

QUEZON CITY SK PROFILE AND PERCEIVED YOUTH ISSUES IN THE COMMUNITY

CLRG-NCPAG

POLICY BRIEF 2018-03

Republic Act 10742 or the SK Reform Act was passed in 2016 to reform the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) or Youth Councils as an institution for youth participation in local governance. This paved the way for the 2018 elections where Filipino youth, 15 to 30 years old, elected new sets of SKs in their villages (barangay).

The election came after a five-year hiatus as a result of delays amidst calls to abolish or reform the SK. Based on a 2007 study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), there was a "mismatch" between SK programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) and the actual needs of the youth. The study included a survey that revealed that SK PPAs are mostly related to sports, environment, and infrastructure rather than "education and training, health and nutrition, anti-drug abuse and livelihood"¹. There was also a widely held perception the SK only exposed the youth to corrupt practices.

As such, among the reforms was a mandatory training program for incoming SK leaders, in order to make them aware of their duties and responsibilities, and the basic rules in budgeting and accounting. They were also taught to understand their accountabilities under the law, and made aware of their ethical responsibilities as a public servant. They eventually elected a SK Federation chair soon thereafter. It was also from the mandatory training that CLRG conducted this baseline survey to determine what the youth considered as important issues, as this would also influence the kinds of PPAs they might push for during their terms in office.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS/ POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Explore possibility of rotating the SK federation head position amongst the SK Chairmen

Early election of SK Federation head does not allow for good consensus building. Provide opportunities to allow election of SK Federation during the mid-term of their mandate.

Validate perceptions by accessing and collecting data at the barangay-level

Perceptions are subjective and have to be grounded with actual data.

The barangay is a logical data intermediary for the SK. In the absence of actual data for some barangays, survey and collection can be one of the first key activities of the SK.

Raise awareness among SK on the rights of children & Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SK programs need to be aligned with development priorities of government as well as rights that are most relevant to their constituency.

Expose SK to good practices of youth intervention programs

Adolescence is commonly associated with risk taking behavior and decisions made on a whim. Exposure to a variety of effective intervention programs and best local and global practices can encourage more reflection and generate more effective interventions.

THE RESEARCH

I. METHODOLOGY

A voluntary survey was administered to all newly elected SK officials in Quezon City (QC) last May 2018 with the aim of knowing their perception regarding key issues relevant to their constituents.

The respondents were asked to choose among 11 pre-identified issues or enumerate others that they perceive were relevant to the youth in their respective community. They ranked these issues from 1 – 12, depending on which is most or least problematic for them. The respondents were also asked to provide the basis for their answers (i.e. data, observation, gossip/hearsay, news, etc.) as well as their knowledge about SDGs and children's rights.

After collating the data, the researchers identified the most important issue according to frequency of

agreement and also based on the mean of the rankings, with the lowest mean considered as most important.

II. FINDINGS

Profile of respondents

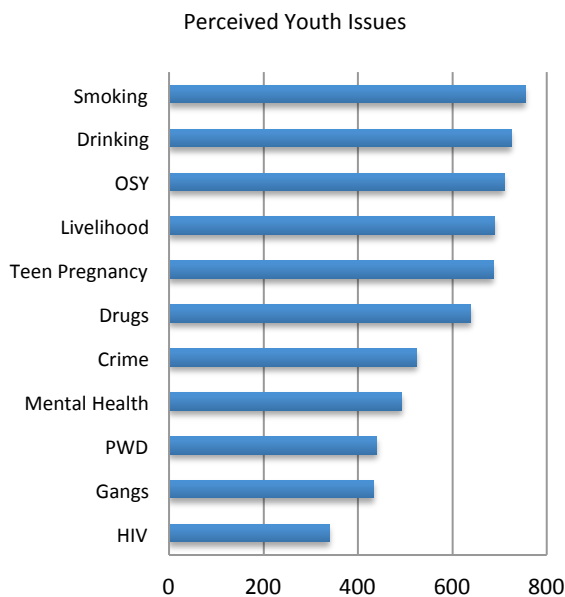
There were a total of 807 respondents, with an almost equal number of men (49%) and women (50%, 1% no response), and majority being 20 years of age, with a standard deviation of 3.37.

Almost half of the respondents come from low-income households (HHs), with only 3% coming from higher earning HHs. This is consistent with Quezon City Government's difficulty in encouraging the youth in more affluent barangays to participate in SK. Majority (67%) of those elected in office said they do not come from

'political' families¹. Only 6% said they had a relatives who were involved in 'politics'. This suggests that SK may be considered as a venue for developing or encouraging new leaders, deviating from the traditional wealthy Filipino politicians.

Perceived issues of the youth

Majority of the respondents identified Smoking (94%) and Drinking (90%) as the most common problem among the youth in their community. The problem of HIV was lowest and considered only by less than half of the respondents (42%).



Acronyms: OSY – Out of School Youth, PWD – Persons with disability, HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

Other issues that were mentioned included bullying, transparency, limited opportunities for sports, excessive use of (social) media, cleanliness/environment, developing good communication/relations with parents, and stronger youth interactions.

Reproductive Health (RH) Issues

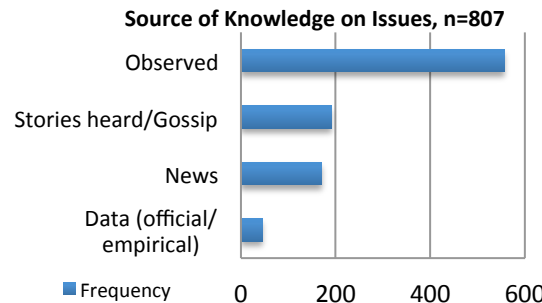
There was also a difference in the perception of RH issues among male and female respondents. While majority of respondents said teenage pregnancy was an issue among the youth, a higher proportion of women reported this being an issue (89% vs. 82%). On the topic of HIV, on the other hand, more men than women viewed (47% to 38%) this as a problem among the youth, and it was also reported as a problem by a majority of respondents only in Districts 2 (63%) and District 3 (51%).

Basis of knowledge on Youth Issues

Most of the respondents, however, noted that their answers were based on observation (69%). Very few said

it was on actual data (6%). Of the few who said it was actual data, most referred to the barangay as their source.

While informative, observations are still subjective and may simply be anecdotal experiences. These may not be as significant or common when viewed as a whole.



Very few said it was on actual data (6%). Of the few who said it was actual data, most referred to the barangay as their source. It is important for policies and programs to be grounded on reality and actual facts and for systems to be in place to make such data available to the SK.

Knowledge on SDGs and children's rights

There's very low knowledge about sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the rights of children among the SK leaders surveyed. Only 3% expressed confidence in their knowledge about SDGs and 10% for children's rights. Others were not so sure, stating that they only have some knowledge on these subject matters (19% for SDGs; 64% for children's rights).

Conclusions

There is a gender balance among the emerging youth leaders of QC, and a high representation among the poorer segment of the population. A larger segment also have no connection to political families, which suggests that possible new political leaders are being groomed or can emerge in the SK.

The highest perceived problems of the youth pertain to risk-taking behaviors, specifically drinking, smoking, drugs, and teen pregnancy. There is also a high concern for access to education, as out of school youth problems were rated among the highest. Emerging issues, like HIV, mental health and PWDs have not been cited as much, but the RH issues can be nuanced by gender and district. HIV for instance, is seen as highly problematic in District 2, and more for men than women.

Perceived issues were based primarily on personal observations (69%) and very few are based on actual official data/facts. Official data often comes from the barangay. While these are perceived issues among the youth leaders, further education with respect to how they link to development and rights would be needed, given the low level of knowledge among them regarding the SDGs and Children's rights.

¹ Note that 'political' families in this case do not necessarily mean they have relatives currently in power in QC.

ⁱ Balanon, Faye & Ong, Michelle & Torre, Beatriz & Puzon, Marco & Paolo Granada, Juan & Trinidad, Arnie. (2007). The Impact of Youth Participation in the Local Government Process. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2pl4kWn>.