



# Assessment of Enabling Environment for Youth Participation in Peacebuilding and Governance in Region X, XI, XIII and Mainland BARMM



Implemented by:  
**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



**Published by:**

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

**Registered Offices:**

Bonn and Berlin, Germany

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**As at:**

May 2022

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**Design and Layout:**

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On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Featured photos: Some photos used in this publication were taken during YOUCAP-related activities and during the photo competition titled “Peace for Mindanao in the New Normal” at the Annual Peace Conference held in November 2020 in partnership with Father Saturnino Urios University during the Mindanao Week of Peace.

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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ABYIP</b>	Annual Barangay Youth Investment Plan
<b>ABR</b>	Arts-Based Research
<b>AFP</b>	Armed Forces of the Philippines
<b>AI</b>	Appreciative Inquiry
<b>ALS</b>	Alternative Learning System
<b>BARMM</b>	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
<b>BDP</b>	Barangay Development Plan
<b>BLGU</b>	Barangay Local Government Unit
<b>BYDP</b>	Barangay Youth Development Plan
<b>CHED</b>	Commission on Higher Education
<b>COMELEC</b>	Commission on Elections
<b>CPP</b>	Communist Party of the Philippines
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>DAP</b>	Differently-Abled Persons
<b>DENR</b>	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
<b>DepEd</b>	Department of Education
<b>DILG</b>	Department of the Interior and Local Government
<b>DNH</b>	Do No Harm
<b>DOH</b>	Department of Health
<b>DOLE</b>	Department of Labor and Employment
<b>DPWH</b>	Department of Public Works and Highways
<b>DRRM</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
<b>DSWD</b>	Department of Social Welfare and Development
<b>ELCAC</b>	End Local Communist Armed Conflict
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GAD</b>	Gender and Development
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>IEC</b>	Information Education Campaign
<b>IP</b>	Indigenous Peoples
<b>JCI</b>	Junior Chamber International
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>KK</b>	Katipunan ng Kabataan
<b>KKDAT</b>	Kabataan Kontra Droga at Terorismo
<b>LCE</b>	Local Chief Executive

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>LDP</b>	Local Development Plan
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Agency
<b>LGU</b>	Local Government Unit
<b>LGBTQ</b>	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer
<b>LYDC</b>	Local Youth Development Council
<b>LYDO</b>	Local Youth Development Office
<b>LYDP</b>	Local Youth Development Plan
<b>MLGOO</b>	Municipal Local Government Operations Officer
<b>NDF</b>	National Democratic Front
<b>NGA</b>	National Government Agency
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organization
<b>NIR</b>	Negros Island Region
<b>NVC</b>	Non-violent Communication
<b>NPA</b>	New Peoples Army
<b>NYC</b>	National Youth Commission
<b>OCD</b>	Office of Civil Defense
<b>OPAPP</b>	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
<b>OPAPRU</b>	Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity
<b>OSY</b>	Out-of-school Youth
<b>PCVE</b>	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
<b>PDEA</b>	Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency
<b>PIA</b>	Philippine Information Agency
<b>PNP</b>	Philippine National Police
<b>PWD</b>	Person with Disabilities
<b>PYDP</b>	Philippine Youth Development Plan
<b>SGLG</b>	Seal of Good Local Governance
<b>SK</b>	Sangguniang Kabataan
<b>SPES</b>	Special Program for Employment of Students
<b>SSS</b>	Social Security Services
<b>TESDA</b>	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
<b>TF- ELCAC</b>	Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
<b>YLS</b>	Youth Leadership Summit
<b>YOUCAP</b>	Youth for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence in Mindanao

## Acknowledgments

The government should not be alone in nation-building and peacekeeping—we need everyone to be on board with us, and have high regards and cognizant as to what our youth could offer and contribute to these long-term aspirations.

With this in mind, the Department, together with the National Youth Commission and other national government agencies, local government units, and civil society organizations, continues to empower the youth through various capacity development activities, learning exchange fora, and other avenues for them to showcase their contributions and participate in achieving local and national development goals, as well as highlight the Sangguniang Kabataan as a platform and a powerful mechanism of youth governance at the grassroots.



Aiding said efforts, it is with high hopes that this study, entitled, “Assessment of Enabling Environment for Youth Participation in Peacebuilding and Governance in Regions 10, 13, 11, and Mainland BARMM”, will assist the national and local implementers in having more sound decisions in order to further empower the youth and our young leaders—opening more opportunities for them to engage, inspire, and influence.

DILG Region 10 fully supports the purpose of this study as we acknowledge that our youth are essential key players in attaining sustainable development, lasting peace and good governance in the country. May this endeavor result in better engagement with the youth as we continue to commit to our active partnership with the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, through its Youth for A Culture of Peace and Non-violence in Mindanao (YOUCAP) program, among our other stakeholders.

**ARNEL M. AGABE, CESO III**  
**Regional Director**  
**DILG Region 10**

## Foreword



The right of the young people to participate in governance is guaranteed in the Philippine Constitution. The law has encouraged the active participation of the youth in local governance since the creation of Kabataang Barangay in the 1970s. An important milestone for young people's participation in governance is the Republic Act 10742, also known as the Sangguniang Kabataan Reform Act of 2015.

The Sangguniang Kabataan is a manifestation of the state's recognition of the youth's right with regard to adequate and genuine opportunities for inclusion in political processes and decision-making at the local level. While this study indicates some good examples of youth engagement on the ground, it also highlights the main building blocks and challenges in fostering active and meaningful participation in governance and peacebuilding. The assessment reaffirms the local government units and relevant state agencies' significant role in enhancing adequate, effective, responsive, and enabling mechanisms and support systems to ensure meaningful youth participation.

The vital role of the youth in national and local development and the need to ensure an enabling environment for them is widely acknowledged. With the support of civil society organizations, the local government units and relevant government line agencies play a crucial role in providing an environment for the youth to express their needs and interests, claim their rights, shape development policies and partnerships, and oversee their implementation. Hence, this assessment shall serve as support to better understand the level and intensity of youth participation in crafting and implementing youth-relevant programs and provide insights on factors for a favorable environment regarding youth engagement.

I hope this publication will serve as a reference and guide for youth and political leaders alike as it contains recommendations to amplify active and meaningful youth participation. May the results and recommendations provided through this report inspire dialogue and cooperation among state actors, local chief executives, the Sangguniang Kabataan, and civil society initiatives to further empower young people in becoming active agents of change in society.

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# 1

## Executive Summary



## 1.1 Purpose

This study attempts to assess the enabling environment that allows the youth to participate in governance, especially in developing and implementing gender-responsive, peace-promoting, and conflict-sensitive programs for children, youth, and their barangay. Moreover, this study determined issues that affect the Sangguniang Kabataan's (SK) role in broadening the youth constituency working for peace by looking at their individual and collective motivations, opportunities, and

capacities. This paper also appraised policy frameworks and political structures of national government agencies (NGAs) and local government units (LGUs) to identify acceptable practices and lessons learned in youth mainstreaming. Lastly, this study documented recommendations on tapping the SK's potential to promote peace and appreciate the plurality of gender from the Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

## 1.2 Methodology

The research used an extensive sub-national survey as the primary tool. It validated findings through a study of related literature, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions where the youth actively participated.

The framework and methodological approach used Appreciative Inquiry and arts-based research in assessing the status of policies and programs for youth participation in Mindanao.

## 1.3 Report Structure

This report organizes the findings in the following manner: First in the report is an analysis of the motivations, opportunities, and capacities afforded to youth to participate in inclusive decision-making and local governance processes meaningfully. Second, the report shows an appraisal of the conditions of structures, such as policies and frameworks, that state

agencies and Local Government Units (LGU) implement to enable civic engagement and SK participation. To cap these reports are options and recommendations that the interviewees mentioned intend to capacitate development strategies of LGUs and other state actors in fostering youth engagement in local governance and peacebuilding processes.

## 1.4 Key Findings

This study shows that the SK, as a platform, is a powerful mechanism of youth governance at the grassroots. Reports of SK and Katipunan ng Kabataan (KK's) experiences in four Mindanao regions

(Regions X, XI, XIII, and BARMM) indicate that the local government units give them space to participate in gender-responsive, peace-promoting, and conflict-sensitive governance.

The question, however, is how meaningful their participation is. This paper describes instances when the SK is not given space in a tokenistic manner but has the right and obligation to govern meaningfully. By governing this way, the government gives relevance and viability to the SK.

There is minimal opportunity to determine the best practices and lessons learned as SKs (Sangguniang Kabataan) do not submit the National Youth Commission (NYC) reports. There is no standard reporting format for the SK if required to submit it. However, this study successfully harvested information from the KII and FGD participants' narratives, not from reports. Accordingly, several factors affect youth participation in government decision-making processes, which include the following: (a) leadership training and development of the SK b) political support; (c) advice from the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), National Youth Commission (NYC), and local governments (LGUs); (d) political dynamics; and e) local bureaucracy.

The number and manner of consultations with the youth may not be enough to say meaningful participation has been achieved, especially in essential aspects of the project management cycle like situational analysis, planning, monitoring, and evaluation. The COVID-9 pandemic even exacerbated this as quarantine restrictions have disallowed people from attending gatherings. Hence, the SK cannot convene meetings unless the SK does it virtually, which is difficult for off-grid areas and without internet connectivity.

Perceived political patronage and maneuvering are among the main reasons the youth lack appreciation towards the SK and its activities. The SK may not have engendered the young constituency's genuine participation in some areas, primarily when its members hail from

well-to-do or political families. The SK needs to regain its nurturing image, especially amongst children and youth, and strengthen idealism to erase the youth's negative mental models against them.

The kind and quality of technical support derived from government and non-government organizations and provided to the SK may not have fully capacitated them to design appropriate programs in line with the PYDP's nine Centers of Participation. There could be a connection between the lack of capacity and the mismatch between SK projects and the actual youth needs. Most projects are on sports, environmental issues, and infrastructure, despite the needed education and training, health and nutrition, anti-drug abuse, and livelihood.

Implementing projects requires funds. However, their financial sources mainly come from the local government unit. Campaigns on youth fund-raising are generally weak, pushing the SK to depend on the 10% SK fund. Despite being assured of funds, however, the tedious process of accessing the SK funds causes the council to function poorly. Many SKs did not have separate bank accounts for their funds until now. Low awareness and understanding of legal frameworks affect their capacity to utilize their funds autonomously.

The Linggo ng Kabataan (Week of the Youth), celebrated on the second week of December every year, is considered a best practice for the SK, which offers immense potential to engage the KK in legislative action, training the youth in the crafting and passing of policies and laws.

Challenges beset SK's role in broadening youth participation in governance, where a lack of control and autonomy may mean they do not have the real power to implement their desired youth programs. Besides, a lack of understanding of national and local duty bearers' duties

and responsibilities and that of the SK structure may have played a role in the lack of faith towards the SK. More training is needed for the SK to better navigate the bureaucracy by improving their knowledge and understanding of financial management systems, creating an appropriate developmental plan and budget, and encouraging other youth to participate.

In terms of the peacebuilding and security aspect of the Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) there is an apparent mismatch between the youth's peace needs and the SK projects, consisting primarily of games and teambuilding activities, that at times promote social cohesion by improving the relationships among participants who come from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. Peacebuilding entails raising awareness about illicit drug issues and violent extremism, which the SK does collaboratively or as an audience to Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP)-led activities.

Youth mainstreaming requires that the entire SK structure be involved in the

mandatory training and capacity-building exercises, including the SK officers and other duty bearers such as the Local Chief Executive (LCE), Local Youth Development Office, NYC, and DILG officers and personnel. The SK can tap local capacities such as educational and training institutions and non-government agencies to conduct this training.

The interviews in this research helped surface many topics that could be integral parts of the SK training to strengthen their peacebuilding and security initiatives. Service providers may lump this training into three broad categories: socio-cultural, socio-political, and economic approaches.

Gender and Development (GAD) and Do No Harm (DNH) are two concepts that are overarching and cross-cutting that the interviewees did not mention as recommendations for the SK training, which is unfortunate given its importance in governance, development, and humanitarian work. GAD in the Philippine context slowly recognizes the plurality of genders to include the LGBT, but the interviews mainly talk about women's empowerment only.



# 2

## Introduction



The Philippines prides itself on having a grassroots-based, government-funded political structure called the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), ensuring that the youth participate in the community's vital decision-making and catering to local youth issues and concerns. The SK helps ensure that the youth achieve their fullest potential by providing a platform to shape policies and programs directly affecting them. The SK provides a space for the youth to learn leadership by becoming actual leaders whom the LGU grants full powers and authority typically accrued

to barangay, town, or provincial elected officials. The SK is not an organization; instead, the SK is the governing body voted into office by the larger youth contingent, the Katipunan ng Kabataan (KK). As their youth constituency's voice, they are expected to learn to speak about issues and concerns and be heard in spaces dominated by older adults in a process called Youth Mainstreaming.

Recognizing the role of the youth in nation-building, the Philippine Government, through the National Youth Commission

(NYC), led in crafting the Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) for 2017 to 2022, which is considered one of the guideposts in putting together Local Youth Development Plans (LYDP) in various lower layers of governance down to the region, province, and to the city- or municipal-levels. The heart of the PYDP is the concept of active, meaningful, and holistic youth participation.

Inside, PYDP identifies specific state duty bearers at the national and local levels to translate the plan into action and push for the full participation of the youth in the process of nation-building. Aside from government line agencies, the PYDP also guides collaborative action between the state and other stakeholders such as civil society and non-government organizations, international and national donors, the Church, media, and the business community.

As a governing body, the government, through the NYC, expects the SK to create and implement interventions for the youth covering nine Centers of Participation: Governance, Economic

Empowerment, Health, Global Mobility, Peacebuilding and Security, Active Citizenship, Environment, Education, and Social Inclusion and Equity. SK's issues commonly include drug and substance use and abuse, sexual risk behaviors, access to affordable quality education, and employment. However, the amount of attention and resources the SK dedicates to each Center of Participation depends mainly on the ground's context. In some areas, the SK focuses on the war against drugs and substance abuse, which is the campaign the Duterte administration is currently working on. Others are raising awareness about HIV-AIDS, gender equity, and human rights. In most cases, the SK taps the youth's tremendous creativity and energy in implementing their activities because they need to attract the millennial youth's attention, which they do in sports and games. For strategies on Peacebuilding and Security, the PYDP envisages that the youth are taking an active role in the work for peace, particularly in addressing and preventing violence and protecting human rights.



## 2.1 Objectives of the assessment



This research is a subnational assessment of enabling environment that encourages the youth's participation in peacebuilding and governance, including planning processes involved in the crafting and implementing the Comprehensive Barangay Youth Development Plan (CBYDP), Annual Barangay Youth Investment Programming (ABYIP), LYDP, and PYDP. The aims of which include the following:

1. To determine the motivations, opportunities, and capacities afforded to young men and women to participate in inclusive decision-making and local governance processes meaningfully.
2. To appraise the conditions of existing policies, frameworks, and political structures of state agencies and LGUs that enable the youth's civic engagement and meaningful participation.
3. To ascertain options and recommendations on capacity development strategies of LGUs and other state actors to foster youth engagement in local governance and peacebuilding processes.



## 2.2 Framework and Methodology

The literature offers various frameworks that help assess the conditions of enabling environments that lead to the youth's collective participation in governance. This paper adopts Holden's Youth Empowerment framework in describing the level and intensity of their collective participation in governance and the status of three kinds of enablers, namely group structure, adult involvement, and group climate (Figure 1; Holden et al., 2004). In doing so, the paper discusses the extent and scope of the youth's meaningful participation in government decision-

making processes and harvest individual, group, and community factors that explain the youth's level of participation in government decision-making processes from the interview and FGD data. These factors could range from motivation, opportunities, capacities to those considered very structural such as policy frameworks and laws. This part of the paper also summarizes the recommendations set forth by the interviewees that can help increase the youth's participation in gender-responsive and peace-promoting governance.

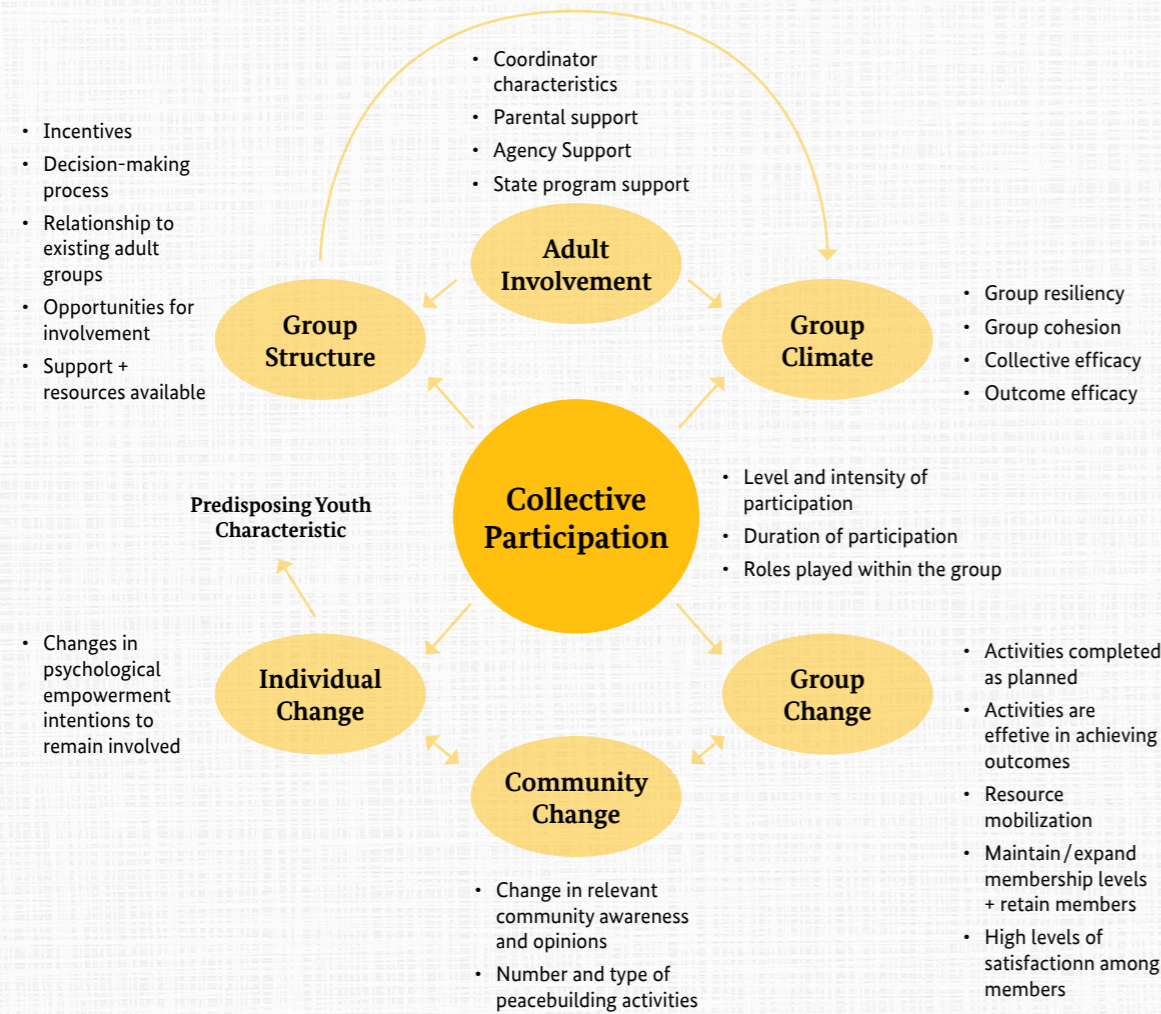


Figure 1. Youth empowerment conceptual framework. Modified from: Holden, D.J., Messeri, P., Evans, W.D., Crankshaw, E., Ben-Davies, M. (2004). Conceptualizing youth empowerment within tobacco control. Health Education and Behavior, 31, 548 – 563.

In Holdens et al.'s (2004) framework, policy frameworks and laws are considered an agency or state support. Among the state and regional policies reviewed in this paper included the following:

- Philippine Youth Development Plan of 2017-2022
- Northern Mindanao Regional Development Plan 2017-2022
- Northern Mindanao Peace and Development Framework
- Caraga Regional Development Plan 2017-2022
- Caraga Roadmap for Peace 2016-2022
- Republic Act 11313 or the Safe Spaces Act of 2019

For the interviews, the research utilized a hybrid online qualitative research methodology to understand the factors that enable the youth's genuine participation in governance in selected regions in Mindanao (Table 1). These methods include three-hour real-time online focus groups interposed with online

discussion board work with one hundred three respondents, fifty-three of whom were females. The virtual FGDs explored the stage-in-life situations of policies and programs for youth development. On the other hand, the community board would help expand and build on the insights gained during the FGDs.

Table 1. Geographic distribution of the KII and FGD respondents (50 Males and 53 Females)

	53 Females	50 Males	Region X (Northern Min)	Region XI (Davao Region)	BARMM	Region XIII (CARAGA)
<b>KII</b>			DILG X (2F) DILG Iligan (1F) LGU Iligan (2M, 6F)	NYC (1M) OPAPP (1F) DILG (1F)	BYC (1M) DILG Marawi (1M) Sangguniang Panlalawigan (1M)	DILG XIII (2F) DILG Butuan (1F) NYC (1F) OPAPP (1F) NICP Surigao City (1M)
<b>FGD</b>			MLGU Talisayan (5M, 4F) MLGU Kitaotao (2M, 2F) SK Iligan (4M, 5F) SK Talisayan (6M, 3F) SK Kitaotao (1M)	LGU Sta. Cruz (3M, 1F) SK Sta. Cruz (3M, 3F)	MLGU Butig (1M) SK Ampatuan (1M, 1F)	PNP Carmen (1F) MSWD of Carmen MLGU Gigaquit (3M, 6F) LGU Carmen (1M, 2F) ABC Gigaquit (1F) ABC Carmen (1F) SK Gigaquit (5M, 4F) SK Butuan (4M, 2F) SK Carmen (5M, 1F) SK Province (1M)

The research benefited from Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Arts-Based Research (ABR) in harvesting best practices and lessons to empower youth. Appreciative Inquiry is considered more appropriate than a problem-focused approach as the latter may cause conflicts to surface among the participants, preventing them from engaging in meaningful discussions in virtual FGDs (Hung et al., 2018). There is also a need to shift to a positive strength-based approach to dispense with the pandemic's negativities.

The research participants communicated comfortably about their situation, experiences, concerns, challenges, or obstacles through ABR in the online discussion board. In ABR, art forms become research data in their own right and are considered equivalent to traditional interview excerpts or observational data supporting the researcher's interpretation process (Coemans et al., 2015).

The interviews questions are structured, to begin with, followed by some open-ended questions keeping the key points relevant to the research questions ready appropriate to the respondent's position and context (see Annex B). The process means that the data collection process would be less structured, more flexible, and inductive to capture various contexts and build on previous interview data.

In the case of the drawings, they serve as proxies for the interviewees' perceptions, feelings, knowledge, and behavior towards the idea of youth participation in conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting governance. Hence, data generated using the drawings and interaction with the research participants is indispensable in assessing the status of youth participation following the three-step model of (1) exposure, (2) engagement, and (3) empowerment.

The data collected through the FGD and KII were analyzed using an exploratory procedure suggested in the literature by Creswell (2007) and Miles and Huberman (1984). In this procedure, data were prepared for analysis by (a) transcribing it first then subsequently (b) reducing it into themes through coding. The interview's video and audio recordings were checked and listened to many times for accurate translation and transcription. Interview transcripts containing a mixture of vernacular and English data were helpful in the code and theme development. The third step involved finding the meaning among the generated codes and themes and aligning them with those of Holden et al. (2004). Braun and Clarke (2006) also point out that new themes may emerge after this step. In harvesting and processing the data, a different person was assigned to increase robustness and validity in the video and audio transcription.



# 3

## Review of Related Literature



Republic Act 10742, known as the Sangguniang Kabataan Reform Act of 2015, institutionalized broader participation and genuine representation of the youth by increasing the age range for membership to include the child youth (15-17), core youth (15-17), and adult youth (25-30). Application for membership into the KK is simple, which only has two requirements for the process. First, the applicants must be residents of the barangay for at least six months. Second, their names must be listed as voters by the Commission on Election (COMELEC) or included in the KK list of the SK Secretary. To make the application process simple, any KK aspirant only needs to submit any of the

following: original or certified true copies of their birth certificate, valid ID, or legal document.

Input from various actors provided much-needed information in crafting the Philippine Youth Development Plan for 2017 to 2022. These inputs were best practices that came learned from the active collaboration between the State and regional and local government agencies (GAs), local government units (LGUs), civil society organizations (CSOs), local youth development offices (LYDOs), and youth groups (YGs). Among the programs conducted within Regions X, XI, XIII, and BARMM include the following:

### A.

#### Initiatives for Health

1. **Adolescent Health and Youth Development Program (Misamis Oriental)** enhances knowledge of sex education to reduce teenage pregnancy incidence. It disseminates IEC materials on sex education and teenage pregnancy.
2. **Adolescent Health and Development Program (DOH)** capacitates health workers in dealing with the youth. Participants engage in Adolescent Job Aid (AJA), adolescent health education and practical training, and health caravans.

### B.

#### Initiatives for Education

1. **Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES)** in Misamis Oriental aims to lessen dropout rates by employing students during summer breaks for a total of 20 days. Part of the students' honorarium is given to them, while the remainder goes to their schools. This program is in partnership with DOLE.
2. **E-AICS (Educational Assistance) (DSWD)** promotes youth empowerment by providing them with educational assistance.
3. **Iskolar Ako ni Bambi (IKNG) (Misamis Oriental)** aids Commission on Higher Education (CHED)/Technical Education And Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in developing the province's human resources by providing scholarship and financial assistance to needy but deserving tertiary-level students.



4. **Alternative Learning System (ALS) (DepEd)** is a practical alternative to formal instruction. It offers quality primary education to all Out-of-School Youth (OSY). To facilitate learning, it uses the Basic Literacy Program, Accreditation and Equivalency Program (certification of competencies comparable to a graduate of the formal school system), and Alternative Learning System (ALS) for Differently-Abled Persons (DAP) It brings primary education to far-flung barangays and helps eradicate illiteracy among out-of-school youth.

5. **Educational Assistance Program (Region XI)** supports economically disadvantaged youth access to formal education and vocational-technical skills training, which would qualify them for gainful employment or enable them to venture into livelihood projects.

6. **Education Assistance Loan Program (Educ-Assist)** seeks to help workers and their beneficiaries (legal spouse, child of SSS member including illegitimate and siblings of unmarried SSS members including half brother or sister) enrolment funds for college, technical and vocational courses. In the past, SSS facilitated the Study Now Pay Later Plan, Educational, Vocational, and Technical Loans. SSC Educ-Assist is different and goes further than merely addressing the short-term credit needs of its members.

## C.

### Economic Empowerment

1. **The Technology package (Region X)** aims to equip the youth about crop production through lectures, discussions, and hands-on activities. It teaches the youth new practices and technologies in crop production.
2. **Unlad Kabataan (Davao)** promotes the development of the OSY and other disadvantaged youth to become self-reliant, economically productive, and socially

responsible citizens who contribute to their family and community development. Youth engage in various activities that promote social and economic development.

## D.

### Social inclusion and equity

1. **Gender and Development Mainstreaming in DRRM for the Youth Office of Civil Defense (OCD)** guides participants in planning their respective DRRM activities. It involves a two-day training with lectures and workshops.
2. **Fun Run Tuao (Region X)** encourages the youth to participate in Palarong Bayan (LGU Tuao), which involves Fun Run Tuao, basketball, pig hunting, and horseback riding.
3. **Bingo Social (Region 10)** raises funds for youth-related activities and incidental expenses.
4. **“Anti-Discrimination Law” Information Dissemination Drive (LADLAD CARAGA Inc.)** informs the public about the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) and Person with Disabilities (PWDs) to prevent discrimination against them. The barangay does this information drive at their level.
5. **Pag-Asa Youth Association (PYA) (Region XI)** provides platforms to discuss youth gender issues. It also offers special services for the rehabilitation and training of youth with specific needs, especially the abused, delinquent, exploited, neglected, those with disabilities, and those in cultural communities.

## E.

### Peacebuilding and Security Strategy

1. **Youth Against Criminality (NIR)** organizes the youth to become a locality’s volunteer against criminality. In this project, the youth may serve as community monitors, report to authorities the existence of criminality, help expand the size of civil security, or testify in court.
2. **BAMBI SPORTS (Misamis Oriental)** promotes sports among the youth as part of curbing juvenile delinquency.
3. **Youth for Peace Program (Region XI)** is a multi-level network of young people adhering to promoting ethnicity to achieve a livable community. It advocates on-air “FB” live streaming block-time radio broadcast that reaches even the remotest area.
4. **Regional Youth Summit Region 13 (Youth for Peace Movement- Pointy CARAGA)** gathers youth leaders to shape the region’s future towards peace and sustainable development. It develops God-fearing youth leaders and creates awareness of the role and responsibilities of the youth.
5. **Youth Peace Table (OPAPP)** is an inclusive platform where the youth can discuss burning issues that affect them. It seeks its commitment to generating creative solutions and ideas on how to best address these issues. It also serves as the primary vehicle to foster a culture of peace and muster support for peace processes with the Bangsamoro and the communities. It is in light of the Six-Point Peace and Development Agenda of the Duterte administration.
6. **OPAPP study grant programs for youth in conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable areas** provide financial assistance for youth to pursue a college education to enhance livelihood and employment opportunities.
7. **OPAPP skills development programs for youth in conflict-affected and conflict-**

## F.

### Governance

1. **Summer Youth Internship Program (DA)** is a month-long internship program that helps immerse students in government work and provides them with a stipend which they can use for school. Its activities include application and interview, contract signing, field exposure, and report presentation. It promotes government service and helps identify potential public servants in the future.
2. **Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Cadet Engineering Program (CEP)** develops the engineer’s functional and behavioral competency through diverse learning methodologies, instilling a strong sense of personal integrity and a desire to contribute to nation-building through public service. The six-month intensive training ensures a stream of young engineers who have the proper foundation for knowledge, skills, and values to run the Department in the future. The CEP is a partnership between the DPWH and the First Pacific Leadership Academy (FPLA).
3. **“Surigao Youth Conference: An SDG Forum” (Rotaract Club of Metro Surigao)** convenes all Surigao young leaders to learn about the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. The congress resource speakers speak about and conduct workshops on various advocacy areas. It encourages the youth to work towards nation-building.

**vulnerable areas** provide technical education and skills training opportunities for young people to enhance livelihood and employment opportunities.

## G.

### Active Citizenship

1. **Riceponsible Department of Agriculture (DA)- Philippine Rice Research Institute (PRRI)** promotes food sufficiency by teaching the youth to be responsible with rice (“riceponsible”). The youth pledge “Panatang Makapalay.” It involves serving a half cup of rice in restaurants, holding an IEC campaign in schools and offices, introducing or promoting alternative staple foods, and staging a Fun Run.
2. **Youth in Action (Yo- Act Program) (NIR)** aims to have a reliable and responsive youth community by 2020. It encourages the youth to join civic activities and training to strengthen their camaraderie. An annual youth convention trained the youth to contribute to a globally competitive country.
3. **PYAP Out-of-School Youth Unlad Kabataan Program (DSWD)** creates, encourages, and facilitates opportunities for the youth to become personally fulfilled and socially aware. It involves seminars, special services, and training to encourage youth in various activities that promote their own economic and social development.
4. **Bangon Resource Project Negros Island Region (NIR) (University Community Development Office of University of Negros Occidental – Recoletos (UNO-R)**
5. transforms a partner community into a model community using a holistic approach towards total human development and sustainability. The youth engage in all aspects (social, economic, spiritual, health, and educational) and levels (from the individual to the family and society).
6. **Pamaskong Handog (PNP PRO 10)** aims to promote a positive lifestyle among young Mindanaoans. Every December, the youth prepare a program with parlor games and gift-giving.
7. **Search for Idols ng TESDA (TESDA)** recognizes TESDA graduates who have

attained skills excellence and success in their chosen occupation and contributed to their communities’ economic growth. In this competition, youth who are part of this competition undertake extensive advocacy and promotional activities to increase public awareness through the tri-media.

8. **Young Information Officers Advocacy (PIA)** empowers the youth to become effective communicators. It helps the youth to understand better their roles in working for progress through communication and information dissemination.

## H.

### Environment

1. **DRRM Orientation for Youth Leaders (OCD)** educates the youth in Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM). It immerses the youth in a two-day training session with lectures and workshops. Participants can define the different concepts of DRRM, identify different DRRM programs for the youth, and enumerate the youth’s roles in DRRM.
2. **DENR Environmental Education Program** promotes engagement with schools and youth organizations through lectures, caravans, exhibits. It aims to intensify values on environmental protection.
3. **DENR Youth Coordinators’ Meeting** that the Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service regularly conducts to bring together youth desk officers at the central, bureau, and local levels.
4. **DENR Youth Camps/Summit/Jamboree/ Ecological Tours/School Caravans** involve many initiatives for the youth: The Earth Day Youth Camp is in partnership with Earth Day Network Philippines and the Department of Education. Ecological trails cater to students, teachers, and youth organizations. Through these activities, the DENR can inform the youth about its advocacies and promote environmental awareness. In the process, the partnership between youth leaders and the national government is all the more

strengthened.

5. **DENR Regional Yes-O Technical Visits**, a project of the DENR Youth Desk in coordination with DepEd, monitors the implementation of environmental programs, the rehabilitation and protection of school nurseries, the planting of endemic and indigenous forest trees within school campuses, and the establishment of such initiatives as adopt-a-mangrove, adopt-a-coral reef, solid waste management, and other programs. Environmental Lectures during school visits. Among the topics are 89 Environmental Advocacy, Basic Ecology, DENR Mandates, Geological Hazards, Kinds of Forests, Solid Waste Management, and Climate Change.
6. **Expanded National Greening Program (DENR)** seeks to reforest or replant denuded forest land across the country. It also seeks to generate and establish livelihood opportunities to address environmentally damaging economic activities.
7. **Tree Planting/Clean-Up Drives** are coordinated activities among community leaders, school stakeholders, and local DENR offices as part of continuing efforts to protect and preserve the environment.
8. **Coastal Clean-up (International Coastal Cleanup Philippines)** promotes awareness towards coastal area conservation.
9. **Dalaw Turo (DENR)** brings information closer to the youth through the site and school visits. Youth participation in environmental leadership is encouraged to increase awareness about environmental management, biodiversity conservation, and protection.





### Level and Intensity of Youth Participation in Governance

This research focuses on programs where the youth, through the SK, pro-actively participate in peacebuilding in their communities. Here, participation means more than just being a mere beneficiary to be involved in the project life cycle from planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting programs. While most youth projects involve adolescents to some extent, they are rarely involved in significant ways throughout a program. A new paradigm requires the transition from tokenism to one that truly engages young people as full partners in designing, implementing, and evaluating strategies and programs (Fig. 2; table 2). This Three-step model underpins the pacing of youth leaders' formation

from exposure, engagement, and empowerment into transformative leaders' conflict-sensitive and peace-promoting. In the exposure stage, the youth are regarded merely as beneficiaries. In the second stage, they are already considered partners, which does not mean that the LGU grants them full autonomy to decide for themselves. In the third stage, state agencies only support the youth as they are considered leaders in their own right. UNICEF uses another version of this model that it uses for children (Fig. 3). However, this rung model helps evaluate the extent of youth participation in proactively building peace. Table 1 shows a detailed technical description of the three lenses.

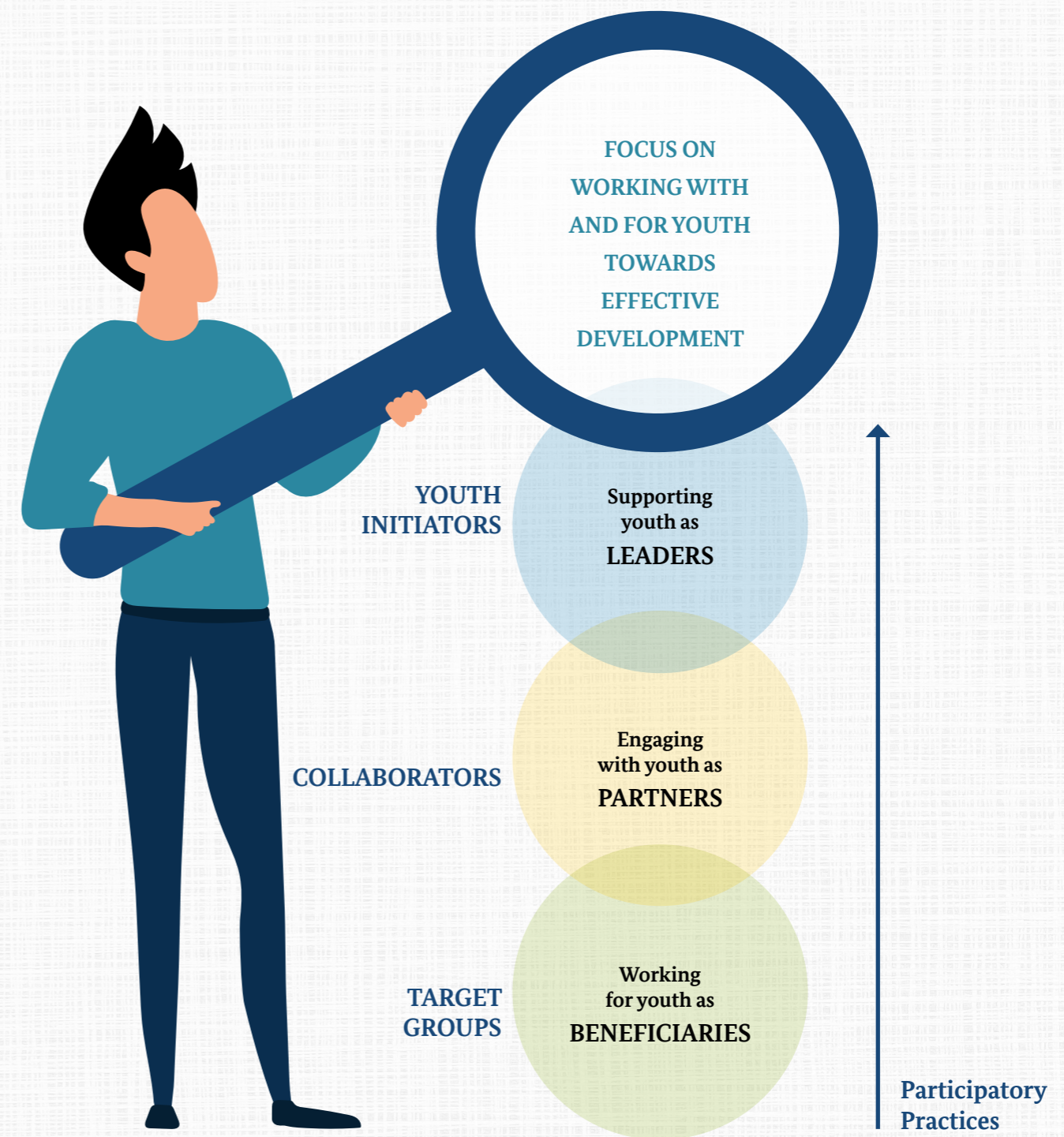


Figure 2. The three-lens approach was used in this research to determine the extent of youth participation in governance. The World Bank Development used this framework in its report in 2007.

Adopted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's participation from Tokenism to Citizenship. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

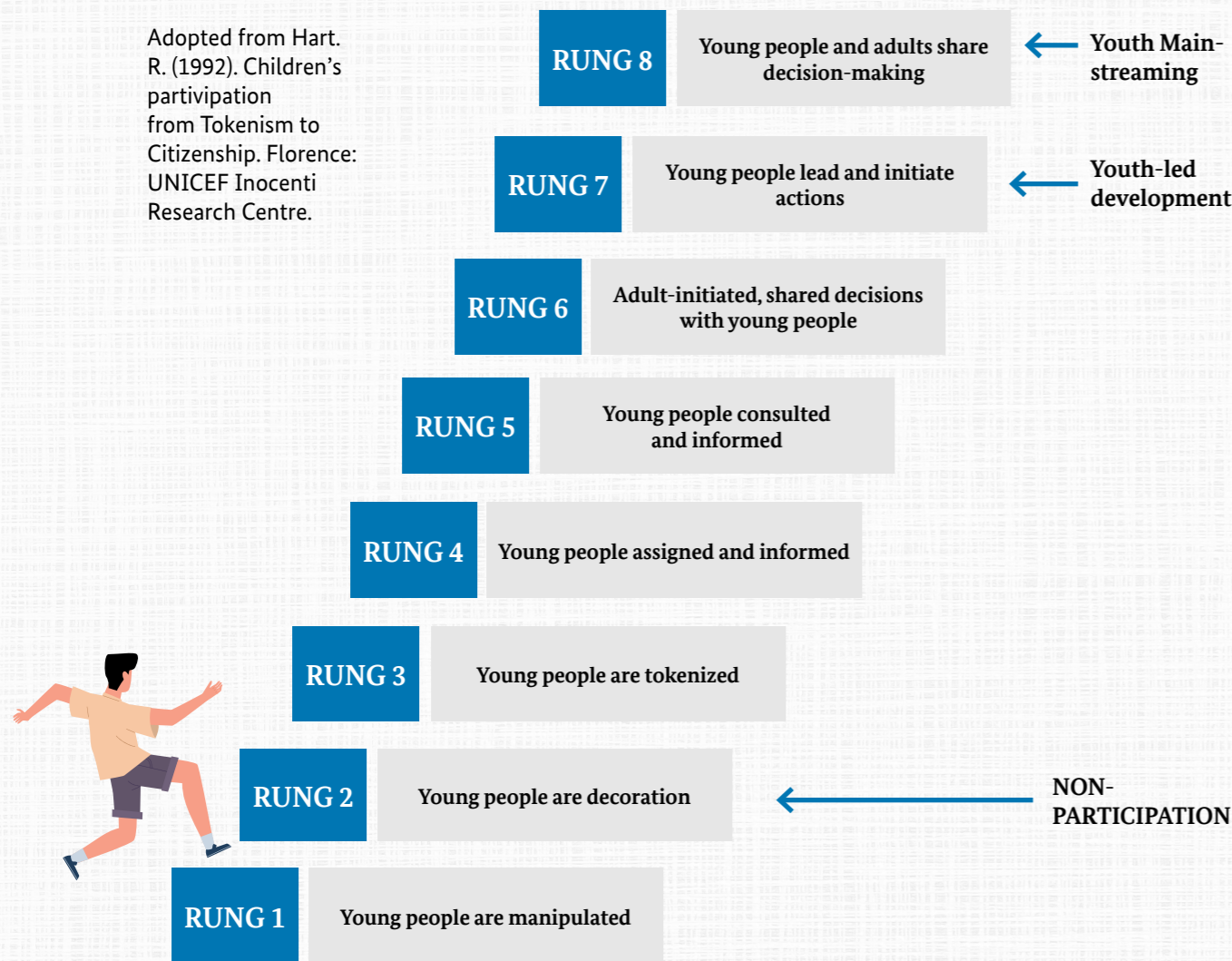


Figure 3. Eight-rung ladder as a model in assessing the level of participation of the youth from tokenism to citizenship. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Center (1992).

Table 2. Descriptions of the three lenses in assessing the participation of the youth in governance.

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
01 Working for youth as beneficiaries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Youth as beneficiaries implies that they are a target group and are adequately informed;</li> <li>2. Explicitly focuses on youth issues through documentation;</li> <li>3. Can prepare the ground for working with youth as partners.</li> </ol>
02 Engaging with youth as partners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaborative interventions, where young people are fully consulted and informed;</li> <li>2. Implies mutual co-operation and responsibility;</li> <li>3. Recognizes that young people generally need experience working at this level before becoming leaders and initiators of development (if appropriate) – a progression that not all would want or be able to make.</li> </ol>
03 Supporting youth as leaders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enabling youth-initiated and directed interventions;</li> <li>2. They are opening up a space for youth-led decision-making (delegation) within existing structures, systems, and processes.</li> </ol>

# 4

## Findings



According to Holden et al. (2004), the empowerment process looks different for different people, organizations, and settings. Throughout this paper, however, the enablers to youth empowerment are discussed based on four key attributes of an empowering group climate, which includes group resiliency, group cohesion, collective efficacy, and outcome efficacy (Holden 2024).

### 4.1

### Collective Participation

#### 4.1.1 Level and Intensity of Participation

The SK typically involves youth sports activities, cultural presentations, and capacity-building programs. The SK also participates in inter-faith activities that promote social cohesion among diverse cultures and religions. However, the youth's participation in the SK activities can differ from one barangay to another. Some SKs find it difficult to convene the youth, while others have difficulty sustaining the participants' attention. When asked at which level they regard the youth participation in governance, the answers are only within the exposure and engagement stage (Figure 4). This perception suggests that the LGU and other duty bearers still need to capacitate the SK to help fully realize their potential. One of the mental models that surfaced during the interview was that the SK

is too young to manage public affairs. Some LGU interviewees said they still needed to supervise the SK to implement programs. Some officers are shy and may yet develop confidence amid older adults in the Barangay Council.

In peacebuilding and security, the SKs initiatives for this pillar usually only rank 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> in the youth councils' priority agenda. These initiatives include the military's Youth Leadership Summit (YLS), which the AFP utilizes to increase awareness about the CPP- NPA-NDF and foster camaraderie and friendship among the participants. According to the participants, the games and teambuilding activities were crucial in positive interpersonal peace.





Figure 4. The two drawings show that interpretation about youth empowerment varies from (a) members of the SK as mere participants to capacity-building sessions only to (b) organizing activities and programs together with the SK.

There are no gender differences in participation in SK - the interviewees happily announced. Female members are typically part of nearly all SK councils interviewed. In addition to women empowerment, some SK councils include LGBTQ rights into their advocacies that call for safe spaces, especially those who do not subscribe to the binary classification of gender, which is a

departure from the primarily women-centric gender and development plan.

Interestingly, the SK is not part of the regional and local Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (TF-ELCAC), a multi-agency convergence to address the decades-old insurgency problem and armed conflict, where children and the youth are targets of recruitment.

### 4.1.2 Duration of Participation

According to the DILG, the increase in youth participation can be explained partly by the rise in the age range from 25 to 30, broadening the base constituency with more people joining the SK from the adult youth. Besides the increase in

the age bracket, NYC expects more youth to join in because of the SK mandate to align their Barangay Youth Development Plan (BYDP) with the Nine Centers of Participation.

### 4.1.3 Roles Played within the Group

The KK considers the SK Chairpersons as role models. Hence, the KK expects the visibility of SKs not only in their attendance at local events to attract more youth but in planning, designing, and organizing activities that promote

the youth's holistic well-being (Figure 5). SK's engagement level with the KK is also an essential determinant of youth participation. One of the interviewees said that "the more active the SK, the more active the KK."



Figure 5. The *Katipunan ng mga Kabataan* expects their SK officers to plan, design, and implement interventions that promote their spiritual, social, emotional, psychological, and physical well-being. The KK expects the SK to foster unity, uphold gender equality, conduct humanitarian efforts, and promote peace and conflict sensitivity.

The immense expectation on the SK can at times be detrimental to the efficacy and effectiveness of the SK, especially when they entrust the responsibility to plan, design, and implement the programs mentioned above only to the shoulders of the SK officers, particularly to the SK Chairpersons. The KK contends that the SK Chairperson is the only one receiving monetary allowances; therefore, they are usually the only ones responsible for performing the tasks above.

If not delegated to the KK and other SK Council members, the tasks would be daunting to the SK Federated President and the SK Chairpersons' welfare. Aside from fulfilling the tasks above, the SK Federated President leads the SK in the

youth's involvement to many unique local bodies, where they are supposed to participate in government decision-making. These local special bodies include the Local School Board, the Local Council for the Protection of Children, and many others. The SK Chairpersons from each barangay, on the other hand, lead the council in crafting their Barangay Youth Development Plan, convening the KK, and in representing the youth in the Barangay Council. Participation in these special bodies and performing their tasks require the SK officers' cognitive empowerment, further education, and capacity-building.

One of the SK Federated President's roles is organizing the KK into various youth

organizations that form part of the LYDC. The youth officer has been giving less attention. To be functional, the LYDC needs to have a minimum number of youth organizations accredited by the LGU. The LYDC is an essential part of the decision-making structure before SK programs are implemented. The LYDC, when fully functional, can support the SK officers in the multitude of tasks given to them.

The DILG expects the SKs to mobilize resources to protect children's rights, participate in the Local School Board's meetings, and engage in Special Bodies created by the LGU. The SK attends the

ELCAC activities merely as participants but not as part of the task force. Despite the opportunity to contribute to the nine Centers of Participation, the region's SKs have focused on Sports, Education, and Livelihood. The council also conducts clean-up drives. Together with the AFP and DILG, the SK co-organizes Youth Leadership Summits to tackle pressing issues in the illicit trade of drugs, firearms, and violent extremism. The YLS could probably be the significant peacebuilding agenda of the SK. The good thing is that even without an honorarium, some of the SKs and KKs still volunteer to participate in community projects.

## 4.2 Individual Change

### 4.2.1 Cognitive Empowerment

Mandatory DILG training and continuous education for the SK officials are prerequisites for the cognitive empowerment of the SK (Figure 6a and b). However, the training they get from DILG may not be enough to prepare the SK in planning, designing, and implementing programs related to the PYDP's nine Centers of Participation. Analysis of the

interview data shows a low to moderate understanding of their SK duties, which probably stems from the limited number of days dedicated to discussing the PYDP and SK Reform Act of 2015. Fortunately, some other institutions and groups help equip the SK with information about peace and order, human rights, and social equity (Figure 6c-e).

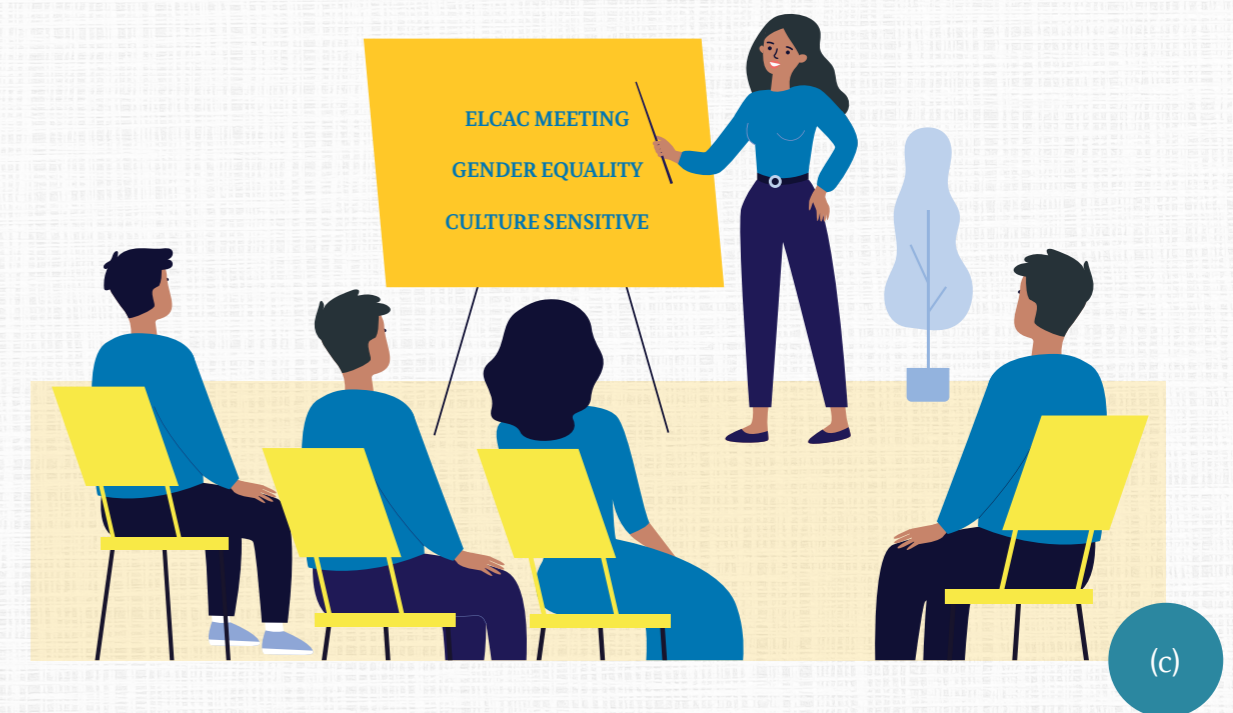
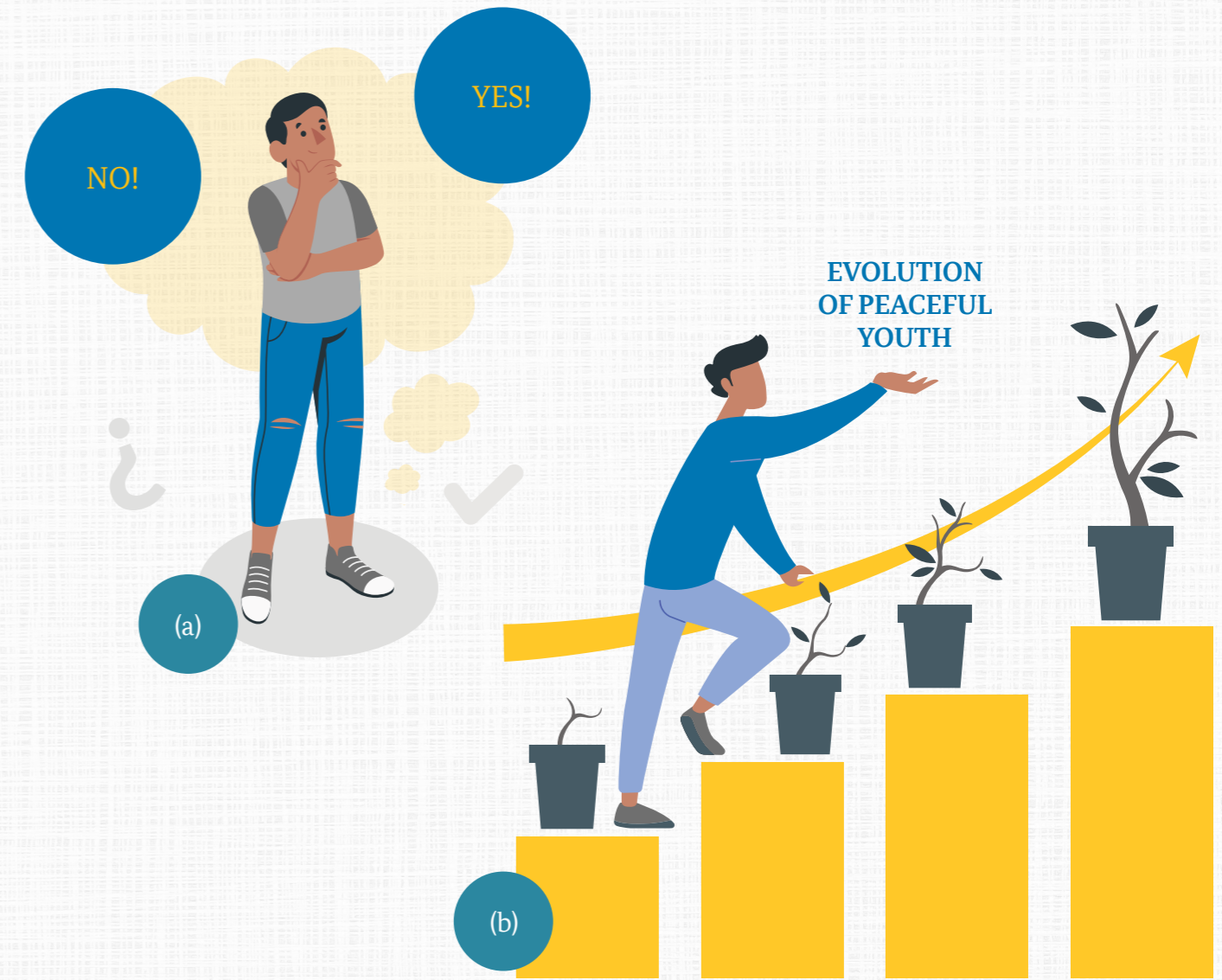




Figure 6. (a-b) Mandatory DILG training and other capacity-building programs are essential for the cognitive empowerment of the youth; (c) Supplementary training by the military and police on Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism (CPVE); and (d-e) Capacity-building on Human Rights and Equality by Non-Government Organizations, Socio-civic organizations, and the academe.

According to the DILG, a broader youth constituency may choose to participate in governance if and only if they know more about the SK Reform Act of 2015, for example, on information such as how to run for elective positions or vote for officers, or the mandate of the SK Council. Not all know their right to suffrage and when and where to register as voters. The LGU should disseminate wider information about youth mainstreaming, NYC, Commission on Election (COMELEC), or the SK themselves creatively to reach more youth.

The DILG offers training on financial management and other technical aspects of the PYDP. However, the SK interviewees said they needed more training to develop robust programs related to the nine pillars of participation. For them, context

is also an essential input for them to craft the BYDP. For example, there seems to be a limited understanding of the extent and scope of peacebuilding and security initiatives that the SK can implement, which the council often carries out as another teambuilding activity. There is no training on conflict mapping, Do No Harm, cultural sensitivity, negotiation, and mediation, which are essential components of peacemaking.

Discussions online with the interview participants helped surface many topics that could be integral parts of the SK training to strengthen their peacebuilding and security initiatives. Service providers may lump these training into three broad classes: socio-cultural, socio-political, and economic approaches. Here is a summary of the topics mentioned during the interviews:

### 1. Socio-political Approaches

- a. Conflict mediation and negotiation
- b. Intergenerational dialogue (Lupong Tagapamayapa or alternative dispute resolution mechanism, Barangay Council, Political Dynamics)
- c. Creative Peacebuilding (Sports for Peace, Arts-based Peacebuilding, Cultural and Traditions, participatory facilitation)
- d. Active Citizenship
- e. Positive social norms and life skills
- f. Non-violent communication

### 2. The Economic Approaches to Peacebuilding

- a. Livelihood

### 3. Socio-political

- a. Peaceful Leadership
- b. Conflict Resolution Mechanisms
- c. Governance and Peacebuilding (Local ordinances and policies)
- d. Philippine Youth Development Plan
- e. Youth Code
- f. Human-rights approach to peacebuilding
- g. Children's rights

## 4.2.2 Emotional Empowerment

Some SK officers admit they still need to develop confidence in articulating their needs and proposals in the Barangay Council. The lack of confidence is something that the SKs want to overcome. There is always fear that the older adults might not listen to them because of their being young. However, the SK's experience in the Barangay Council

tells of a welcoming environment for the young officers. They report that the SK has been listened to, especially in matters concerning children and the youth. Adult allies, both the barangay and town officials, have shown interest in the various SK activities and even co-facilitated some children and youth programs' conduct.

### 4.2.3 Intention to Remain Involved

Unlike sports and cultural activities, SK's training and continuous education programs receive less attendance, probably because of the perception that more youth participate in games because of the enjoyment and fun they experience. Children and the young seldom attend seminars and training, which, according to the interviewees, are boring. Local SK holds raffle draws and provides food to attendees to encourage the youth to join these activities.

There is a high turnover rate for SK treasurers and Secretaries, mainly because they don't receive any remuneration for the services they render. Thus, SK Chairpersons often look

for new volunteers to manage the SK's finances and keep their records, affecting delivering services.

The pandemic has also crippled the SK's ability to reach out to its constituents for consultations and youth conversations with the KK. Even though online platforms are already available, there is simply no internet connection to do this. Face-to-face SK assembly is also not feasible given the Inter-agency Task Force's quarantine restrictions on COVID-19, which prevents youth and children below 20 years of age from going out from their homes to attend meetings.

the right time for the SK to push for the institutionalization of youth initiatives by integrating them into the LGU's local policy agenda and not just into their LYDP. Among the regional development plans that need further integration of the youth agenda includes the following:

- a) Northern Mindanao Regional Development Plan 2017-2022
- b) Northern Mindanao Peace and Development Framework
- c) CARAGA Regional Development Plan 2017-2022
- d) CARAGA Roadmap for Peace 2016-2022

### 4.3.2 Nature of Peacebuilding Activities

Baseline information tells us that peacebuilding conducted by and with the SK uses team-building games as a creative means of building positive relationships among youth participants.

The peace initiatives promote social cohesion, foster positive relationships, and teach active citizenship (Figure 7a and b).

## 4.3 Community Change

### 4.3.1 Change in Relevant Community Awareness and Opinions

Awareness about youth mainstreaming has never been the same since the Marawi Siege, which catapulted the need and desire to include the youth in government decision-making processes, which stems from the observation that

actors in violent conflicts are getting younger and younger. The tide has shifted towards healthcare programs; instead of mobilizing resources for the youth, youth programs are getting scantier as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is

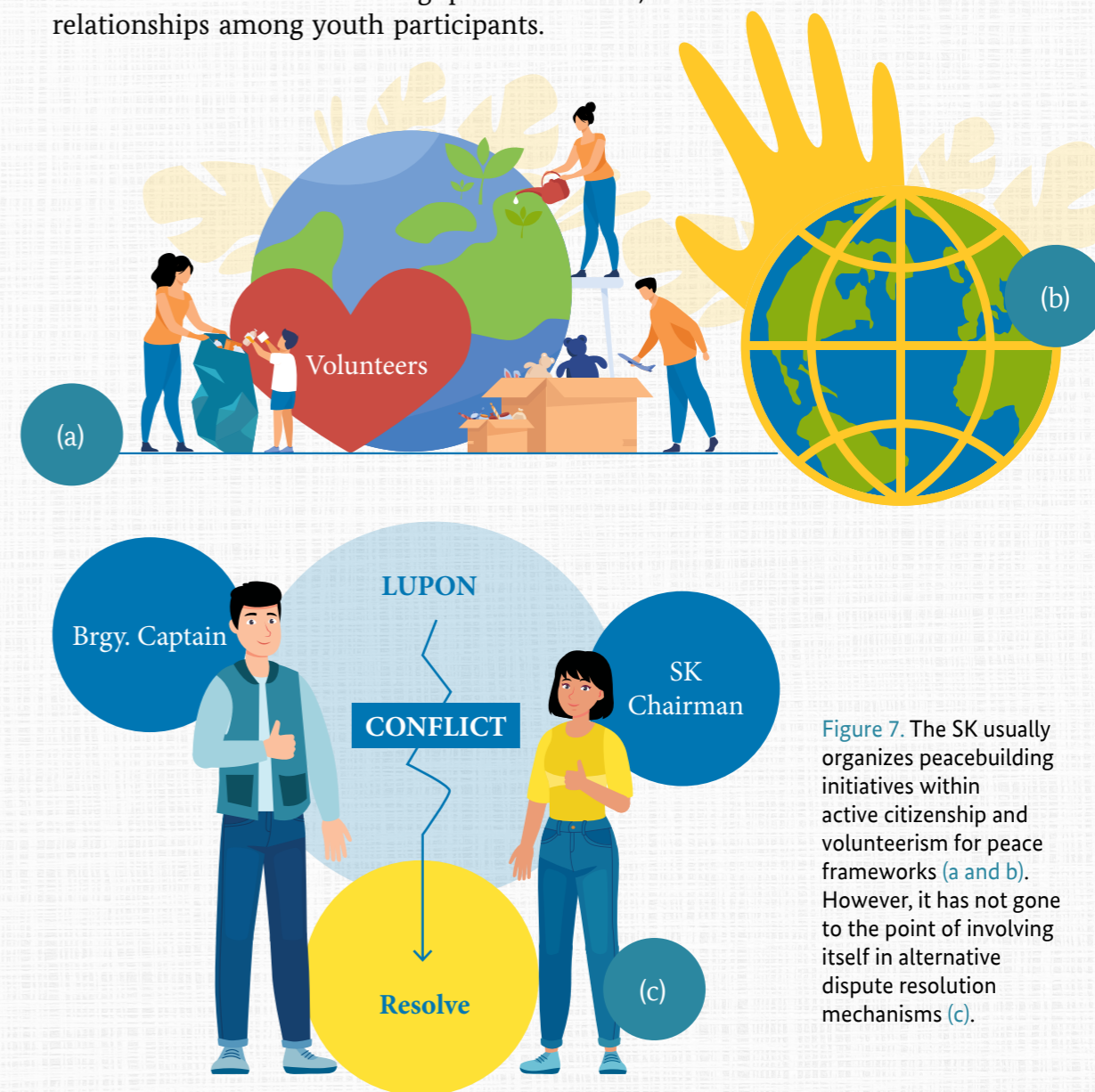


Figure 7. The SK usually organizes peacebuilding initiatives within active citizenship and volunteerism for peace frameworks (a and b). However, it has not gone to the point of involving itself in alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (c).

However, there are instances when the SK is doing more than games and teambuilding in their peace initiatives. The SK in Lanao del Sur, for example, is said to have a broader peacebuilding agenda, which explains why it ranks this as first among the nine pillars of participation they have implemented in the province. The province boasts of having a peace and development roadmap they call the Kalilintad Roadmap, which the Provincial Local Government Unit (PLGU) implements in five phases, namely the (a) creation of a technical working group (b) establishment of a Peace and Development Office (c) Identification and implementation of peace-promoting programs (d) economic approaches to peace (e) and institutionalization of peace programs through policy lobbying.

The status of the PYDP at the municipal and city levels may not be similar to that reported at the provincial level. For example, the SK in Marawi participates in rehabilitation and reconstruction programs, especially after the Marawi siege. However, the DILG notes that many of these programs are sports events and cultural presentations. Although the DILG also noticed the SK's social entrepreneurship programs, it probably concerns the government's rehabilitation efforts. Youth mainstreaming, if it were to be judged based on the number of youth- and youth-serving organizations, is already vibrant in Marawi, especially after the siege.

In Butig and elsewhere, peacebuilding activities are organized jointly by the SK and the military through their Youth Leadership Summit (YLS). Sadly, in some instances, the youth may find it challenging to work with the military, especially if people still have enemy images against the government security

sector. For the YLS, the participants undergo activities to better understand recruitment to violent extremist groups and engage in fun and games to expand their friends' network.

In almost all project areas, settling disputes among the youth remains a function of the *Lupong Tagapamayapa*, which does not include the SK. The traditional leaders' role is to mediate, negotiate, and settle conflicts. Among the localities included in this research, only the SKs in Ampatuan, Maguindanao, are involved in the *Lupong Tagapamayapa*. At times, the Barangay Chairpersons engage the SK in dispute resolution but, in most cases, as a consultant to youth affairs only. Some Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) consult the SK on resolving conflicts involving the youth, as the barangay officials believe that the younger officials know the youth's behavior and attitude better.

The BLGUs harvests ideas from the SKs on the kinds and nature of conflicts that divide the youth and listens to them for recommendations and affirmative actions. However, the SKs said their participation in the *Lupong Tagapayapa* ends when cases already involve Republic Act (RA) 9262 (Anti-Violence of Women and their Children Act of 2004), land disputes, and other complicated issues. When asked if they had formal training in mediation, negotiation, and conflict resolution, the SKs interviewed said they had received none. These topics are not part of the police's *Kabataan Kontra Droga at Terorismo* (KKDAT) and DILG's mandatory training. The SK officers interviewed did not expect upcoming training because of quarantine restrictions and limited internet connection.

## 4.4

## Group Change

### 4.4.1 Activities Completed as Planned

The SK officials interviewed said that usually, they are not able to cover all of the PYDP's nine centers of participation. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted plans to engage the youth in training and other SK activities because of quarantine restrictions. It is also difficult to organize online activities as many Mindanao areas do not have a solid and stable internet connection.

Unlike the other regions, and because it is still in its transition phase, the Bangsamoro Youth Commission decided to focus on five out of nine Centers of Participation in the PYDP, namely health,

education, active citizenship, governance, and peacebuilding and security. The commission temporarily excluded the four other Participation centers because it lacks comprehensive data to guide them to craft and design any programs. While working with BARMM on building the regional bureaucracy, work is underway within BYC in integrating youth voices in setting the foundations of moral governance. Two years after the establishment of BARMM, the BYC is still busy localizing and crafting the modules for the mandatory training of the SK.

### 4.4.2 Activities Effective in Achieving Peace Outcomes

In many instances, the SK and their adult allies have a limited understanding of peacebuilding. They often narrow it down to preventing crime and deterring substance abuse only (Figure 8). Hence, most of the interventions are in collaboration with PDEA, PNP, and AFP. It excludes other aspects of peacebuilding, such as mediation, negotiation, and alternative dispute resolution, even in conflicts that involve children and the

young. Interestingly, only the SK from Ampatuan mentioned they were part of the alternative, community-based mechanism for dispute resolution called the *Lupon Tagapamayapa*.

The SK and their adult allies are not to blame for the limited understanding of peacebuilding. The outcome and output statements for the Peacebuilding and Security pillar of the PYDP only include

drug prevention and rehabilitation, Payapa Masagana Pamayan Program, Youth Peace Table, and the Comprehensive Juvenile intervention. The BYDP, which is supposed to align with these outcome statements, thus, is also limited.

Fortunately, there are cases, like those in Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao, where the SK involve themselves in various peace interventions other than peace and order. As part of their peace interventions, Davao's SK set their targets on the health pillar to work on teenage pregnancy issues, HIV-AIDS, and mental health, resulting in a lack of inner peace to affected individuals. They also do programs on education, social inclusion, and equity, which address structural forms of violence and promote equitable access to essential services.

When asked what peacebuilding interventions the SK should implement, the NYC in Davao suggested non-violent communication, which is essential in establishing positive relationships. Many SKs fail to appreciate the Peacebuilding and Security pillar thinking that they are remotely affected by conflict. Some are passive on issues of peace and conflict. This mental framework is why NYC

provides a space called the SK Tambayan for the officers to understand the social issues affecting them and, at the same time, propose measures to address them. In Davao, the youth peace interventions come in the form of dialogues and Culture of Peace seminars. The socio-civic organization Youth for Peace usually organizes these interventions and partners with the SK to invite their constituencies into the program. The Youth for Peace believes that holding dialogues and listening sessions would ultimately deter violent extremist groups' recruitment of the young. According to NYC, the Davao SK are already well-engaged in local peace processes, citing their organized or attended dialogues. The SK has also developed strategies to sustain such efforts in their respective communities.

On their own, the Giguait SK convenes its constituents to seek help on matters in de-escalating gang violence in Surigao del Norte, which they say has effectively mending back the relationships between conflicting youth groups. Other relevant programs participated by the SK tackle gender and LGBTQ issues to provide safe spaces for non-binary categories of genders.



Figure 8. In many instances, the SK and their adult allies interpret peacebuilding and peacekeeping as the same, limiting the activities to prevent crime and substance abuse, neglecting the many other aspects of conflict transformation.

### 4.4.3 Resource Mobilization

To increase participation from the KK, the operations of the SK need financial support from the government. However, the 10% budget allocation from the barangay does not suffice. SK activities, mainly funded through the 10% SK funds, could benefit from a private-public partnership with local and international institutions and groups. However, there are rare instances when SKs can mobilize funds from other sources; hence training them on resource generation can be one topic they can learn.

When SKs fail to attend the mandatory training, they are not afforded "full-pledged" status as officers, which has dire consequences on their ability to function in their respective communities. Without mandatory training, the SK

cannot open a separate bank account for their funds, rendering them dependent on the BLGU, which may compromise their engagement in decision-making processes.

According to the interview data, Lanao del Sur has not integrated the PYDP into the Provincial Development Plan. Despite this, the SK has not failed in lobbying to allocate funds for youth programs in the province. The Provincial SK also has the Ranao Youth Development Council's backing and support, which helps mainstream the local youth agenda. Despite being six months old only, the Regional Youth Development Council (RYDC) has shown a promising role in increasing youth participation in governance.

As of this writing, the LGU of Ampatuan encourages young individuals to organize themselves into groups for technical purposes as the government usually provides grants to groups' collective efforts. Granting monetary support to individuals is not feasible. Currently, BARMM is initiating programs to encourage the youth to organize themselves and seek accreditation to form part of the Local Youth Development Council.

#### 4.4.4 Maintain/Expand Membership Levels and Retain Members

One of the challenges to fully implementing the SK Reform Act of 2015 is accrediting youth organizations and youth-serving organizations that would comprise the local Youth Development Council. For example, Lanao del Sur towns are depauperate in youth organizations' presence, making it challenging to identify at least eight representatives to comprise the LYDC for each municipality. In Marawi, however, even though many youth and youth-serving organizations are present, only a number have applied for accreditation to the Local Youth Development Council. Many applications, though, are already in the pipeline.

#### 4.4.5 Level of Satisfaction Among Members

There are many reasons for the diminished confidence in the SK and its projects. One reason is that people seem to find a disparity between the youth's most pressing needs and interests and the SK's projects in the communities. This disparity sometimes raises questions on whether the SK can fully serve its purpose of looking after the youth's welfare. The result is that the KK may become indifferent, apathetic, and disillusioned, lessening their chances of participating in the SK activities and projects (UNICEF, 2007).

It might be difficult for the SK to satisfy every member's needs in their respective responsibility areas unless there are opportunities for massive consultation among constituents and ownership of the solutions to the problems. Some SK Officers report frustrations and discontent with how their adult allies handle and engage them. However, the statements above are challenging to support, given the lack of a comprehensive evaluation system for the SK.

## 4.5 Group Structure

### 4.5.1 Incentives

According to the DILG, financial incentives, salary, or honorarium matter in running organizations like the SK. Nowadays, many young people prefer to work rather than volunteer to plan and implement programs and projects in their communities. The lack of remuneration could explain why it is difficult for some barangays to find young individuals who would volunteer as a secretary or treasurer to their SK.

Budgeting is something that needs support from within the SK and from the LYDO or the DILG. The SK treasurer cannot do it alone, which is difficult when no funds are available to commission someone to do the budgeting. The turnover rate for SK treasurers is also

high because of the difficulty in finding volunteers who have the competencies needed for the position. Budgeting and the entire financial management system related to SK funds are crucial as they affect the SK operations. Sometimes, the lack of remuneration deters them from assuming roles in the SK.

Incentives and rewards may be essential to encourage the youth's participation in the SK; however, having none has not dampened the spirit for some areas, especially when the SK Chairperson shares whatever they receive as an allowance to the Secretary and Treasurer. Some use other creative legal ways to keep their secretaries and treasurers.

### 4.5.2 Decision-making Process

Only some LGUs have invited their SK to put a youth agenda to their Local Development Plans (LPD). The LDP has integrated a youth agenda in other project areas, but not those identified in consultation with their SK. Not having a separate bank account may compromise

some of the SK's financial autonomy as they have to seek approval from the barangay council members. The lack of autonomy is a dilemma, primarily when conflicts exist between the SK and LGU officials.

### 4.5.3 Relationship to Existing Adult Groupings

Tokenism, a lower form of participation, often results from the lack of appreciation of adults on the idea of youth mainstreaming or youth empowerment (Reyes and Asinas, 2011). While this may still be the general pattern for the regions covered in this research, there are cases where adult public officials already consider the youth, especially the SK, as credible voices. Youth empowerment proves to be problematic only in areas where communities demand the young to obey their adults blindly. In these cases, they feel powerless, unable to control their lives, anxious about their futures, and disabled with anxiety about their self-image.

One of the challenges to youth mainstreaming is the perception that the youth is valuable only when it comes to parties and games but not on serious stuff. Also, one bad apple may spoil the bunch. According to one SK interviewed, one person's poor choice may spoil people's thinking about the youth. Thus, the youth must pull their acts together to improve their image in society. This negative perception of the youth may explain why most BLGUs have never invited the SK to become part of the Lupon Tagapamayapa. There is a firm conviction that they cannot participate in alternative dispute resolution mechanisms within their barangays, even when conflicting parties involve the youth.

### 4.5.4 Opportunities for Involvement

Based on the interviews, there are cases where the youth's involvement goes far beyond mere tokenism. For example, in the BARMM, more young people have joined the parliament as legislators and leaders, which is a good sign of youth empowerment. Many are holding either elected or appointed positions in public offices. We have seen young decision-makers who have led their constituencies with flying colors. Many of the policy recommendations of BYC were supported and approved by the regional government.

There are various other spaces where the youth in Lanao del Sur can participate in governance. For example, they can participate in the Ranao Youth Parliament, a sub-national version of the National Parliament, where the youth

can craft and propose laws vital to them. As of this writing, many of the Ranao Youth Parliament's policy outcomes that the participants legislate are related to peace and security. Second, those with innovative ideas and a heart for social entrepreneurship can submit proposals to the Ranao Grants Program. They get a lump sum to support programs that would help alleviate poverty, which is considered one of the significant drivers of unpeace in the province. The third is through the Young Ranao Leaders Academy, where participants can learn new knowledge and life skills such as peace education.

When asked about inclusivity in youth participation, the interviewee was happy to announce that the PLGU of Lanao

del Sur conducted youth conversations in the entire province where the SK harvested data about the youth's needs and solutions to address these needs. The Provincial SK ensured that data from the youth conversations became integral components of the Youth Development Plan.

On mediation and negotiation, the SK officers mentioned they still have to learn skills to facilitate them. Most BLGUs have not invited the SK to be part of the Lupon Tagapamayapa, composed of the Barangay Chairperson and nineteen other members. The exception is in the Ampatuan town of Maguindanao, where the BLGU invites the SK to participate in the alternative dispute resolution mechanism.

SK activities include the Linggo ng Kabataan, where the LGU gives the KK opportunities in crafting policies and lobbying them. This week-long celebration, conducted every second week of December, can be one of the spaces where the SK can implement peacebuilding training for them and the SK. Because of the pandemic, most SK activities are in online seminars, further marginalizing those who do not have internet, lessening KK's participation in youth activities.

### 4.5.5 Support and Resources Available

In support of the youth mainstreaming advocacy, the Iligan LGU has passed a local ordinance establishing the Youth Center to house various recreational and learning spaces. The ordinance's passage is a massive realization of the goals of the SK Reform Act of 2015 and that of the PYDP. Socio-civic organizations,

Like other towns, the SK in Ampatuan makes sure many craft the Youth Development Plan of their respective barangays. However, the interviewees mentioned that the LGU may not have always integrated the YPDs into their Local Development Plan (LDP).

The SKs are also not consulted in the LDP crafting, which might mean that the youth agenda may not always be present in the LGU's plans, or if it were, may not be reflective of the solutions to the concerns as experienced by the youth. Also, the town of Ampatuan is still yet to create its local Youth Development Council. Most of the time, the SKs are involved in governance-related decision-making processes involving the 10% SK funds. Other than that, the LGU is less likely to involve them.

Gender and Development programs are not limited to providing protection and safe spaces for girls and women as there are also initiatives for the LGBTQ. Although activities organized for the LGBTQ were more on pageant and beauty contests and not necessarily about their rights. Environment programs include coastal clean-up and others.

including Rotaract and Junior Chamber International (JCI), offer training on parliamentary procedures, which enable the SK to propose resolutions to strengthen youth participation. JCI Iligan engages the SK in its Active Citizen Framework, which capacitates situational analysis and problem-solving.



Academic institutions within Iligan also offer training for the SK on peace education. The city also has an LYDO that supervises the affairs of the SK.

Like other government agencies, the SK has to re-align its budget and programs to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, they could not implement programs, projects, and activities related to the PYDP's participation centers except on health. The re-alignment was necessary as the SK also had to play their role in mitigating the impact of COVID-19.

The virus's threat also affected their

mandate to convene the KK because they have to observe quarantine protocols that prevent them from face-to-face meetings. Others were able to engage their constituencies using online knowledge-sharing platforms. However, not all have access to the internet. Lack of internet is one of the biggest challenges to meaningful consultation and involvement of the KK in decision-making processes that affect their lives, mainly because the quarantine restrictions prevent children and youth from going out.

and guide them in crafting the BYDP. In most cases, the coordinator of the LYDO is an appointive position. Hence it may also be vulnerable to political dynamics.

In most cases, the LYDO is a designation over and on top of a person's work, rendering the mandate to serve the youth second priority. Davao de Oro established their own Youth Development Division, a testament to the local government's support for the SK. The Governor here was once a recipient of the programs of NYC. A team comprised of a Youth development Officer (YDO-IV) and support staff runs the daily operations of the Youth Development Division. In contrast, most LGUs place their LYDO in some of the existing offices, which could be burdensome for a few appointees. For others, the LYDO may not have any formal training in youth engagements, which can be another layer of challenge to capacitating the SK.

According to NYC, the LYDO is an integral part of the SK Reform Act of 2015. They are supposed to be front liners in supporting the SK, particularly in planning and implementing programs and activities for the children and youth. The LYDO is also in charge of capacitating the SK and acts as a multiplier force of the NYC.

For Kitaotao in Bukidnon, the LYDO officer assigned to the SK is appointed other administrative functions in the LGU, which seems to affect efficiency in supervising the youth council. However, this situation may be a reality rather than an exemption in the areas covered by

this research. As mentioned above, LYDO attends many functions in the town or city, which may reduce its capability to fully supervise the youth's activities.

The Gigaquit SK partners with private and public offices to run their day-to-day operations. They have not reported any program yet with the LYDO. For advice, they seek mentorship directly from the DILG, especially matters related to financial management. When asked what topics they need capacitation on, the SKs reckoned they would like to be re-oriented on the PYDP again. The SK officers felt they needed to spend more time to learn more about RA10742 from the mandatory training of the DILG. This mentoring is something that the LYDO can do.

Butig already has an LYDO; there is limited information about the activities they organized as most of the peacebuilding activities the interviewee reckoned were those related to the Youth Leadership Summit. The LYDO in Marawi is also fully functional, whose head now is formerly associated with the NYC. The LYDO position in Ampatuan is currently vacant, which the SK hopes to be filled up by the LGU soon.

According to Holden et al. (2004), ideally, adult allies should respect the youth, have active listening skills, be open-minded to ideas and approaches, and relate to the youth. Following the YECF, support from the LYDO and the supporting agency is essential.

## 4.6

### Adult Involvement

The involvement of adults is key to the success of SK or any youth-led programs. The Holdens et al. (2004) Youth Empowerment Conceptual Framework (YECF) highlights adults as

allies who have a critical role in enabling youth participation in governance. The YECF framework expects adults to create empowering settings in which their young people can engage.

#### 4.6.1 Coordinator Characteristics

The DILG works in tandem with the LGU to attend to the SK's need to implement the PYDP. Ideally, they do not engage the young directly, and they have to coordinate with the local government to implement interventions for the SK and KK. The LGU

theoretically has a diversity of spaces and channels to support youth participation in governance. One such mechanism is the Local Youth Development Office (LYDO), which is supposed to oversee the SK's capacity-building initiatives for the youth

### 4.6.2 Parental Support

Parents play significant roles in the youth's participation in the SK. For example, parents can be imposing on whether their children volunteer in SK activities. Parents also prefer their

children to spend more time in school and finish their degrees first rather than volunteer in the SK's community projects.

### 4.6.3 Agency Support

Schools and universities influence a lot of children's and youth's participation in SK. According to the DILG, unless educational institutions put a premium to active citizenship in their curriculum, many youths would still be apathetic to social issues (Figure 9a). They would care less about the SK and volunteering in community projects. Aside from reforms in the curriculum, immediate intervention should address students' recruitment to violent extremist groups and the use and sale of illicit drugs.

Besides schools, youth-serving NGOs assist in training the SK on education, health, social inclusion, and equity. For peacebuilding, they partner with the police and military on Kabataan Kontra Droga at Terorismo (KKDAT) and YLS, which allows the SK to learn the negative impacts of illicit drugs and violent extremism. The SK also seeks to eliminate discrimination against Indigenous Peoples (IP) youth through dialogues and immersions.

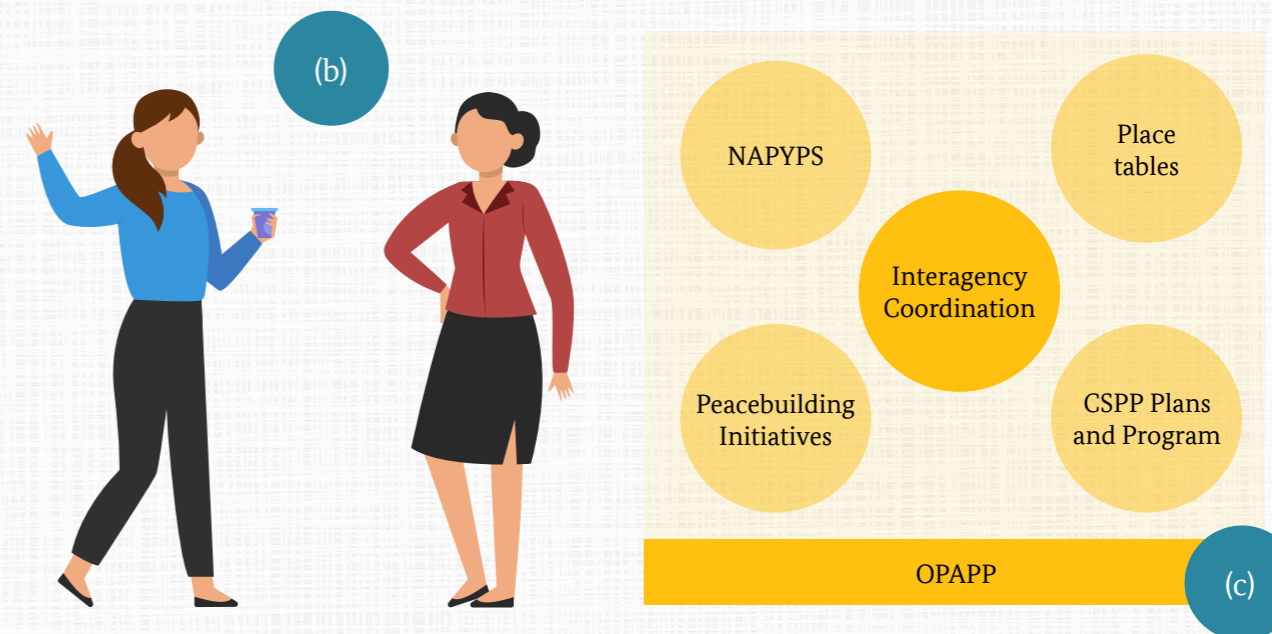


Figure 9. Several LGUs and socio-civic organizations see themselves as adult allies and platforms that provide development opportunities for people to create positive change. These platforms (a) act as a shelter that provides safe learning spaces for the youth. Meanwhile, in (b-c), youth empowerment is possible when duty bearers provide safe spaces for children and the youth to participate in governance mechanisms that typically only involve older adults.

### 4.6.4 State Program Support

A careful review of the Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) reveals that it adopts an empowerment approach in engaging the youth in nine centers of participation, particularly on health, education, economic empowerment, social inclusion and equity, peacebuilding and security, governance, active citizenship, environment, and global mobility. Based on the PYDP, SK-led programs are supposedly grounded in positive youth development, which requires sociopolitical awareness and enhancing young people's skills to make them positive change agents. Thus, the state taps national line agencies in the cognitive and emotional empowerment of the youth.

of the LGU's performances. The criteria encompass indicators on adopting a local youth development program, establishing a local youth development council, providing a youth development office, and instituting policies, programs, and activities that promote the vital role of youth governance.

For example, based on the interview data, the DILG offers free consultation and mentorship to the SK and other youth groups to attract more youth to participate (Figure 9b). So far, the results have been positive, as evidenced by children and child youth's attendance to convergences organized with the DILG. The PYDP's content is cascaded to the SK by the DILG, which was necessary for guiding the youth in crafting their BYDP. Besides content, additional skill sets in writing, planning, and pitching are needed for the SK officers to approve their BYDP.

There is a way for the government to check the implementation of the PYDP and the SK Reform Act of 2015 through institutionalizing the Seal of Good Local Governance in the DILG's assessment

According to one of the interviewees, trickling down the content and essence of the PYDP can be very tricky. The PLGU needs to contextualize the youth development plan to fit into the province's unique legal, religious, and cultural landscape. Unless the PLGU does this, the SK would most probably implement the PYDP for compliance purposes only, endangering its meaningful execution. For the peacebuilding and security pillar, the engagements are usually with the military and police, which gives an impression that they are implementing it with a security lens and not with the academic or social aspect of peace.

Other national line agencies also provide support to the SK. For example, Gigaquit SK partnered with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Education's Alternative Learning System (ALS), and the military in providing livelihood opportunities for the marginalized youth in Surigao del Norte. This program helps many low-income families in selected communities, although only a few indigenous people could avail of the livelihood initiative for now. In selecting ALS beneficiaries, the SK enlists out-of-school youth in their communities and interviews the applicants themselves.

The AFP also engages the SK through its Youth Leadership Summit that provides leadership and violent extremism prevention training. As a contribution to the pillar on Peacebuilding and Security, the SK participates in the police's CPVE interventions through its Kabataan Kontra Drogra at Terorismo (KKDAT) program. The PNP does this as part of the ELCAC's goal of addressing communist insurgency, which has affected three interior barangays in the municipality.

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) also organizes similar activities with the young but focuses on fire safety for children. Sometimes, these initiatives are co-implemented together with NYC and DILG. In some cases, the security sector taps other local capacities for peace like the academe and business sectors. In these undertakings, no modules are standardized as learnings are dependent upon the local context.

In Northern Mindanao, OPPAP focuses on organizing and capacitating IP youth through the Mindanao IP Youth Organization (MIPYO) (Figure 9c), which provides space for convergence of IP youth from all over Mindanao. This focus on IP youth means lesser attention is given to the SKs by OPAPP on the aspect of conflict-sensitive and peace-promoting programs. For MIPYO, the goal of the training is more than just the mere acquisition of skills. It also provides an opportunity for the participants to air out their issues, concerns, and needs - a space believed to be important in the overall framework of preventing recruitment to violent extremist groups by addressing regional development challenges within conflict-affected and vulnerable areas.

Aside from MIPYO, OPAPP can also strengthen the capacities of SK in promoting peace in their communities through its Social Healing and Peacebuilding (SHAPE) Program, which engages local governments in the crafting of conflict-sensitive and peace-promoting (CSPP)-compliant Barangay Development Plans (BDPs). SHAPE, funded under the PAsagang Pamayan (PAMANA) program, aims to mitigate or remove the causes of un-peace and pave the way for peace and development. Hopefully, SHAPE's campaign will reach the level

of SKs as current efforts are limited to engagement with local governments. In the meantime, the lack of access to the internet may hinder any plans to do this soon.

The OPAPP office in South-Central Mindanao focuses exclusively on the PAMANA, which does not have youth programs. There is a separate unit in the Central Office that works on advocacies for youth and women. The PAMANA is in collaboration with the LGU and does not include peace education. Instead, the PAMANA involves infrastructure development. OPPAP is engaged in the TF-ELCAC, which does not include SK in the membership.

Gender sensitivity is also one of the advocacies of OPAPP, which it does by providing online platforms to raise awareness about Executive Order 273 (E.O.273) (1995-2025) or the Philippine Plan for Gender and Development. For the DILG, awareness and respect for different genders' needs promote inter-personal peace and inner peace. Thus, it is also a form of peacebuilding similar to cultural sensitivity.

According to NYC, mandatory training is the product of an inter-agency effort. For example, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) co-authored the learning guide for peacebuilding and security, which explains its focus on drugs, loose firearms, and violent extremism. While these topics are important, it failed to look at peacebuilding in its broadest sense, encompassing inner peace, interpersonal-personal relations, and harmony with the environment. The topic on governance, the DILG modules may include Do No Harm and Reflective Peace Practice to have a

semblance of being peace-promoting.

The NYC, as a coordinating body, does not directly implement programs and projects on the ground. It does this by partnering with local capacities such as government duty bearers, youth-serving organizations, and youth organizations.

BARMM has a unique context that sets it apart from the rest of the Philippines. It has a peculiar history of peace and conflict, including Rido or clan feud and the 2017 Marawi Siege. Because of this, BYC intends to emphasize conflict transformation and healing in the Peacebuilding and Security pillar of youth participation. This focus might come as a departure from the crime prevention lens in tackling this pillar of the PYDP.

To address violent extremism, BYC is working with BARMM in crafting its Regional Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security. Moreover, the Bangsamoro Youth Code is also on its way, ready to be presented and approved by the parliament. Crafting the Youth Code, which involves the BYC Chairperson, would soon be an essential framework in changing mental models towards youth participation in governance. For now, the draft is still in the hands of the technical working group members, awaiting more comprehensive public consultation with various youth sectors. The BYC also mentioned that aside from working on these documents, the BARMM consulted them in the Bangsamoro Local Government Code crafting, a youth agenda.

# 4.7

## Group Climate

### 4.7.1 Group Resiliency

Group resiliency happens when an empowered SK council can resist internal breaks in relationships, especially when things go wrong among the officers or when programs fail and do not go as planned. An empowered group does not have fragile relationships; it is solid and robust as stone. In reality, there could be many conflict faults within and between SK councils that can break the organization. For example, the SK is not immune to the effects of political dynamics as many of them are close biological kin of people holding elected office in the past or present. At times, this affects the chances of their plans and programs being approved and implemented. Political dynasties have long been a feature of the local political landscape, which, at times, could affect the SK's exercise of meaningful autonomy. When it seeps into the SK structure, patronage politics disempowers the youth and makes them lose their autonomy to govern along the way, with local government officials controlling SK funds' management.

The lack of autonomy happens whenever SK officials are elected, not based on their own will, but voted into office because of alleged support from local politicians, who ultimately would control the SK affairs.

There are reports of politicians who field SK chairs related to them by blood as either sons, daughters, or relatives. When touted as a training ground for patronage politics and possibly corruption, the SK loses its credibility, ultimately affecting the KK's participation in the SK activities.

Horizontal conflicts in the form of clan feud or *rido* that span generations of individuals may also affect the term of office of SK officials, most especially if they belong to one of the conflicting parties by blood. Thus, holding dialogue spaces to rekindle relationships between generations of leaders is necessary, as the relationships between politicians ultimately affect the budgeting and implementation of SK programs and projects.

Attendance to youth convergences can sometimes become tricky, especially when political dynamics are involved. LGU officials may opt not to send their SK to participate in seminars, training, and activities. At times, the dynamics between contenders in government elective positions may also affect the approval of BYDPs and releasing of the budget.

### 4.7.2 Group Cohesion

True to its original intent, teambuilding exercises are valuable in maintaining group cohesion, which is why it is primarily the military's approach to implementing the Youth Leadership Summit. Lacking in these training are tools needed to maintain cohesive groups such as non-violent communication

(NVC), Do No Harm, love languages, and conflict style responses. While the above are implementable, the digital divide during the pandemic remains one of the challenges to maintaining positive relationships.



Figure 10. Teambuilding exercises that employ games help rekindle positive relationships among youth participants and promote group cohesion.

### 4.7.3 Collective Efficacy

The SKs are supposed to open a separate bank account for their funds. However, the majority have not done so because of the long and tedious process of complying with the requirements. Because of this, the SKs had to align their programs to that of the BLGU so that they could collaborate with the barangay officials on interests

and concerns common to them, which could also provide the necessary financial support. The challenge is when there is a conflict between the SK and the BLGU, affecting the youth council's collective efficacy in implementing their programs.

### 4.7.3 Outcome Efficacy

The Municipal Local Government Operations Officer (MLGOO) of Kitaotao mentioned that it is often difficult to track and fully assess the outcome efficacy of the SK as the youth councils are not required to submit accomplishment and evaluation reports to their office. Hence, the need for knowledge management, including a system of evaluation and monitoring.



Figure 11. An empowered SK, with outcome efficacy, can deliver the services and products expected from them successfully. The outcome efficacy of the SK, symbolized by the fruits in the tree, is often tricky to ascertain because of the lack of an evaluation system.

## 4.8 Predisposing Youth Characteristic

Absent in the interview data is the impact of individual situations of SK, such as school and work conditions, on their performance as officers. Unknown to many, many SK officers are multi-tasking, attending to their functions as community leaders, and are either earning their degrees or working for an income. However, narratives were present on how parents and probably clan members influence SK officers' decision-making, which may have negative or positive consequences on their roles in the community. Influence from older adults, such as parents and relatives, can be difficult for shared decision-making processes. This situation can be problematic in families where adolescents have more power than the SK member, towering the young officer's decisions.

## 4.9

### Set of options and recommendations on capacity development strategies of LGUs and other state actors to foster youth engagement in local governance and peacebuilding processes

Based on a literature review, the Philippines is strongly committed to fostering youth political participation, articulating in RA 10742 or the SK Reform Act of 2015, the PYDP, and various other regional development plans. Here, the Philippines articulates its belief that its people's participation, including youth, is a fundamental democratic right in government-related decision-making processes.

For the most part, effective and meaningful youth participation in governance has one of three attributes: it can be consultative; it can entail youth-led participation, where young people have a direct impact on decision-making within their youth communities; finally, it can involve collaborative youth participation, where young people effectively take part in governance-related decision-making processes.

Some of the SK members, who took part in the interviews, live in conflict-affected areas, or are in situations of violence, often spoke of a trust gap between young people and older adult leaders in their barangay, town, or province. Stereotypes of the youth as problems or passive victims are often pervasive. Rather than being

part of the solution, most barangays, for example, exclude their SK chairpersons from being part of the twenty-member Lupon Tagapamayapa - the community's alternative dispute resolution mechanism - on the assumption that the young might find it challenging to participate in such a critical task.

The survey highlights the government's need to develop a strategic framework that identifies priorities for youth participation in conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting governance. One can presume that based on the choice of words, Peacebuilding and Security in the PYDP is suggestive only of the use of a risk lens to peacebuilding, which could limit programming to remedial responses rather than genuine conflict prevention efforts. In response, theories of change (TOC) that state that employment, education, training, livelihood, and network development could dissuade the youth from engaging in violent behavior dominate persistently in government peacebuilding programming, shadowing TOCs that places more value on the promotion of a culture of peace and active non-violence.

The AFP and the PNP's efforts to engage

the youth in their YLS and KKDAT are commendable as these provide the SK and KK spaces to participate in peacebuilding. However, since the government's armed security sector and the ones organizing the YLS and KKDAT, the dominant framing utilized is usually through the lens of risk. The unemployed, marginalized, orphaned youth, for example, could be threats to peace and stability.

The NYC took note of the SK's need to conduct situational analysis to understand their constituency better. This activity would be similar to NYC's National Youth Assessment Study, which the International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) Save the Children conducted before crafting the PYDP. The barangay-based situational analysis involves the KK to help harvest information about issues affecting them. A caveat is that situational analyses often do not consider any violent or unpeaceful consequences of SK's programs and projects.

A similar recommendation from the DILG is to apply a differentiation framework to the peacebuilding initiatives to Caraga's rural and urban communities. People from these areas have unique histories of conflict; hence they have different peace needs. Other modules should be crafted for the diverse communities to cater to differentiation in their peace needs. Some areas appear to be more vulnerable to recruitment to violent extremist groups. As stated in the interview data, most SK peace interventions are limited to creative peacebuilding involving games and safe spaces, which they conduct with the AFP or the PNP. The SK organized the Sports for Peace to promote social

cohesion, although no robust evaluation mechanism can attest to its actual impact. Peacebuilding and Security rank 3rd in the priority pillars of participation by the Gigaquit SK, although it is limited to the activities mentioned earlier. The SK can do more as peacebuilding is multi-faceted and can take on different approaches.

In-depth knowledge about social issues is needed for the SK to identify and design interventions, which means they have to have access to training materials to learn the trade's content and tools. Technical skills in writing are also fundamental as many cannot articulate their thoughts into words. They should also learn to speak effectively, which comes in handy when they seek the approval of their BYDPs or champion some cause. A paradigm shift from dispute-based leadership to peace-promoting governance should be a hallmark in the SK modules. The LYDO also has to be familiar with the law, especially about the SK Reform Act of 2015 and government spending.

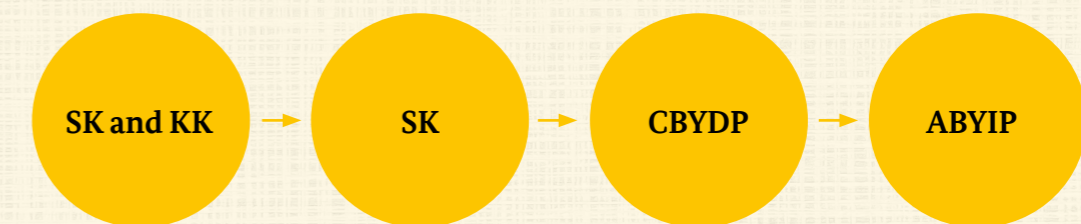
Reinforcing proposal writing, pitching, and participatory facilitation skills for duty bearers such as the DILG and LYDO are important in cascading new ways to engage the SK, especially in the mandatory training. Training on appropriate and acceptable pedagogies to the Millennials may also be of immense help as the DILG prepares to enhance its capabilities to engage the new generation. Training the LYDO is also vital for them to provide appropriate guidance to the SK and KK.

Aside from the training, there are other spaces, herein called pathways, where the youth can mainstream gender-responsive,

peace-promoting, and conflict-sensitive governance into the overall SK structure. For example, the SK can apply DNH in listening sessions with the KK to ensure the general constituency's pro-active and safe participation. The pathway represents this space as SK and KK when the youth

meet regularly for their general assembly. Here, tools such as Conflict Context Analysis, Decision Trees, and Reflective Peace Practices may come in handy before designing peace interventions.

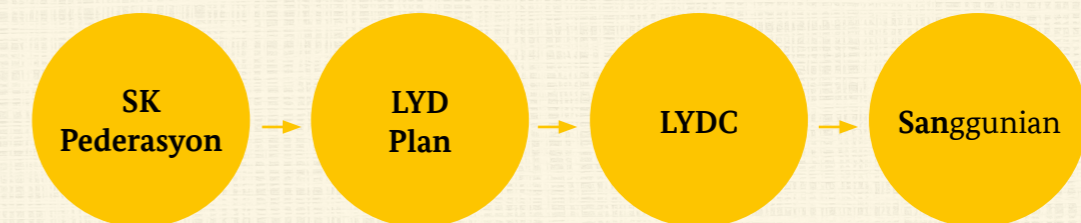
#### Pathway 1:



In pathway 1, the SK can institutionalize their peace interventions in the Comprehensive Barangay Youth Development Plan (CBYDP) that the SK crafts after organizing the SK and KK general assembly. One should note

that the SK's role is to consolidate and process the consultation results with the KK, forming part of the CBYDP and allocated budget in the Annual Barangay Youth Investment Program (ABYIP).

#### Pathway 2:



In the second pathway, the SK Pederasyon, a collective of Barangay SK Chairpersons, crafts the Local Youth Development Plan (LYDP) and submits it for discussion and

more input from the Local Youth Development Council before approval by the Town Sanggunian Council. By law, the SK Pederasyon crafts the LYDP based on the Local Development

Plan (LDP) and the PYDP, which is sadly not the case in many towns and cities in Mindanao. Based on the interviews, the PYDP does not trickle down into the LYDP, and that the LDP sometimes does not contain a youth agenda, which is something to worry about but can be part of the agenda for action.

The above mentioned pathways represent opportunities for GIZ-YOUCAP and concerned government agencies to ensure conflict sensitivity and gender-responsiveness in local youth development planning, comprehensive barangay youth development planning, and annual barangay youth investment programming.

To increase support to the SK, the NYC proposes including Youth Programs as one of the criteria in awarding the Seal of Good Local Governance. The incorporation of youth development programs into the LDP effectively increases funds appropriated to SK's programs. For example, for the Ampatuan SKs, the LGUs can help foster the youth's meaningful participation by including them in crafting the Local Development Plan and the budgeting process. Hopefully, LGUs will dedicate resources to make a separate office dedicated to the LYDO. The SK and the LYDO could also consider submitting priority plans that outline peace intervention areas to secure fund allocations from OPPAP or the country's ELCAC.

In the SK Reform Act, additional financial benefits for appointive SK positions can help the operations. These benefits include an honorarium for the treasurer and the secretary. Training on resource mobilization

and government procurement procedures from COA helps to cement a good SK foundation. After all, good governance anchors itself greatly to process excellence. Only half the SK council opened separate bank accounts for their funds in Caraga. The council's treasurer deposits the 10% fund, which is already an accomplishment for Gigaquit as SKs in other municipalities have never opened their accounts. Circulars and memos and further instructions from the NYC reach the SK but are seldom understood. There is a need to adopt strategies for effective communication to strengthen the SKs. This route is where the LYDO comes very important.

An Active Citizenship framework is among the recommendations the DILG would like to see embedded within the BYDP, which is essential in fostering volunteerism and youth participation in various governance aspects.

For DILG, the SK and other sectors' policy recommendations cannot be acted upon at the regional level. It has to be recommended by any concerned stakeholder for approval at the national level. These recommendations do not exclude those coming from the Local School Board, of which the SK Federated President is a member.

Lastly, there seems to be no standard evaluation or assessment of youth involvement, specifically developing conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting programs. Thus, the SK and LGU need to develop a practical framework to appraise the youth's peacebuilding theories of change.

# 5

## Concrete Recommendations



Increasing youth participation in conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting governance requires a strengthened, coordinated, and effective action at the national and local levels. However, data collected from this

research show that despite having the PYDP, most local government units from the region down to the barangay level have not incorporated measures that ensure meaningful youth participation.

To attain the objective mentioned above, YOUCAP project implemented by GIZ may assist national and local entities such as the NYC, DILG, OPPAP, and LGUs in supporting the youth's participation in three measures, firstly by covering the broader population enabling environment, secondly, by instituting capacity-building activities, and thirdly, by focusing on gender-responsive programs. Thus, the following measures, albeit broad in scope, form part of the recommendations:

a) The national and local governments must ensure that local capacities for peace in legal frameworks, policies, and plans are in place and responsive to the youth's needs in their respective communities.

- i) Formulation of comprehensive, integrated, and easily implementable youth development strategy in all governance levels from the region down to the barangay, bearing in mind the youth's unique peace needs per locality.
- ii) The government must ensure that developing the strategy is a multi-pronged and participatory exercise that encourages vital stakeholders such as the SK, KK, youth organizations, and youth-serving organizations to participate and have a role. For example, the LGU should ensure broad participation in determining key thematic areas representing critical peace issues affecting their

youth within the strategy.

- iii) Aside from the need for a meaningful consultation process, the DILG and NYC should ensure that LGUs craft their youth development strategy based on thorough analysis and synthesis of available research information and sound study of the locality's conflict context.
- iv) The LGU, through their LYDO, should help advocate for a deeper analysis of the needs of the youth. The information derived from the analysis would be vital in crafting holistic theories of change on youth and peacebuilding.
- v) The conduct of situational analysis that feeds into the design of policy and programmatic interventions of the LGU and the SK should include a systematic study of the profile, causes, actors, and dynamics of conflict. Often, these data are absent in the situational analysis.
- vi) Any situational analysis, which forms part of the LDP, LYDP, and BYDP, could benefit from conflict analyses at various levels (e.g., local, regional, national). The LGU's and SK's ability to identify the appropriate focus for the conflict analysis is crucial because the issues and dynamics at the national and regional levels may differ

from those at the grassroots. A comprehensive situational analysis, such as this, is essential in linking conflict analysis with the level and kind of intervention.

- vii) The LGUs and SK should facilitate research into practical platforms to engage the hardest to reach youth and support their involvement in planning and implementing the LYDP and BYDP.
- viii) The LGUs should press for a multilateral peacebuilding system to start moving towards an all-of-nation approach of shifting from remedial responses to genuine prevention efforts, which it can do by bestowing responsibility upon the LYDO to initiate and give direction to other stakeholders to initiate and implement creative and sustainable youth development programs and projects that delivers maximum impact. The government needs all the help from different stakeholders to ensure youth mainstreaming in all governance levels.
- ix) The NYC, DILG, LGU, and SK may employ Reflective Peace Practice (RPP) in evaluating youth participation in national and local peacebuilding and development initiatives. The YOUCAP project may assist either in capacity-building or in the development of the evaluation tool.

- x) The YOUCAP may assist the DILG in developing a robust evaluation mechanism for Youth Development in its annual hand-over of the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG). The original criteria encompass indicators on adopting a local youth development program, establishing a local youth development council, providing a youth development office, and instituting policies, programs, and activities that promote the vital role of youth governance.
- xi) The LGU and SK could also produce knowledge materials for policymakers, youth activists, and development partners to contribute to the local peace processes.

b) Provide development platforms that help young people acquire skills and capacities to participate actively in conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting democratic processes.

- i) To help empower the youth as planners, the DILG and other youth-serving organizations can help assist the SK in determining, harvesting, and processing information needed to craft their LYDP and BYDP. These are highly technical skills that can help them collect relevant data on the physical geography, population structure, recent history, political and economic



landscape, social composition, environment, and geo-strategic position of their locality and responsibility areas.

- ii) Training on conflict context analysis would help the SK and youth-serving organizations understand the conflict context in which they would work and their role in that context.
- iii) To be comprehensive in their analysis of the conflict context, the SK and youth-serving organizations could have training on one or several world views or approaches in understanding their conflict landscape, such as the Harvard Approach, the Human Needs Theory, and the Conflict Transformation approach. By exposing the SK to a diversity of peacebuilding world views, they would have a better chance of moving away from using only a risk or security lens towards a more holistic and systematic understanding of conflict and peace.

One of the opportunities that LGUs can do to help

redress mistrust towards the young is by making them key stakeholders in peacebuilding strategies such as training their skills in mediation and negotiation, which could confer the youth the ability to take part in the dispute resolution activities of their barangay's *Lupong Tagapamayapa*. This training can be in the form of simulation exercises where the SK and LGU officials swap positions and play the role of the other.

- iv) Under the supervision of the NYC, DILG, and LGUs, the SK should learn how to develop and establish an M&E system that employs the Reflective Peace Practice (RPP) to evaluate youth participation in national and local peacebuilding and development initiatives.
- c) Ensure inclusivity in participation and the youth's presence, from all genders, in governance-related decision-making processes and moving away from a young-women-focused-only Gender and Development programming.

# 6

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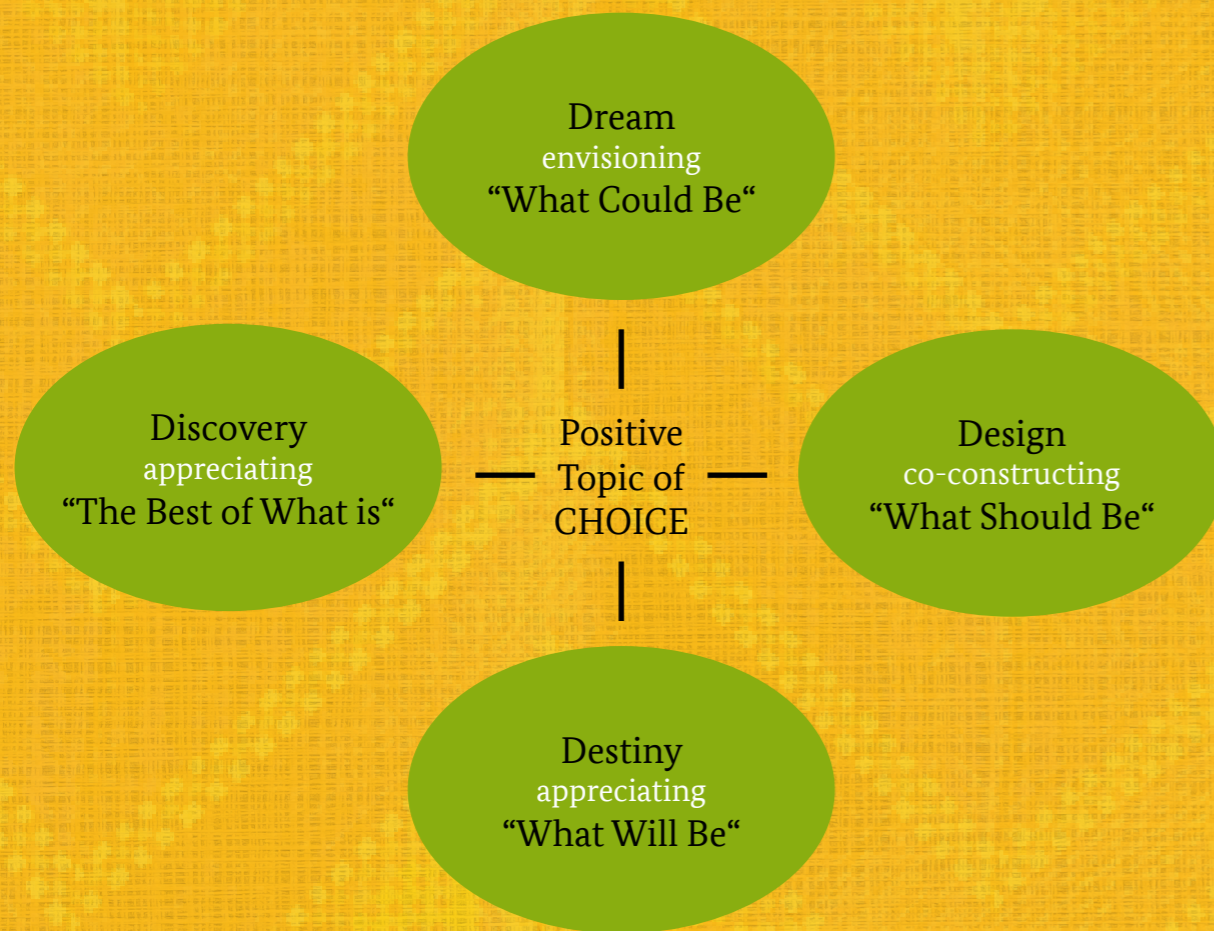
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# 7

## Annex B

Appreciative Inquiry: A Guide to the Questions asked during the KII and FDG



As a framework in harvesting data, appreciative inquiry informed the questions asked during the interviews, which are enumerated as follows:

### 1) Discovery

This step aims to reach a deeper understanding of the participant's perspective and idea about youth participation in conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting governance by asking them to draw any of their actual experiences. Here, the use of art supplements the qualitative comprehension of FGD data by not relying on the exclusive use of verbal content (Daher et al., 2017). To help recover any actual experiences and meanings the participants have on youth participation, they drew their answer to the following probing question:

1. "When you think about youth participation in conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting governance, what is the first thing that comes to mind?"

After five minutes, the participants shared and discussed their drawings in plenary with the other FGD participants.

The focus of this step is to gain an overview and understanding of the motivations, opportunities, and capacities of young men and women to meaningfully participate in inclusive decision-making and local governance processes, also taking into account a specific gender lens. For the FGDs with the SK officials, this step is necessary to determine

the extent of young people's knowledge and appreciation of their rights to participate in decision-making processes and structures (local governance). Likewise, this study's data can help gauge the extent of how the youth exercises active citizenship in community development and peacebuilding.

This step aims to determine what initiatives exist and ascertain their implementation method to ensure youth participation in governance and peacebuilding. The Golden Circle Diagram was used to sort out key points and provide a logical thread for the FGD, which the participants accomplished via the online community board. For this step, the probing questions are:

1. Please think about young people participating fully in conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting governance. Why do you think this is important?
2. Which policies and interventions increased the youth's meaningful participation in conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting governance?
3. How were the interventions done?



The Golden Circle Diagram was used to understand the issues affecting youth participation in governance.

This step needs the most time allocation during the FGD because of the number of follow-up questions. While the participants were accomplishing the Golden Circle Diagram, the facilitator had to harvest answers to the following follow-up questions:

1. What is the stage-of-life status and condition of youth-relevant policies, platforms, and mechanisms embedded in local peace and development plans?
2. What is the status of existing frameworks that facilitate all young people's active participation in decisions, especially those that concern them, and encourages them to engage as active citizens?
3. What knowledge and skills do the youth possess that enable them to make informed decisions?
4. What knowledge and skills do the youth have that confer leadership in mobilizing resources to implement the local youth development plan? Which differences do appear?
5. How aware are the youth of how their opinions become an integral part of decision-making processes?
6. How were the consultations with the youth undertaken? Were different youth groups consulted (e.g., IP youth, Out-of-school youth)?
7. Are there different programs that cater to the needs of various groups of youth?
8. What strategies were adopted to engage more individuals?
9. What strategies engage the private sector in initiatives for youth?
10. What strategies ensure the sustained participation of the youth after their initial engagement?
11. 15. Are there any development opportunities offered for the youth? Which ones?
12. Are there opportunities for out-of-school youth? What about the indigenous people? Are there any for the Bangsamoro? How about the orphans? The homeless? Those with special needs? The parenting? How about IDPs? Those with a juvenile or criminal record? How have they been engaged? If they were not engaged, what were the challenges/restrictions?
13. What community resources are made available for the benefit of the youth? Which ones were dedicated solely to youth development?
14. What infrastructure provide service options for young people?
15. Were there any financial incentives and opportunities for paid training and positively reinforcing to sustain youth motivation?
16. What moral and emotional support programs are available for the youth?
17. Are there evaluation and monitoring mechanisms installed to help improve the program?
18. How were lasting connections built among the youth?
19. What public-private partnerships served as a key to meeting the needs of the youth?
20. Are there any programs that focus on the mental health needs of and psychosocial support for the youth?

## 2) Dream

After sharing local policies in conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting youth participation, it was easier for them to pick the best practices and ascertain lessons. To further facilitate the FGD, the study used a set of probing questions to get details and expand answers on the following:

1. What policy interventions do you like best? Can you explain why?
2. What would you change about the interventions to make them better?

Succeeding follow-up questions, which are dependent on the answers to the probing questions, were asked. Sample follow-up questions for this step include:

4. What factors support civic engagement and youth participation in local peacebuilding and governance?
5. Which factors hinder the active participation of young people?

6. How frequently do the LGU offer learning opportunities and experiences for the youth? What kind of opportunities?
7. Are there available resources (spaces, project funds, materials) necessary for ensuring the effective operation of SK? If not, what is needed, and why?

This step examined the capacities and limitations of LGUs and government bodies in instituting the enabling environment as channels for young people to participate in decision-making. These are when practices and gaps in the processes and approaches of state actors are to be analyzed to get information on the involvement of the youth in the crafting of relevant policy; establishing local platforms and mechanisms; mainstreaming of youth perspectives and agenda in peace and development initiative; implementation of youth-responsive public services and programs.



## 3) Design

In this step, the interviewer narrows the question to “What other suggestions can you make to improve youth participation in conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting governance?” All proposals that would further strengthen existing local policies are the focus of this step. The findings gathered from this step would provide practical guidance and recommendations in structuring

the capacity development strategies of YOUCAP for the state actors and government bodies to enhance their capacities in strengthening the enabling environment as channels to foster youth engagement in local governance and in mainstreaming gender, cultural, conflict sensitivity and youth-oriented strategies in public programs and services.

## 4) Destiny

A matrix would be made available to identify and characterize potential stakeholders and partners in improving the level of youth participation in conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting governance. The characterization would keep two parameters: the stakeholder’s influence in their community and their interest

in the program. In this step, the interviewer asks, “Which institutions, agencies, or groups can work together for the inclusion of the youth to conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and peace-promoting governance processes?” “How can these institutions and agencies be better prepared to engage youth and young adults better?”



Implemented by:  
**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



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**Published by:**  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit  
(GIZ) GmbH

**Registered offices:**

Bonn and Berlin, Germany

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### About the Design

Mindanao has rich and diverse cultures. For a long time, these distinctions have been a source of contention. It is time to work together to rebuild a culture of peace, regardless of faith, tribe, or gender.

The vibrant designs emerged from the textiles of several Mindanao tribes with rich, bright, and unique clothing patterns. The combination of these textiles to the traditional weaving pattern (banig) symbolizes the collaboration of ideas, approaches, dialogues, and participation of youth and other stakeholders in creating a culture of peace.

Three hands clasped together is a gesture of cultural unification and social cohesion among the Mindanao's three peoples: Muslims, Christians, and Indigenous People. This symbol also reflects the project's education, civil society, and government partners, both state and non-state actors. These elements form a modern peace sign and the letter "Y," representing both the primary actors of the project, the youth, and the project itself, YOUCAP.

YOUCAP is a multi-stakeholder project that aims to strengthen the capacities of state and non-state actors in Mindanao to contribute to culture-sensitive, gender-sensitive, and youth-oriented peacebuilding and non-violent conflict transformation.