercises, and spiritual and devotional practices.

Table 1. Regular schedule of activities at the Taytay Night Care Center

TIME	ACTIVITIES
6:00-6:30	Acceptance/registration of children (with medical certificate)
6:30-7:00	Washing/grooming of children and changing from street wear to proper night attire
7:00-7:30	Orientation for new attendees/feeding time
7:30-8:30	Activities: story telling/drawing/group singing/movie viewing
8:30-8:40	Toilet training/visit before sleep
8:40-8:50	Spiritual devotion/prayer
8:50	LIGHTS OFF
9:30	Staff: clerical tasks
5:30-5:40	Wake up call/bathing/grooming
5:40-6:00	Morning prayer/light breakfast
6:00-6:20	Homeward bound for children with their parents
6:20-6:30	Staff:cleaning up of the center

Christmas parties have become an annual tradition in the center. The first Christmas party of the center was held on December 22, 1999. Many parents and their children who have become clients of the center, the Night Care staff, Mayor Jun Zapanta and his wife, the parish priest, the vice mayor and her council, leaders of Taytay Methodist church and different representatives from the industry sector attended the first Christmas party. The different sectors represented donated food, toys, clothes for the children attending in the center.

Home visits are done by the MSWD head and the Night Care staff to disseminate information of the available services in the center to the residents of the different barangays of Taytay. The different manufacturing plants and factories are also visited and dialogues are held with management and labor representatives to inform them that the center is their local government's support towards the safety of their women workers and their children.

The two prominent churches in Taytay, both the Catholic and the Methodist, have worked hand in hand in announcing to their respective members of the existence of the center that can help mind the children of working mothers on night shift. Even the barangay leaders in Taytay have contributed their share in coordinating with the parents in their barangays to attend the regular monthly meetings (every last Friday of the month) held by the Parents' Organization at the center.

The Taytay Night Care Center still lacks many facilities in its present location. Its water has to be fetched for there are still no pipelines to supply water directly to the installed sink. Even the toilet is some distance away from the room. It badly needs a laundry area with enough water supply for the weekly laundering of beddings and other linens used in the center. The center does not have any telephone connection. The size of the room itself does not comfortably allow for more children to be taken in.

The center lacks mattresses, rubber flooring, and its own service typewriter for the preparation of reports and documents.

IV. Financial Profile

The DSWD provided initial funds for the operationalization of the Night Care Center, for the training of the care givers and for the personal services of the social worker and nurse, in accordance with the MOA signed for the project.

The mayor of Taytay allocated P50,000 as the LGU's counterpart at the start of the implementation. The money was primarily used for the partitioning of the church's multi-purpose hall for a dedicated room for the Night Care Center. The rest of the funds were used to buy six cribs, toy shelves, water, milk, provide travel allowance for the two volunteers and to pay for laundry services for the bed linen and night clothes. The vice-mayor also supports the center through material and medical assistance. Medical assistance has been augmented by the generous donations from various benefactors of the municipality such as the private organizations and factories.

The Municipality of Taytay DSWD office has prepared itself for the end of DSWD National and Regional funding. The major costs will involve the wages of a nurse and a social worker (approximately P400,000/year), the construction of a permanent Night Care Center (approximately P300,000) on the land donated by the Simona Homeowners' Association and operating expenses (approximately P400,000/year).

Transportation expenses for follow-ups and home visitations as well as reporting, canvassing, factory follow-ups will also be needed. Mrs. Teresita Dotado has submitted a financial plan for municipal DSWD services, including the Night Care Center, for consideration by the mayor and the Municipal Council.

Assessment of the Taytay Night Care Center

On the Involvement of the Different Stakeholders

Taytay Municipal Government

The municipal government of Taytay headed by Mayor Jun Zapanta, the vice mayor and the *Sangguniang Bayan*, the MSWD, and the Health and Engineering Departments have all been supportive of the project. Taytay was chosen to be the site of the Night Child Minding project because it was the first municipality among the LGUs in the industrialized zone of Rizal that significantly responded to the call of the advocacy forum.

The local government of Taytay allocated initial funds at the onset of the project implementation. It contributed to the enhancement of the physical structure of the Night Care Center. In the following year, more budget allocations are planned to include the salary of night care givers and the construction of a permanent site for the night care/child minding center. Funds for the construction of the new building that will house the Night Care Center are also planned by the Taytay Municipal government.

The barangay leaders have also been actively coordinating with their barangay residents to attend the monthly fora of the Parents' Organization of the center.

The MSWD office of Taytay is ably headed by a dedicated and persevering officer in the person of Mrs. Teresita Dotado. She has served as a catalyst in continuously coordinating with and mobilizing the national and regional offices of the DSWD, Taytay government leaders, the workers, parents and residents of Taytay, as well as the heads of the local churches. She has been

overseeing the implementation and daily operation of the Taytay Night Care Center. She was instrumental in obtaining a lot donation that will serve as the future site of a bigger and improved Night Care Center.

The social worker and nurse who have taken the task as child care givers are competent and are basically dedicated to their roles. However, they also feel badly about the effects of devolution on their salaries. The other concern of the staff is about the policy on hiring staff who are local residents. The Office of the Mayor has signified its support of continually hiring the present staff and working out possible schemes with the private organizations and the business sector or providing additional honoraria to approximate the salary rate when they were still paid from the DSWD national funds. In the same manner, providing transportation allowances and honoraria for the volunteer care givers is being studied.

Parents/Residents of Taytay

The residents of Taytay have been actively attending every forum arranged by the DSWD national and regional offices as well as those organized by the MSWD. The parents themselves have formed a Parents' Organization that regularly meets every last Friday of the month.

Currently, local community involvement consists of two women who volunteer almost every night to help the paid social worker and paid nurse take care of the children. There are some mothers (regular clients) who have committed their time and services to the Night Care Center whenever their work shift returns to the daytime schedule. Several parents have signified their willingness to volunteer their services when the construction of the new building commences.

Churches

The heads of the two local churches in Taytay are very much supportive of the Night Care Center. The parish of St. John the Baptist has provided the space to temporarily house the Night Care Center. It further takes care of the center's expenses on utilities. The Taytay United Methodist Church provided materials such as books, toys, clothes and slippers for the children. Both churches call and inform their own parishioners or members about the availability of a supervised child care service for working mothers.

Business Sector

The manufacturing companies and factories in Taytay are aware that the presence of a Night Care Center in their municipality will redound to the improved efficiency and productivity of their women workers. From the start of the implementation, many companies have already donated various equipment and goods to the center. There were even offers at the beginning to house the center in the premises of their manufacturing plants. The offers were politely declined for these may run counter to the objective of providing the service to the general populace of Taytay.

The business sector has signified their commitment to help the Night Care Center more regularly if it finds a more permanent location of its own. The construction of the new building on a lot donated by a private homeowner's association has inspired this commitment. This early, the industrial sectors have pledged funds, construction materials and other equipment for the building construction.

The factory heads have joined the effort of informing their workforce especially their married women workers of the services provided by the Night Care Center.

On Satisfaction of the Clients/Beneficiaries

The target clients of the Taytay Night Care Center are obviously satisfied as may be seen from their repeated availment of the child minding services. It has been recorded that up to 40 children have been accommodated in one night during the peak season. In its first year alone, 93 different children (71 parents) have already availed of the service. They constantly refer the center to other parents. They are even willing to pay a small amount to help subsidize the service. On top of this is the willingness of the mothers to spend free time and give their service as volunteer child care givers on their nights off from work.

The married women workforce of Taytay have become more confident with the work opportunities that may come their way even if these would require uninterrupted night work hours. The people of Taytay have become aware that there is an effort to provide proper measure to ensure safety and security of the women workers and of their young children. The satisfaction of the residents of Taytay is evident in inspiring the local homeowner's association to donate a piece of land for the building of the new and more permanent childcare facility. Significant involvement of all the sectors: local government, church, constituents, and the business sector is a manifestation that the municipality of Taytay benefits and is satisfied with the available service of the Night Child Care Center.

Sustainability

The Night Care Center will soon suffer the phasing out of fund support from the national government. The local government of Taytay has signified its support to continue the project and counterpart funds have been proposed to the municipal legislative council for the long-term sustainability of

the night care service. However, the local government's limited budget does not allow it much leeway.

Realizing this budget constraint, the MSWD together with the Parents' Organization and the church are actively making representations with potential benefactors from the private sector.

Replication of the Project

The success story of the Taytay Night Care Center has encouraged the nearby municipality of Cainta to duplicate the project. The DSWD national and regional offices are making preparations of setting up another child minding facility in another industrialized locality.

The MSWD hopes that after building the permanent facility, the firms in the area, which have often shown their support of the service, can be tapped for regular financial support to keep the service running. Other options might be to mobilize the partners' organization to field off-duty mothers as night care staff to decrease the personnel costs of running the services.

Recommendations

Financial

The reporters support the MSWD initiative of preparing a more expanded Memorandum of Agreement to include all the different stakeholders. This may be done when the more permanent facility for night childcare is up. This will encourage the stakeholders to implement more consistently their commitments and will foster the sustainability of the project.

The clients of the center must be encouraged to share in the subsidy and maintenance of the facility. A reasonable fee must be imposed for the supervised care of their children in the center.

This move will emphasize better the involvement of the parent-beneficiaries in the sustainability of the center.

Tasking a Grant Development Officer from among the stakeholders to market the success story of the Night Care Center will contribute to the facility's sustainability.

Staffing

Encourage more mothers to take schedules in manning the center especially on their nights off from work. The current staff who received formal training must start echoing and transferring their know-how in child care management to the volunteers.

Continue the submission of quarterly reports to DSWD which will provide insights on problems encountered by the center and may be able to come up with ways to improve the delivery of service. This will also serve as monitor that the main objectives of the center are met and upheld.

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Duplication

The DSWD must start considering other industrialized zones in other regions and provinces. More advocacy fora should be organized in other provinces where there are significant numbers of women in the workforce.

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