

TUL 670 Project 7

Transforming Lives through Early Childhood Education

A Study on the Effectiveness of Mission Ministries Philippine's ECE programs



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7/25/2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the directors of both Mission Ministries Early Childhood Education and Church Planting Ministries. Ms. Chonabelle Domingo and Pastor Amado (Don) Reyes, for allowing me to conduct this research.

Thank you to Ms. Doris Risare and her family for allowing me to stay with them over the past year and to Ms. Doris who helped to translate and assisted in transcribing, as well as, connected me with my research assistant Chery Borbe. Thank you Chery for joining me on visits to the communities for interviewing, observing, and holding focus group discussions. Your assistance was greatly needed and appreciated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Executive Summary	3
II. Introduction	4
Education: A Luxury in the Developing World	4
Low-Cost Private Schools: Bringing Quality Education to the Poor	4
Participatory Research Methods	5
Identifying the Participants	6
III. Community Context and Issue	8
A Brief History of Education in the Philippines	8
MMP ECE: Quality Education and Christian Discipleship in the Philippines	10
IV. Research Findings	12
MMP ECE: An Early Childhood Education Provider	12
MMP ECE Partner Schools' Tuition	15
MMP ECE's Philosophy: Learning through Play	16
MMP ECE's Holistic Curriculum	16
MMP ECE's Partners	19
The Overall Impact of MMP ECE's Partners and Curriculum	20
A Minority Opinion on the Impact of MMP ECE Partners and Curriculum	27
V. Summary of Main Findings	28
The Relationship Between the Partners and the Success of MMP ECE	28
MMP ECE's Holistic and Unique Curriculum	28
MMP ECE's Accessibility to the Poor	29
The Academic and Social Impact on Students and Parents	29
The Spiritual Impact on Students and Parents	30
VI. Conclusion	31
The Future of MMP ECE and Transformative Quality Education	31
Opportunities for Future Research	32
VII. A Final Note from the Researcher	33
Works Cited	34
Appendix A: Informants	35
Appendix B: Interview Guides	36
Appendix C: Photos	45

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations, international aid agencies (NGOs), and national governments have been looked to as the experts in bringing education to all children no matter race, status, or gender. While positive shifts in education have occurred through these agents, globally, education is still not-accessible to all children. In response, there has been a movement of low-cost, private schools springing up in urban poor communities to help bring accessible and quality education to children.

This paper looks at one such movement known as, Mission Ministries Philippines (MMP). They are an Early Childhood Education movement advocating for the children in urban poor communities. Mission Ministries Philippines' Early Childhood Education (MMP ECE) partners with churches to set-up low-cost private schools in urban poor communities around the Metro-Manila area. Since 1986, MMP ECE has been helping to bring quality Christian education to children between the ages of three and six, in order to prepare them to enter into public school. It has been recognized by the local government for its excellence in bringing quality education to children in urban poor communities.

This study seeks to understand; how do MMP ECE's partners and curriculum provide quality education to children in urban poor communities? How is the curriculum unique and what is the impact of the program on students, their families, and communities? Data was collected at four of MMP ECE's partner schools, located throughout Metro-Manila. At each school, teachers were interviewed and focus group discussions were held with parents. Research found the significance of the partners and the curriculum in creating quality education. The data also found academic, social and spiritual impacts on both the children and their families.

II. INTRODUCTION

Education: A Luxury in the Developing World

Education is a powerful tool. It can transform one's socioeconomic status, provide access to higher paying job opportunities, increase self-esteem, and provide opportunities for cultural and economic growth. Education is not only transformative, but it is considered to be a human right. According to the *United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, "[Children] have the right to go to school for free, to play, and to have an equal chance to develop [them]selves and to learn to be responsible and useful" (United Nations, 2013).

In the developing world, the right to education is not always realized. According to the *State of the World's Children 2004*, published by UNICEF (2003) "Universal education might seem a relatively straightforward goal but it has proven as difficult as any to achieve...Some 121 million children are still denied this right" (p. 1). For many children growing up in poverty, education is considered a luxury for those who have the means.

At times, due to the pressure placed on governments to make education accessible for all children, the quality of the free education is less of a concern to the government compared to the number of schools built and the number of children registered in schools. UNICEF (2003) states that, "While it is considered desirable to have as many children in school as a country can afford, it is not considered obligatory or necessary that governments mobilize the needed resources so that all children can complete a quality education" (p. 8). This can be seen in the Philippine context, where it is not uncommon for public schools, especially on the outskirts of Metro-Manila, to have a student to teacher ratio of 100 to 1

Low-Cost Private Schools: Bringing Quality Education to the Poor

An emerging trend of low-cost, community-based, private schools are being found throughout the developing world. In 2012, Pauline Dixon published an article in the *Econ Journal Watch* titled, *Why the Denial? Low-Cost Private Schools in Developing Countries and Their Contributions to Education*. In this article, she writes that there is a "'mushrooming' of private schools in parts of Africa, owing to poor quality in government schools" (p. 188). Dixon (2012) also mentions the affordability of these schools even for families who earn less than a dollar a day (p. 187).

Likewise, in the Philippines, an early childhood education movement known as Mission Ministries Philippines (MMP) has been joining with churches in urban poor communities to provide quality early childhood education through low-cost private preschools. Established in 1984, MMP Early Childhood Education (MMP ECE) has planted over 400 preschools mostly within the Metro-Manila area. Their vision is "providing poor families with the means of educating their children in their early years of life" (Mission Ministries Philippines, 2011).

This research focuses specifically on MMP ECE partner preschools in Metro-Manila. How do the MMP ECE partners provide quality education to children in urban poor communities? Specifically, this research will look at:

- Who are the partners?
- How is the curriculum holistic and unique?
- What is the impact on the student, family, and community?

Participatory Research Methods

A participatory research approach was used in gathering the data. This approach is dependent on the participation of the people within the researched group. The participatory approach seeks to empower the participating population and bring about social change. This should occur not only from the resulting data, but in the process of gathering the data as well (Mayoux, 2009).

The research applied a mix of structured and unstructured methods to collect qualitative data through observation, focus group discussions and informant interviews. Ethical considerations were taken into account in regards to data collection. Participants were made aware of the purpose of the study and asked for their permission to authorize the use of a recorder when used. For ethical reasons, the parents and teachers have been kept anonymous and are identified by a letter of the alphabet assigned at random.

- *Observation*

This method of observation involves paying attention to surroundings and non-verbal clues. The researcher took notes on the setting and actions happening around the school and within the classroom. Interactions between the participants; teachers and students, or teachers and parents were also observed. All observations were recorded in a research journal.

- *Focus Group Discussions*

The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were semi-structured and conducted amongst the parents of past and present students. The questions can be found in Appendix B. The discussions were led by the researcher and her research assistant and translator. They focused on the parents' views on education, the perceived impact of the schools on the students and community, and the spiritual beliefs and practices of parents.

- *Informant Interviews*

The informant interviews were semi-structured and were conducted with MMP ECE Partners (Teachers and Administrators), the MMP ECE Executive Director, and MMP Church Planting Missionaries. The questions can be found in Appendix B. They focused on the partnership with MMP ECE, the MMP ECE curriculum, the spiritual influence of MMP ECE, and the motivation of

the partners.

- *Data Analysis*

From transcripts gathered by semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, key themes and sub-themes were identified. Similar information was grouped together and key quotes were identified to show the unique structure of MMP ECE and the impact of the partners and curriculum on students, families, and communities.

Identifying the Participants

The Contributing Communities

A sample of four MMP ECE partner schools, serving children from three to six years old, was chosen to investigate. Three schools were located in Quezon City: *Hilltop Christian Academy*, *Heart of Jesus*, and *Old Balara Christian Community*. One school was located in Antipolo: *Full of Knowledge*. All of the schools were partnered alongside a church and established in urban poor communities.

The communities of the partnering schools and churches are identified as informal settlements. They are not recognized by the government as legal settlements and are at risk for demolition and relocation. Even though, there is risk of eviction, the youngest community that participated in this research was around twenty years old. Each community was well established enough to have access to running water and electricity.

Old Balara Christian Community is different from the other schools in two ways. The first is that it has recently moved out of its original urban poor community and grown to serve students from preschool to high school. The school is now located right outside the community. The second way this school is different is that it serves students from both the urban poor and the middle class.

The Contributing Population

Over a period of six weeks, this study collected data from 34 participants:

- 8 people were interviewed 5 MMP ECE partners and 3 MMP staff.
- 4 focus group discussions were held. A total of 26 parents of past and present students participated in the discussions.

- *MMP Staff*

The Director of MMP ECE, Ms. Chonabelle Domingo, was a key informant in this research process not only acting as a bridge between the researcher and the participating communities, but also answering questions and helping to guide the process. Ms. Domingo is the original

teacher of MMP ECE and has helped to establish them as a credible and respectable consultant of quality preschools.

Two MMP Church-Planting missionaries were also consulted during the research in order to understand the process of planting a preschool alongside an MMP church plant. They shared their experience of failure and success in the process.

- *The Partners and Parents*

The students, their families, and the MMP ECE partners who participated in this study belong to or grew up in the context of the urban poor. In the urban poor communities of Metro-Manila, many are second generation. Their parents migrated to Metro-Manila before they were born and settled alongside others on land owned by the government or a private land owner.

Of the twenty-six parents one was male. Three of the twenty-five women were grandmothers. The participants ranged in age from early twenties to early fifties years old. Majority of the parents who participated did not have beyond a high school education. The jobs available to the parents belong to the informal economic sector. Informal jobs are not regulated by the government and usually pay below minimum wage. The participating parents or their spouses worked as street vendors, owners of sari-sari stores, or in construction.

The partner teachers and administrators are required to have at least some college. The four teachers interviewed in this study were women. The one administrator was male. Two of the teachers were single women and leaders within the partnering church. The other two teachers interviewed were the wives of the pastor of the partnering church.

III. COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND ISSUE

A Brief History of Education in the Philippines

In order to understand the present system of education in the Philippines, it is important to understand some of the complex history of the Philippines. For more than 300 years from 1521-1896, the Philippines was a Spanish colony. In 1898, two years after gaining independence from Spain, the Philippines was occupied by the United States of America (USA) until 1936 when they became a Commonwealth. During World War 2, they were briefly occupied by the Japanese from 1941-1944. They finally gained independence in 1946 with the establishment of the Republic of the Philippines.

Philippine Education under USA Occupation: 1898 – 1941

Under Spanish rule, free primary education was implemented by the *Educational Decree of 1863* (Dolan, 1991). This decree was unrevoked even as Spain's rule ended. Under the USA occupation, as free primary education was spreading, an overwhelming need for teachers developed. In response to the need, the already present American soldiers became volunteer

teachers until 1901, when the USA sent more than one thousand teachers to the Philippines to teach in the primary schools (Wikipedia, 2013).

Teachers from the USA replaced soldiers from the USA. In these schools, alongside the basics of math, reading, and writing, the values and beliefs of the USA were also taught. Also, English, a foreign language for majority of Filipinos, became the primary language of instruction. Renato Constantino (1966), in his article *The Miseducation of the Filipino* comments on the injustice of using a second language as a primary language of instruction. He writes:

“Language is a tool of the thinking process. Through language, thought develops, and the development of thought leads to further development of language. But when a language becomes a barrier of thought, the thinking process is impeded or retarded and we have the resultant cultural stagnation. Creative thinking, analytical thinking, abstract thinking are not fostered because the foreign language makes the student prone to memorization...Independent thinking is smothered because the language of learning ceases to be the language of communication outside the classroom. A student is mainly concerned with the acquisition of information. He is seldom able to utilize this information for deepening his understanding of his society's problems” (p. 13).

Philippine Education under the Republic of the Philippines: 1946-2011

Even as the Philippines gained independence with the establishment of the Republic in 1946, not much was changed in the system of education until 1974 with Dept. Order No. 25, s. 1974. According to the article *Language Policies in the Philippines* by Clemencia Espiritu (2011), this order titled *Implementing Guidelines for the Policy on Bilingual Education* states, “Filipino shall be used as medium of instruction in social studies/social sciences, music, arts, physical education, home economics, practical arts and character education. English, on the other hand is allocated to science, mathematics and technology subjects” (Section 2, para. 7). This order was reiterated in the Constitution of 1987 and is still in place today.

Another significant change that occurred in Philippine education during this time period was the commencement of *Republic Act 6655*. This act is also called The Free Public-Secondary Education Act. While primary school had been free for almost a century since Spanish rule, it was not until 1988 that secondary education was mandated to be free (Robles, 2013). With the passage of this act, Philippine students were now required ten years of schooling versus the previous six years.

Philippine Education under the Republic of the Philippines: 2011-2013

Until recently, the Philippine education system consisted of a primary education consisting of Grades 1 – 6, serving children aged 6 – 13 years old, and secondary education consisting of Years 1 – 4, serving children aged 13 – 16 years old. Since 2011, major reforms have occurred in Philippine education. One such reform is the number of required school years. In the 2011 –

2012 school year with the commencement of the *Republic Act No. 10157, the Kindergarten Education Act*, a mandatory year of kindergarten has commenced.

The *Kindergarten Education Act* states in section 2 its purpose which is “to provide equal opportunities for all children to avail of accessible mandatory and compulsory kindergarten education that effectively promotes physical, social, intellectual, emotional and skills stimulation and values formation to sufficiently prepare them for formal elementary schooling” (Congress of the Philippines, 2011). Upcoming Filipino students are now required to have a preschool education before entering into Grade 1. Over the next couple of years, two more grades will also be added onto the secondary education, creating a K-12 school system.

The 2012-2013 school year saw the commencement of the *Filipino Order No.16* also called, *Mother Tongue-Based Multi Lingual Education (MTB-MLE)*. This order decrees that, “Starting School Year (SY) 2012-2013, the *Mother Tongue-Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE)* shall be implemented in all public schools, specifically in Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2 and 3 as part of the K to 12 Basic Education Program” (Department of Education, 2012)

With the passage of these reforms, it seems the Philippine government is seeking to improve the quality of free education offered to its citizens. In truth though simply adding more years in schools will not guarantee the quality of education received. If proper resources are still missing in these schools, like; books and other necessary educational materials, or if the average class size remains around 80 students to one teacher, the quality of education will continue to be poor. Despite these recent reforms, the Philippine government still has much to improve in the nation’s system of education to ensure quality education for every child.

MMP ECE: Quality Education and Christian Discipleship in the Philippines

Pioneers in Filipino Education Reform

MMP ECE in many ways has shown themselves to be a pioneer in Philippine education. In 1984, they recognized the advantage of preschool education. They understood it could provide a solid educational foundation for those entering into the public school system. In the *Mission Ministries Philippines, Inc.: Five year Business Plan* by Dr. Stewart DeBoer (2004), the intention of MMP ECE is, “To stimulate and inform preschool children of their potential so that when they enter first grade, in a public school with its crowded classrooms and under staffed teachers, they will be ahead, be able to anticipate and move beyond what is expected of them” (p. 24).

MMP ECE also early on implemented the Mother-Tongue Based Learning, discovering the benefit in teaching children how to first read in their native tongue. It was not until 2012; that the Philippines Department of Education began requiring all schools to first teach children to read in their native tongue. MMP ECE is an advocate for quality education, willing to go beyond what is required to ensure all children regardless of gender or socioeconomic status have an opportunity for a quality education.

Redefining Christian Education

Not only is MMP ECE leading the way in Filipino education but also in the field of Christian Education. According to Dr. DeBoer (2004), Christian education is often “neither Christian nor education” (p. 24). Some schools may teach facts out of the Bible, but not give opportunity for the student to apply or relate what they are hearing to their life. Dr. Stewart DeBoer (2004), believes:

“Christian education is more than mere transmission of Bible content. Mere teachings of Bible facts do not reflect a Bible teaching philosophy...Learning should be motivated internally employing the abilities of God to meet pupil’s deepest needs...Advocat[ing] cultural transmission of Bible content when it connects with life...[and] taught at the level of the life of the student and his or her need” (p. 25).

MMP ECE recognizes that the gospel of Jesus Christ is more than spiritual good news; it incorporates the physical, social and economic spheres of life. The children are taught and encouraged to dream about their future and the future of the Philippines. The teachers understand that “survival and preservation are a high priority in the minds of the poor, but it must go far beyond this; they must find purpose and delight in life itself. Included in the final teaching objective of the lives of the children should be a motivation toward a wholesome anticipation of Christian joy” (p. 25).

Transformation through Discipleship

An important part of Christian education recognized by MMP ECE is holistic discipleship of the student, teaching and modeling how to follow Jesus. MMP ECE is part of a global movement called the 4-14 Window. This movement formed in 2009, when the global church recognized the potential mission field of the 4-14 year old age group.

In the booklet, *Raising Up a New Generation from the 4-14 Window to Transform the World*, Luis Bush (2010) writes “85% of our adult personality is formed by the time we reach six years of age” (p. 10). He further mentions that around 80% of adult Christians began to follow Jesus between the ages of 4-14, pointing out the importance of reaching this age group now, for the future (p.10). Bush also addresses the importance of reaching those populations between 4 years and 14 years, who are living in poverty. He cites that there are negative forces at work in poverty and disempowering systems that result in ongoing or even intensified poverty (p. 10).

MMP ECE desires to be a light in the darkness for these children. The hope is that as children from poor communities learn they are loved by God and created with value and purpose, transformation occurs in their hearts. Where before existed fatalism and a negative view of self; now there exists hope and purpose and self-worth. MMP ECE encourages students to dream about their futures, and seeks to prepare the students with the necessary tools to face

whatever obstacles may arise in the future.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

MMP ECE is seeking to respond to the lack of quality education for the poor by empowering local church leaders to establish community preschools that offer quality Christian education. This study looked at how do MMP ECE's partners and curriculum provide quality education to children in urban poor communities?

- Who are the partners?
- How is the curriculum holistic and unique?
- What is the spiritual impact on the student, family, and community?

MMP ECE: An Early Childhood Education Provider

MMP ECE is not a preschool, but a consultant. Over the past couple of decades within Metro-Manila, they have become recognized as experts in early childhood education. They have developed a quality early childhood education program alongside an original biblically based curriculum. Churches throughout Metro-Manila and more recently beyond have sought a partnership with MMP ECE in planting a low-cost community-based preschool. Once a preschool is a member of MMP ECE, a variety of services, trainings, and networks are made available. These are described below.

MMP ECE's Membership Requirements & Services

Partner schools are required to pay a start-up socialized fee, dependent on the type of school and community it is based in. One school interviewed paid a start-up fee of 7,000 Philippine Pesos (PHP) or about \$175.00 United States Dollars (USD) which provides:

- *Technical Services, including;*
 - Assistance in setting up ECE program
 - Parents' orientation and development program
 - Provides networking opportunities
 - Provides classroom visitation and coaching
 - Organizes training seminars for teachers and administrators
- *Master copies of Early Childhood Education materials, including;*
 - MMP ECE Curriculum for Nursery, Kinder and Prep
 - Compilation of Songs, Poems & Rhymes
 - Children's song CD
 - A set of 15 MMP ECE books for Nursery, Kinder and Prep Levels

- *Support Services, including;*
 - Access to MMP ECE library /resource center
 - Access to Book ad Supplies Sponsorship Program
 - Access to other MMP ministries, i.e. Job Link program enabling high school graduates to have employment, and MMP’s holistic church planting ministries
 - Discounted Fieldtrip Package

Following the establishment of the partnership, the partner school renews their membership yearly in order to continue receiving the support and services of MMP ECE. The schools interviewed in this research had a yearly renewal fee of 1,000 PHP or about \$25 USD.

MMP ECE’s Relationship with Department of Education

MMP ECE is officially licensed to operate under the Philippines’ Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). A few years ago, the Philippines’ Department of Education (Dep Ed) awarded MMP ECE with a certificate that acknowledges their work as a “Service Provider of the Dep Ed in its commitment to promotion and implementation of...alternative education programs in its target communities as part of its apostolic mission to provide educational access and opportunities to the marginalized sectors of the society.” This certificate is helpful in providing legal recognition for partner schools that otherwise may not be accredited by the Dep Ed.

The Dep Ed requirements for recognition are not all feasible in an informal settlement. The most cited reason for not being recognized is the size of the classroom, as space is often limited in informal settlements. In the past, the Dep Ed has accepted the certificate as a form of legality and allowed the school to continue.

MMP ECE as a Network of Resources

MMP ECE is a consultant with a vast network. Not only does their network include the hundreds of partner schools and churches but also church planting and educational resources for partners. The network also has school scholarships and sponsorships, microfinance, livelihood, and counseling available to students and parents.

- *Partnering Schools*

MMP ECE connects schools with each other in order for them to share their resources and help one another succeed. When starting up the school Teacher H did not have any furniture or supplies for the school, but MMP connected the school with a school that was shutting its doors and offered to give all their furniture to Teacher H. This connection helped to provide resources for her classroom and students.

- *Scholarships*

MMP ECE is able to provide scholarship opportunities to partner schools. All but one parent interviewed sent their child to the preschool by way of scholarship or socialized tuition. There are three scholarship programs within MMP ECE. Apart from the scholarships, it is not uncommon for a donor to help start-up and fund a school; especially those planted by MMP's Church Planting teams. The three available scholarships under MMP ECE are:

1. *Somang Seed*: A Korean foundation translated in English to "Seed of Hope." The foundation was started by a former graduate student of Asian Theological Seminary and helps to sponsor between twelve and twenty students at fifteen different partner schools considered to be the most indigent. These sponsorships allow for parents to only pay half the tuition or less each month.
2. *MMP Book Scholarship*: This scholarship funded by MMP sponsors helps students unable to buy the necessary books as the books are not usually included in the tuition fee.
3. *MMP School Supplies Scholarship*: This scholarship funded by MMP sponsors helps students pay for notebooks, pencils, etc.

- *Livelihood/Microfinance*

MMP ECE understands that many of the students, families and teachers in the communities have a variety of needs and early childhood education in itself does not address every need. Recognizing, that there are already capable organizations meeting significant community needs, MMP ECE has created a network of community development resources. Presently, MMP has the ability to refer families to livelihood, microfinance, or employment services, health, and church planting to name a few.

- *Guidance Services*

MMP ECE desires to be inclusive of children who may have special needs, believing all children have the right to an education. Through daily assessment of the child's learning the partners are able to notice possible development hindrances and take the appropriate steps to help the student. One of these steps may include referring the student to the Guidance Services organization. They seek to provide the necessary trainings and skills to the teachers and parents, and provide the proper diagnosis and method of intervention for the student.

MMP ECE Partner Schools’ Tuition



Figure 1: Monthly Tuition for the MMP ECE Partner Schools 1, 2, & 3 in this study

On average an MMP ECE partner school charges a monthly tuition of 500 PHP. The tuition goes to pay for resources and materials needed for the student and the classroom to provide quality education. If there is tuition left over after the cost of materials, it goes to pay the salary of the teacher and teacher assistant. The teachers realize it is a sacrifice for many of the parents to pay the monthly fee. They work hard to make the cost worth the sacrifice to the parents. At times, parents who may be having difficulty paying are able to offer their time to the school; cleaning up, organizing, and assisting in whatever way is needed.

Scholarships were available at three of the schools interviewed. The fourth school, the one serving students from both the urban poor and middle class, did not offer a scholarship. Instead it offered a socialized tuition, meaning the cost of tuition is based on the parent’s tax return.

At each school, participating parents were asked whether their student was on scholarship. The result showed that twenty-five of the twenty-six parents either availed of a scholarship or paid a socialized tuition. According to the teachers, each school had from twelve to twenty students (about one-third of the schools’ student population) on a scholarship.

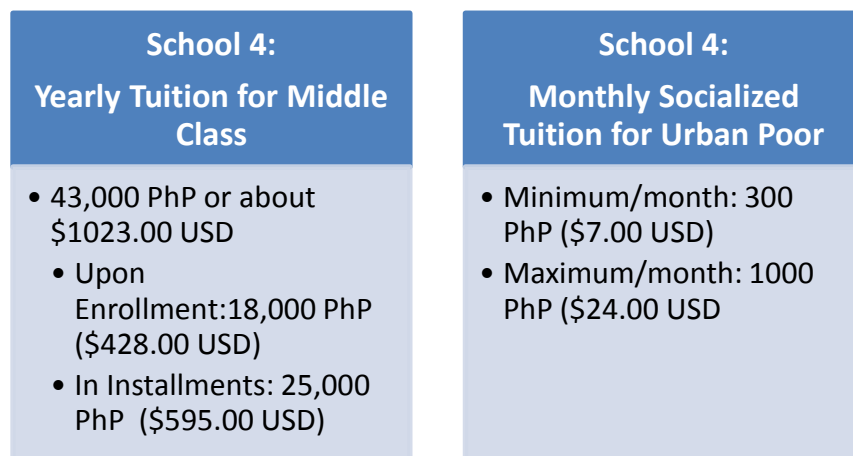


Figure 2: Yearly Tuition and Monthly Socialized Tuition for MMP ECE Partner School 4 in this study

MMP ECE's Philosophy: Learning through Play

One factor which makes MMP ECE partner schools unique in Philippine education is their philosophy. MMP ECE believes the process of learning is equally as important as the product of the learning. The public schools in the Philippines hold to a traditional philosophy, which simply teaches repetition or memorization without offering opportunities for critical thinking. Teacher D described most public education in the Philippines as training students simply to “become employed and be the best employee.” In her opinion, it is not challenging students to question the ‘status quo’ or think creatively.

MMP ECE's partner schools apply a different approach called the Development Appropriate Practice (DAP). The DAP philosophy believes that children can learn through play. It is an integrative approach that recognizes every opportunity as a learning opportunity. For this approach the classroom is divided into centers, consisting of; a play kitchen, a reading corner, a manipulative center (building blocks), an art corner, and if possible a sand center. At certain times during the day, usually in the beginning of class the students are allowed to choose a center and play there. While the students are playing the teachers will observe and ask them to identify colors that they see.

During one observation, a student at the play kitchen was pretending to cook and eat corn. There were three plastic corn cobs on his plate. The teacher recognized a learning opportunity and asked the student, “What is that on your plate?” The student replied, “Corn.” The teacher asked, “What color are they?” The student responded, “Yellow and white.” The teacher asked, “How many are there on your plate?” The student responded, “Three.” Simply, through play the teacher was able to integrate a lesson in identifying objects, colors and counting.

MMP ECE's Holistic Curriculum

Alongside the DAP philosophy of learning, MMP ECE has created a quality, biblically based classroom curriculum. It was initially created several years ago by a well-respected community of teachers from The University of the Philippines, including Ms. Domingo, the MMP ECE Executive Director. The curriculum and publications of MMP ECE are not only unique for their Biblical integration but as well as their ability to teach children to read before entering Grade 1. The curriculum incorporates lessons based on the UN's Declaration of the rights of a child, it integrates teaching children the discipline of saving money, and teaches children to love and respect God and others as well as, their country and their culture. The curriculum and its effectiveness are further described in the sections below.

Spiritual Development: Biblical Integration and the Discipline of Prayer

- *Biblical Integration*

The curriculum is designed to be holistic, recognizing the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of students. The most distinctive feature about the curriculum

is the Biblical integration. When asked about Biblical integration, Administrator M explained, "The MMP curriculum...integrate(s) Christian values in their curriculum: How to love God, How to love parent, How to love other children, nature, and the Word of God."

This integration is represented in the four themes spread out over the four quarters of the school years. Each of the themes; *Myself*, *My Family*, *My Community*, and *My Universe* are represented by a Bible verse which is said at least once during each class day throughout the quarter. An example seen at the Hilltop School was under the theme of "Myself" the topic for the week was, "I am special" and the memory verse was "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Psalms 139:14

Biblical integration can be found in reading, as well as in social studies, science and math. In each of these subjects the Biblical narrative can be integrated into the lesson. In reading, the students learn about the Biblical characters, Moses and Miriam, as they learn to read the letter M. In social studies and science they learn that God created the world and everything in it alongside how to take care of each other and the earth. This is just a few examples of a Biblically integrative curriculum.

- *The Discipline of Prayer*

One of the most unique and transformative features found in a MMP ECE partner classroom is prayer. At least three times throughout the class day, the teacher and students pray to God. Every class prayed at the beginning of class, at snack time, and before going home.

Each classroom was different in the way prayer time was led. In some classes, the teachers lead the prayer and the children repeat after them, while in others teachers have memorized prayers for the students to learn and say together. However the prayers are led, at each school it was apparent, through speaking with the parents, the routine of prayer is influencing the students and even the parents. Prayer is something the students are practicing at home and encouraging their families to practice.

Economic Development: The Discipline of Saving

Alongside spiritual development, each of the MMP ECE partners taught the important economic practice of saving money. The teachers all spoke of the practice beginning at the start of the school year. Each student is told to bring in an empty baby powder bottle or tin can, which is decorated and becomes the student's bank. The students are then told to bring in at least one peso (that they get from their parents) every school day and place it in their bank.

At the end of the semester or school year, the child is able to spend the money they have saved. One teacher said her children spend the money on a field trip, another teacher said the children used the money to buy a Christmas gift, and another school said the children use the money to buy costumes for MMP ECE's yearly event for partners called "Show of Talents", where all partner preschools are invited to perform.

According to the teachers, the students are very excited when they see how many pesos they have collected. Teacher D, who teaches at the school which caters to both indigent and middle class students, has a competition amongst students of who can save the most and rewards the winner by matching what the student has saved. She says the students spend the money on new shoes or sometimes treat their family to a nice meal.

Academic Development: Reading through Mother-Tongue Based Learning

In regards to academics, MMP ECE's curriculum is one of the very few that can boast in teaching children to read before entering Grade 1. The government schools do not teach children to read until Grade 1. According to the teachers, those students who attend government schools only learn the alphabet before entering into Grade 1. Students who attend MMP ECE's partner preschools have an advantage over their peers, knowing the alphabet and sounding out letters, if not yet reading.

MMP ECE has had a great success over the years using the method of *Marungkol* or Mother-Tongue Based Learning. The main book used for learning to read is Bip-Bip: Bilis sa Pagbasa ng Batang Isip-Pinoy written and published by MMP ECE. This book has three levels; Nursery, Preschool, and Kindergarten. It has been credited with successfully teaching children how to read simple words in a matter of weeks.

Teacher A expressed her belief in the method of *Marungkol* saying, "The parents are after the reading. Parents are eager to send their children not to the government schools where they will just do worksheets...We are really doing what the government is trying to implement. The children [who have gone here] are already readers so they have an advantage. I have taught a student to read in two to three weeks using the *Marungkol* approach...Simple words but still reading."

Social Development: Respect the Land and Culture

Through another of MMP ECE's books, Civics and Culture Made Easy, the students are taught to be proud of their heritage and to respect their land. This is important as there is such a strong Western influence in the Philippines.

This book educates children on the Filipino Heroes and National Symbols to give them a sense of pride in their country and nationality. It also integrates Christian values telling children of God's love for them as well as reminding children of their duty as citizens. It is a hope of MMP ECE and their partners that these children will grow up and love God and their country enough to work towards making it an even better place.

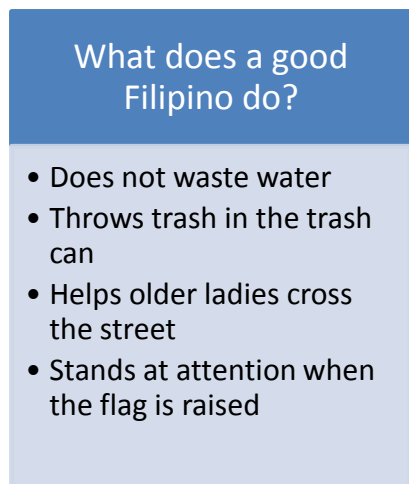


Figure 3: An example from the book, *Civics and Culture Made Easy*

Teacher H expressed her hope for the future saying, “I have a dream. I want this nation to do something for the people. I don’t want international aid. I want one day for us to not look for outside help.” Her hope is not only for the future of these children but for their future role and contribution to their nation.

MMP ECE’s Partners

The philosophy and curriculum are an important part of MMP ECE’s uniqueness. Equally significant are the partners alongside MMP ECE. Combined the curriculum and partners are creating quality and effective preschools. This section will look at who are the partners of MMP ECE and what makes them successful.

Partners are Entrepreneurs

Each of the teachers interviewed has founded or played an initial role in the founding of the school with the help or permission of the partnering church. Before applying to become a partner with MMP ECE, certain requirements must be met. These include; a needs assessment survey of the community and legal identity of the program. Whether the school will be a corporation, a single proprietorship, day care or church-based school must be decided, alongside forming a school Board with at least five members.

The partners decide how their school will run based on the community assessment. They decide the cost of the school, what services the school will offer outside education, and are responsible to hire employees and market the school to the community. The partners take a risk in starting up these schools.

Partners are Evangelists, Counselors, and Social Workers

Starting up a school, the partners are aware they will become business owners, school teachers, and/or school administrators. Alongside these jobs, the teachers and administrators interviewed were also pastors, church leaders, and evangelists. Of the four schools interviewed, three of the schools were rearranged on the weekends to become a place of worship for Sunday morning. Two of the teachers were the wives of the pastor of the partnering church and two of the teachers were single women, who were leaders within the partnering church.

The role of the teacher, according to the four interviewed, is more than teaching. At times the teacher is a social worker, a child advocate, a counselor, a cook, a janitor, a Bible study leader, a tutor, a community organizer, and a networker. The teachers and administrators interviewed were significant in the life of both the children and of the parents interviewed.

Partners are Internally Motivated

All of the teachers mentioned that they are motivated by evangelism and a passion to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the students and parents. Each teacher has established and/or leads

a small group bible study for the parents on a weekly basis. At three of the schools, the teachers mentioned that the parents who availed of a scholarship were required to attend the Bible study. Two of the schools were established for the purpose of ministering to the community and planting a church.

Of the four teachers interviewed, only one teacher said she took a salary. She also had two teacher assistants she paid monthly at \$25-50 USD. Two teachers were able to maintain through donations from supporters outside the community. One of these two teachers also found time to work a second job. The motivation of these teachers is best expressed by Teacher A, "It is only God's grace that makes us stay. As long as I see the benefit of the school I stay. This is my joy seeing children learn at age four and five."

Like many of the partners and parents, Teacher H grew up in urban poverty. She managed to graduate from high school and earn scholarships to attend college, eventually becoming a professional social worker. In 2008, she decided to help her church community by starting a preschool. She did not plan to be the teacher, but soon found herself leaving her salaried career to become an unsalaried preschool teacher.

Teacher H says that she can relate to her students. She wants them to see that they too can succeed as she did. She tells her students, "Dream and work hard towards attaining that dream. Make a promise to yourself that you can do this, a successful doctor or lawyer. I am the example. I graduated and I had no money. There are scholarships, but they do not give to those who do not make an effort."

The Overall Impact of both MMP ECE's Partners and Curriculum

Having looked at the unique structure of MMP ECE, its curriculum and partners, what is the overall impact on the students, families and communities? Three categories will be examined for impact; academic development, social development, and spiritual development.

The Impact on Students

- *Academic Development*

According to the teachers and parents interviewed, they are inspired and proud of the academic achievements of the students. The parents smiled as they spoke of their children's successes. The academic successes mentioned by parents over the span of the four schools were; writing, identifying colors, knowing the alphabet, sounding out letters and reading.

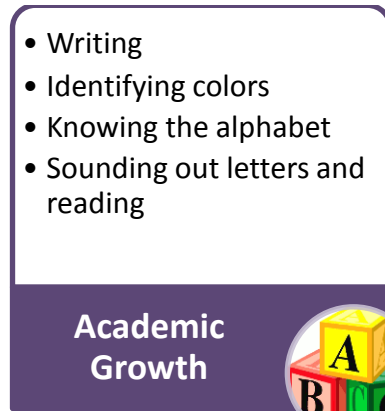


Figure 4: Academic Growth of Students cited by Parents

One teacher said one hundred percent of her students read before entering Grade 1, while another said on average eighty percent of the students read before entering the public school system. Having the exposure to reading before entering Grade 1, already, places the students ahead of their peers who will have only entered Grade 1 knowing the alphabet.

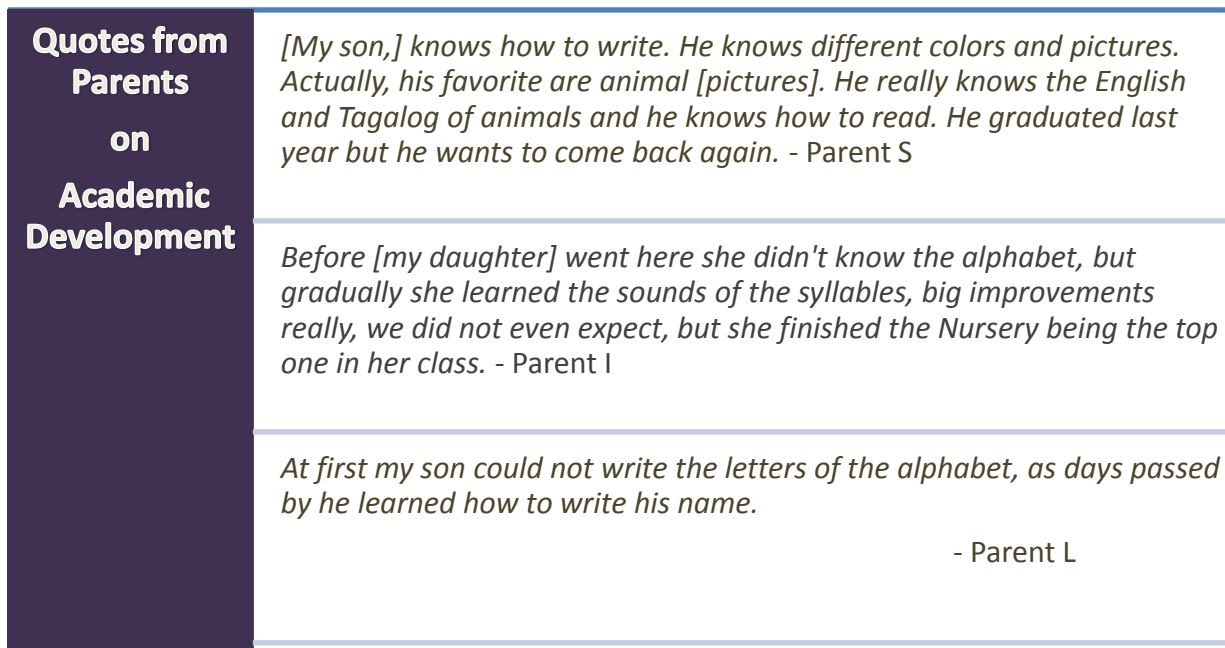


Figure 5: Quotes from Parents on the Students' Academic Development

- *Social & Spiritual Development*

When parents were asked to discuss changes in their child since attending, all of the parents sighted social and spiritual changes as well. The most common changes mentioned by parents were; their child overcame being shy, made friends, began showing respect to adults, and stopped throwing trash on the ground.

In regards to spirituality, praying and reading or listening to the Bible, telling the memorized Bible stories from class to family and peers, and a desire to go to church were mentioned by the parents.

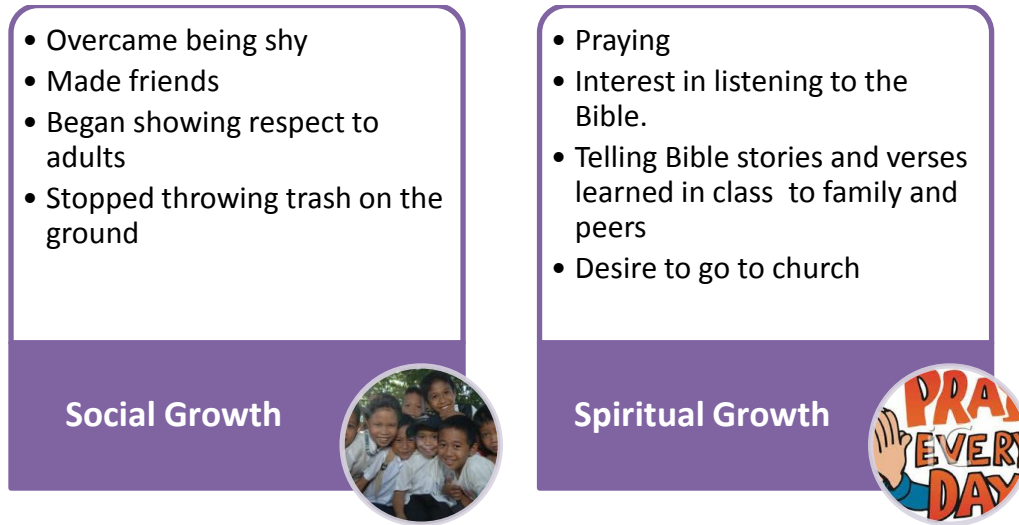


Figure 6: Social and Spiritual Growth of Students cited by Parents

<p>Quotes from Parents</p> <p>on</p> <p>Social Development</p>	<p><i>I observed the change in [my son's] behavior. Before he just played by himself, now he has learned how to play with other children. - Parent L</i></p>
	<p><i>My daughter learned to respect the teacher and her parents. She learned how to read, write, and she became friendly as well. - Parent N</i></p>
	<p><i>My child was shy but now she leads inside the school. - Parent W</i></p>
	<p><i>Even the simple throwing of garbage. They do not throw it just anywhere. The candy wrapper they will stick in their pocket or give to me. - Parent V</i></p>

Figure 7: Quotes from Parents on Students' Social Development

<p>Quotes from Parents on Spiritual Development</p>	<p><i>[My daughter] became more aware of going to church, she prays before eating and before going to bed, she even reminds us to pray for Jesus to watch over us. - Parent J</i></p>
	<p><i>My children are Bible readers and they pray a lot before they go to sleep. They are the ones reminding me. - Parent R</i></p>
	<p><i>My daughter is teaching her playmates not to curse and to respect their parents. She is teaching the memory verses and Bible stories that she learns in class to her playmates. -Parent W</i></p>
	<p><i>The difference [between students who attend elsewhere] is that the children who are studying here before they eat, sleep, or leave the house they pray, and the kids really show respect to adults. - Parent X</i></p>

Figure 8: Quotes from Parents on Students’ Spiritual Development

- *Providing Students and Parents with Hope for the Future*

One of the questions which always made parents smile, was the question: “What does your child want to be when he/she grows up?” At each of MMP’s graduation ceremonies, whether Nursery, Preschool, or Kindergarten each child stands in front of the audience and says, “When I grow up I want to be a...”

The responses from the parents interviewed are seen in Figures 9 and 10 below:



Figure 9: The top 3 responses by parents to "What does your child want to be when they grow up?"



Figure 10: Other responses by parents to "What does your child want to be when they grow up?"

The Family Impact

- *Views on Education*

In researching the impact on the families of the students, the researcher sought to understand the educational background of the parents. In what way were these preschools significant for the parents? What is their view of education? How did they come to value education for their child?

In regards to past education experiences, it was almost evenly split between parents who had to fight for an education and others who had supportive parents who sent them to school. Even still, ninety percent of participating parents had finished high school or had received an equivalency. Three of the parents interviewed had finished college.

One of the mothers spoke of the hurt she felt as her parents had denied her the opportunity to be educated. She said, that because she was a woman her parents thought it was a waste of money to send her to school because she would just get married. One woman spoke of her and her younger sister taking turns working to put each other through high school. Even as those women fought for a high school education, many of the mothers admitted they married or became pregnant soon after graduating from high school and were unable to continue with furthering their education.

Parents, who expressed a lack of support from their own parents growing up, were motivated by their educational experience to provide a better education for their children. Those who were supported by their parents sought to offer the same support to their children and more if possible. All of the parents shared the view of education as a way to better their child's (boy or girl) future.

<p>Quotes from Parents on View of Education</p>	<p><i>We are pursuing for our children to be well rounded individuals and that happens in education. - Parent S</i></p>
	<p><i>[Education is] important because it is for the future of my child. We were so poor growing up that my parents did not send me to college, that is why, I will do my very best to see that my child will finish college for her to have a better future, so she can get a nice job, save money and have a good family of her own. - Parent K</i></p>
	<p><i>I was not able to finish high school. I want my children to have a better future. We don't have anything to give them as an inheritance but this education they can get now. - Parent E</i></p>

Figure 11: Quotes from Parents on their View of Education

- *Parent – Teacher Relationship*

The research also sought to understand the relationship between the teacher and the parent. This was observed as the parents arrived at the school and socialized before and after the discussion. Three parents from two of the schools spoke openly of their admiration and gratitude for the teachers and administrators during the discussion. In some cases, the teachers were not only seen as great teachers to the children but also recognized as spiritual leaders and mentors to the parents

At all of the preschools, the relationship showed to be one of mutual respect. The parents trusted the teachers. Two of the teachers spoke about parents coming to them for family counseling even. One teacher even spoke of her desire to offer at some point opportunities for professional family counseling through the school, as she believes there is a strong need for it.

<p>Quotes from Parents/ Teachers</p> <p>on</p> <p>Parent - Teacher Relationship</p>	<p><i>I have known Teacher D for many years. I know her teaching, her style, her discipline. My eldest child to my youngest child have all studied here. - Parent T</i></p>
	<p><i>We have committed ourselves to go to church and to learn from the Bible, and the pastor [school administrator] is our [spiritual] advisor.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Parent S</p>
	<p><i>We offer regular parenting seminars. I feel a burden for the home life [of the students] so that is why this year I want to focus on family relationships. - Teacher A</i></p>

Figure 12: Quotes from Parents and Teachers on Parent-Teacher Relationship

- *Spiritual Impact*

In regards to spiritual development, around fifty-seven percent of the parents interviewed came from a nominal Catholic background. Since sending their child to the preschool, they have joined the small group Bible study or church service offered at each of the preschools. Parent R admitted that when she first started to attend the church service, it was simply to avail of the scholarship opportunity. Now, she says, “I enjoy being at the church.”

Parent O spoke of how her child had influenced the family by constantly reminding them to pray before each meal. Overall, forty-two percent of parents interview expressed a change had occurred regarding their spirituality and their view of God, since their child started attending the preschool.

<p>Quotes from Parents/ Teachers on Spiritual Impact</p>	<p><i>[My daughter] is the only one who prays...she has influenced the family.</i> - Parent O</p>
	<p><i>There was a student whose father was a cockfighter. The student was taught to pray in the preschool and made the family pray every night before eating dinner. The mother and the student eventually began going to church and after a while the father went with them and since then he has quit cockfighting.</i> - Teacher A</p>
	<p><i>Before i started attending the Bible study offered for parents, I was a nagger. I was a gossip. Instead of gossiping I am now reading the Bible.</i> - Parent T</p>
	<p><i>Before when I didn't have money I cried, but now I pray and read the Bible and not just when I am in trouble.</i> - Parent W</p>
	<p><i>Before, my children attended this school and I joined the Bible study, my children would have to bring me money because I was a gambler. I used to curse and be really angry. I was a gossip. My children were the first in the family to become Christians. I eventually joined the small group for parents and would bring food. I no longer gossip, instead we share Bible verses.</i> - Parent U</p>

Figure 13: Quotes from Parents and Teachers on Spiritual Impact

The Community Impact

Finally, this research sought to understand how the teachers and parents perceived the impact on the community surrounding the preschool. This was done simply by asking each teacher and parent, *“Does the school have an impact on the community, and if so, in what ways?”*

All of the teachers and administrators interviewed believe the church and preschool have a spiritual impact on the community. Teacher A responded, *“The gospel is being heard in the community.”* In regards to academic impact on the community, Parent F said *“Yes, there is an opportunity for children to have good education.”* When partners were asked if students participated in community improvement projects, such as; picking-up trash in the community, all but one school responded, *“No, but maybe we can do that in the future.”*

Quotes from Parents on Community Impact	<i>Last year, the teacher sponsored a livelihood seminar for the parents [of students in the community] on soap making. It was free for the parents to attend. – Parent Y</i>
	<i>The people have gotten to know God, because of the teachers and school administrator being Christians. Every Friday we have a prayer meeting here and during the summer. They [the teacher and her family] go from house to house to share the gospel. – Parent J</i>
	<i>The school is popular. Lots of parents want to send their children here. It is highly recommended. – Parent Q</i>
	<i>The children have an impact outside the school because of their achievements in the activities of the community. For example one school sponsored activity was putting signage by the waterway which said, 'Don't Litter. – Parent X</i>

Figure 14: Quotes from Parents on Community Impact

A Minority Opinion on the Impact of MMP ECE's Partners and Curriculum

The above data shows the majority opinion on MMP ECE's impact, within the research though a minority opinion was found as well. Before each focus group discussion began, parents were asked to fill out a quick questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to provide the parents a chance to express themselves outside the group. In analyzing the data, a minority opinion of the above data was found by a few of the participants:

- Two parents say their child is not praying or going to church with family.
- Six parents say child is not concerned with throwing trash on the ground.
- Two parents are not as involved in their child's education.
- One parent interviewed did not have a child on scholarship.
- Two parents have not seen much of a change in their community since the preschool opened.

V. Summary of Main Findings

This study looked at MMP ECE. What makes them unique in the Philippines' education system, and in what ways are they impacting students, families, and communities? MMP ECE is not an established for-profit school but an education consultant that seeks to provide a quality service to churches in order for them to be transformative agents-of-change in their communities. A summary of the significant findings are discussed in the following sections.

The Relationship between the Partners and the Success of MMP ECE

The partners are a significant part in determining the success of the school. The partners interviewed in this research were all passionate about teaching children and encouraging academic success. The partners were also passionate about evangelism and seeing not only the students but their families realize God's love and purpose for them. The partners are more than teachers. They are pastors, counselors, evangelist, leaders, and entrepreneurs.

The research findings pointed to the teachers and their motivations having a significant role in the success of these preschools. In an article by James Tooley (2009) titled, *Private Education and Development: A Missed Connection? Part 3*, similarly, he writes, "[Teachers are] the secret of success in these private schools for the poor...In a private school, the teachers are accountable to the manager (who can fire them), and, through him or her, to the parents (who can withdraw their children)" (paragraph 30-31).

The teachers and administrators who partner with MMP ECE understand that the parents are their customers. They know if the parents are unhappy with the quality of education received, they will withdraw their students. One of the more remarkable things about MMP ECE partners though, is that many of them do not receive a livable wage, if they receive a wage at all.

MMP ECE's Unique and Holistic Curriculum

MMP ECE is unique in its approach to education. Whereas, many schools including the public schools in the Philippines use the traditional approach, MMP ECE is using the Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), learning through play. Alongside DAP, MMP ECE has created their own biblically based curriculum, allowing for children to learn Bible stories while they are reading, writing, counting, and learning about science.

The curriculum was found to be holistic in that it had an impact on a child's academic development, economic development, social development, and spiritual development. Academically, MMP ECE is one of the few preschools who can boast teaching children to read before Grade 1. MMP ECE is also one of the very few who teach children economic responsibility in regards to saving money. Each class interviewed taught children how to save money. In regards to social development, children were learning to love and respect their nation and culture, as well as themselves and others. Lastly, in regards to spiritual

development, the children are hearing and memorizing scripture and practicing the discipline of prayer.

MMP ECE's Accessibility to the Urban Poor

Affordability

In order to provide quality education, the partners charge a fee. This fee is affordable and low-cost, even more so in comparison to other private schools. The fees ensure students materials and classroom resources for a quality learning experience.

According to the data collected, scholarships are important to the parents and partners of MMP ECE. All, except one parent, interviewed reported their child was on scholarship or paid a socialized tuition. Scholarships keep the schools accessible to more of the population.

The benefit of a cost-based system is the teachers work hard and even overtime to provide a good service to the students and parents. The teachers feel obligated to make sure each child learns, even if it means spending extra time with the student. Both the students and parents benefit from a cost-based system as it is important for teachers to ensure the students learn in order for the program to continue.

Adaptability

MMP ECE maintains accessibility to the urban poor through the adaptability of their model. Even with the use of the Development Appropriate Practice and centers for learning, the schools can be modified to meet the needs of students and parents and depending on available resources in the community. The schools visited were different in regards to size of classroom, monthly cost, number of teachers, whether they offered a feeding program, the hours they held class, and how often they met with parents.

Even with these differences each school was similarly impacting students and parents. They were each producing students who could read, write, and identify colors and numbers and students who prayed inside and outside of school. The parents as well at each school were able to speak of significant spiritual impacts since their child began attending.

The Academic and Social Impact on Students and Parents

According to parents and teachers interviewed, students are entering into top level classes at the public schools, which as one parent said, "is where the learning takes places." According to this same parent, "The teachers don't bother to teach in the bottom level classes." Student of MMP ECE partner preschools are learning to write, identify colors, and sound out words or even read before entering Grade 1. The students are encouraged in their ability to succeed academically and reach their dreams.

Apart from academics, these preschools are helping children to learn how to interact with others. Many of the parents discussed the inability of their child to make friends before attending the school, but now according to the parents, their child has many friends and has improved on their social skills. This will be beneficial for the child as he or she enters into public school where they will be placed in class sizes upwards to 100 students.

The parents as well are influenced by the schools. Their views on education are positively impacted and they are proud of their student's academic achievements. The parents are expected to be involved in their child's progress, helping with homework and reading to their children.

The parents on scholarship are required to attend a weekly group meeting or Bible study led by the teachers. At two of the schools visited during the research, two moms were found volunteering in the classroom. MMP ECE is providing opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning as well as providing opportunities for parents to grow and learn.

Martinez, Naudeau, Pereira (2012), authors of *The Promise of Preschool in Africa: A Randomized Impact Evaluation of Early Childhood Development in Rural Mozambique*, researched the influence of low-cost private schools in Mozambique. At one point the study discusses the influence of low-cost private schools on parents or caregivers of preschool students. Impact was found on both parent views on education and parent involvement. Similar to MMP ECE findings, the programs in Mozambique, "require a time commitment for participation in monthly meetings, and some parents also volunteer to help with preschool management and maintenance activities" (p. 28). But even more than an impact on educational views and parent involvement, the MMP ECE study also found a spiritual impact.

The Spiritual Impact on Students and Parents

MMP ECE partners are ministering to students and parents outside of the church context. The parents are learning about the importance of prayer and Christian values from their children, as well as the teachers. Through required parent orientation and seminars held at the preschools, parents are learning about Christian values in parenting.

Children are not only reading before Grade 1 placing them ahead of their peers, but they are also being disciplined to know God's love for them and to love others. They are being taught to pray, they are being told stories from the Bible, they are learning how to live out Christian values, and these ideas do not just stay in their minds and hearts. The children are spreading these ideas to their families and peer.

The impact the MMP ECE partners are having on children and their parents is inspiring. As the hearts of children and parents are transformed, it impacts the community. As mothers stop meeting together to gossip and start meeting together to discuss the Bible and pray, the kingdom of God is glimpsed and the seed of transformation has been planted in the community.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study found that low-cost private schools are significantly impacting the urban poor in Metro-Manila. Previous research done in other countries found quality education and academic and social impacts on both students and their parents or caregivers. This study researched the spiritual impact, and found that children and parents are experiencing significant spiritual growth. Children who attend these schools were cited as playing a significant role for the spiritual change in their parents.

The Future of MMP ECE and Transformative Quality Education in the Philippines

Entrepreneurial Curriculum

MMP ECE is consistently improving and updating its curriculum and network to meet the needs of teachers, students and parents within the community. One example is starting this October 2013 MMP will start offering teacher training on “Raising Kids to be Entrepreneurs.” Teacher D’s school has incorporated entrepreneurship in the curriculum for many years with exciting results from students.

One parent from OBCC shared how her children had opened a sari-sari store over the summer that they ran from their house. The leaders of MMP ECE believe that “entrepreneurship training can help children develop some important real-world skills.” It’s exciting to think what a curriculum like this taught amongst urban poor communities will bring.

In regards to this curriculum, it would be valuable to find a way to intentionally include parents in the learning process. Many of the parents in urban poor communities are entrepreneurs themselves. They own sari-sari stores and other informal businesses in the community. Those parents who are not yet entrepreneurs may be able to see the value in starting a business. Once the training is complete, it may be valuable for the partner administrators or teachers to hold a seminar for parents or adults in the community on entrepreneurship.

Impacting the Community

While the parents at each school were able to site a way the school is impacting the community, only one out of the four schools participated in a community outreach or activity program. While the partner administrators have the ultimate say, How can MMP ECE encourage the schools to be more active in the community especially in regards to keeping the surrounding area clean, recycling or helping a neighbor?

MMP ECE could initiate a day in the school year set aside for community outreach. The children could partner with parents and older children from the partnering local church and plan a day of clean up or assisting a few neighbors with their needs. It would be an additional way for the school to share God’s love with the community.

Responding to the availability of Free Government Preschools

Due to the government requiring Kindergarten starting 2013, an availability of free government Kindergartens will continue to be on the rise in the Philippines. This will potentially affect MMP ECE, as students will be expected to attend the Kindergarten at the public school or a school recognized by Dep Ed. This expectation would exclude many of the MMP ECE partner schools as they do not have the space size required for a classroom in order to be recognized by the Dep Ed

MMP ECE offers more than Kindergarten and is still able to offer Nursery and Pre-Kindergarten classes. The same curriculum is taught at these levels at an age appropriate level. As long as funding continues to be available for scholarships and churches continue to see a need to offer low-cost quality education to their community, MMP ECE will continue to bring quality education to urban poor communities.

Relationship of MMP ECE and MMP Church Planting

Through this research, it was found that the both MMP Church Planting branch and MMP Early Childhood Education have a lot to offer each other. Both are in the same business of advocating for the urban poor and bringing hope to urban poor communities. Each can share, learn from, grow from, and encourage each other with their experiences and ideas. Hopefully, in the future, both MMP departments will work to strengthen the relationship between ECE and Church Planting.

Future Research Possibilities

This study is hopefully, one that opens a door for conversation on education for the urban poor. The hope is that the research on these schools and church plants continue. There is still so much more to be discovered. MMP is a movement; it is continuously growing and changing from one day to the next. As of right now, further research questions include;

“In light of the new kindergarten mandate, how will MMP respond or change as more government (free) kindergartens are offered in indigent communities? What steps can MMP ECE take to have more of their kindergartens approved by the Dep Ed?”

“How can MMP ECE better learn from and work together with MMP church planting teams to strengthen pastors and teachers who use preschools as an entry point into the community?”

“How can MMP Church Planting learn from and work together with MMP ECE to strengthen their pastors and teachers who are starting preschools?”

VII. A Final Note from the Researcher

Thirty years ago a movement was birthed. It started with a handful of people who dreamt of making a difference in the lives of children living in urban poverty. Eventually, they planted a preschool. It failed. But by the grace of God they didn't give up. They went through periods of trial and error and re-evaluation, but they never lost their vision to provide quality education for all children.

At one point this movement was joined by a group of church-planters who desired to plant a church in every slum. Over the years, the movement continued to grow. The number of preschools impacting urban poor communities grew to over one hundred. They became recognized as quality education providers by their peers.

The church-planting team grew too, as leaders from urban poor communities were mobilized to plant churches in other communities. Through the churches, leaders were being empowered to act as change-agents in their communities. They helped to gain land rights and provide opportunities for income.

Thirty years later this movement has planted over four hundred schools and over forty churches throughout Metro-Manila's urban poor communities. Thousands of lives have been impacted. Thousands of seeds of transformation have been planted and taken root in hundreds of communities. This is Mission Ministries Philippines (MMP).

In history, movements are the source of change in the world. Movements have freed slaves, defeated unjust laws and structures, and brought hope to dark places. So often it is easy to depend on the UN or NGOs or governments to change the world. Even at times the global church responds to issues by simply copying the government response. But let people rise up who have courage to imagine a different response, a response that needs God to lead the way and not simply bless the effort, and let others be wise enough to join.

The movement of MMP is still growing and even now new churches and preschools are starting up bringing hope to people who are more often cast aside than advocated for. As we follow God into the slums, plant holistic faith communities, and create quality education opportunities, will you join with us in this movement to raise up leaders and transform lives?

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VOCABULARY

Socialized fee- a fee usually based on percentage of a person's income and assigned after an assessment is done of their home or community and viewing their tax return.

Informal settlement- A community of homes illegally living on land owned by someone else and not formally recognized by the government, at risk for demolition.

Pinoy- A term used to describe a native Filipino

PHP (Philippine Peso) - at the time of data collection and write up ~41 Philippine Pesos to 1 US Dollar (USD)

Struggling Poor – poorest of the poor. No income.

Entrepreneurial Poor – own an informal business or find ways to gain a consistent income.

Marungkol – the Pilipino word used to refer to the method of teaching children how to read using their native tongue. Within the Philippines there are over twenty different tribal languages with Tagalog or Pilipino being recognized as the national language, and English recognized as the language of instruction for school subjects such as Math and Science.

APPENDIX A: INFORMANTS

Research Guide

Ms. Chonabelle Domingo - Executive Director of MMP Early Childhood Education - Quezon City, PH

Research Assistants

Doris Risare – MMP Church Planting Missionary – Quezon City, PH

Chery Borbe – Community Developer at Samaritana Transformation Ministries – Quezon City, PH

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW & FOCUS GROUP GUIDES

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Do you live in this community? How many years have you been in this community?
2. Why did you start a school?
3. How did you decide to partner with MMP?
4. Were you a teacher previously?
5. How many students attend this school?
6. Could you describe a typical day in class? Starting when the students arrive until they go home.
7. Could you tell me more about the classroom centers?
Why are they important? What are you teaching through them?
8. Could you demonstrate how you teach reading?
9. How are you teaching children to pray?
10. How do you teach children about the Bible? About Jesus? How do you apply it to your life?
11. How do you teach Christian values?
12. Could you share a story about this schools impact on a family? ...On a community?
13. Could you describe what makes a successful school?

Parent Focus Group Discussion Questions

1. Where are you from/grow up?
2. How long have you been in the community?
3. How many children do you have? How many attend this preschool?
4. How did you hear about this preschool?
5. How long has your child attended this preschool?
6. Could you share about your education experience growing up?
7. What are your thoughts on your child's education?
8. What is significant about the experience at this preschool that you are willing to pay for your child to attend, when free preschools exist in the community as well?
9. Would you explain your decision to send your child to a Christian school?
10. Would you share a story of a change you have seen in your child since attending this school?
11. In what ways has this school impacted your family?
12. In what ways has this school impacted the community?
13. Would you share what your religious beliefs are?
14. In what way, has the leadership at this school impacted your child's view of God? Your view of God?
15. What does your child dream to be when he/she grows up?

QUICK SURVEY FOR PARENTS (filled out before or after Focus Group Discussion)

Please circle the number that best reflects your response to the statements below.

Bilagan ang numero ng lyong sagot sa pangungusap na nasa ibaba.

1 = Disagree 2 = Somewhat Agree 3 = I Don't Know 4 = Mostly Agree 5 = Agree

1.= Hindi Sumasang-ayon 2.= Medyo Sumasang-Ayon 3. = Hindi Ko Alam

4. =Sang-Ayon na Sang-Ayon 5.= Sumasang-Ayon

1. Ang aking anak ay may pangarap na kung ano ang ang kanyang gustong maging sa kanyang paglaki. *My child has a dream of who he/she wants to be when he/she grows up.*

1 2 3 4 5

2. Natutong magdasal ang aking anak magmula nang mag-aral sa paaralang ito. *Since attending this school my child prays to God.*

1 2 3 4 5

3. Nagbabasa kami ng aking anak ng kanyang mga aklat sa bahay. *I spend time reading with my child outside of school.*

1 2 3 4 5

4. Ang aking anak ay nagtatapon ng basura sa kung saan-saan. *My child throws trash on the ground.*

1 2 3 4 5

5. Hindi lumiliban sa klase ang aking anak, maliban na lang kapag siya ay may karamdaman. *Outside of being sick, my child always attends class.*

1 2 3 4 5

6. May malasakit ang guro sa pagtatagumpay ng aking anak.
The teacher cares if my child succeeds

1 2 3 4 5

7. Ang aking anak ay nasa scholarship.
My child is on scholarship.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Dumadalo ako sa simbahan kasama ang aking anak.
I attend church with my child.

1 2 3 4 5

9. Ang aking anak ay marunong magrecycle.
My child recycles.

1 2 3 4 5

10. Ang mga guro ay nagtuturo sa aking anak tungkol sa Bibliya
The teacher teaches my child about the Bible.

1 2 3 4 5

11. Ang aking anak ay maaaring magtagumpay sa pagkamit ng kanyang pangarap.
My child can succeed at achieving his/her dreams.

1 2 3 4 5

12. Dumadalo ako sa parent at teacher conference
I attend parent/teacher conferences.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Ang aking anak nakakaalam kung sino si Hesus Kristo.

My child knows who Jesus Christ is.

1 2 3 4 5

14. Mahalaga na may malasakit ang magulang sa pag-aaral ng kanilang mga anak.

It is important for the parent to care about their child's education.

1 2 3 4 5

15. Ang aking anak ay may pangarap para sa kanyang kinabukasan.

My child has a dream for the future.

1 2 3 4 5

16. Ang aking anak ay naniniwala na mahal siya ng Diyos.

My child believes God loves them.

1 2 3 4 5

17. Ako madalas makipag-usap sa guro tungkol sa pag-aaral at progreso ng aking anak

I often talk with the teacher about my child's learning progress

1 2 3 4 5

18. Ang aking anak ay nagtatapon ng basura sa tamang tapunan

My child picks up trash and throws it away in the garbage

1 2 3 4 5

19. Ang komunidad ay nag improved magmula nang itayo ang paaralan

The community has improved since the establishment of the school.

1 2 3 4 5

20. Tinutulungan ko ang aking anak sa kanyang mga takdang aralin.
I help my child with their schoolwork.

1 2 3 4 5

21. Ang aking anak ay masaya sa kanyang pag-aaral.
My child wants to go to school.

1 2 3 4 5

22. Ang aking anak ay mabait makitungo sa kapwa.
My child treats other people with kindness.

1 2 3 4 5

23. Ang aking anak ay nangunguna sa pamilya sa pagdarasal bagi kumain
My child asks the family to pray before each meal

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX C: PHOTOS



Photo 1: FGD with parents at one of the schools

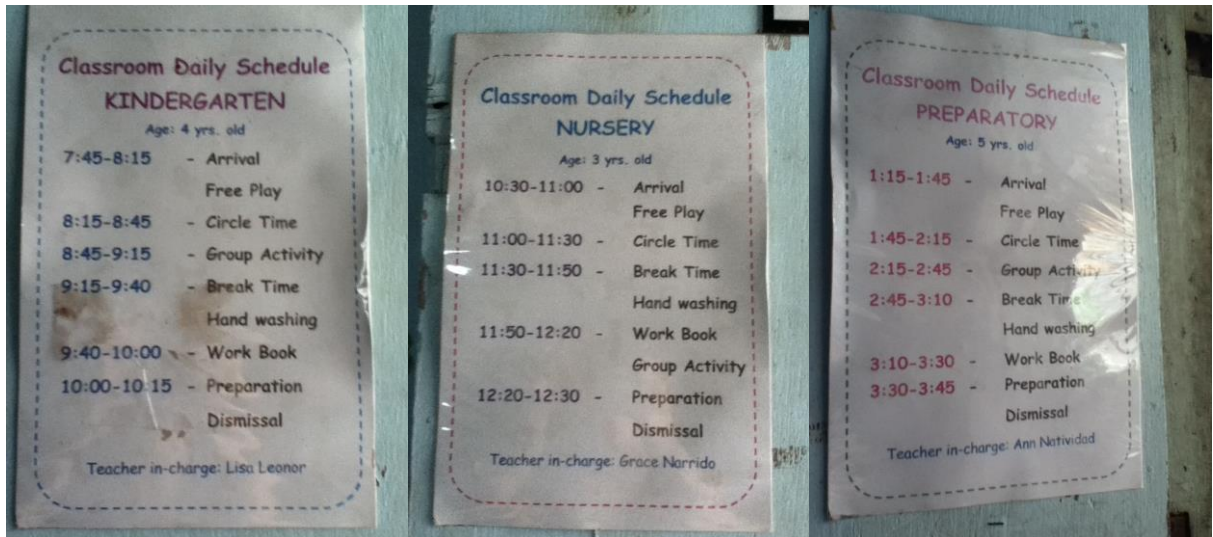


Photo 2: An example of a daily class schedule



Photo 3: DAP Centers set up in a classroom



Photo 4: After interviewing and holding a discussion at one of the schools



Photo 5: Holding a FGD in one of the classrooms at a partnering school