

EXPLORING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZATIONS: AN INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE^{1*}

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PARTICIPATION is gradually becoming a fashionable concept within psychology. Historically, the fields of community and political psychology were the first to explore this concept. In political psychology, participation has been associated with good citizenship, such that the involvement of citizens in state formation and nation-building has been the major focus. Thus, participation is usually taken to mean as political participation, and more specifically, electoral participation (voting or working for a particular candidate or issue). While community psychology maintained the interest in citizen participation, the concept has been broadened to include involvement in other arenas besides the state: work settings, health care programs, neighborhood associations, and educational institutions (Duffy & Wong, 2003).

Organized Participation of Children and Young People

In the Philippines, a bulk of discussion of children and young people's participation is focused on political participation. As a consequence, even organizing and mobilizing the youth as a sector had something to do with political affairs. For example, a study of the youth situation in the Philippines done by the National Youth Commission (1997 as cited in UNESCAP, 2000) traced the earliest formal organizations among the youth to the American Commonwealth period, in the form of youth political parties in the 1930s and 1940s. Meanwhile, school-based organizations, such as academic, socio-civic or fraternities and sororities, also flourished in college and university campuses. In the turbulent years of the 1960s, radical youth groups from the student sector lashed out against issues ranging from tuition fee increases to increasing US intervention in Philippine affairs. These anti-government sentiments crystallized in the formation of the *Kabataang Makabayan* (KM), a national student organization, in 1964.

Other types of youth organizations also emerged in the 1960s, specifically those organized along religious lines. Although considered to be more moderate in orientation, these organizations also participated in mass mobilizations together with other interest groups such as peasants, workers, fisherfolk. Protests against the Marcos administration intensified in the late 1960s as more activists joined the student movement. President Marcos, desperate to suppress the people's movement, declared martial law in 1972. After the military crackdown against militant groups, organizing became strictly state-regulated. The only organizations that remained were the ones that the Marcos dictatorship allowed to exist. Among those that continued were those initiated and supported by the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches (Constantino-David, 1998).

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Although very much regulated, new organizations were allowed to set-up by the mid-1970s with social development issues on a largely community-based level. The revival of the student movement also came in the form of relief and extension work, as spurred by severe typhoons and floods. Martial Law continued its state-sponsored efforts in youth development. Through Presidential Decree 684 issued in 1975, Marcos created his youth arm, the Kabataang Barangay (KB). However, many criticized the KB for its failure to maximize young people's meaningful participation. The same goes for its successor, the Sanggunian Kabataan.

The present study reanalyzes the results of a mapping project of children and young people's participation in the Philippines commissioned by the Save the Children-UK Philippines. The mapping was done in order to gather baseline data on existing children and young people's organizations: location, sphere of activities, areas of operation, and others. This mapping project specifically focused on the activities and experiences of SC-UK's partner organizations. It also sought to determine organizational variables and processes that shape the participation of children and young people in the organization. Last, it aimed to describe the role of adults in the context of youth participation.

Methodology

In this study, children's organizations or initiatives are groupings of children, adolescents and young people, a significant number³ (at least 25%) of which are under 18 years of age. The members share objectives, ultimate goals or common ideals, carry out activities or work together orderly in groups. Community-based child-led initiatives/organizations are groups that carry-out their activities and work in the communities where they live. There are community-based initiatives/ organizations that are also doing work at other geographic levels (such as municipal, provincial, in-country regional, national and international) or around different issues that affect them. These groupings are also included in this definition.

Metro Manila and Metro Davao were chosen as research sites since the Save the Children-UK Philippines has active programs in these areas. The organizations were sourced from SC-UK's partners and networks in the two areas. Child-led initiatives/ organizations affiliated with other organizations that are not child-focused were also included in the preliminary investigation.

A preliminary survey was done among 41 organizations that have agreed to participate in the study. The survey aims to map children and young people's organizations based on organization type, location and sphere of operation, and organizational features (leadership, membership, vision etc.). After the mapping survey, 10 organizations were selected based on the following criteria: (a) the organization operates at the community level and (b) the organization focuses on children and young people's issues within the community. Key-informant and group interviews were conducted among a total of 40 officers and members of selected organizations to obtain the following information: (a) nature of organization, (b) form and level of organization, (c) roles and activities of in the organization, (d) perceived benefits of participation, (e) challenges to participation, and (f) role of adults.

³ This criterion was incorporated in order to include those organizations with members who are 18 years old and above. The term "significant number" was also integrated so that the Under 18s have significant presence and influence in the organization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section attempts to identify patterns in the experience and practiced of organized participation among children and youth. Children and young people's participation occurs in various settings and contexts. In the area of organized participation of children and young people in this study, the following contexts were identified to be significant: the organization itself, the partner- adult organization, and the local community.

The Children and Young People's Organization

A total of 41 children organizations were surveyed. Twenty-six (63.4%) came from Metro Manila while the other 15 (36.6%) were from Davao City. One of the primary interests was to determine the scope of operations of the organizations or organization base. Organization base was categorized as follows: community, municipal or district (if operations extend over a number of communities), regional or national in scope, and school-based.

Majority of the organizations (29 or 70.7%) were found to be active in their local communities. In fact, some organizations derive their names from the communities where they originate (for eg., Samahang Kabataan ng Bahay Bukid from Bahay Bukid, Caloocan, or Samahang Kabataan sa Ilang in Davao). Five organizations comprise school-based groups. Three organizations are either regional or national in scope.

Table 1. Organizations by base of operations

| | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|
| community | 29 | 70.7 |
| school | 5 | 12.2 |
| national | 3 | 7.3 |
| organizational | 2 | 4.9 |
| district | 1 | 2.4 |
| school/community | 1 | 2.4 |
| Total | 41 | 100.0 |

Because it was already established that most of the organizations surveyed were found to be active in their respective communities, it is interesting to describe the nature of the communities where these organizations can be found. In both areas, community-based organizations were found in *urban poor communities*. Some of these organizations are located in resettlement areas, soon-to-be-demolished areas, or in areas considered to be squatter communities.

For most of the cases, the organizations do not have a space they could consider as their own. These organizations are usually housed in the adult partner organizations' headquarters or office.

While this is especially true among organizations that have activities that are regional or national in scope, such as CLASP (Child Labor Advocates of the Philippines), Samahan at Ugnayan ng mga Manggagawang Pantahanan ng Pilipinas or SUMAPI from Visayan Forum and YP-ASEC (Young People Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children), this pattern also holds true among community-based organizations. Usually, they share the address of the adult partner's field or satellite office. For example, Lakas ng Kabataan-Phase 3 (LK3) in Bagong Silang, Caloocan holds its meetings in the compound of the daycare center and clinic operated by ZOTO. So do the children's associations under ERDA which conduct organizational assemblies in their SABANA (Samahan ng mga Batang Nananambakan) office in Tondo, Manila.

Organisation type was also identified. This was based on the type of membership in the organization. For example, a *base organization* has members composed of individuals. An organization is considered to be a *coalition* when the members are organizations with common projects/activities. Meanwhile, a *federation* is a legally-recognized group of independent organizations and a *network* may have organizations and/or individuals with clear principle-based unities working together on strategic issue/s on a long-term basis.

Majority of the organizations (37 or 90.2%) are base organizations. Of these, about 28 are community-based. Four are school-based and the other two are either municipal/district or regional/national organizations. An example of the latter is Young People Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children (YP-ASEC). Although national in scope, YP-ASEC's members are individuals. Meanwhile, two organizations were identified as networks. One is CLASP and the other is the National League of Amerasians (NLA), both based in Manila. Both are considered advocacy groups. CLASP actively works towards the elimination of child labor while NLA champions the cause of Amerasian children. The KABIBATA Foundation in Davao is the lone organization that operates in both the community and the school.

Table 2. Organizations by type of membership

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| base organization | 37 | 90.2 |
| network | 2 | 4.9 |
| coalition | 1 | 2.4 |
| federation | 1 | 2.4 |
| Total | 41 | 100.0 |

Organization base and type serve as factors that influence the types or nature of activities or endeavors that the organizations undertake. For example, community-based organizations usually initiate activities or projects that provide direct service to its identified clientele or target constituency (usually, other young people). Common projects among the community-based organizations are cleanliness campaigns and organizing youth-oriented activities such as sportsfests and other types of competitions (eg., dance contest or Battle of the Bands). However, some regional/national-based organizations also provide direct services, such as in the case of SUMAPI, which reaches out to domestic workers in parks, schools and other areas where these groups congregate.

Meanwhile, advocacy-related activities are usually the main focus of networks and coalitions. CLASP, for example, comes out with a newsletter that updates the campaigns of member organizations. NLA lobbies for legislative measures to uplift the situation of Amerasian children. Some community-based organizations reported engaging in advocacy campaigns, specifically those with adult partner organizations involved in the same line of advocacy. These advocacy activities range from posting information materials all over the barangay to participating in mass mobilizations.

Emergence and Existence

It was observed that most of the organizations are young. The average length of existence in months is about 54 months (4 years). The newest organizations, SINAG and LAMDAG, both from Davao, were established just about two months prior to the conduct of the research. The oldest are NLK, LK3 and Teatro Uhay, all from Manila, which have been in existence for about 14 years. Both NLK and LK3 are ZOTO-affiliated organizations while Teatro Uhay is a community-based theater group in Krus na Ligas, Quezon City which works closely with ECPAT-Philippines.

Manila-based organizations have existed much longer than those organizations operating in Davao. In Davao, the average age of the organization is about 2.25. This is contrasted with Manila-based organizations which have an average of about 5.92 years. This information may not only gauge the level of children's participation but may also reflect the diversity among the surveyed organizations in terms of experience, achievements, and level of organizational sophistication.

For what purpose were the organizations created? Our analysis shows that the organizations endorse any of the following: a more parochial **community orientation** or a broader **rights orientation**. Consistent with the **community orientation**, many of the community-based organizations were borne out of a felt need for children and young people to do something worthwhile for the community. Officers and members of the organizations saw their respective organizations as providing venues and opportunities to make productive use of their time and talents. Also, they acknowledge and recognize the important role of children and young people in the improvement of their respective barangays. Thus, this entailed some form of direct community service or another such as clearing of canals or cementing of pathways in the barangay. More specifically, organizing into groups was usually perceived as a means to avoid engaging into undesirable activities such as taking drugs or taking up vices. There are times though that these organizations attempt to fill up the gap in the service delivery by local political entities. Interestingly, such a perspective is shared among organizations being supported by ZOTO.

A larger group reported that their organization was formed primarily to advance a **children's rights perspective**. These mission statements are usually associated with organizations which receive support and guidance from adult partner organization working in the same field of advocacy.

Also, the formation and establishment of most, if not all, of the organizations were initiated by or facilitated through adult staff members of partner organizations with programs operating in the local communities. Visayan Forum formed SUMAPI at a time when the abuse of child domestic workers became a public concern. The Tabing Ilog Youth Club was originally organized by Bayan Muna as one of its youth arm. The Franciscan seminarians formed Teatro Uhay to "enlighten the community through theater arts." Thus to a large extent, the organizations'

emergence (and continued existence) may be due to the initiatives of adult organizations in the community.

In some instances, the children's organizations are considered to be counterparts of existing groups for adults. For example, ZOTO initially organizes the adult members of the community and then later forms an organization composed of the children of the adult members. This was also true for DBK whose members are groomed to succeed the adults in their people's organization. Bantay Bata sa Komunidad was initially an initiative among mothers in the Pandacan area but later recruited members from their children. From just two areas in 1995, membership expanded to 8 areas.

Exposure to activities initiated by adult organizations may have also indirectly led to the organization of the young people. Amerasian children organized into the National League of Amerasians after attending a convention tackling the plight of Amerasian children. After participating in a ZOTO-sponsored sportsfest, young people from Sto. Nino in Tala, Caloocan realized that a formal organization would be of great help to the youth in their baranggay. Hence, the Sto. Nino Youth-Tala Chapter was born. Similarly, SAKSI was formed after Sangguniang Kabataang officials from the area underwent a series of orientation sessions given by the Kaugmaon Center for Children's Concerns, Inc.

Nature of Organizational Activities

Depending on the nature of the organization and its mission, the activities vary. Community focused organizations understandably would concern themselves with the workings of the community. These usually involve activities such as "CleanLINIS DRIVE" that aims to collect garbage and also to clear pathwalks and canals to prevent flooding during the rainy season. Such activities are what Zialcita (2000) claimed as neighborhood associations' "responses to the government's inability to provide basic services." These organizations also initiate youth-focused activities such as sportsfests, and other competitions such as a dance contests. Interestingly, these particular activities become potential sources of funds to the cash-strapped organizations and a venue for bonding and camaraderie for the members.

Meanwhile, advocacy seems to be a major concern among organizations with a children's rights perspective and those that may be considered as special interest groups. Again, this was trend echoed by SC-UK partners in programs such as Early Childhood Care and Development (SC-UK, 2001). These activities may be internally focused. Training and sessions that aim to raise the level of awareness of members may be an example of this type. Bukas Kamay sponsors Children or Youth Development Sessions to advocate certain issues.

Advocacy activities may also target people outside of the organization, especially the potential members. This may be done in the form of display and distribution of information materials around the neighborhood or wearing of T-shirts with slogans. Orientation sessions and consultation meetings are also possible venues for advocacy.

It is not surprising to discover that many children organizations report the use of theater arts in their advocacy activities. It has been found that Perhaps this is one of the reasons why YP-ASEC actively pursues its partnership with Teatro Uhay, an established community theater group in Krus na Ligas, Quezon City, in order to infuse children's rights messages into its annual Lenten production. In fact, ZOTO has developed its own cultural arm, Kultura at Sining ng Maralita, for such purposes. Another group merged within ZOTO, Zone One, which aims to give voice to the concerns of the youth. After receiving basic theater arts education, children develop

their own presentation that incorporates the issues that confront them as a sector. Most of these presentations are performed during gatherings and conventions, or even during street mobilizations.

As noted earlier, children organizations even participate in mass mobilizations. Groups such as CLASP, SUMAPI and other child rights-focused organizations prepare activities that culminate in the Global March. Children's organizations from communities threatened with eviction and demolition join their adult counterparts in street protests.

Lobbying is another form of advocacy that coalitions and networks specifically undertake. CLASP takes to heart its letter writing campaigns to legislators to enact the Magna Carta for Domestic Workers. SUMAPI is currently working on measures to recognize the value of domestic workers through the existing social security system. The same goes for NLA which seeks recognition of Amerasians by both US and Philippine governments.

Forms of Participation in Organization

Attendance in meetings and activities. A major part of the participation of children and young people's participation is in the work and activities of their own organization. Attendance in meetings and sponsored activities were the most often cited form of participation in the organizations.

All of the organizations reported that they meet regularly. However, this regularity also varies. For most of the organizations, regular meetings are usually held once a month. Again, type of organization may have something to do with regularity. Community –based organizations hold frequent meetings since they are easily mobilized. Networks and coalitions meet less frequently. The number of meetings also increases when the number of planned activities increases.

Most of the meetings are planning and evaluation sessions. Special meetings are held to iron out problems and difficulties. A general assembly is usually called when an important decision has to be made (election of officers, replacement of officers, change in the organization's by-laws and structures). The officers are the ones who facilitate the meetings with the partner-organization representative (usually a coordinator) as co-facilitator.

For most of the organizations, especially the community-based organizations, networks and coalitions, the adult-partner organization's office serve as the venue for the regular meetings. Usually, the meetings are held during weekends, since this is when the children are free from school activities and is also a non-working day for the staff. As mentioned earlier, although the organizations do not have a designated space within the organizations but they can make use of the space for their meetings and activities, provided that the adult-partner organization will not use it.

Democratic decision-making, and inclusive representation. Who sets the agenda for specific meetings depends on the purpose of the meeting. If the meeting is about a specific activity of the organization (eg. Fund-raising), the children, specifically the officers, set the agenda with some input from the coordinator. But if the meeting is to inform the children of a particular project or activity by the adult organization, then it is the adults who set the agenda. In this case, the adult facilitates the meeting.

Organizations decide on important matters through elections. The general assembly is considered the highest decision-making body on important decisions. However, the day-to-day operations and decisions are vested on the leaders or council of representatives (if organization is large enough).

A leadership model is obviously encouraged among children and young people's organizations. This means that adult partner organizations invest much time and effort in developing leadership potentials of children-members. Unless specified, the leaders are usually the ones who represent the organizations in meetings, training seminars, conferences, and advocacy-related activities.

Access to information and open communication. Levels of information sharing within the organizations vary. Some children organizations depend solely on their partner organization for important information and communication. Documentation and records-keeping are obvious limitations among children organizations. Many of the organizations do not keep records of their activities and achievements. Usually, it is the partner organization that take care of the documentation requirements of the organizations, possibly in compliance with the conditions set by funding agencies.

Choice and inclusive methods. There are some activities done in partnership with adult organizations that expose children to significant risks. One example is the participation of children in mass mobilizations. Based on the interviews with some of the children representatives, it seemed that the need for their participation in these activities were not made clear to the children. Most of the time, it is stressed that it is their responsibility to participate, not their right.

Regarding methodologies, organizations provide members with different opportunities to participate in. Perhaps it is important to note the popularity of the use of theater arts and other creative techniques in fostering children and young people's participation.

Reflection, monitoring and evaluation. With the help of the adult partners, children organizations are able to analyse issues that specifically affect them, either as a sector or as an organization. For example, NACCAP member organizations have decided to change their organizational structure following a meeting of representatives from the different barangay children's associations. SUMAPI is currently exploring the possibility of obtaining accreditation from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that takes them one step towards substantial autonomy from Visayan Forum.

Factors Related to Level of Participation

Size of organization. The size of the organizations varies. Coalitions and networks based on individual memberships are typically larger. School-based organizations are generally smaller. Community-based organizations on the other hand, could be as small as ten members or as large as a number of barangays. A relationship between organization size and level of member involvement can be implied. As organizations grow larger, a sense of diffusion of responsibility also develops. The children, mostly the officers, who participated in the study decry some of their members' seeming lack of commitment to the organization. The creation of core groups as reported by many of the organizations attests to the reality that not all members are active. However, the children were quick to

aver that they can count on most of the general membership especially in important activities. For most of the organizations, it seems that the optimal size for active membership is 30.

Roles within the Organization. Those who were interviewed have a clear vision of the organization. The younger members, especially those between the ages 7 and 10 had difficulty articulating their organization's purpose. The officers were more articulate than the regular members. They know more about the organization's day-to-day process, structure and history.

Perceived Benefits of Participation

Personal growth and development. Their participation in their respective organizations has worked wonders for both officers and members alike. Enhanced self-esteem and confidence is a dominant theme in the children and young people's narratives about the impact of their participation to their own lives. For example, both Gelli and Inday attest that they used to be very reticent around people. But only after about a few months of accompanying the SUMAPI officers in their weekly outreach in Luneta Park, they eventually felt more confident and comfortable in approaching and talking to strangers.

The children's organization also paved the way for opportunities for self-growth and development. They have gained knowledge and skills that would have been inaccessible if not for their involvement in their respective organizations. Knowledge about their rights as children is perhaps one of the most significant learnings that they have received. Other skills that they have developed include: public speaking, facilitation, theater, letter writing, designing training modules, organizing activities, organizing management, and mobilizing other children.

Good communication skills are particularly evident among the leaders, especially those from rights-focused organizations. They exhibited confidence in expressing their ideas. This is not as obvious among newer members or even among leaders and members of newly established organizations. There is no doubt that participation in organizations develops certain capacities in the children. However, it is important to note that the level of development may vary depending on: how well established the organization is; and the specific roles that children assume in the organization.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the organization to the children and young people is the realization of their potentials as human beings, and that other people would appreciate their contributions.

Building friendships. Some of the children and young people interviewed reported their gratitude in being able to meet different kinds of people in their stint with the organization. Through these interactions, they were able to widen their own horizons and perspectives, and also from one another's experiences. An added bonus, of course, is that they gain more friends in the process.

Membership in an organization provides opportunities to establish connections with only members of the organization but also nonmembers and children from other communities and organizations as well. Bonding activities within the organization let the members get to know each other better. Through their own sponsored activities (dance contests, sportsfests, open

parties), children get to meet and interact with other nonmembers. If the organization belongs to a network or a coalition, children get a chance to build friendships with members of other organizations. Inter-organizational activities such as summer camps are much anticipated activities by children of the member-organizations. It is during this time that they not only get to travel but also make new friends.

Challenges to Participation

Resources and sustainability. As with other non-profit/ not for profit organizations, the organizations in the study are constrained by lack of resources. Most of the organizations are largely dependent on resources allocated by the partner organization. The possibility of discontinuing due to lack of funds is very real among these organizations especially when its operations depend on external funding.

But despite all these, the children and young people's organization have devised creative ways in order to cope. Some organizations collect monthly fees from its members, funds which they themselves manage. Some survive through a "*patak patak*" (donation) system. All of the organizations reported a variety of activities that they have devised to raise their own funds for their activities.

Relationships with other adults in the community. Relationships with adults in the community pose a challenge to a majority of the children's organizations. Adult reactions towards their organization vary. Some adults have expressed admiration for their efforts to make productive use of their time. While still some others have asked them to recruit their children and relatives, and have provided them ideas of what needs to be done in the communities.

There are times when they are accused of committing hanky-panky instead of being appreciated for the service they are doing for the community.

Perhaps, one of the most anxious about the participation of children in the organizations are the parents. Abby, an advocate from YP-ASEC(Young People Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children) revealed that sometimes she gets in trouble with her parents due to her responsibilities with the organization.

The parents' orientation plays a significant role if children would be able to participate. In cases where parents are part of a sectoral organization, their children's involvement in an organization is not an issue. Instead, the parents are the ones who encourage them. Jovy shares that initially her mother was irritated at the frequent and long meetings: "*meeting na naman*". Eventually, her mother would be one who would remind her of her obligations as a member.

Since SUMAPI deals with domestic workers, it is inevitable to deal with the kasambahays' employers. This is a source of concern among SUMAPI members. Maribel reveals of times when employers get angry when SUMAPI members follow up the kasambahay at their employer's houses.

Connecting with the local government. The barangay represents the biggest challenge to the children's organizations. Their reactions towards children's organizations range from active cooperation to passive support. These varying reactions may have something to do with the nature of the adult-partner organizations' relationships with the barangay, and the openness to children's participation among local officials.

Child-focused NGOs have actively campaigned for the representation of children in the local councils. Some BCAs (barangay children's associations) in Manila such as Samahan ng Malaya at Nagkakaisang Kabataan in Metro Manila and its mother organization, ERDA, had some success in the past in convincing the barangay to convene the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC). However, the children revealed that the local body was convened only once or twice, and apparently was never pursued with earnestness by the local officials. But, selected representatives from the BCAs were able to sit in these meetings. However, the gains that were made at one time may not necessarily be extended especially when barangay leadership changes. As every new leadership dawns, a new struggle also develops. This echoes what Ong and Aguirre (2003) documented in SC-UK's Program for Abused and Exploited Children (PAEC) in their partnership with LGUs.

In this aspect, children-focused organizations seem not to exert as much influence with the barangay. Their relationship is rather a tenuous one. This may be due to the fact that children-focused organizations usually serve or focus on the group or sector that ranks low in barangay priorities. It might also be that barangays feel that the concerns are very specific to children and may not necessarily impact on the whole barangay. Approval from the barangay comes when it feels that the endeavors would benefit a majority of their constituents. The children reveal that they get support from the barangay when they launch their CLEAN-LINIS drives. Although, barangay support may be absent or lukewarm at best, no case has been documented of any antagonism on the part of the barangays.

Broad-based organizations such as ZOTO apply a different tack. In most of their local partnerships, ZOTO has managed to establish good relationships with the local barangays. In fact, some barangay officials are members of the different people's organizations that ZOTO has organized in the areas. This may have contributed to a more positive working relationship with the barangay. Also, in most areas, the Sanggunian Kabataan (SK) are usually inactive, thus these children's organizations virtually take over the responsibilities of this youth agency, although without having access to its public funds. In several cases, they initiate projects that local SKs are known for: sportsfests, dance contests, parties, organizing the town fiesta, etc.

Interestingly, the Sanggunian Kabataan does not figure at all as partners of the children's organizations. In a few cases, SKs are held with some derision. Ironically, in one particular case, a member is also an SK Kagawad, however, she was not able to bridge the two groups together. "The SK is inactive anyway," they rationalised. This case illustrates the cleavage between two youth organizations existing in many communities.

Recognizing this, Kaugmaon sought to influence the SK by integrating it into its organization's activities. They have consciously invited the SK in Barangay Ilang, Davao City to participate in an orientation session on children's rights. After the session, the possibility of forming a local youth group was explored. SAKSI or Samahan ng Aktibong Kabataan sa Ilang was thus born.

Networks with other organizations. Generally, members are aware of other organizations operating in their areas but most of the time, they do not have an opportunity to meet one another. Encounters with children from other organisation depends on whether they are part of the same network or not. Usually, the networking is initiated by the adult partner organizations as in the case of NACCAP. Already existing for several years, this network already has a formal electoral

system in place: every organization sends representatives to different convocations where they elect officers at district, municipal, regional and national levels.

But there are also networks that were initiated by the children themselves. The Kabataan Network was formed by children-members of organizations that belong to the Kabataan Consortium, a network of adult organization working in the field of children's issues in Davao. Their most recent activity is a theater festival that the children themselves organized this year.

CLASP is another more well-established network that around the issue of child labor. Like NACCAP, it already has developed its own system of doing things. Regular elections were conducted over the years. The network has undertaken activities around a common advocacy such as its participation in the Global March.

The Parent-Adult Organization: Models of Facilitating Participation

The adult-partner organization plays a critical role in the participation of children and young people. It is with the adult-partner organization that children's organizations maintain a significant working relationship. In many cases, the adult organizations serve as the driving force for the children and young people's organizations.

Areas of Adult-Partner Support

In almost all of the cases, the children's organizations have depended on the partners for their survival and development. As mentioned earlier, the partners' headquarters or field offices serve as the children's associations **meeting venues** and **mailing address**. Without such support, organizing the children and young people would have been virtually impossible.

The most obvious support that the organizations receive is **funding**. This may be direct or indirect. Direct funding is when the children submit proposals to the partner organizations and then the latter allocates funds. This is the case for most of the projects of SUMAPI. They provide Visayan Forum with budget for each activity, a meeting is held, and when everything is in order, funds are allocated.

Indirect funding occurs when the children make use of the partners' resources and networks to source funds. For example, ZOTO-affiliated children's associations distribute solicitation letters from among ZOTO partners whenever they are mounting a large theatrical production. Several projects were accomplished in this manner. Zone One was able to produce their recording through this route.

The children's associations supported by ERDA, CCF and World Vision have revolving funds aside from the funding they receive from the mother organizations. They collect monthly fees from its members. This serves as start up fund for most of their activities. The funds are supplemented by other fund-raising activities that they initiate.

Capability-building is another key area of support that the children's organizations receive from their partners. This may range from: orientational (children's rights) to skills-based (organizational management and leadership, public speaking and facilitation skills, theater arts and even livelihood). Bukas Kamay (CCF) and Kabataan in Action (World Vision) regularly participate in Children and Youth Development Sessions. So do SAKSI and KASA KA BA.

Technical support and guidance provided the children's organizations the necessary skills to manage their organization. The influence of the partner organization is evident in the way the children's organization is structured: the organizational structure to a certain extent mirrors that of the partner agency. Usually, the partner organization assigns a staff to function as a coordinator. In children-focused organizations, this task falls on the shoulders of a resident social worker or a former member (a "graduate") who was hired as a staff. In broad-based organizations, community organizers function as the *tulay* between the organization and the partner. This close coordination enables the partners to monitor and at times *direct* the activities of the children's organizations. In almost all of the cases, the children's organizations "carry" the partners' mission statements.

From among the organizations surveyed, SUMAPI shows promise of extending itself beyond the identity of its partner organization, Visayan Forum. At the time of the conduct of research, SUMAPI is preparing for accreditation with Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The result of this endeavor will truly be a hallmark case in organizing children and young people. However, the decision to pursue this path was prompted by intense discussions with Visayan Forum staff.

In some cases, children organizations just follow what the partners have outlined for them. One officer mentioned that they come to a meeting when the coordinator calls for one: "*Pag pinapatawag po kami.*" In such a meeting, the list of activities is already prepared and the purpose of the meeting is for task assignment. In other organizations, however, the children are given free rein in coming up with their own plans and priorities.

Models of Facilitating Participation

Based on the history and origins of the organizations in the study, the nature of their activities, vision and mission, and the nature of their partnerships, three distinct models of how participation is facilitated by adult partner organizations could be identified: the community development model, the social welfare model and the child rights model.

Community development model. Community development as an approach focuses on building consensus within a locality (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger & Wandersman, 1984). The community development model may be linked to the history of community organizing which is said to have developed as a systematised set of skills and principles only in the 1970s (Constantino-David, 1995). Incidentally, Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO) has figured prominently in this history, especially in the urban poor areas. Carroll (1998) described the process as confrontational, though not in principle violent. The urban poor has been credited for providing warm bodies for mass mobilizations, an expectation that is also set for the children and youth organizations supported by ZOTO.

Under this model, mobilising the youth is not isolated from other forms of mobilizing in the community. Youth organizing is an outcrop of organizing the adults in the community. This may be the reason why ZOTO supported youth organizations are mostly newly established organizations.

Children and young people are not treated as separate groups. Thus, membership may range from children as young as 6 or 7 to young people in their 20s. Usually, the focus of the organization is

not children's rights per se but community development. The organization is seen as a means to prevent delinquency, which is seen as a threat to community development. As such, community development issues rank higher than specific sectoral concerns. Specific children's issues are pursued through the initiatives of the children and young people themselves. Only when a specific issue threatens the community (e.g., drug addiction) that it becomes a concern for the adult organizations. Support from adult organizations for the youth organization's activities may be relatively easy but this support is contingent on whether the adults are convinced that such an initiative would be beneficial to the community.

Social welfare model. The social welfare approach dominates the practice of social work in the Philippines (Protacio-De Castro, et. al. 2004). In this approach, children are seen as beneficiaries of different adult-designed programs. Children participated initiated within the confines of the adult organizations and as beneficiaries of the various support programs, usually in the area of education. Children initiatives are usually activity-based (clubs) but are not established formally. This model may be applied to the kind of children's participation fostered by the "Big Four", the oldest and largest social welfare NGOs dealing with children: ERDA, CCF, World Vision and Plan International.

This may have been developed as the social welfare organizations recognize the value of children's participation in the expanding political arena. As a case in point, the establishment of the National Anti Poverty Commission (NAPC) provided the space for children's representation in the public arena and sparked the four organizations to work together around a common advocacy. Most, if not all, children representatives to the NAPC come from the four organizations. In this model, we can see an expansion of the children's participation concept along two levels. One is from activity-based participation to organized participation of children. Two, the expansion is from within the adult organizations to the communities. Thus, the formation of barangay children's associations (BCAs) became one of the stated objectives of the Expanding Children's Participation in Social Reform (ECPSR) Project.

In this model, children's participation is geared towards increased representation of children in the public sector. Hence, children are trained to become leaders and adequate sectoral representatives. However, more emphasis is given to participation at the national and regional levels. An important part of the process is the choice of the next children representative to the NAPC. Representation in the local structures remains to be a challenge: although children are mandated to sit in meetings of the BCPCs, these structures rarely get prioritised by local authorities.

This model consciously separates children from young people, unlike the community development which lumps children and young people together. The BCAs launch their own set of activities, usually in close coordination with the adult organization. Because of the ECPSR, strong networking is obvious in the children's associations organized along this model. An interesting outcome of such networking is the seeming congruence or patterning of activities among the various BCAs: the BCAs have similar activities, and also similar time tables regardless of organization size or mother organizations.

Child rights model. Among the three models, this model looks at participation as a right. The promotion of children's rights is the main motivation behind the establishment of children's organizations. Essentially, children-focused, the organizations work around various issues confronting children: child labor, child abuse, street children, among others. A clear children's

rights orientation is obvious in this model. Compared to the social welfare model, the nature of children's participation is more diverse.

Life skills development is one of the major focus of the organizations. Another is advocacy. The nature or focus of advocacy efforts may either be general children's rights or specific children's issues such as those mentioned above. Like the community development model, children and young people may work together around certain issues.

Being child-focused, organizations following this model struggle for support, recognition and acceptance by and within local communities since they do not directly target specific community concerns. Apparently, children's rights awareness and acceptance among adults in the local communities are still low, an observation that mirrors other studies that discussed adult's perceptions of children's rights (see Balanon & Yacat, 2003).

The Local Communities: Arenas of Struggle and Recognition and Legitimization

Data from the survey and interviews reveal that the barangay presents the biggest challenge to the children and young people's organizations. Their reactions towards children's organizations range from active cooperation to passive support. These varying reactions may have something to do with the nature of the adult-partner organization's relationships with the barangay, and the openness to children's participation among local officials.

Child-focused NGOs have actively campaigned for the representation of children in the local councils. Some BCAs (barangay children's associations) in Manila such as Samahan ng Malaya at Nagkakaisang Kabataan in Metro Manila and its mother organization, ERDA, had come success in the past in convincing the barangay to convene the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC). However, the children revealed that the local body was convened only once or twice, and apparently was never pursued with earnestness by the local officials. But, selected representatives from BCAs were able to sit in these meetings. However, the gains that were made at one time may not necessarily be extended especially when barangay leadership changes. As every new leadership dawns, a new struggle also develops. This echoes what Ong and Aguirre (2003) documented in SC-UK's Program for Abused and Exploited Children (PAEC) in their partnership with local government units (LGUs).

In this aspect, children-focused organizations seem not to exert as much influence with the barangay. Their relationship is rather a tenuous one. This may be due to the fact that children-focused organizations usually serve or focus on the group or sector that ranks low in barangay priorities. It might also be that barangays feel that the concerns are very specific to children and may not necessarily impact on the whole barangay. Approval from the barangay comes when it feels that the endeavors would benefit a majority of their constituents. The children reveal that they get support from the barangay when they launch their CLEAN-LINIS drives. Although, barangay support may be absent or lukewarm at best, no case has been documented of any antagonism on the part of the barangays.

Broad-based organizations such as ZOTO apply a different tack. In most of their local partnerships, ZOTO has managed to establish good relationships with the local barangays. In fact, some barangay officials are members of the different people's organizations that ZOTO has organized in the areas. This may have contributed to a more positive working relationship with the barangay. Also, in most areas, the *Sanggunian Kabataan (SK)* are usually inactive, thus these children's organizations virtually take over the responsibilities of this youth agency, although without having access to its public funds. In several cases, they initiate projects that local SKs are known for: sportsfests, dance contests, parties, organizing the town fiesta, etc.

Interestingly, the *Sanggunian Kabataan* does not figure at all as partners of the children's organizations. In a few cases, SKs are held with some derision. Ironically, in one particular case, a member is also an SK Kagawad, however, she was not able to bridge the two groups together. "The SK is inactive anyway," they rationalized. This case illustrates the cleavage between two youth organizations existing in many communities.

Recognizing this, Kaugmaon sought to influence the SK by integrating it into its organization's activities. They have consciously invited the SK in Barangay Ilang, Davao City to participate in an orientation session on children's rights. After the session, the possibility of forming a local youth group was explored. SAKSI or Samahan ng Aktibong Kabataan sa Ilang was thus born.

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The preliminary survey of selected organizations reveal certain patterns and trends. These patterns are influenced in part by the adult partner organization. Not only do most children and young people's organizations depend on the adult organization for survival and development, they also derive their sense of identity and direction from these groups.

Children and young people's participation in their organizations are generally encouraging. Children and young people meet regularly to discuss issues and plan their activities. The growing number of members also attests to a growing interest among children and young people to get involved. For those who are already members of an organization, there is a sense of pride and ownership among children and young people with regards to their organization.

There is no doubt that participation in the organizations have opened a variety of opportunities and experiences for the children. This study is no different. Through their organizations, the children and young people reported achieving a sense of accomplishment, and purpose and meaning in life. Several of the organizations have the capacity to reflect and act on issues that they have identified as affecting their organizations. They have also coped with the constraints over resources through their own creative ways.

Experiences working with other children's groups have generally been positive. Those who have experienced the collective endeavors not only have developed new friendships but also appreciated the virtue of working together even though they are coming from different organizations.

NOTES

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This criterion was incorporated in order to include those organizations with members who are 18 years old and above. The term "significant number" was also integrated so that the Under 18s have significant presence and influence in the organization.

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