

RHIANNON D. WILLIAMS

9. SITUATING EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT QUALITY

Local Filipino Practices of Bayanihan and Dagyaw

INTRODUCTION

Today, compared with the aims of large-scale investment in child-survival programs throughout the 1970s and 80s, the goal of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) among NGOs operating in majority-world contexts is not only to promote survival but also to promote survivors' physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development (World Bank, 2004). The term "majority-world" refers to the countries in which the majority of the children live, as opposed to the "minority-world" or developed countries, in which the minority of the world's children live. The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development (2013) explains that ECCD encompasses the period of human development from prenatal stage through the transition from home or ECCD center into the early primary grades of school (prenatal – 8 years of age).

Two main factors have led to the increased interest in ECCD. First, at the institutional level it has been touted by economists and ECCD experts in the minority world as an economically sound investment. ECCD has been seen as a less controversial—some would argue an apolitical—intervention broadly aimed at reducing poverty and more specifically providing children and families with a strong foundation on which children can further their development. When one notes that 89% of children under age five in the world reside in majority-world countries, versus 3% in the United States and 8% in other minority-world nation-states, refocusing development funds for this population not only makes sense, it is seen as hugely beneficial for the survival of these millions of children, their well-being, and educational and economic prospects as well as indirectly for their communities (UNESCO, 2009).

The second factor that has received attention in the literature is that ECCD not only encompasses the young child's education but also his/her health, environment, and overall wellbeing (UNESCO, 2007). Based upon research in neuroscience, education, psychology, and medicine, ECCD links the young child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical processes with the care (by families, communities and the nation) required to support each child's development (Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, 2013). Furthermore, many organizations hold

that ECCD should be a part of a range of programs that promote education together with community mobilization. Therefore, because of ECCD's broad base, it is seen in some policy arenas as a leverage point for not only funding from international donor agencies, but also for capacity building in communities. As Ball (2005) explained in her work with First Nations communities in Canada, children are viewed as the hope for the future. Further, she argued that focusing on the wellbeing of children could work as a 'hook' to attract and garner community support, commitment, and action.

As the international community seeks to invest in the creation of quality ECCD communities, in this chapter, I report on qualitative research in which I used a critical constructivist approach to understand social constructions of quality ECCD communities from those most closely invested in the process, to further engage multiple stakeholders in grappling with the complexities that exist between local, national, and international notions of quality in ECCD communities at present and in the future. This research explored local constructions of ECCD quality from perspectives in two Philippine ECCD communities. In the study, quality was not essentialised as a universal, static construct. Instead it was considered a relational concept, based upon discussions with local Filipino ECCD stakeholders. Following a presentation of theoretical and policy-related issues in the literature pertinent to this research, I discuss the manner in which I investigated ECCD in Filipino settings through an anthropological and social-justice lens to learn what a quality ECCD community looked like from the perspective of those who live within these communities. Furthermore, using Sen's capabilities approach as an evaluative lens, I considered the current feasibility of these two communities operating within locally driven constructions of quality. I address these issues in the latter part of the chapter.

SPACE FOR LOCAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF QUALITY IN ECCD

In the ECCD literature almost all writers agree that for positive changes to occur in children's well-being, quality discussions, processes, indicators, and outcomes must be at the forefront of dialogues and interventions (see for instance Cryer, 1999; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; Evans, 1997; Moss, 2006; Young, 2002). However, scholars disagree with regard to whom, how, and what components determine a quality ECCD community. Some scholars say that experts should determine quality indicators based upon what the research has shown to achieve the greatest success with respect to set quality outcomes (Charlesworth, 1998; Copple & Bredecamp, 2009; Cryer, 1999; Rushton, Juola-Rushton, & Larkin, 2010). However, this view assumes universal agreement on what these visions and goals should be and that knowledge of what constitutes quality ECCD communities resides primarily with experts. Critics present two main, intertwined objections to top-down, narrowly focused ECCD initiatives. The first of these addresses the issue of community engagement and social change. The second criticism points to community members as knowledgeable actors. These critiques often stem from problems that have been documented at the community level. As Carney and Bista (2009) explained,

While scholars acknowledge the complex and contested nature of “community” and accept that participatory activities take many different forms (e.g. Bray, 2001), there is also broad agreement that educational reform must engage stakeholders if it is to have any chance of overturning historic patterns of underinvestment, low relevance, and marginal usefulness (Carney & Bista, 2009).

In other words, when initiatives do not involve individuals within the community in some manner, there is mounting evidence that program initiatives do little to alter the larger systemic issues plaguing the community (Carney & Bista, 2009; Penn, 2005). In relation to ECCD, Ball (2005) noted when there is little attention or effort to involve the very people supporting children’s learning and development, the likelihood of positively changing a community’s social fabric is minimal. As Ball further (2005) explained, civic engagement is generally seen as a pre-condition for social change. Moreover, many scholars and practitioners in the international-development field assert that “community participation in schooling . . . is essential for the achievement of efficient, accountable, and sustainable education” (Carney & Bista, 2009, p. 189; Bray, 2001).

Increasingly Western donors are placing more emphasis on locally driven development strategies (Abdi & Cleghorn, 2005; Abagi, 2005; Kendrick & Jones, 2008; Mkosi, 2005). One reason for this shift is the failure of the “Washington consensus”, a Western-oriented development policy. As Stiglitz (2002) explained, the “Washington consensus has proved neither necessary nor sufficient for successful development . . . (and) even when growth did occur, it was not equitably shared” (p. 20). A key word in Stiglitz’s remarks is equity, for fairer and better use of human resources, social and political sustainability, and even efficiency. Equity, has become prominent in “post-Washington consensus” development strategies. These approaches encourage processes that deal simultaneously with issues of democracy, poverty alleviation, and sustainability at the local level. At their core is equitable social change, cutting across social strata. In the community-engagement literature, civic engagement is widely documented as a pre-condition for social change (Denissen, Skelton, & Kari, 2006; Freire, 1970; Kirpal, 2002). Consequently, meaningful involvement of community members is essential for understanding and building on the strengths, challenges, and goals of families and their young children. More specifically,

community engagement is a first step towards the introduction of appropriate kinds of supports to protect inherent assets, such as mother tongue and positive cultural practices, and to improve the quality of life for young children and families (Ball & Pence, 2006, p. 24).

The second critique of top-down interventions rests on possession and definitions of knowledge: Who possesses knowledge about quality ECCD? In my research and for the purposes of this chapter, knowledge is defined in a constructivist epistemological paradigm, that knowledge is socially constructed, as an interplay or co-construction

between people and their evolving circumstances and information (Kincheloe, 2008).

The assumptions underlying top-down initiatives—universality of childhood and learning styles, linear efficiency, and scientific understanding—silence local citizens and assume that knowledge only comes from scientific studies tested through observations of the natural world in early-childhood communities. They produce constructions of quality ECCD based upon outside experts' questions and scientific observations, ignoring the individuals in the community whose knowledge and voices envision different ideas of early-childhood initiatives, notions of childhood, frameworks, or purposes within local Filipino communities (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999; Penn, 2005; Moss, 2006).

Researchers and field practitioners explain that the lack of sustainability of certain interventions is partly due to this knowledge disconnect, which negates possibilities for knowledge sharing and collaboration with community members to create quality constructions based upon mutual understanding, goals, and site-specific realities (Ball & Pence, 2006; Cleghorn & Prochner, 2010; Penn, 2005). Empirical studies of quality in ECCD have focused mainly on quality inputs, outputs, and outcomes with respect to a child's health or cognitive development (World Bank, 2004; UNICEF, 2006; Aboud, Hossain & O'Gara, 2008). While it has been argued that within majority-world contexts, individuals who support a child's growth and development are vital to sustainable community ECCD interventions, very few studies have sought to gain a deeper understanding about the values and constructions of childhood and quality ECCD from those living within majority-world ECCD communities.

THE STUDY

Theoretical Framework

The epistemological underpinnings for the study reported here resided within a critical constructivist paradigm which maintains “a perspective that is counter-hegemonic . . . as it uses the voice of the subjugated to formulate a reconstruction of the dominant” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 15), in this case how local community stakeholders reconceptualize a quality early-childhood structure.

I used a theoretical framework based on anthropology and social-justice literature to best understand specific locally constructed knowledge and processes regarding childhood and quality ECCD. From an anthropological perspective, scholars offer that individuals in a specific time and context have socially and culturally constructed knowledge of childhood and child-rearing (Levinson & González, 1999). How quality child-rearing practices and goals for children are organized socially and culturally is the main focus of this study. Tobin (2005), an early-childhood anthropologist, argued that quality is a cultural construction and therefore “quality standards should reflect local values and concerns and not be imposed

across cultural divides” (p. 421). In general the social-justice literature focuses on inequalities, with respect to quality constructions of ECCD, Unterhalter (2009) and Cryer (1999) argued, who is involved in determining what is fair and the process by which they engage in discourse is critical to achieving equity and quality in an ECCD community. For my study I chose Sen’s capabilities social justice approach (1999, 2005) to frame how social relations and structures maintain stakeholders’ unequal participation in the constructions and enactment of quality and offered an evaluative lens to look at stakeholders’ abilities to function in (envisioned) quality processes within their communities. These two theoretical perspectives support the objectives of this research, by providing a greater understanding of what these two communities ECCD stakeholders’ value and understand about children and early education and the current and future possibilities of functioning in ways that are valuable to ECCD stakeholders.

ECCD in the Philippines: Policy Context

In fulfilling their obligation as a signatory of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, the Philippine government enacted Republic Act No. 6972, the Barangay-Level Total Protection of Children Act, also known as the Daycare Act (de Los Angeles-Bautista, 2004). This legislation requires all local government units (LGUs) establish a day-care center in every *barangay* (village). However, with the decentralization of basic health and social services from 1990 onwards, each local government is responsible for the management and operation of its day-care centers (UNESCO, 2003).

Convinced of the benefits of the Daycare Act, in December 2000 the Philippine government approved the Republic Act No. 8980, providing for the development of quality ECCD programs for all young children. This law is a comprehensive policy and a national system for early-childhood care and education providing broad support and promotion of the rights of children to survival, development, and to support parents in their roles as primary caregivers and as their children’s first teachers (Philippine Government, 2000). Furthermore, investment in ECCD was believed to be an investment that would facilitate the Philippines achievement of Education For All (EFA) goals, in particular the EFA goal #1 that sets out that a country expand and improve comprehensive early-childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children (Jomtien, 1990). Beginning in 2011, several additional K-12 education policies addressing access and human rights have been signed into law and are starting to be implemented throughout the Philippines. In 2009, the DepED Order No. 74 addressed the linguistic discrimination that had occurred in emphasizing English education through the implementation of Mother Tongue Based, Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) (Republic of the Philippines Department of Education, 2009). In addition, the Philippines President Aquino signed into law the Enhanced Basic

R. D. WILLIAMS

Education bill (Republic Act. 10588) in the spring of 2013. This law adopted a K-12 compulsory education cycle, instead of the previous 1st grade-10 cycle, to ensure that students are prepared to go to university by the time of graduation from grade 12 (Philippine Government, 2013).

Research Methodology

Using the social-justice and anthropological theoretical frameworks, there were two overall questions for eliciting the qualitative data I collected. What stakeholder quality local practices are envisioned to achieve desired quality goals in their communities? How do current social relations within the communities enable or inhibit stakeholders' envisioned quality ECCD goals and incorporation of local practices into quality constructions?

Employing a constructivist paradigm, I used qualitative methodology with a collaborative, ethnographic focus to obtain data from focus groups and interviews. To facilitate focus group discussions and guide semi-structured interviews this research used a future-visioning process called StoryTech (Harkins & Kubik, 2006; 2010). Overall, in designing the study and choosing methodological tools I took into consideration the indirect and contextual nature of the concept of quality, allowing a critical, in-depth look at stakeholders' local constructions of a quality ECCD within two Filipino ECCD communities.

Data Collection. I collected data over a period eight months in 2008, with the help of research assistants. I focused on ECCD stakeholders from metro Manila and Antique. The study's unit of analysis was the barangay, the smallest governing unit in the Philippines. As a result of the ECCD Act 8980, the barangay in conjunction with the municipality or city is responsible for the majority of funding for early-childhood care and development Philippine Government, 2000).

The research took place in the communities of Bagumbayan, Taguig (Metro Manila) and Sibalom, Antique. The research focused on the stakeholders involved with these two areas' daycare and KBA (Kapit Bahay-Aralan/ Family day-care) programs. In the Philippines early-education and health centers are operated by the barangay, and the majority of public daycares and KBA centers operate half-day sessions for children 3–5 years old, three to five days a week. Each class may have from 15 to 40 students and one or two teachers. KBA centers are usually run in a community members' home or local church and are supported by a local NGO. These centers fill gaps in available ECCD services in some areas of these communities. Each research area had nine sets of informants as shown in [Table 1](#).

In the study settings, parents of Sibalom and metro Manila were quite diverse in terms of educational attainment and socioeconomic status. Educational attainment ranged from sixth grade to a bachelor's degree with 2% of the participants having had some formal schooling, 35% percent high-school graduates, 42% having had some college courses, and 19% having had college degrees. Parent participant's

Table 1: Study Participants

<i>Type of Informants</i>	<i>Manila</i>	<i>Antique</i>
KBA Parents	7	13
KBA Teachers	8	N/A
Day-care Parents	8	10
Day-care Workers	8	13
Community Volunteers	10	15
Barangay Captain/Councilors	10	15
City Councilors	4	2
Other ECCD Advocates in the City LGU	2	2
Barangay Affairs Officer	2	
Save the Children	1	4
Day-care Children	62 (2 classrooms)	65 (2 classrooms)
Total	115	139

salaries ranged from 800 to 20,000 pesos per month (approximately US\$20–\$500). Day-care and KBA teacher informants came from thirteen different barangays in Sibalom and six in metro Manila. The day-care teachers, ages 21–60, had six months to 20 years of experience.

Community member informants formed the broadest, most wide-ranging group of stakeholders who were the study participants. They included ten teachers, one midwife, six either barangay nutrition specialists (BNS) or barangay health workers (BHW), two church workers, two Barangay Service Point Officer (BSPO) volunteers, two homeowners' association volunteers, and one high-school student. Community members ranged in age from 15 to 60 years old. Local government unit informants represented three levels of local government: provincial, municipal or city, and barangay. This study concentrated mostly on the barangay, but it also included key individuals at the municipal or city level since funding, support, and advocacy for children's issues are so closely linked between barangays and their municipalities or cities.

In terms of equitable participation in the research process, each stakeholder group was created based on the individuals' role within the ECCD system and facilitated by a local research associate. I was cognizant of the potential power participants within different ECCD roles wield and how this may influence their participation in the research process. Therefore, I separated all parents, day-care and KBA teachers, and community members into separate groups since it was felt by the organization I was working with that individuals would feel more comfortable and open in discussions. In addition, there were two research associates involved in all data collection and initial analysis stages of the study. Since both RAs had extensive backgrounds in

R. D. WILLIAMS

community development and community-based research and were fluent in at least three languages (Tagalog, English, and another local language) they were able to facilitate each of the stakeholder groups in a mix of languages and ways that were familiar to participants.

Story Tech Tool and Process. I used a focus-group method with a future-oriented tool, StoryTech, to direct the focus groups. I used the StoryTech tool to communicate and organize information, knowledge, and competence from a wide range of stakeholders in the focus-group method. It framed the process and way in which the questions were asked in each stakeholder group.

The process is quite similar to that of a regular focus group, but has a few unique components. This study's StoryTech process comprised the following steps: 1) design a StoryTech tool specifically for the stakeholders and contexts of early childhood in the Philippines; 2) gather a group of six to ten individuals; 3) introduce a StoryTech that relates to the group and facilitates the process of future-visioning; 4) guide individuals in the writing of visions on the specific ECCD topic being discussed; 5) lead a discussion on the group's visions. Then after the first StoryTech round 1) read and complete an initial analysis of each groups' visions; 2) develop a second StoryTech tool based upon the initial analysis; 3) facilitate second StoryTech discussion with the same group; and 4) engage group in the collective process of refining the visions presented in the second StoryTech tool.

Interviews were held with several stakeholders who, due to geography and schedule, were unable to meet in one location. The individuals interviewed in Antique were municipal officials and Save PhCO staff, and in metro Manila, barangay and city officials. The interview protocol was semi-structured, with questions mirroring as much as possible the content reflected on and co-constructed in the StoryTech sessions. However, we were only able to talk with each person once.

Data Analysis. The data analysis process was loosely based on the CQR (Central Question Research) method (Yeh & Inman, 2007), organizing the data into domains, topics, core ideas, summaries, and finally cross-cutting themes. The final eight themes from the overall data set were; structure and facilities, mobilizing human agency, legislative measures and advocacy, children's health and nutrition, rationale for investing in ECCD education, collaboration, curriculum and pedagogy, and interactions. We (two research associates and myself) used these themes to reread all transcripts and individually code with a representative quote. On several occasions, the imbedded meanings in either the original Tagalog or Kinaray language necessitated a more nuanced explanation to convey the participant's intent accurately.

THE STUDY FINDINGS

In presenting the findings that emerged from the data analysis, the main purpose was to convey stakeholders' constructions of quality, both the principles and goals

they hold for their ECCD communities, curricula, and professional development. In this account of the research, I focus on the critical dimension of community in the findings. With the ultimate goal of improving the livelihoods for all children and families in an inclusive and equitable manner I suggest the implications that challenge international organizations to think about how they can create and support spaces that facilitate respectful dialogue across ECCD stakeholders. The names used are pseudonyms. Many of the findings are in the form of scenarios that portray the issues within the context of the research process, from the perspectives of the study participants.

*Quality ECCD Community and Local Filipino Practices of
Bayanihan and Dagyaw*

A child-friendly community is a place where the children are motivated and inspired to be their best, because they feel loved by their parents, and people in the community are their models of good discipline for which they learn good values that will inspire them to become responsible and disciplined citizens of the community and country. In their community, the parents are also encouraged to produce and earn more not only for the family's needs but also for the easy sharing of whatever they have for the needs of their neighbors in need is displayed (*Isa, community member, Sibalom*).

Almost all stakeholders in Sibalom and Bagumbayan reiterated what Isa explained in the above quote; they viewed community as more than just a group of individuals, but as a collection of people who depend on one another and for whose wellbeing they are mutually responsible. Moreover, communities see a quality early-childhood education not as a process to develop the cognitive and social domains of a child, but as an engaged, integrated process to further opportunities for children and families, thereby integrating these skills and knowledge into the future vitality of the community.

The *bayanihan* and *dagyaw* derive from a still-common Filipino tradition in which community members welcome new neighbors in the barangay by gathering a group of people to carry the newcomers' homes. Today, these terms more broadly refer to the spirit of communal unity or effort to achieve a particular objective and are a process through which people join forces to work on a project for a community. Overall, the process of a *bayanihan* or *dagyaw* seeks the strengths, knowledge, and skills of many individuals to accomplish a common community goal. Furthermore, who makes decisions and how they are made are spread across the various members of the community, validating the importance of everyone's contribution (Asha, Research Assistant, personal communication, July 14, 2008).

What emerged from the findings in both Sibalom and Bagumbayan were visions of quality ECCD communities that situated their local constructions of quality in terms of local practices of *magbayanihan* or *madagyaw* (The prefix *ma* is added to *dagyaw* and *mag* to *bayanihan* to indicate "the act of"). The findings suggest local constructions of quality are collaboratively driven, and desired quality outcomes

R. D. WILLIAMS

include sharing knowledge and responsibility, mobilizing human agency, building bridges in the community, and caring for each other.

Quality Component: “We Have Experience”: Sharing and Valuing Knowledge

The findings in this quality component “sharing and valuing knowledge” ECCD stakeholders presented a *bayanihan* as a platform from which to envision their communities of Sibalom and Bagumbayan, mobilizing human agency, which involves valuing individuals’ knowledge and engaging in community collaboration and partnerships. Whether one is leading the process of building the new ECCD classroom or laying the foundation, each individual brings something to the process and is involved in something larger than the piece he/she contributes. Most importantly, the *bayanihan* or *dagyaw* does not assume which strengths community members may contribute to the process.

Sharing knowledge. In one of the ECCD stakeholder’s *bayanihan/dagyaw* future scenarios from Sibalom, the community assembles to discuss ECCD issues. Istoy, the barangay official invites all to talk about the current problems, asks for suggestions, and then puts the achievement of the goal in the hands of the community by distributing responsibility—and thus ownership and accountability—among a broad base of citizens. As Ivy, a day-care teacher, puts it simply, “everyone is involved and [his/her] opinions sought after” (Ivy, day-care teacher, Bagumbayan).

The barangay officials’ leadership is important to note as other stakeholders suggest that while their experiences may not be perceived within the more traditional roles of early education, care, and health, through a process like *magbayanihan* or *madagyaw*, a space is opened up for collaborative dialogue and problem-solving, encouraging many different individuals to offer their skills in the process.

From teachers to preachers in both of these communities, individuals discuss the knowledge they have to contribute to the success of the barangay. Noel (Community member, Egana), for example, talked about she would like to share her work experiences with others in this quality making process, including working with children of different ages. However, presently, she would not be thought of as someone to engage in a quality ECCD community. This group of ECCD stakeholder’s constructions of quality within the concept of *magbayanihan* or *madagyaw* opens up the communal ECCD space to alternative resources including local ECCD stakeholders.

Valuing knowledge. In a *bayanihan* or *dagyaw*, leadership that recognizes the experiences and knowledge of others can enhance the discussion, dialogue, and outcome. Across stakeholder future scenarios, the recognition around the important knowledge that others possess that is not being used and shared in public spaces emerged as an important sub-quality component. In many of the future scenarios, the

quality component of valuing knowledge additionally required a shift in perspective among stakeholders.

One example of this emerged in a future scenario written by day-care teachers in Bagumbayan day-care teachers where they could see themselves acting differently in public spaces, for example, at a barangay-council meeting. In this scenario day-care teachers present their needs to the barangay council, which in turn offers its support for the day-care center. They talk excitedly about how they will sit in and participate in the barangay-council meetings. “We will stand up for what we believe in,” states one of the more vocal day-care teachers. They envision that “barangay officials will listen intently and offer their assistance because of all the great successes of the barangay’s daycare,” Lucing, another day-care teacher, says.

This picture underlines two aspects of this sub-theme: the confidence of day-care teachers to act in a more public space and the recognition of their knowledge and contributions by barangay officials in a respectful equal manner. This group of teachers sees barangay-council meetings as a public space where respectful dialogue and validation of individual teachers’ knowledge would take place. Ivy, a day-care teacher, makes clear that an important part of dialogue and respect for individuals’ knowledge and contributions is how individuals behave with each other. Similar to Lucing, Ivy (day-care teacher, Bagumbayan) notes that in a successful barangay, people treat each other as equals. In five years, “we continue being . . . effective service provider[s] and [barangay officials and others of higher status do] not to find it difficult to think that we are equals. [We] become open-handed in interacting with each other, that we are always ready to help one another toward continued improvement of the community.”

An ECCD space where power relations had been redistributed in a manner that respects each individual as one with unique, valid opinions on what comprises quality ECCD within their community. Similarly, in the scenario day-care teachers envisioned, the ECCD community identified and valued human potential, encouraged individuals to think about their role in different spaces, and share and build on each other’s knowledge and experiences, all of which add to the building of an inclusive, quality ECCD community.

Quality Component: Unity of our community: Cooperation and Collaboration

The success of the barangay lies in the unity, cooperation, and mutual help and support from all stakeholders, such as barangay officials, parents, members of the community, and even the children.

—Antang, day-care teacher, Sibalom—

Sharing and valuing community members’ experiences and knowledge are critical foundations upon which a *bayanihan* or *dagyaw* operate. Yet, how individuals coordinate and accomplish set goals of a *bayanihan* or *dagyaw* rest on the underlying

notions of cooperation and collaboration. Across the different stakeholder groups, several ideas create a more nuanced view of what cooperation and collaboration means for them, ranging from soliciting others' opinions on topics and discussing issues with each other to active participation in the community, effective communication, and shared responsibility.

Engaging in these aspects of *mabayanihan* or *madagyaw* redistributes individuals' roles in the ECCD quality process. Stakeholder groups, such as parents and day-care teachers, are asked what and how to accomplish a goal in concert with barangay officials, and/or ECCD experts. Collaborative leadership and an inclusive process negotiate and distribute power among ECCD stakeholders. For example, in one future parent-teacher scenario, encouraging collaboration begins by fostering partnerships through clear, respectful communication between the day-care teacher and the parents. Through amicable dialogue, the day-care teacher- Nedring, asks parents for help not only in the classroom, but also for their ideas and suggestions about potential problems. She provides a space not for the transmission of uncontested knowledge of child development, but one for discussing and sharing knowledge. Each individual partner comes as a citizen in a democratic community, one who possesses unique perspectives and bodies of knowledge that can be used in the broader education of children.

On the other hand Pedring, a barangay- official, thinks about cooperation and the sharing of ideas from a slightly different perspective, which may be influenced in part by his role as a barangay official. In his and other Sibalom officials' point of view, cooperation can be facilitated through constant discussion. In the future, "all the stakeholders should cooperate and have continuous dialogue. The people in the community gather to discuss the welfare of children" (Pedring, barangay official, Sibalom). Other stakeholder groups have visions, similar to those of Nedring and Pedring, which include gathering together and discussing issues about children, but their ideas are more specific to their particular spaces in the community.

The findings suggest that stakeholders see cooperation and collaboration as individuals being actively involved in the ECCD community and keeping an open mind as a centerpiece of their working relationships. Stakeholders' notions of cooperation focus on the community or barangay level, and these individuals in the research share the basic premise that in a successful child-friendly barangay, mutual aid and assistance increases communication and potentially creates future collaborations.

While the findings presented here illustrate a quality construction based upon local conceptions of *bayanihan* or *dagyaw*, which include the values of respect, cooperation, and collaboration, stakeholders have a large gap in understanding how to bridge local conceptions of quality and further develop the leadership within the community to enact early childhood democratic spaces and to work toward achieving the visions included in this chapter. Dialogues organized by Save the Children were taking place as I was finishing up the research in the Philippines, but ideas about which directions and types of facilitation might be needed were still in the nascent stage. These questions and areas need further attention and research.

DISCUSSION

The study reported here, ascribing to the notion that “quality” is a relative and social construction, contributes to the literature on community participation in the early-childhood education ‘quality’ processes. In the one particular case of two barangays in the Philippines, stakeholders engaged in a process of dialogue, discussing and negotiating what they, as a community, value as a quality ECCD community.

These two Filipino communities’ visions of a quality ECCD community suggested that their ideas are based on the local practices of *bayanihan* and *dagyaw*. Values, such as care, collaboration, and valuing local individuals’ knowledge, imbedded in the local practices of *bayanihan* and *dagyaw* were a part of their visions of quality and how they see the community achieving its desire for its children’s futures. While some stakeholders’ ideals were not very different than what exists presently in their ECCD communities, some of the locally driven ideals involved stakeholders re-negotiating current social and power relations.

As mentioned previously regarding theoretical underpinnings for the research, Sen’s (1999, 2009) capabilities approach provides a framework for evaluating inequity in society and understanding how it is possible to challenge it, as in this case, the difference in ECCD stakeholders’ social status and thus their contributions to constructing quality notions of ECCD. Sen’s (1999, 2009) critical concepts that were useful for understanding the potential inequalities among stakeholders in the two Filipino ECCD communities of this study are the *freedom* to convert capabilities into actions, the *diversity* of social arrangements that affect freedom, and the *value* individuals place on children’s education and well-being. Here I discuss the application of the social conversion factors in relation to stakeholders’ visions of functioning, broadly answering whether these stakeholder groups in their particular social and institutional contexts were actually able to do the things they value and envision doing.

Stakeholders’ Freedom to Participate in the Process of Change Within the Community

Local practices of Bayanihan and Dagyaw and top-down ECCD discourses. What the StoryTech process highlighted in the two barangays of this study is that there are indigenous ways of knowing and working with children that are held by their members to be a necessary part of a quality community. Understanding and facilitating these local values into the process of developing quality ECCD is a phenomenon that does not necessarily align with the underlying assumptions that guide many international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) education-development programs. Rather, those projects or interventions emphasized the child’s welfare separate from his/her community, relationships both present and historical, and community responsibility, thereby exacerbating the very issues current ECCD efforts attempt to resolve. As Peter Senge (2001) argued,

R. D. WILLIAMS

until we go back to thinking about school as the totality of the environment in which a child grows up, we can expect no deep changes. Change requires a community—people living and working together assuming some common responsibility for something that is of deeper concern and interest to all of them, their children (p. 23).

While the current Filipino ECCD policies are a step in the right direction, a shift from thinking of early-childhood care and development as distinct from a community and its everyday functions and responsibility to it being an integral part of or one pathway toward mobilizing a community's human agency is essential.

Local practices of Bayanihan and Dagyaw and existent social structures and norms. The collaborative community processes, talked about in detail in the findings are similar to the notion of democratic practice, with dialogue, discussion, and cooperation as the main elements. Yet while many stakeholders envision such collaborative scenarios, for some, these ideas, values, and beliefs could potentially be threatening. For many in these barangays, the freedom to participate in democratic spaces would provide an opportunity they have never had before; for others, especially community leaders, community members valued participation could threaten the social norms and relations to which they are accustomed.

Current social structure. Currently in the two communities the freedom of opportunities for stakeholders to engage in civic activities are distributed unequally as a result of minimal structures that facilitate communication between stakeholder groups and community leaders regarding children's welfare. In addition, the current context in the Philippines yields few incentives for leaders to either engage in dialogues with the marginalized or authentically support their efforts in day-care communities. One example of current tensions and inequities in opportunities to participate in the dialogue and decision-making is the Barangay Councils on the Protection of Children (BCPC). To be considered a child-friendly barangay, community partnership structures for the protection of children must be in place. The purpose of these structures is to provide an arena for community members to discuss on a regular basis a variety of issues related to children's welfare, including quality and the day-care community. However, as NGO leaders explain in interviews with them, there are not sufficient mechanisms for ensuring these structures are operational or inclusive. At the time of data collection, Bagumbayan had a semifunctional BCPC and Sibalom did not yet have one. From what I understood, the Bagumbayan BCPC was not open to community members, but only to select stakeholder representatives.

While it is quite evident from the quality visions in this study that barangay officials are key players in achieving these aims, with the primarily top-down leadership these leaders currently employ, the collaborative and cooperative leadership structure and processes envisioned by many stakeholders is hard to imagine, despite it being more closely related to their noted local practices.

Current social norms. In the day-care teachers' scenarios presented in the findings they envision parents as a part of a community of learners, each with his/her own unique experiences, knowledge, and understandings especially when it comes to

one's child. Similarly, some community members and day-care teachers' envision themselves sharing their experiences and knowledge with community leaders. However, individuals in these two communities are often the recipients of, not the producers of, knowledge; therefore, they wield less power, currently, in shaping valued information in their environments, especially, in terms of the behavioral codes that govern public spaces such as the classroom.

In his dialogic encounter with Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Huiskamp (2002) contended that "powerlessness is also a function of unequal control over the means of knowledge production, or what Anisur Rahman describes as 'the social power to determine what is valid or useful knowledge'" (p. 73). Therefore, what day-care or KBA teachers or parents need is not access to the predominant ways of thinking in early-childhood development, but a shift in the community's thinking about whose knowledge is valued and who decides what knowledge is important. In other words, how barangay officials, parents, community members and day-care teachers see each other's capability to act toward contributing to a quality ECCD community is critical to their ability to actually participate in local practices of *bayanihan* and *dagyaw*.

Implications for Quality ECCD Discussions and Future Research

In the research reported here, stakeholders from two locales in the Philippines participated in a process of envisioning constructions of quality in their ECCD communities. Overall, the findings from this study demonstrate idealized notions of a quality are based upon local conceptions of *bayanihan* and *dagyaw*. First, the study suggests that these notions are indeed conceptualized and articulated in a different manner, based on stakeholders' unique knowledge and perspectives.

Situating the findings in Sen's social-justice capabilities perspective, particularly the intersections of quality and equity, this study argued that each individual has a human right, the freedom to use his/her desired capabilities for achieving higher quality ECCD that improves children's well-being. Dahlberg et. al (1999) suggested that the process of making meaning does not imply constant agreement, rather a continuing dialogue among stakeholders. This study showed evidence of process freedom, as Sen argued (2009), with spaces for stakeholders to construct quality in ways that incorporate local ways of knowing, being, and acting. Hence, how does bottom-up quality relate to top-down quality (e.g., international and national ECCD policies or international discourse on ECCD) and also quality from the middle (the ideas of barangay and city leaders or national and international non-governmental organizations [NGOs])? And how are these sometimes differing notions of quality negotiated in a fair and just manner?

Specifically looking at the Filipino ECCD system and how the process of constructing quality may have implications at multiple levels, based on the findings of this study I suggest that without middle-level leaders placing equitable value upon locally constructed visions of quality ECCD, and quality from the bottom—also

R. D. WILLIAMS

purposefully facilitating the multi-directional flow of ideas, skills, and resources—the likelihood of constructions of quality reflecting local values, beliefs and rationale is minimal. Therefore, a critical shift in the way stakeholders in the middle think and talk about the forms of knowledge that emerge from the bottom is crucial to the realization of all stakeholders' ideal constructions of quality.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while in this chapter I am not suggesting ways in which cultural projects such as ECCD democratic communities can evolve, flourish, and sustain themselves—these areas need further research—I present and discuss locally constructed visions of processes and practices that have emerged from the research and the literature on inclusive practices, which support stakeholders ideal quality ECCD community. Furthermore, this chapter does not focus on early childhood learning per-se, but the kind of nurturing, quality environment stakeholders envision within these communities as supporting the structures and leadership necessary for young children to become 'professional citizens'.

This quality community relocates the focus from the individual to the collective, and from one way of knowing to multiple ways of knowing around quality ECCD. It looks to itself for knowledge, thereby validating its unique "funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005). Parents, day-care teachers, KapitBahay- Aralan (KBA) teachers, community members, and barangay officials all resound in their desire for well-educated children; however, just as loudly, they speak of morals, values, and respect for others. Nurturing the child as a part of the community and cognitive learning goes hand in hand.

If programs are meant to have a lasting effect on changing and improving the condition of children and society, they must be culturally sustainable and respond to local needs and demands. Only if local communities are involved in programs and take ownership of them will ECD programs persist and continue to have the same positive effects when outside donors cease their funding (Kirpal, 2002, p. 293).

Furthermore, a sustainable process must involve not only local ownership but also a constantly evolving, self-reflecting, and viable quality child-friendly barangay. If the knowledge does not originate from those in the community, the possibilities for creating new knowledge and ECCD programs, sustainability, and desired social change are minimal. In the quest for inclusive quality improvement in majority-world contexts, to define quality in such limited, outcome-based terms often excludes those it attempts to empower, and thus is problematic when our primary goal is to foster sustainable, inclusive, quality ECCD communities. Envisioning a more collaborative community-based approach encourages children and families to learn, participate in a collective project, or a vision where they can begin to see connections to their present and future.

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R. D. WILLIAMS

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AFFILIATION

Rhiannon D. Williams
University of Minnesota