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# Challenges and Opportunities in Public After-School Care: A Case Study of the Village Hive Initiative in Battambang

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### A B S T R A C T

This study examines the impact of the Village Hive's After-School Care Program on students' learning experiences, well-being, and overall school environment in Battambang, Cambodia. The Village Hive project transitioned its privately-run youth center into a public primary school-based after-school program, integrating community resources to ensure sustainability. While the initiative aims to enhance academic support, social development, and accessibility, limited research exists on students' perspectives regarding these services. Using a mixed-methods approach, qualitative data were gathered through student forums, and quantitative data were collected via a scaling question to assess students' perceptions of the program. The study focused on students from two of the four schools where the Village Hive's after-school care program was embedded, with a total of 75 participants. Findings indicate that while students benefit from improved academic support, teacher engagement, and extracurricular activities, they also face challenges such as classroom distractions, interpersonal conflicts, and environmental concerns. The integration of the After-School Care Program within public schools has fostered a sense of community ownership and accessibility, though further improvements in school infrastructure and behavioral guidance are necessary. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on sustainable education models and informs policy recommendations for enhancing school environments and after-school programs in Cambodia.

Keywords: After-School Care Program, Public Education, School Environment, Student Well-Being, Educational Challenges, Student Engagement, Extracurricular Activities, Holistic Child Development, Sustainable Development

## 1. Introduction

The Village Hive project successfully transitioned its youth center into an after-school care program at a public primary school in Ou Char Commune, Battambang, as part of its strategy for sustainable, community-led development. Initially launched in 2016, the holistic services provided by the Village Hive model—education, nutrition, and healthcare for vulnerable children—operated out of privately-run facilities. However, with the goal of embedding these services into public systems, CCT collaborated with the local council to transfer the youth center to the public school in Phum Ang Village. The community contributed space, facilities, and staff, enabling the new after-school care program to operate within the school while also reducing operational costs by eliminating the need for private rental spaces. This transition marked the successful integration of the after-school care program into the public school system (CCT, 2021).

The Public After-School Care Program provides a wide range of benefits to children, youth, families, and communities. Socially, it enhances children's skills, including improved behavior, concentration, and self-worth. Academically, the program supports student performance through better attendance, remedial tutoring, homework assistance, extracurricular activities, and life skills development. It also helps working families by offering a safe environment for children while parents or guardians are at work. Health-wise, the program promotes children's well-being by providing nutritious meals, clean water, and access to clothes washing and sanitation facilities. Additionally, while vulnerable families can access the service free of charge, it is available to all families for a small fee, generating income to further support the school (CCT, 2024).

### 1.1 Research Problem

Understanding students' experiences within the school environment and after-school care programs is essential for improving educational outcomes and overall well-being. While the Public After-School Care Program is designed to provide academic support, social development, and health benefits, there is limited research on how students perceive and experience these services. Factors such as academic assistance, behavioral guidance, and the accessibility of resources may influence students' engagement and development, yet their perspectives remain underexplored.

Additionally, the school environment presents both opportunities and challenges for students. Issues such as classroom distractions, interpersonal conflicts, and environmental concerns may hinder learning, while positive aspects like teacher dedication, extracurricular activities, and a well-maintained

physical environment contribute to student motivation. However, there is a need to examine how these elements collectively shape students' school experiences and identify areas for improvement.

Students themselves hold valuable insights into the effectiveness of school and after-school programs, particularly regarding classroom engagement, school cleanliness, discipline, and access to essential resources. Their perspectives can help inform policies and interventions that align with their needs. However, without a structured understanding of their experiences, efforts to enhance learning environments and after-school programs may be insufficient or misaligned with student priorities.

Given these gaps, this study seeks to explore students' lived experiences within the school setting and after-school care programs. By identifying challenges, highlighting positive aspects, and gathering student perspectives on necessary improvements, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence their educational experiences. This research will contribute to the development of a more inclusive, supportive, and effective learning environment that meets the diverse needs of students.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

Based on the research problem, the study is conceptualized with five key objectives:

- To identify challenges in the school environment that affect students' learning and well-being, including environmental concerns, interpersonal conflicts, and classroom distractions.

- To examine positive aspects of the school experience, such as student engagement, classroom cleanliness, teacher dedication, and the role of the physical environment and extracurricular activities.

- To gather students' perspectives on necessary school improvements, including waste disposal practices, playground expansion, classroom discipline, and healthier food options.

- To evaluate the benefits and challenges of the after-school care program, particularly its role in academic support, financial accessibility, behavioral concerns, and overall student development.

- To develop a theoretical framework that integrates school environment improvements, structured after-school programs, and family support mechanisms to enhance holistic child development.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Barriers to Education and Strategies for Improvement in Cambodia

Around 30% of the population in Cambodia lives below the poverty line, and this significantly affects children. Over 10% of children lack access to education, and approximately 44.8% (1.52 million) of children aged 5-14 are economically active (Brocker, 2021). While Cambodia has made significant strides in education, such as preschool enrollment doubling since 2007 and primary school enrollment rising to over 97% by 2017/18, many children, particularly in impoverished rural and urban areas, continue to fall behind. Despite these advancements, a substantial number of children are not meeting age-appropriate learning standards. Nearly 25% of Grade 3 students cannot write a word in a dictation test, and only 27% of children aged 3 to 5 are on track in literacy and numeracy. Furthermore, over half of adolescents drop out of school by age 17 (UNICEF Cambodia, 2018a).

In Cambodia, children face significant barriers to education, particularly in rural areas where families struggle to afford schooling. Poor-quality teaching, a lack of qualified teachers, and inadequate learning environments further hinder educational progress. Many schools also lack essential infrastructure, such as clean water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities, which affects students' well-being. Violence, including corporal punishment in some schools, creates an unsafe learning environment, while children with disabilities often face discrimination, limiting their educational opportunities (UNICEF Cambodia, 2018a).

Children who do not receive an education are more likely to remain trapped in the intergenerational cycle of poverty, as education is a key means of breaking this cycle (CCT, 2020). Inadequate learning environments and poor nutrition contribute to developmental delays, leaving many children behind in terms of cognitive and social growth (UNICEF Cambodia, 2018a). Addressing these barriers is crucial to unlocking children's potential and preventing cycles of disadvantage. To improve children's well-being and education, it is essential to ensure access to basic social services such as education, health, and nutrition (UNICEF Cambodia, 2018b). Accelerated teaching methods for children who have been out of school (PSE, 2025), enhancing school amenities (LWB, 2023), and providing teacher training can help support students' learning and growth (Helpcode, 2025).

### 2.2 Strengthening Universal Public Services through the Village Hive

The Village Hive focuses on enhancing universal public services to improve community living standards and protect against crises and vulnerabilities, with a particular emphasis on public education. Public education is seen as a vital investment with significant social benefits, as it provides children with the tools to secure a stable income, contribute to society, and reduce reliance on public health and social support systems. The Village Hive strengthens

public primary schools, high schools, and teacher training colleges through four key activities: improving infrastructure, enhancing classroom environments, upgrading curricula, and resourcing and supporting teachers (CCT, 2024).

The Village Hive supports schools in the community by helping them assess and improve school infrastructure, including classrooms, toilets, playgrounds, and accessibility for children with special needs. The program also focuses on creating safe, well-equipped, and inviting classroom environments. Additionally, the curriculum and syllabus are enhanced by incorporating ICT literacy, extracurricular programs, remedial tutoring, and after-school care. Teachers and faculty receive ongoing support, including additional resources and training in pedagogy, child protection, and ICT literacy (CCT, 2024).

The Village Hive also provides a public after-school care and preschool program that offers numerous benefits, including improved social skills, academic performance, and support for working families. The program provides children with nutritious meals, clean water, and access to sanitation facilities, while generating income through a small fee for non-vulnerable families. This service is available to all families in the village, creating a sustainable model to support both educational and community health needs (CCT, 2024).

### 2.3 Alignment of the Village Hive with the Education Strategic Plan 2024-2028 Policy Priorities

The ESP (Education Strategic Plan) 2024-2028 Policy Priority focuses on ensuring that all Cambodians have access to quality, equitable, and inclusive education enriched with the necessary knowledge, skills, discipline, ethics, good behavior, health, fitness, and lifelong learning. Priority Program 1 focuses on reforming schools to ensure inclusive and equitable access to quality education, with the goal that all primary school-aged children complete primary school and achieve strong competency in core subjects and life skills. Priority Program 4 aims to promote physical activities, physical education, and sports, which are essential for maintaining fitness and good health. Priority Program 5 stresses the significance of performance-based management, notably through the Pre-Service Teacher Education (PRE-SET) program. This initiative seeks to ensure that new teachers, at all levels, possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Furthermore, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Teacher Career Pathways (TCP) are designed to support teachers and school management in acquiring new skills. Lastly, Capacity Development and Support for Decentralization (D&D) are aimed at ensuring education officers across different levels are equipped to perform their duties with high productivity and efficiency (MoEYS Cambodia, 2024).

The Village Hive aligns closely with the ESP 2024-2028 Policy Priority in several key areas. Both initiatives emphasize the importance of strengthening public education to ensure that all children, regardless of background, can achieve academic success. The Village Hive's activities, such as improving school infrastructure, enhancing classroom environments, and upgrading curricula, directly support the goal of Priority Program 1, which focuses on ensuring equitable access to quality education. These efforts mirror the aim of providing inclusive and equitable education for all students, particularly those in underserved communities.

Another area of alignment is the emphasis on physical activities and health. Priority Program 4 stresses the importance of promoting physical education and sports to maintain fitness and overall well-being. Similarly, the Village Hive contributes to community health through its after-school care program, which provides nutritious meals, clean water, and access to sanitation facilities. This program not only supports children's health but also complements the ESP's goal of promoting well-being alongside educational achievement.

Both the ESP and Village Hive recognize the significance of supporting teachers for improved educational outcomes. Priority Program 5 focuses on performance-based management, including initiatives such as the Pre-Service Teacher Education (PRE-SET) program and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), which aim to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills needed for effective teaching. This aligns with the Village Hive's ongoing support for teachers through resources and training in areas such as pedagogy, child protection, and ICT literacy. These efforts ensure that educators are better prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Finally, both the ESP and Village Hive emphasize the importance of creating sustainable, community-focused support systems. The Village Hive integrates sustainability by generating income for its programs through small fees for non-vulnerable families in the after-school care program. This initiative, along with other community-driven efforts, reflects the ESP's emphasis on capacity development and decentralization, ensuring that local education officers and communities can effectively contribute to the betterment of educational standards and living conditions over time.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences within their school environment, after-school programs, and family circumstances. The descriptive nature of the study aimed to systematically document students' perceptions of the challenges and benefits they encountered in these settings. Qualitative data were gathered through student forums, where students shared their insights on school conditions, academic support, and socio-economic hardships. Additionally, quantitative data were collected within the student forums using a scaling question, in which students rated the after-school care program at different points in time. This rating provided a structured measure of how they perceived the program's effectiveness and its impact on their education, well-being, and future opportunities.

By integrating qualitative narratives with quantitative measures, the study provided a holistic and data-driven analysis of students' lived experiences. The qualitative component focused on thematic analysis of student discussions, identifying key concerns such as environmental challenges, behavioral issues,

and financial struggles. Meanwhile, the quantitative aspect, including the after-school care program rating, allowed for a numerical assessment of student perceptions over time. This combination of methods ensured that the study not only captured students' personal reflections but also provided measurable insights into their evolving experiences.

### 3.2 Population and Sample

This study targeted students from two of the four primary schools where the Village Hive's After-School Care Program had been implemented and subsequently handed over. The first school had an enrollment of 149 students (59 girls), while the second had 591 students (253 girls). These schools were selected due to their direct experience with the program, making their students the most relevant participants for assessing its impact. The study explored students' experiences, perspectives, and perceived benefits of the program within these educational settings.

A purposive sampling technique was employed, allowing students to self-select for participation in student forums. Teachers informed students about the study, and those interested voluntarily joined. This approach ensured that participants were genuinely interested and willing to share their experiences. Four student forums were conducted: SFDA1 and SFDA2 for students from the first school, representing grades 1–3 and 4–6, respectively; and SFDW1 and SFDW2 for students from the second school, divided by the same grade levels. This structure facilitated discussions aligned with students' educational stages.

A total of 75 students (31 girls) participated, with 39 students (20 girls) from the first school and 36 students (11 girls) from the second. Among them, 33 of the 34 students from the first school who had participated in the After-School Care Program joined the discussions, while 21 of the 31 students from the second school's program took part. The sample size was considered appropriate, as it included students across different grade levels and participation statuses, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the program's impact on various student groups.

### 3.3 Data Collection Method

The data collection for this study was conducted through face-to-face discussions with four focus groups. The researchers utilized both participatory and non-participatory observation methods to gather data. The participatory observer directly interacted with the participants, conducting semi-structured interviews, while the non-participatory observer focused on noting the responses provided by the participants. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions, with one observer actively engaging in the discussion and the other remaining detached to record observations. This method ensured a comprehensive collection of both qualitative and quantitative data through the interactions.

The tools used in data collection included the Signs of Safety Framework and the Appreciative Inquiry approach. The Signs of Safety Framework, developed by Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards, was employed to guide the discussions. This framework consists of three main questions: "What are we worried about?", "What is working well?", and "What needs to happen?" (What Work Center for Children's Social Care, 2018). Each of these questions was expanded upon using the EARS process of Appreciative Inquiry, which includes Eliciting questions, Amplifying questions, Reflective questions, and Starting-over questions (Cafcass, 2022). These tools provided a structured approach to exploring the participants' experiences and allowed the researchers to engage in meaningful conversations that delved into the nuances of the After-School Care Program.

To further enhance the quality of the data, a scaling question, a jugdement on scale, (Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership, 2024) was also adopted at the beginning and the end of the discussions to gauge participants' reflections on the program. The scaling question asked participants to rate the after-school care on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 indicating no support or benefits from the program and 10 indicating comprehensive support and positive outcomes for the children. This question provided valuable quantitative data that complemented the qualitative insights gathered through the discussions. Regarding the reliability and validity of the instruments, both the Signs of Safety Framework and the Appreciative Inquiry process have been widely used in similar studies, ensuring their credibility and appropriateness for this research.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were employed to interpret the data and draw conclusions. For the quantitative data, a t-Test for two sample means assuming unequal variances was used to hypothesize differences in students' perceptions regarding the situation before and after the integration of the After-School Care Program. This inferential statistical test allowed for the comparison of the means from the scaling question responses and provided insights into whether the perceptions of students from both schools were significantly different before and after the program's integration. The t-Test helped to identify the impact of the program and the extent of change in students' perceptions of the after-school care services.

For the qualitative data, grounded theory was used as the primary analytical approach (Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K., 2018). Grounded theory is a systematic methodology for generating theories based on the data collected from participants. The analysis followed a multi-step process beginning with open coding, where the researchers identified individual pieces of meaningful data within the responses. These open codes were then grouped into axial codes, which clustered similar codes by their underlying meanings, helping to organize the data. The final step involved selective coding, where axial codes were related to one another and linkages were drawn to understand the broader patterns or themes within the responses (Ngath, 2025).

The final phase of the qualitative analysis was theory generation, where the researchers developed a theoretical framework based on the clustered data and the identified patterns. This theory was then verified by comparison with existing theories and literature to ensure its relevance and validity. This

dual approach—quantitative analysis through the t-Test and qualitative analysis using grounded theory—enabled a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions and experiences with the After-School Care Program, providing both statistical evidence and rich, contextual insights into the program's impact (Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K., 2018).

## 4. Presentation of the Results

### 4.1 Challenges and Improvements in the School Environment: Insights from Student Forums

#### 4.1.1 School-Related Challenges and Concerns

**Environmental Concerns:** Several environmental issues were raised by students in the forums, particularly related to the school environment. Stray dogs were identified as a significant disruption, especially during meal times, causing disturbances among students (SFDA1). Additionally, students expressed concerns over poor hygiene and the accumulation of garbage, citing the unhygienic environment as a source of discomfort (SFDA1, SFDW1, SFDW2). The need for better waste disposal practices was emphasized, with many students expressing a desire for the school to enforce proper waste management and discourage littering (SFDA1, SFDW1). These environmental issues, coupled with cleanliness concerns, highlighted a broader need for improvements in the school's upkeep to ensure a healthier learning environment for all.

**Interpersonal Conflicts:** Interpersonal conflicts in the school environment were also highlighted. Students reported incidents of quarreling, mockery, and bullying among peers (SFDA1, SFDW1), and some expressed concerns over the use of foul language and inappropriate behavior (SFDA2, SFDW1, SFDW2). Teacher-student tensions, including physical discipline, were noted as a concern (SFDA2, SFDW2), with some students requesting alternative, non-physical forms of punishment, such as writing exercises (SFDA2). Physical fights among students were considered disruptive and undesirable (SFDA2). These interpersonal issues, coupled with environmental challenges like unhygienic conditions and distractions (SFDW1), underscored the need for interventions to foster a more supportive and respectful environment, both in terms of peer behavior and teacher-student relationships.

**Classroom Distractions:** Distractions in the classroom were identified as a significant challenge to maintaining focus. Students in SFDA1 shared that disruptions, such as slow writing, chatting, and teachers resorting to scolding, hindered learning. These concerns were echoed in SFDW1, where students noted distractions like classmates eating snacks during study time. Both groups emphasized the need to enhance focus and reduce distractions to improve academic progress, with some suggesting stricter measures to minimize disruptions and encourage better concentration during lessons.

#### 4.1.2 Positive Aspects of the School

**Student Engagement and Responsibility:** Despite challenges, positive engagement in school activities was observed. Students in SFDA1 and SFDA2 expressed enjoyment in studying and actively participated in classroom discussions, highlighting their motivation to engage in educational activities. In addition to academic enthusiasm, students demonstrated a strong sense of responsibility toward the school environment, helping to clean classrooms and maintain cleanliness around the school (SFDA1, SFDA2). Students also expressed admiration for their teachers, with participants in SFDA2 specifically mentioning their eagerness to learn and respect for the teacher-student relationship.

**School Environment:** The school environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' experiences. Both SFDA1 and SFDW1 students highlighted positive aspects, including a large playground, trees, and a clean classroom. Students in SFDA1 expressed enjoyment in studying and contributing to classroom cleanliness. Additionally, the presence of trees created a pleasant atmosphere for learning and recreation.

**Extracurricular and Recreational Activities:** The availability of extracurricular activities, especially sports, was another positive aspect. Students in SFDA1 and SFDA2 expressed a strong preference for sports activities, highlighting their enjoyment of physical playtime and appreciation for the large playground at the school (SFDA1). Students in SFDA2 valued the sports programs, recognizing their positive role in daily routines.

#### 4.1.3 Desired Improvements in the School

**Environmental and Infrastructure Improvements:** Students across different groups suggested several improvements to address environmental and infrastructure concerns. The removal of stray dogs from the school was a primary concern, particularly for students in SFDA1 and SFDA2, who noted the distractions caused by these animals, especially during mealtimes (SFDA1). Additionally, SFDA1 students called for better waste disposal practices to address issues with garbage accumulation and poor hygiene (SFDA1, SFDW1). Students in SFDA2 emphasized the need for playground expansion, including additional facilities like swings, to enhance recreational opportunities (SFDA2). They also suggested infrastructure improvements, such as building a new fence and providing necessary cleaning supplies to maintain a cleaner and safer environment (SFDA2). These suggestions reflect a desire to improve the physical and social environment to create a better learning and play space.

**Academic and Classroom Focus Improvements:** In response to concerns about classroom distractions, students in both SFDA1 and SFDA2 highlighted the need for better focus and fewer disruptions. Students in SFDA1 emphasized improving writing skills and minimizing distractions caused by chatting or teacher reprimands. The need for a more consistent and clean school environment was also mentioned by SFDA2 students, who expressed a desire for less disruption during lessons. These discussions reflected a collective desire to improve the academic conditions of the school, with students requesting quieter, more disciplined environments for learning.

**Food and Health Concerns:** Beyond environmental issues, students in SFDA2 raised concerns about the school's food options. They specifically requested the removal of unhealthy food items, such as noodles and hot dogs, from the school's food sales. This desire for healthier food choices, combined with the request for better focus on waste disposal, reflects a collective effort to improve the overall health and well-being of students, both academically and socially.

### 4.2. Student Feedback on the After-School Care Program

#### 4.2.1 Challenges and Concerns Related to the After-School Care Program

**Financial Concerns:** During a student forum discussion, some students raised concerns about the daily fee of $0.75 for the after-school care program, noting that it could be a financial challenge for some families (SFDA1). They expressed worry that once the project closes their case from the Empowerment Journey, their families will be required to pay the fee of $0.75 per day to continue using the after-school care program. However, families are only closed from the Journey if their socioeconomic situation is deemed stable (CCT, 2023), ensuring they can afford the fee. The fee applies only to families that are not at risk and voluntarily choose to participate, while at-risk families can access the program free of charge. Developed as a social enterprise by the schools, the program is designed to be inclusive, providing support for both vulnerable and less vulnerable children. Contributions from participating families help sustain the program, covering meals, materials, and other essential resources, thereby reinforcing its long-term impact and accessibility (Vang, 2025).

**Behavioral Issues:** In the student forum discussions, several behavioral issues emerged as significant concerns among students, particularly in terms of disruptions and the use of inappropriate language. In SFDA2, students voiced frustration with the disruptive behavior of their peers, specifically noting incidents of students using foul language and engaging in physical altercations. Similarly, SFDW1 participants highlighted disruptions in the classroom, with students loudly interrupting lessons, eating snacks during study time, and displaying negative behaviors like taking others' materials or using bad language. The lack of accountability was also a notable concern, as some students were seen not taking responsibility for their actions, further exacerbating the classroom dynamics.

#### 4.2.2 Benefits of the After-School Care Program

**Academic Support:** The after-school care program has provided significant academic support for students, particularly in subjects such as math, Khmer, English, and computer education. According to the SFDA1 group, this support has been invaluable, especially for those who face challenges in these subjects. Additionally, students in SFDA2 expressed the benefit of receiving additional learning time and homework assistance, which they greatly appreciated due to their parents' limited availability. Students in both SFDA1 and SFDA2 expressed their appreciation for the extra learning opportunities and emphasized the value of the academic support they received after school. They also expressed a desire for continued academic assistance, particularly in subjects like math and Khmer.

**Nutritional and Healthcare Support:** In the student forum discussions (SFD) concerning the after-school care program, participants highlighted the significance of nutritional support and healthcare assistance. Students in both SFDA2 and SFDW1 expressed appreciation for the snacks and fruit provided, which helped them feel nourished and energized during their time at the program. This provision was particularly important in light of the ongoing food insecurity at home mentioned by some students in SFDA1. Additionally, healthcare support, including basic health services, was praised for contributing to students' well-being (SFDA2). The students appreciated the opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities (SFDA1, SFDW1).

**Moral and Behavioral Development:** In the SFD, students shared their insights into various aspects of moral and behavioral development at school. The students from both SFDA2 and SFDW1 highlighted the importance of fostering virtues and proper behavior, emphasizing the role of school activities like gardening in promoting moral development. The engagement in gardening activities, where students plant and maintain the school's garden on Saturdays, was seen as a positive and productive way to instill a sense of responsibility and care for the environment, while also cultivating virtues such as teamwork and discipline (SFDA2). Students in SFDW1 echoed similar sentiments, recognizing that collaborative learning and acts of kindness, such as sharing snacks or supporting each other in academics, contribute to building positive behavior and moral values.

**Well-being Support:** In terms of well-being support, both students in SFDA2 and SFDW2 highlighted the importance of rest and relaxation in their daily routines. Students in SFDA2 particularly appreciated the designated time for relaxation and naps provided in the after-school care program, emphasizing its contribution to their overall well-being (SFDA2). Similarly, in SFDW2, the opportunity to rest was seen as a beneficial aspect, offering students a much-needed break from their busy school day. Both groups also identified the value of having time for personal care, such as engaging in activities like gardening (SFDA2) and taking naps (SFDA2), which contributed positively to their mental and physical health.

#### 4.2.3 Desired Enhancements in the After-School Care Program

**Academic and Extracurricular Programs:** In the discussions about the academic and extracurricular programs, students have expressed satisfaction with various support systems offered at school. Continued academic support for subjects like Khmer and mathematics remains essential for students, as highlighted in SFDA2 and SFDW1. Sports programs, particularly the expansion of football activities, were also praised, with both SFDA2 and SFDW1 participants noting their importance in fostering teamwork and physical health. Creative arts, such as dance and cooking, were recognized as positive additions to the extracurricular schedule (SFDA2, SFDW1), with students appreciating the well-structured timetable that ensures a balance between

academics and leisure. Additionally, some students from SFDA2 and SFDW1 called for further expansion of sports facilities, including the introduction of basketball and volleyball equipment, and an emphasis on creating a more comfortable and clean environment. Students also expressed a desire for more diverse extracurricular activities such as additional dance programs and creative arts (SFDA2). Through these discussions, it is clear that while the current academic and extracurricular offerings are valued, there is a call for enhancements to both the school environment and the after-school care program to better support students' needs.

**School Environment:** The environment of the after-school care program was positively highlighted by both groups, particularly for being cleaner and more comfortable. Students from SFDA2 appreciated the natural environment, mentioning trees and a clean school environment as important aspects of the program (SFDA2). Students in SFDW2 echoed similar sentiments, noting the importance of having a cleaner and more comfortable space (SFDW2). Despite the positive feedback, both groups raised concerns related to disruptions during school time, such as the presence of stray dogs at the school, which caused distractions (SFDA2, SFDW2). Additionally, students from both groups noted challenges related to classroom hygiene and distractions caused by noisy classmates. However, both groups also expressed a desire for improvements, such as better school cleanliness and enhanced school facilities (SFDA2, SFDW2). These insights reflect students' aspiration for a supportive and well-maintained environment that encourages learning while addressing potential distractions and disruptions.

### 4.2.4 Benefits of the After-School Care Program for Families

**Impact on Families:** The After-School Care Program has provided significant benefits to both children and parents, with student forums highlighting its positive impact. For students, the program ensures safety, reduces family meal expenses, and offers academic support in subjects like math, Khmer, and English, as well as homework assistance (SFDA1, SFDW1). It also fosters peer support, collaboration in learning, and personal acts of kindness, creating a nurturing environment that prioritizes both education and well-being. Parents benefit from the program by gaining more time to work and earn money (SFDA1), while the program also helps reduce financial pressures on families by cutting down meal costs (SFDA2, SFDW2).

**Safety and Well-being:** The safety and well-being of children were emphasized in both SFDA2 and SFDW2, where participants noted that support from project staff allowed parents to focus on their livelihoods. SFDA2 participants further highlighted the importance of ensuring children remain in a safe, structured environment after school. This ongoing support reinforces the program's vital role in balancing academic responsibilities with family needs. Overall, the program is seen as a crucial resource that enhances students' education and supports families' well-being.

### 4.2.5 Likes and Dislikes Regarding the After-School Care Program

**Likes:** The student forums revealed both positive aspects and areas for improvement within the school environment and after-school care programs. Students in the four groups, SFDA1, SFDA2, SFDW1, and SFDW2, expressed their appreciation for well-structured lesson schedules and the positive influence of their teachers, which contributed to their enjoyment of learning. The after-school care program received particular praise, with students highlighting the academic support provided in subjects like Khmer, math, English, and computer skills. Furthermore, the variety and quality of food options were well-received, though some students in SFDW1 noted concerns about repetitive menu items, such as bananas. Students from SFDA1 also showed enthusiasm for contributing to the school's growth and upkeep through activities like gardening, fostering a sense of responsibility and community involvement. Additionally, extracurricular activities like football and the introduction of dance and cooking programs were well-liked by students across the different groups.

**Dislikes:** Despite the positive aspects, certain aspects of the program were identified as areas for improvement. Disruptions in classroom behavior, including students engaging in inappropriate language, stealing materials, and using cell phones during lessons, were highlighted as significant concerns by students in SFDA1, SFDA2, and SFDW1. Furthermore, both SFDA1 and SFDA2 students voiced dissatisfaction with the school's hygiene, particularly the presence of stray dogs and the lack of cleanliness in classrooms, which they felt impacted their learning experience negatively. Students from SFDA1 suggested that the school improve waste management and enforce stricter behavioral regulations to address these concerns. Additionally, the absence of proper sports facilities like basketball and volleyball equipment was also mentioned as a drawback, with students in SFDA2 expressing a desire for more diverse extracurricular activities to further enhance their overall experience at school.

### 4.3 Challenges and Aspirations of Students Facing Family Struggles: Insights from Student Forums

### 4.3.1 Family-Related Concerns

Family struggles emerged as a significant theme in the student forums, particularly for students in SFDA1 and SFDW1. Many students expressed distress over witnessing parental conflicts, which caused emotional stress. Food insecurity was also a prevalent issue, especially in SFDA1, where participants shared experiences of sometimes not having enough to eat. Some students in this group were also involved in child labor, such as selling water convolvulus late into the evening to support their families. These financial struggles were further compounded by their parents' lack of stable income, perpetuating the cycle of child labor.

Similarly, SFDW1 participants reported concerns about family hardships, emphasizing the negative impact on their emotional and physical well-being. These challenges affected not only their overall health but also their academic performance and participation in school and after-school activities. Despite

these difficulties, students in both groups valued the support provided by after-school care programs, which offered academic assistance, meal support, and a safer environment away from some of the stresses they faced at home.

### 4.3.2 Desired Support for Families in the Community

Student forums highlighted the urgent need for financial stability within families to reduce child labor. SFDW1 students, in particular, emphasized the importance of parents securing stable incomes to prevent children from engaging in labor, such as selling goods late at night. Both SFDA1 and SFDW1 participants expressed concerns about family struggles but were uncertain about effective solutions to ease these difficulties. Many students hoped their parents could establish stable businesses or reliable income sources, believing this would eliminate the need for child labor. While after-school care programs provided support, some participants noted that the daily fees posed a challenge for their families.

Despite these financial difficulties, students in both groups remained optimistic that increased financial stability could reduce child labor in the future. SFDW2 also underscored the importance of a steady income in addressing child labor but, like the other groups, shared uncertainty about how to resolve these financial struggles. The group further noted that children often work long hours, sometimes in exchange for charity—receiving food or goods in return for their labor—which negatively impacted their ability to focus on their education.

### 4.3.3 Aspirations and Future Goals

In both SFDA1 and SFDW2, students expressed a strong desire for financial stability, with many aspiring to homeownership. Currently living in rented accommodations, they associated this aspiration with the hope for stable income sources, often wishing for their parents to establish reliable businesses or other financial support systems. These aspirations were deeply connected to the challenges they faced, including food insecurity, parental conflicts, and the consequences of unstable family incomes, such as child labor. SFDA1 participants shared concerns about working long hours, such as selling water convolvulus, which affected their ability to focus on their studies. Despite these difficulties, students remained hopeful that their families would eventually achieve financial stability, alleviating the pressures they faced.

Similarly, SFDW2 participants expressed a shared longing for financial security, particularly through homeownership and stable family incomes. The group emphasized the importance of financial stability while acknowledging the difficulties posed by economic insecurity. Both groups voiced appreciation for the support provided by the After-School Care Program, which helped reduce family expenses and offered a safer learning environment. Ultimately, students in both groups shared a collective hope for a future in which financial stability could ease the burdens they faced at home and school, creating a more secure future for their families.

### 4.4 Impact of the Village Hive Integration on After-School Care Program Effectiveness: A Statistical Analysis

The results of the t-Test for Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances indicate a significant improvement in the perceived effectiveness of the after-school care program following the integration of the Village Hive initiative. Participants rated the program on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 represented no support or benefits, while 10 reflected comprehensive services supporting children's education, well-being, and leadership development. The mean rating before the integration of Village Hive was 3.48, whereas after the integration, it increased substantially to 8.39. This notable rise suggests that participants perceived a considerable enhancement in the program's effectiveness.

In terms of variance, the responses before the initiative had a variance of 2.79, while after the integration, the variance was 4.12, indicating a slightly wider distribution of ratings. The sample sizes included 50 observations for the period before Village Hive and 66 observations for the period after. The t-statistic of -14.30 and an extremely low p-value ($4.21 \times 10^{-27}$) confirm that the observed difference is statistically significant, meaning the improvement is unlikely due to random chance. Additionally, the absolute value of the t-statistic is far greater than the t-critical value (1.98), reinforcing the strength of the results.

Overall, the findings strongly suggest that the integration of the Village Hive initiative has led to a significant enhancement in the after-school care program. Participants now perceive it as offering better support for children's education and overall well-being, demonstrating a positive impact on their development.

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

| | Impact of the Village Hive Integration on After-School Care Program Effectiveness | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | *Before the integration* | *After the integration* |
| Mean | 3.48 | 8.393939 |
| Variance | 2.785306 | 4.119347 |
| Observations | 50 | 66 |
| Hypothesized Mean Difference | 0 | |

| df | 113 |
|---|---|
| t Stat | -14.2977 |
| P(T<=t) one-tail | 2.1E-27*** |
| t Critical one-tail | 1.65845 |
| P(T<=t) two-tail | 4.21E-27*** |
| t Critical two-tail | 1.98118 |

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Key Factors Influencing Student Engagement and Success

#### 5.1.1 School Environment Shapes Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes

The school environment plays a significant role in shaping student engagement and learning outcomes, as revealed through the student forums. Students expressed several challenges related to the school's environment, particularly environmental concerns such as stray dogs, poor hygiene, and accumulation of garbage. These issues caused discomfort and distractions, which hindered students' ability to focus on their studies. In addition, interpersonal conflicts, such as bullying and inappropriate behavior, were cited as disruptions, affecting both peer relationships and teacher-student interactions. These environmental and interpersonal challenges highlight the need for interventions to improve the school's cleanliness, waste disposal practices, and the overall social climate.

Despite these challenges, students also highlighted positive aspects of the school environment that contributed to their engagement and motivation. Many students expressed enthusiasm for their studies, actively participating in classroom discussions, and taking responsibility for maintaining cleanliness in their surroundings. The presence of a clean classroom, large playground, and trees created a pleasant atmosphere conducive to both learning and recreation. Extracurricular activities, particularly sports, were also noted as a major source of enjoyment and engagement, with students recognizing the importance of physical activities in their daily routines and appreciating the large playground available to them.

In response to the identified challenges, students proposed various improvements to enhance both the physical environment and academic focus. Key suggestions included the removal of stray dogs, better waste disposal practices, and infrastructure improvements such as expanding the playground and providing additional facilities. To improve academic focus, students emphasized the need to reduce classroom distractions and foster a more disciplined learning environment. Additionally, students expressed concern over the school's food options, advocating for healthier food choices to support their overall well-being. These recommendations reflect a desire for a more supportive and engaging school environment, one that fosters both academic and holistic development.

#### 5.1.2 After-School Programs as a Buffer against Socioeconomic Hardships

The findings of this study reflect both the benefits and challenges associated with the after-school care program. One of the primary benefits highlighted by students was the academic support provided, particularly in subjects like math, Khmer, English, and computer education. Students appreciated the additional learning time and homework assistance, which helped bridge the gap caused by their parents' limited availability to provide academic help at home. Additionally, the program's nutritional support, including snacks and fruit, was essential for students experiencing food insecurity, offering nourishment that helped them focus during their time at the program. Students also appreciated the well-being and healthcare support provided, noting how the program contributed to their overall health through access to basic medical services and a safe, structured environment after school.

The study identified key areas for improvement to further enhance the program's impact. The daily fee of $0.75 plays a crucial role in sustaining the program by covering the costs of meals, snacks, and child care. While at-risk families receive free access, less vulnerable families contribute this fee to help maintain program quality and long-term viability. Although many families acknowledge the value of this support, some hesitate to contribute despite having the means to do so. Additionally, while the program prioritizes at-risk families, some non-vulnerable families also seek free access, highlighting the need for clear guidelines to ensure fairness and sustainability. Maintaining both accessibility and financial stability remains a key priority. Furthermore, fostering a positive and respectful learning environment is essential. Discussions emphasized the importance of reinforcing clear expectations and accountability measures to minimize disruptions and create an inclusive space where all students can thrive.

Despite these challenges, students expressed a strong desire for the program to continue and expand. They valued the opportunity to engage in extracurricular activities, such as football, dance, and gardening, which helped foster teamwork, discipline, and a sense of responsibility. They also advocated for improvements in the school's environment, particularly in terms of cleanliness and the availability of more diverse extracurricular activities. These findings underscore the importance of after-school care programs in supporting both students' academic success and their personal development, while also highlighting areas for enhancement, such as addressing financial concerns, improving behavior management, and expanding facilities and activities.

### 5.1.3 Family Struggles and Economic Hardships Influence Student Success

Family struggles, particularly related to parental conflicts, food insecurity, and child labor, emerged as significant challenges affecting students' emotional well-being and academic performance. Many students expressed distress from witnessing parental conflicts, which created emotional stress. Food insecurity was a common issue, with some students sharing their experiences of going without enough food. Many students were also involved in child labor, such as working late at night to support their families, which further compounded their struggles. The lack of stable income for many parents perpetuated this cycle of child labor, making it difficult for these students to focus on their education.

Despite the challenges they faced, students appreciated the support offered by after-school programs. These programs provided academic assistance, meals, and a safer environment away from some of the stresses they dealt with at home. However, students expressed a need for more systemic solutions to address the root causes of their struggles, such as improving family financial stability. Many students hoped that their parents would be able to secure stable incomes or establish businesses, which would eliminate the need for their children to work.

The discussions also emphasized the importance of financial stability in reducing child labor and improving the students' overall quality of life. Students expressed strong aspirations for a future with stable incomes, often linking these aspirations to hopes of homeownership. They believed that achieving financial stability would not only ease their financial struggles but also improve their ability to focus on their studies and reduce the need for child labor. Despite the uncertainties about how to resolve these issues, students remained hopeful that, with time, their families would achieve greater financial stability, ultimately improving their academic performance and well-being.

### 5.1.4 A Holistic Approach to Student Development is Essential

The findings of this study also highlight the importance of a holistic approach to supporting student success, which requires addressing multiple levels of student development. This includes improvements in the school environment, support for family financial stability, and the enhancement of after-school programs. Students expressed a need for schools to adopt stricter discipline policies, improve hygiene standards, and foster inclusive learning environments that accommodate the diverse needs of all students. Such improvements would contribute to a better overall educational experience, reducing the impact of environmental factors that hinder academic performance.

Equally important is the role of family financial stability in supporting student success. Many students indicated that their academic focus and well-being were directly affected by the financial hardships their families faced. To reduce the impact of child labor on education, it is essential for communities and policymakers to prioritize initiatives that support family income stability. By ensuring that families have access to stable sources of income, students would be less likely to engage in child labor, allowing them to dedicate more time to their studies and extracurricular activities. This support could significantly improve students' academic performance and emotional health.

Finally, enhancing after-school care programs is critical to supporting students facing family-related challenges. After-school care programs provide academic assistance, a safe space for learning, and in some cases, meals. These programs are vital in offering relief to students who experience food insecurity or are dealing with stressful home environments. However, to maximize their effectiveness, it is important for these programs to be supported by both local communities and policymakers. By improving the quality and accessibility of after-school care, schools can ensure that students have the resources they need to succeed academically and personally, despite the challenges they may face at home.

### 5.2 The Integrated School and After-School Care Model: A Theory for Holistic Child Development

This theory posits that a well-structured school environment, combined with an effective after-school care program, fosters holistic child development by addressing educational, social, and family-related challenges. The model emphasizes the interplay between environmental factors, behavioral influences, academic support, and family stability in shaping student well-being and success.

### 5.2.1. Environmental and Social Influences on Student Well-being

The school environment plays a critical role in student engagement and learning outcomes. Environmental factors such as stray dogs, poor hygiene, and waste accumulation can significantly diminish students' sense of safety and hinder focus in the classroom. Furthermore, interpersonal conflicts—such as bullying, inappropriate behavior, and teacher-student tensions—distract from a positive learning atmosphere. Addressing these environmental and social challenges through improved infrastructure, stricter behavioral policies, and enhanced student-teacher relationships is essential for fostering a conducive educational setting.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes the critical role of environmental layers—ranging from immediate surroundings (e.g., the classroom, peer interactions) to broader contexts (e.g., family and community)—in shaping student development. A safe and supportive school environment, as outlined by this theory, is fundamental for enhancing student engagement and social interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bandura's Social Learning Theory further supports this by suggesting that learning is influenced by both social interactions and environmental factors. Bullying and teacher-student tensions disrupt positive learning environments, which in turn hinders student engagement. Positive reinforcement and the modeling of appropriate behaviors, however, can help improve students' social and academic outcomes (Bandura, 1977).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory underscores that basic needs, such as safety and physiological well-being, must be met before higher-level needs like learning and self-actualization can be pursued. Environmental issues like stray dogs and poor hygiene impede students' sense of security, ultimately affecting their focus and ability to engage in learning. A safe, clean, and supportive environment is, therefore, crucial for academic and social success (Maslow, 1943). According to Sugai and Horner's Positive Behavior Support (PBS) framework, fostering a positive school climate reduces behavioral issues, including bullying, and promotes a more productive learning environment (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

### 5.2.2. The Role of After-School Programs in Academic and Behavioral Development

After-school care programs offer structured academic support, extracurricular activities, and nutritional aid, benefiting both students and families. These programs help students improve in core subjects, develop moral values through teamwork and responsibility, and engage in recreational activities. However, behavioral issues, financial constraints, and classroom disruptions can hinder the effectiveness of these programs. A structured, discipline-enforcing approach, coupled with financial assistance for struggling families, can enhance program efficiency and accessibility.

Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (1978) posits that social interaction plays a key role in cognitive development. Programs that promote social engagement not only support academic growth but also foster moral development through shared responsibility and teamwork. Similarly, Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory (1963) highlights the importance of social interactions in building a child's sense of identity and ability to navigate social roles. These aspects are critical for students' overall psychosocial development, particularly in the context of after-school programs.

### 5.2.3. Family Challenges and Their Impact on Education

Parental conflicts, food insecurity, and child labor are significant barriers to student well-being and academic success. Economic instability often forces some students to engage in labor, reducing their time and energy for school activities. These hardships detract from their academic performance and participation. Support mechanisms—such as financial assistance, community-driven economic stability programs, and enhanced after-school care—can mitigate these effects, ensuring that students receive both educational and emotional support.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory explains how external factors, such as family dynamics and economic instability, interact with students' environments, influencing their development and academic success (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory reinforces this by asserting that students cannot focus on higher-order academic tasks until their basic needs, like food and safety, are met (Maslow, 1943). Economic disparities further restrict access to resources, as highlighted by Bourdieu's Theory of Social Capital (1986), which suggests that students from disadvantaged backgrounds face additional barriers to success, such as lack of access to enrichment programs. Epstein's Framework of Overlapping Spheres of Influence underscores the importance of family and community collaboration in supporting students' development and academic achievement (Epstein, 2001).

### 5.2.4. A Sustainable Model for Holistic Student Development

An integrated approach combining school improvements, structured after-school programs, and community-based financial support can create a sustainable model for student success. Schools should prioritize environmental enhancements, stricter behavioral guidelines, and expanded extracurricular opportunities. Additionally, after-school care should incorporate financial aid options, structured discipline policies, and personalized academic support. At the community level, promoting stable employment for parents can reduce financial burdens, allowing students to focus on their education.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory supports this integrated approach, emphasizing the importance of multiple environmental layers—such as school, family, and community—in shaping a child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, structured environments that provide positive reinforcement, social support, and clear expectations help enhance students' self-regulation and academic achievement (Bandura, 1986). Epstein's Framework of Overlapping Spheres of Influence suggests that collaboration between schools, families, and communities is essential for creating an environment that supports students' development (Epstein, 2001). Finally, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory reinforces the importance of ensuring financial security for families as a precursor to unlocking higher-order educational achievements (Maslow, 1943).

## 6. Implication and Recommendation

### 6.1 Implications of an Integrated School and After-School Care Model for Holistic Child Development

Educational policies need to take a holistic approach by addressing both in-school and out-of-school factors that influence students' success. While aspects such as cleanliness, discipline, and teacher-student relations within schools are crucial, it is equally important to consider the broader context, such as family financial stability. A stable home environment can significantly impact a child's ability to focus on their studies and thrive academically. Therefore, policies should integrate these different factors to create a well-rounded support system for students.

Expanding after-school programs is another critical measure to enhance educational outcomes. These programs offer much-needed academic and emotional support, allowing students to further develop skills, reinforce classroom learning, and engage in positive activities outside of school hours. To maximize their impact, such programs should be made financially accessible to all families, particularly those from lower-income backgrounds, to ensure that no student is excluded from these valuable opportunities.

Lastly, interventions aimed at improving education outcomes must be multi-faceted, targeting not only school conditions and student behavior but also the family support systems that influence a child's academic success. A comprehensive approach that includes support for the school environment, student development, and family engagement can create sustainable, long-term improvements in education. By focusing on all these interconnected elements, educational systems can provide a solid foundation for future academic achievement and personal growth.

*6.2 Recommendation*

*6.2.1 Recommendations for Policymakers:*

- Prioritize initiatives to improve the school environment, including:
  - Enhancing cleanliness, waste management, and sanitation.
  - Reducing bullying and fostering a positive, inclusive social climate.
  - Adopting stricter discipline policies to minimize distractions and improve focus.
- Implement measures to improve family financial stability, such as:
  - Supporting stable income generation for families to reduce the need for child labor.
  - Providing resources and programs that assist families in establishing businesses or securing stable employment.
- Expand access to after-school programs by:
  - Making these programs financially accessible to all families, especially those facing economic difficulties.
  - Ensuring after-school programs are inclusive and cater to the diverse needs of students.

*6.2.2 Recommendations for the Village Hive Project*

- Collaborate with local authorities to improve the physical and social school environment:
  - Address issues like stray dogs, waste disposal, and hygiene.
  - Enhance infrastructure, including playgrounds and recreational areas.
- Expand support for after-school programs by:
  - Offering academic assistance and a safe, structured environment.
  - Providing essential services such as meals and health support.
- Partner with local businesses to improve family income stability:
  - Support initiatives that help families secure stable income or start small businesses.
  - Collaborate with community organizations to offer vocational training to families in need.

*6.2.3 Recommendations for Donors and Foundations*

- Fund programs that improve school infrastructure and facilities:
  - Support the development of cleaner, safer, and more engaging school environments, including waste management and playground enhancements.
- Increase funding for after-school care programs:
  - Ensure these programs are free or affordable for vulnerable families.
  - Expand the range of academic, extracurricular, and health services offered.
- Support initiatives to improve family financial stability:
  - Provide funding for vocational training, or business development programs for families.
  - Invest in long-term strategies to reduce child labor by addressing its root causes.

**Appendix A. Proposed M&E Framework for the Public After-School Care Program**

| Key Component | Indicators | Data Collection Methods | Evaluation Questions |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

| Environmental Factors | - Student safety<br>- Cleanliness of school environment<br>- Frequency of bullying incidents<br>- Student-teacher relationships<br>- Classroom engagement | - Surveys/interviews with students, teachers, and parents<br>- Observations of school facilities<br>- Records of behavioral incidents | - Are environmental issues (safety, cleanliness) being addressed effectively?<br>- Does the environment affect student engagement? |
|---|---|---|---|
| Academic and Behavioral Development | - Academic performance<br>- Attendance rates<br>- Completion of after-school activities<br>- Participation in extracurricular activities<br>- Behavioral improvements | - Academic records<br>- Attendance logs<br>- Teacher reports on student behavior<br>- After-school care participation records | - Are students showing academic improvement?<br>- Is after-school care improving behavior and academic outcomes?<br>- How do students interact in social settings? |
| Family Support | - Parental involvement<br>- Financial assistance provided<br>- Levels of food insecurity<br>- Student well-being at home | - Parent surveys/interviews<br>- Financial aid records<br>- Food security assessments<br>- Family engagement activities | - Are families receiving adequate support?<br>- How do parental conflicts/economic challenges affect student outcomes? |
| Sustainability and Community Support | - Community involvement<br>- Financial aid availability<br>- Stability of funding sources<br>- School environment improvements | - Community surveys<br>- Financial records<br>- Reports on school-community partnerships<br>- Long-term funding analysis | - How sustainable is the funding?<br>- Are community-driven programs reducing financial pressures on families? |

**Appendix B. Survey on the Integrated School and After-School Care Model: Assessing Holistic Child Development**

**Section 1: Demographic Information**

1.  **Age of the student (if applicable):**

    o   Under 10 years

    o   10-12 years

    o   13-15 years

    o   Over 15 years

2.  **Gender:**

    o   Male

    o   Female

3.  **What grade level are you in?**

    o   Grade 1

    o   Grade 2

    o   Grade 3

    o   Grade 4

    o   Grade 5

    o   Grade 6

4.  **Do you participate in the After School Care Program**

o  Yes

o  No

**Section 2: Environmental Factors**

5.  **How safe do you feel in your school environment?**

    o  Very Safe

    o  Safe

    o  Neutral

    o  Unsafe

    o  Very Unsafe

6.  **How would you rate the cleanliness of the school?**

    o  Very Clean

    o  Clean

    o  Neutral

    o  Dirty

    o  Very Dirty

7.  **How frequently do you witness or experience bullying in the school?**

    o  Never

    o  Rarely

    o  Occasionally

    o  Frequently

    o  Always

8.  **How would you describe your relationship with teachers and staff at the school?**

    o  Very Good

    o  Good

    o  Neutral

    o  Poor

    o  Very Poor

9.  **How engaged do you feel in classroom activities?**

    o  Very Engaged

    o  Engaged

    o  Neutral

    o  Disengaged

    o  Very Disengaged

**Section 3: Academic and Behavioral Development**

10. **Since joining the after-school care program, how would you rate your academic performance?**

    o  Much Better

    o  Better

    o  No Change

    o  Worse

    ○   Much Worse

11. **How helpful has the after-school care program been in supporting your homework and studies?**

    ○   Very Helpful

    ○   Helpful

    ○   Neutral

    ○   Not Helpful

    ○   Not Helpful at All

12. **How often do you participate in extracurricular activities (e.g., sports, arts, etc.) as part of the after-school program?**

    ○   Always

    ○   Often

    ○   Sometimes

    ○   Rarely

    ○   Never

13. **How would you assess your overall behavior at school since participating in the after-school care program?**

    ○   Much Improved

    ○   Improved

    ○   No Change

    ○   Worse

    ○   Much Worse

14. **Do you feel the after-school care program has helped you develop social skills, such as teamwork and communication?**

    ○   Strongly Agree

    ○   Agree

    ○   Neutral

    ○   Disagree

    ○   Strongly Disagree

**Section 4: Family Support**

15. **Has your family received any financial assistance to help cover school-related expenses (e.g., fees, uniforms)?**

    ○   Yes

    ○   No

16. **Do you face challenges related to food insecurity or limited access to meals at home?**

    ○   Never

    ○   Rarely

    ○   Sometimes

    ○   Often

    ○   Always

17. **Do you believe parental involvement positively impacts your academic performance?**

    ○   Strongly Agree

    ○   Agree

    ○   Neutral

  ○ Disagree

  ○ Strongly Disagree

18. **Do you receive sufficient emotional and academic support from your family?**

  ○ Always

  ○ Often

  ○ Sometimes

  ○ Rarely

  ○ Never

**Section 5: Community Support**

19. **How would you rate the level of support the community (neighbors, local organizations) provides to the school and after-school care program?**

  ○ Very Supportive

  ○ Supportive

  ○ Neutral

  ○ Unsupportive

  ○ Very Unsupportive

20. **Do you believe that community-based programs effectively alleviate financial burdens for families?**

  ○ Strongly Agree

  ○ Agree

  ○ Neutral

  ○ Disagree

  ○ Strongly Disagree

21. **Has the after-school care program offered you any new opportunities to enhance your academic or social development?**

  ○ Yes, many opportunities

  ○ Some opportunities

  ○ No opportunities

  ○ I don't know

22. **Would you recommend the after-school care program to other families?**

  ○ Yes

  ○ No

  ○ Maybe

**Section 6: Overall Program Satisfaction**

23. **How satisfied are you with the overall after-school care program?**

  ○ Very Satisfied

  ○ Satisfied

  ○ Neutral

  ○ Dissatisfied

  ○ Very Dissatisfied

24. **What suggestions do you have for improving the after-school care program?** (Please provide your response below)

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