



# Youth Participation in Governance

Reflections on the Localized  
Galing Kabataan Initiatives





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Researcher/Writer: Emmanuelle Magno  
Copy Editor: Jonahkriza Aglupus  
Layout Artist: Kevin de Guia  
Project Coordinator: Jay Carizo  
Overall Project Director: Georgina Hernandez-Yang  
Credits for cover photos: Sangguniang Kabataan Divisoria, Zamboanga City  
and Dipolog City National High School, Zamboanga  
del Norte  
Allen Berbon (Northern Samar PIO)

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TECHNICAL NOTE: In this publication, unless otherwise indicated, the term "youth" refers to all those between the ages of 15 and 30, as reflected in the Republic Act 8044 or the Youth in Nation-Building Act. The term "young people" may be used interchangeably with the word "youth."



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This report is dedicated to the Filipino youth, especially the young leaders and organizations who strive to serve their communities.



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## Glossary

ATI	Agricultural Training Institute	KKK	Kabataan Kabubwason Kauswagan
A + I	Adaptive and Innovative Leadership Program	LGU	Local Government Unit
CARFA	Cantongtong Agrarian Rice Farmers Association	LYDC	Local Youth Development Council
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation	LYDO	Local Youth Development Office
COPE	Cycle of Progress and Empowerment (from Sinag ng Hilaga's ILAW project)	NGAs	National Government Agencies
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease	NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
CSO	Civil Society Organization	NYC	National Youth Commission
DEPED	Department of Education	POs	People's Organizations
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government	PYDO	Provincial Youth Development Office
DMO	Disaster Management Orientation (KKK project)	PYDP	Philippine Youth Development Plan
DOLE	Department of Labor of Employment	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	SCYPG	Strengthening Children and Youth Participation in Governance
EO	Executive Orders	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
FPE	Foundation to the Philippine Environment	SGLG	Seal of Good Local Governance
GPF	Galing Pook Foundation	SK	Sangguniang Kabataan
ILAW	Isang Landas at Wangis	UN	United Nations
KK	Katipunan ng Kabataan	YES	Youth Empowered Samar Awards
		YDO	Youth Development Office

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Youth Participation in Governance: Reflections on the Localized Galing Kabataan Initiatives

This is a compilation of promising collaborations and effective programs led by youth development organizations in different communities that have been recognized by local governments as adaptive and innovative. The stories that are featured here draw from the Galing Kabataan Awards, which is a mechanism of local government units (LGUs) to incentivize youth leaders and groups to address urgent needs by utilizing their capabilities and resources in creating positive results and impact. While there have been established award-giving bodies for youth initiatives, most of these operate on a national scale, which makes it more challenging for grassroots organizations to compete. Thus, Galing Kabataan localizes the recognition process to make it accessible and equitable to the youth.

The Galing Kabataan Awards served as the public value creation showcase of 7 LGUs from Eastern Visayas and Zamboanga Peninsula--(1) Samar, (2) Catbalogan City, (3) Northern Samar, (4) Catarman, (5) Zamboanga del Norte, (6) Dipolog City, (7) Zamboanga City. Each of the LGUs developed their own criteria, selection committee, selection process and branding to ensure that it is contextualized to their local environment and that it is relatable to the youth in the areas.

The impact of the Galing Kabataan Awards goes beyond the recognition, incentives, and motivation that the winners gain as the LGUs are also transformed in the process. It opened the eyes of local officials and LGU department heads to the creativity, capability, and competencies of the youth to address systemic issues that communities face such as hunger and malnutrition, poor learning outcomes, and lack of access to mental health services. It paved the way for cross-sector collaboration especially among national government agencies (NGAs), LGUs, non-government organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, faith-based organizations



*Sirak Awards winner, Andam Kabataan representative shares that they want to equip the youth with knowledge, empathy, spirit of collaboration.*



What makes up effective practices in Youth In Innovative Governance? Mentors and participants discussed #BagoTayo plans during the Galing Pook Governance Fair 2018

and youth-led organizations. Most especially, it allowed for youth-adult partnerships to flourish and strengthen as the Galing Kabataan Awards presented a strong proof of concept that it is effective and efficient to actively engage the youth in governance and development.

While the Galing Kabataan Awards created momentum in strengthening children and youth participation in governance, it does not mean that the mission has been fully

accomplished. There are four key action points that need to be pursued in order to maximize the gains from this initiative. First, we need to organize the Galing Kabataan winners and other youth-related and youth-oriented organizations into a network that promotes youth participation in governance through capacity building and policy advocacy efforts. Second, we need to promote a more rigorous evaluation of LGUs' commitment to the inclusion and empowerment of the youth by enhancing the metrics for the Youth Development assessment area of the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG). Third, we need to continue to find models of effective and functional Local Youth Development Offices (LYDOs) and promote it nationwide so that the majority of LGUs will reach such a level. Fourth, we need to popularize the Galing Kabataan program winners as a standard of effective youth governance so that it could serve as benchmarks for the youth as they elect their Sangguniang Kabataan officials in 2023.

As we reflect on the gains of the Galing Kabataan, we recognize that its success is built upon the foundation of adaptive and innovative LGU leaders and staff, SK officials and leaders of youth organizations, and other stakeholders on youth development who have completed the Galing Pook Academy's Adaptive and Innovative Leadership Program. This is all made possible through our continuing partnership with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the National Youth Commission (NYC) as we collectively work together towards expanding more opportunities for children and youth participation in local governance.

# 1 | Introduction

According to the United Nations (UN) World Youth Report (2020), there are 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, or 16 per cent of the global population. Estimates report that by 2030, the youth will reach 1.29 billion in number (or 15.1% of the total world population) and 1.34 billion by 2050 (almost 13.8% of the total world population).

Youth bulge, or the increase of the young people in an area as compared to the working class and the old age, is common among least developed and developing countries. In the group of 47 countries designated by the UN as “least developed,” annual population growth rate of 2.3% from 2015 to 2020 as against the world’s average of 1.04%. If nothing is done, the growth rate of the said 47 countries will continue to increase and could reach 2.5% by the year 2030.

The Philippines, though already considered as a developing country, is also considered as among those with a large children and youth population. As seen on Table 1, findings from the 2020 Census of Population and Housing show that the population below 15 years old is 33.4 million or 30.7% of

the total population. The youth, whose age ranges from 15 to 30 years old totaled 31.4 million or 28.9% of the population higher than the 29.39 million (29.2%) recorded in 2015.<sup>1</sup>

This number highlights the need for us to recognize the value of engaging and mobilizing youth in governance. Oftentimes, the youth are underestimated because of their age and lack of experience, and this is a setback to effective nation-building. The statement “bata lang ‘yan” (he/she is just a child) has been so ingrained in the Filipino psyche and it dismisses the potential of the children and youth to contribute to the development of the community at present.

The government recognizes the need to create institutionalized avenues for the youth to participate in governance, and has continuously attempted to do so. When the Pambansang Katipunan ng Kabataang Barangay (KB) was created in 1975 during the Marcos administration, it aimed to: “consolidate the youth and channel their potentialities towards a more meaningful involvement in community as well as national development; and, create a united youth

Year	Number			Percent to all ages			Sex Ratio
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	
2020	31,401,973	16,013,645	15,388,328	28.9	29.1	28.7	104
2015	29,390,687	14,920,799	14,469,888	29.2	29.4	29.1	103

**Table 1.** Population of youth or persons aged 15 to 30 years old in 2020 and 2015.

Source: <https://psa.gov.ph/content/age-and-sex-distribution-philippine-population-2020-census-population-and-housing> (same as footnote number 3)

1 Philippine Statistics Authority. 2022. “Age and Sex Distribution in the Philippine Population (2020 Census of Population and Housing)” in <https://psa.gov.ph/content/age-and-sex-distribution-philippine-population-2020-census-population-and-housing>



front, geared towards social development by serving as a forum of youthful ideas on vital issues affecting the nation.”<sup>2</sup>

The negative framing of this “bata lang ‘yan” sentiment was reinforced when KB initiatives focused only on sports development—suggesting that youth efforts in governance are limited to leisurely activities. The KB also became a breeding ground for dynastic politics and nepotism.<sup>3</sup>

A positive framing of the “bata lang ‘yan” concept pushes the idea that the children and youth can create impact in the future, which emphasizes the need to instill values in them now to mold them into productive members of society. It acknowledges the role of adults in aiding the formation of the youth into their full and realized forms as adults who can contribute to social good. This is encapsulated in the words of the Philippine national hero, Jose Rizal, “the youth is the hope of the Fatherland”, and in the concept that “ang mga anak ay kayamanan” (children as wealth). While having children and rearing a family is in and of itself a gift and a common choice especially in the Philippines, the idea is that the children will soon become members of the working force and contribute income for the family.

True enough, this obligation to give back to the family is a role that the youth themselves acknowledge and own up to. According to “The State of the Filipino Youth”, the 2021 YouthLed National survey, “helping parents and siblings financially” is a top priority for 72% of the 4,900 respondents from the youth sector.

Youth participation in the Philippines is seen in many forms. Participation of young people is vital in crafting policies and delivery of programs and services that address the concerns of the youth and their communities. Because of this recognition of the youth’s unique role in nation-building, advocacies on nurturing the children and youth properly, giving them proper education and building their capabilities exist. In the field of governance, these include reforming the KB because, as the 1987 Constitution emphasized, “The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It shall inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.”<sup>4</sup> This is consistent with the principle that “through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities, helping them to learn vital life-skills, develop knowledge on human rights and citizenship and to promote positive civic action.”<sup>5</sup>

Consistent with the Philippine Constitution, the Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act 7160) instituted mechanisms for a meaningful participation of the youth sector in local governance. This was indirectly amended with the passage of the SK Reform Law (RA 10742) which sought to “establish adequate, effective, responsive and enabling mechanisms, and support systems that will ensure the meaningful participation of the youth in local governance and in nation-building.” This was further amended by RA 11768 titled “An Act Strengthening the Sangguniang Kabataan, Institutionalizing Additional reforms to Revitalize

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2 Villacorta, Wilfrido. 1978. “Kabataang Barangay: A Case Study” presented in the UNESCO Asian Regional Youth Meeting: Youth Mobilization for Development in Asian Settings (September 17-22)

3 Evangelista, Alex. 2018. “Kabataang Barangay: Get to know the forerunner of the Sangguniang Kabataan” in <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/210754-kabataang-barangay-sk-predecessor/>

4 Article II, Section 13 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution

5 <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-participation.pdf>

Youth Participation in Local Governance and by Providing Honorarium, Other benefits and Privileges, Amending for the Purpose of Certain Sections of Republic Act No. 10742, otherwise known as the Sangguniang Kabataan Reform Act of 2015,” which institutionalizes additional reforms to empower the SK in fulfilling their mandates as youth public servants, by providing them more benefits and privileges.

The reform also created a Local Youth Development Council (LYDC) in every province, city, and municipality to support the SK programs. LYDCs are composed of representatives from different youth organizations in the community including student councils, church and youth faith groups, youth-serving organizations, and community-based youth groups. The age of the council members was also amended from 15-17 years old to 18-24 years old.<sup>6</sup>

The intentions of the SK Reform Law, however, could only be realized when (i) youth leaders and the youth councils themselves have not only the technical know-how but most importantly the capacity to actively and effectively involve in governance equipped with relevant and important information to craft standard as well as beyond conventional programs; (ii) there are effective mechanisms for participation mainstreamed in LGU processes; and (iii) such capacities and mechanisms work for their LGUs to actually integrate and implement innovative and longer term programs for the children and the youth.<sup>7</sup>

The Philippines has 42,046 barangays, and each barangay is mandated to have one SK Council composed of one chairperson and seven council members. This translates to 336,368 individuals that must be trained in leadership and youth governance – a challenging task for the NYC.

Second, LGUs have other concerns to prioritize that the interests of the youth sector may not be among their main thrusts. Or, even if the youth may be a priority of the LGU, the concept of “bata lang yan” may come into play giving the adults the “moral obligation” to be in control. With these, the possibility of repeating the mistakes of the Kabataang Barangay is not remote.

To contribute in the realization of the objectives of the SK Reform Act, the Galing Pook Foundation (GPF) has created programs that help build the capacities of the youth and equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively participate in local government process while at the same time strengthen the capacities of the LGUs in developing mechanisms conducive to youth participation. These include, among others, the Adapt and Innovate (A + I) for Children and Youth Participation in Governance Program which was implemented with the support of UNICEF and NYC.

The A + I for Children and Youth is a participatory, adaptive, and innovative leadership course taught in four modules, and



*Members of the #BagoTayo Youth Network in a lively discussion with other representatives on implementing programs to engage new and experienced youth leaders*

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<sup>6</sup> Project Note: Strengthening the Children and Youth Participation in Governance Program, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



was created to provide a value-creation learning experience for local chief executives and the local government unit's A+I Team.

At the end of the course, the desired results for the participating LGUs are for them to have:

- a. Formed a local governance team that appreciates participatory adaptive and innovative leadership learned from real-life models;
- b. Set in motion a banner program for peace and development that is imbued with good governance principles and inspired by real-life practices; and,
- c. Broadened their network of resource contacts for continuing improvement of their local programs.

One of the outcomes of the A+I is the Strengthening the Children and Youth Participation in Governance Program (SCYPG) Program, a training program designed to strengthen adolescent youth leaders and members of youth development councils (SK, KK, LYDO) capacity in local planning and budgeting. This program also ensures that mechanisms for adolescent youth participation in governance are mainstreamed in LGU processes like local planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring; and that the ability of LGUs to implement and develop innovative and adaptive programs for children and adolescent youth are improved. The SCYPG Program was implemented by GPF with support from UNICEF and NYC.

This document presents a compilation of promising collaborations and effective programs led by youth development organizations harvested from different communities. The main objective of this publication is to contribute to the



*#BagoTayo Launch, 2019. Iloilo Board Member Jason Gonzales shares best practices in good local governance with young leaders and organizers*

growing body of evidence that the youth can also help to the development of their communities and society. This is to prove that given proper incentives and mechanisms, the youth can go beyond the usual stereotypes that they are limited by their age and inexperience, and in the case of SK leaders, that their programs are only focused on sports development. The undertaking also aims to contribute to the development of policies and mechanisms to ensure youth participation in local governance. This, likewise, aims to amplify the recognized youth-led programs so that other youth or SK organizations can replicate the same.

The document is divided into four parts. The current part provides the introduction and background, the second part presents a discussion on the kinds of participation and engagements of the SK and youth organizations in governance and segues into the Galing Kabataan Initiatives. The third part presents a discussion and analysis of the initiatives while the last part offers recommendations that can be considered by different stakeholders particularly the LGUs, the NYC, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and other national government agencies.

## 2 Youth Participation in Governance and the Galing Kabataan Initiatives

Children and youth participation in governance is not a new concept in the Philippines. It comes in many forms starting from political activism through social media postings, joining or supporting political parties or candidates during elections, and, for those that meet the age requirements, exercising the right to vote and be voted upon during elections.

The most common platform of youth participation is the Sangguniang Kabataan elections. According to the Local Government Code of 1991, children and youth ages 15-30 years old may vote and be voted upon in SK elections.<sup>8</sup> Every three years or as may be determined by law, qualified children and youth—that is, those who met the age requirement and have registered with the Commission on Elections—may join the SK elections and elect (or be elected) in their respective barangays the (or as) members of the SK Council composed of one chairman and seven council members.

The SK Council has their own budget and mandates. SK Councils are automatically allocated with the 10% of the income of the barangays where they are located – funds that the council alone will manage subject to government accounting procedures, and devoted for youth development programs and projects.

The mandates of SK Councils are to:

- **Promulgate resolutions** necessary to carry out the objectives of the youth in the barangay in accordance with applicable provisions of the code;
- **Initiate programs** designed to enhance the social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical development of the members;
- **Hold fund-raising activities** the proceeds of which shall be tax-exempt and shall accrue to the general fund of the SK; provided however, that in the appropriation thereof, the specific purpose for which such activity has been held shall be first satisfied;
  - a. Create such bodies or committees as it may be deemed necessary to effectively carry-out its programs and activities;
  - b. Submit annual and end-of-term reports to the Sangguniang Barangay on their projects and activities for the survival and development of the youth of the barangay;
  - c. Consult and coordinate with all youth organizations in the barangay for policy formulation and program implementation;
  - d. Coordinate with the NYC and other development projects and programs at the national level; and

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<sup>8</sup> Section 39 (f) Republic Act 7160 otherwise known as the Local Government Code as amended by RA 10742 otherwise known as the SK Reform Act.



The most common platform of youth participation is the Sangguniang Kabataan elections.  
(Photo from SK Official FB Page)

- e. Exercise such other powers and perform such other duties and functions as the Sangguniang Barangay may delegate or as may be prescribed by law or by ordinance.

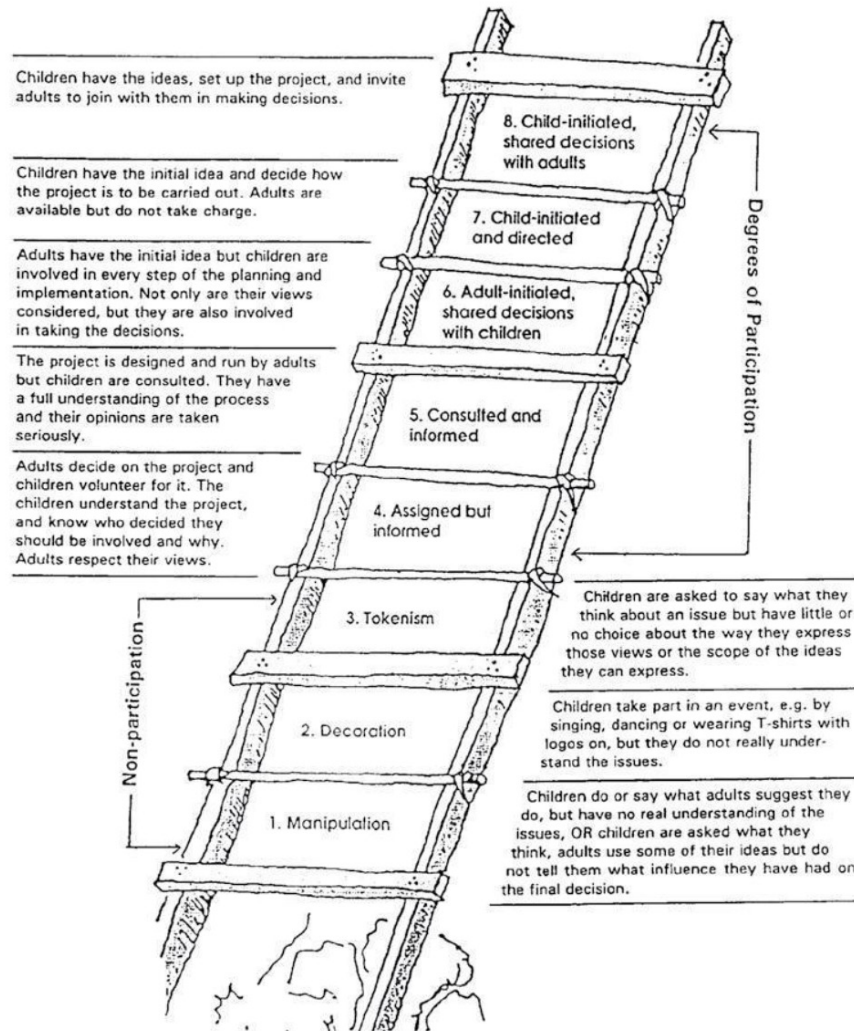
The SK Reform Act and its corresponding amendment has granted SK Councils a certain degree of autonomy and fiscal independence. The Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2019-001 of the Department of Budget and Management, the DILG and the NYC last 23 January 2019 entitled “Guidelines on the Appropriation, Release, Planning and Budgeting Process for the SK Funds”, for instance, prohibits barangay treasurers to disburse the funds as these should be automatically given to the SK Council and deposited to the bank of the latter’s choosing.

Because of the kind of autonomy granted to the SK Councils, relationship patterns between the SKs/YDOs and the LGUs begin to emerge. These include the following:

- a. **Separate entities or unmindful of each other’s existence.** SKs, YDOs and LGUs work independently and as separate entities implementing their respective

programs, projects, activities. The only point of intersection between the LGU and the SK is the former’s oversight functions over the latter through the Local Youth Development Office;

- b. **Tokenistic Youth Participation.** Participation of SKs and YDOs is just for compliance. This is the common kind of relationship noticeable in most pilot areas especially at the start of the SCYPG Project;
- c. **Consultative Relationship.** There are two kinds of consultative relationships. The first one is for compliance where LGUs, either through the LYDOs or directly by the mayor, consult the SKs and/or the YDOs. In this kind of relationship, consultations mostly revolve on budget and on LGU-initiated youth programs. The second is a strategic consultative relationship to temper the influence of one group or a set of stakeholders. Just like in the first type, LGUs consult SKs and YDOs. Unfortunately, there are SKs that do not work well with LGUs because of political partisanship, or with YDOs because of personal dynamics. For this reason, LGUs consult or interact with the two groups separately. In areas where politicization and political factionalism is strong, the LGU would support YDO organizing activities to temper the SKs;
- d. **(Almost) Co-equal Partnership.** Consultations are increased and the SKs and YDOs operate without fear of being reprimanded or controlled. As a result, the level of participation among youth is very high ranging from levels 6-8 in Roger Hart’s “ladder of children’s participation”.



**Figure 1.** Roger Hart's "Ladder of Children's Participation"<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Hart, Roger A. (1992). Children's Participation: From tokenism to citizenship, Innocenti Essay, no. 4, International Child Development Centre, Florence





Youth Leaders attend the #BagoTayo Youth in Governance Fair in Iloilo City held this June 2022, which also served as the culmination of the A+I Leadership Training for Children and Youth

## The SCYPG and the Galing Kabataan Awards

The SCYPG was conceptualized to help realize the SK Reform Act by strengthening the capacities of the SKs, the members of the Katipunan ng Kabataan (KK), the LYDOs in local planning and budgeting and ensuring that youth participation in governance is mainstreamed in LGU processes, among others. The desired goal of the program is to move the level of children and youth to the highest level of participation described as child-initiated or shared decisions with adults, and the treatment of children and youth as co-equal decision-makers.

This explains why SCYPG is also referred to as the #BagoTayo Children and Youth in Governance Project – “bago” for “change or new” and “tayo” meaning “us”. It is aimed at:

- Strengthening the capacity of adolescent youth leaders and members of youth development council (SK, KK, LYDO in local planning and budgeting)
- Mainstreaming the mechanisms for adolescent youth participation in governance in LGU processes

***“ Dito nakita namin ang aming mga potensyal. Dito namin nakita na kaya ng mga kabataan na magpatakbo ng asosasyon... Nakilala po kami sa iba-ibang ahensya, nabigyan kami ng idea at ng iba’t ibang techniques.”***

***“ This is where we realized our potential. We saw that young people are capable of running an association... We were introduced to different agencies, and we were given ideas and different techniques.”***

**Cantongtong United Youth Association**

particularly in the aspects of local planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring; and,

- Improving the ability of LGUs to implement and develop innovative and adaptive programs for children and adolescent youth.

The SCYPG, however, was not designed as “inputs only” intervention but instead ensures that there is a “harvest of best practices and innovations” at the end of the program. For this, one of the components is the Galing Kabataan Awards.

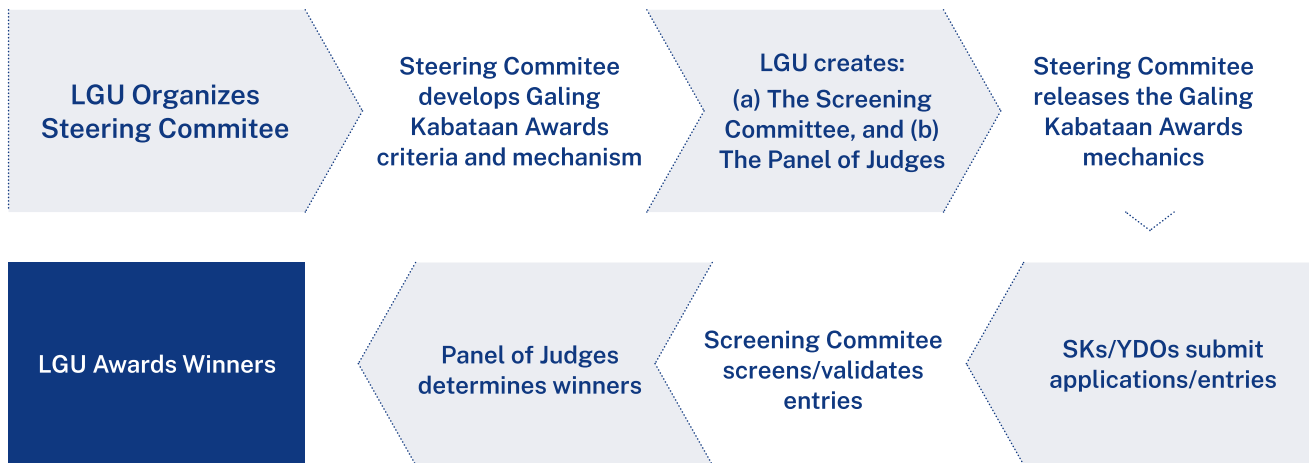
The Galing Kabataan Awards is an LGU awards mechanism for recognizing programs, projects or activities for children and youth, getting them funded and implemented, then measuring their outputs and impacts to the children and youth in particular and the community in general. This project was implemented in the provinces of Northern Samar, Samar, Zamboanga del Norte, and the highly urbanized city of Zamboanga. The project was expected to be implemented in a one-year timeframe but was affected by

the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. From purely in-person implementation of capacity building activities, the mode of project delivery became a mix of face-to-face and online activities; and from one year, the project was extended to two years.

The Galing Kabataan Awards served as a public value creation showcase of 7 LGUs from Eastern Visayas and Zamboanga Peninsula. However, its impact goes beyond the recognition, incentives and motivation that the winners gain as the LGUs are also transformed in the process. It opened the eyes of local officials and LGU department heads to the creativity, capability, and competencies of the youth to address systemic issues that communities face such as hunger and malnutrition, poor learning outcomes, and lack of access to mental health services. It paved the way for cross-sector collaboration especially among NGAs, LGUs, NGOs, academic institutions, faith-based organizations, and youth-led organizations. Most especially, it allowed for youth-adult partnerships to flourish and strengthen as the Galing Kabataan Awards presented a strong proof of

Project Site	Coverage	Pilot Site
Northern Samar	24 municipalities; 569 barangays	Municipality of Catarman with 55 barangays
Samar	24 municipalities and two component cities; 952 barangays	Catbalogan City with 57 barangays
Zamboanga del Norte	25 municipalities and 2 cities; 691 barangays	Dipolog City with 21 barangays
Zamboanga City	98 barangays	-

Table 2. Summary of SCYPG Program Project Sites



**Figure 2.** Galing Kabataan Awards Process

concept that it is effective and efficient to actively engage the youth in governance and development.

Said programs may be youth-led or co-initiated with adults, and revolve around the nine centers of participation as stipulated in the Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) namely (1) health, (2) education, (3) economic empowerment, (4) social inclusion and equity, (5) peacebuilding and security, (6) governance, (7) active citizenship, (8) environment, and (9) global mobility.

The SCYPG Program is implemented in the following areas as seen on Table 2.

Each area and pilot site are required to organize the LGU Adapt+Innovate Team for Children and Youth (LGU A+I Team) whose members are required to participate in Adapt+Innovate Leadership Course and other capability building activities, and in the later part, the screening

committee, and the panel of judges for the Galing Kabataan Awards. The LGU A+I Team is composed of the following but may be expanded or modified by the LGU:

- Local Chief Executive (Governor or Mayor)
- Local Social Welfare and Development Officer
- Local Health Officer
- Local Youth Development Officer
- Public Employment Service Officer
- Local Youth Development Officer
- SK Federation President
- Schools Division Superintendent
- Civil Society Organization representative focused on youth development

In almost all project sites, the LGU A+I Team (except for the SK Federation President) also sits as a Screening Committee for the Galing Kabataan Awards. The members of the panel of judges are selected based on the consensus

of the members of the LGU A+I Team and they can be LGU officials, members of the community and, in some cases, from regional offices of the national line agencies.

In general, the Galing Kabataan Awards process is seen on Figure 2.

Name of Awards Program	LGU	Number of Entries	Number of Winners	List of Winners
Kadasig Awards	Northern Samar	24	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disaster Management Orientation (DMO) &amp; Climate Change Adaptation Program (CCA) (KKK -Kabataan, Kabubwason, Kauswagan)</li> <li>Kumustahan sa Gitna ng Krisis (Gios Kabataan)</li> <li>IsTOURyahe (Tour &amp; Tell) (Allen Volleyball District Association)</li> <li>Co-VEGE 20</li> <li>i-SHARP (SK Lavazares)</li> </ul>
Youth Empowered Samar (YES Awards)	Samar	22	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Egg Layering and Vegetable Production (CUYA: Cantongtong United Youth Association)</li> <li>Oplan Kaagapay: COVID-19 (JCI Catbalogan Balud, Inc.)</li> <li>Obra Mula sa Basura (SK Minarog)</li> </ul>
SIDLAK Awards	Zamboanga del Norte	44	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PaHiValo Project (Red Life Advocates)</li> <li>Kaagapay Projects (SSG Gutalac National High School)</li> <li>Mangroves Reforestation &amp; Conservation (GSP ZN - Dapitan NHS)</li> <li>War Against Single-Use Plastics (WASUP)</li> <li>Modules Mo! Print Ko! (SK Brgy. Salvador, Gutalac)</li> <li>Project E-YAZ! (Greenducators-ZN)</li> <li>BESH Program (SK Federation Jose Dalman)</li> <li>The Food Court: PAKALS Center (SSG Sibutad NHS)</li> <li>Family Disaster Resiliency Program (ZAPFEYA)</li> <li>Leadership Development Program (Red Cross Youth Council)</li> </ul>
Mugna Awards	Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte	21	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unity &amp; Households Cooperation To Showcase Development In Our Purok and Barangay (Purok 4 Cogon, Dipolog City)</li> <li>Mugna Kinaiyahan (Dipolog City National HS Eco Club)</li> </ul>



Name of Awards Program	LGU	Number of Entries	Number of Winners	List of Winners
Joventusiasmo Award	Zamboanga City	4	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettuce Do It (SK Divisoria)</li> <li>• Project WHEAL (We Heal for The Nation) (Red Cross Youth - Philippine Red Cross - Zamboanga City Chapter)</li> <li>• Reviving Hearts with Hope (Rotaract Metro Zamboanga)</li> </ul>
GKAKARITI Awards	Catbalogan City, Samar	15	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sangguniang Kabataan - Brgy. Canlapwas</li> <li>• Sangguniang Kabataan - Poblacion 13</li> <li>• Sangguniang Kabataan - Poblacion 9</li> <li>• Sangguniang Kabataan - Brgy. Payao</li> <li>• Sangguniang Kabataan - Brgy. Silanga</li> </ul>
Sirak Awards	Catarman, Northern Samar	4	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILAW (Sinag ng Hilaga)</li> <li>• Sangguniang Kabataan Educational Assistance Program (SKEAP) (SK - Brgy. Casoy)</li> <li>• Barangay Youth Emergency Response Team (SK - Brgy. Casoy)</li> <li>• Andam Kabataan (Catarman Municipal Youth Development Office and Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office)</li> </ul>

**Table 3.** Galing Kabataan Award Programs (per area)

For the SCYPG Program, all the project sites including their pilot areas were able to develop their respective Galing Kabataan Awards. Through this, it showed that given proper incentives, SK Councils and youth organizations can also develop and implement programs and innovations that will not only be beneficial to the youth sector but also the community in general. This section presents the mechanisms created by the LGUs and the characteristics of the programs and innovations developed and/or implemented by the youth.

### **Mechanisms in LGU-specific implementation of the Galing Kabataan Awards**

Not all areas have a conducive environment for children and youth participation in governance. There are instances where policies and programs for youth concerns are not part of the priority of the LCE. Political affiliation of an SK official, whether in terms of party affiliation or familial relation to a political opponent, can hinder building good relationships with the LCE. These scenarios can create political dynamics that usually affect inter-organizational relationships particularly between the SK Council or Federation and the LGU. As a result, and considering that

the SKs also have their own funds, the most logical approach is to leave each other alone.

For areas where the youth organizations and LGUs have good relations, the question is more on how to utilize said relationships for public gain. With the SK Reform Act, LGUs cannot dictate what SKs should prioritize and execute. But it has two recourses—(1) influence the SKs through the LYDO who is an employee of the LGU, or (2) create an environment through formal mechanisms that could maximize children participation in governance. The latter is what the Galing Kabataan Awards is all about.

The LGUs under the SCYPG Program had to implement their respective awards program and consider different factors such as the number of active SKs and youth organizations in the locality, the level of engagement and kinds of programs that these SKs and youth organizations implement. Their own local context was also considered in developing their

respective awards program, including the design, process, criteria and categories, with emphasis on their culture and community's concerns. This encouraged the creativity of the LGUs to craft their own guidelines to tailor-fit their initiative based on their context, contrary to a commonly committed mistake of a top-down one-size-fits-all approach.

To facilitate the implementation of Galing Kabataan Awards, all seven (7) LGUs operationalized their plans through Executive Orders (EOs) issued by their respective local chief executives and allocated the corresponding budgets including the cash incentives for the winners. The budget allocations were approved by their respective legislative councils or Sanggunian Panlalawigan/Panlungsod/Bayan. Some LGUs committed to implement the Awards Programs on an annual basis, and therefore institutionalized them through Ordinances approved by the local legislative branch.

The number of applications per award program varied. Reasons for this may include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) Limited awareness-raising, promotion, and information dissemination on the call for the awards applications; (2) Lack of interest from youth organizations to participate in the award programs; (3) Lack of skills of the members of the youth organizations to document their projects and programs and comply with the requirements of the participating LGUs; and (4) Youth do not see their projects as award-worthy, thus, they did not apply.

It should be noted that the Galing Kabataan initiatives were implemented at the start of the pandemic when lockdowns were rampant and in some areas, the youth below 18 years of age were not allowed to go out. Second, local government communications relied mainly on telephone and internet connectivity making it more difficult for communities with difficulty on internet access. As a result, most of the

### **In implementing the localized Galing Kabataan Awards, these questions were considered:**

1. How many active SKs and youth organizations were in the locality?
2. How engaged were these youth bodies, and what types of programs did they implement?
3. What factors in the local context should be considered in the design, process, criteria & categories of the awards program?

participating SKs and youth organizations are mostly coming from the urban centers.

As Allen Berbon, the Public Information Officer and Local Youth Development Officer of Northern Samar said, “There are excellent youth-led programs at the community level but because the youth particularly from the GIDA areas do not know how to properly document these programs, the latter were not submitted as entries. In fact, some of the winners in the Kadasig Awards are less appealing to the members of the screening committee. It was only when we physically validated these programs that we realized their value”. For this realization, the LYDO has included in the provincial government’s projects the capacity building of the members of the SK Councils and youth organizations on project documentation.

A discussion on the themes, project entries and notable case studies for each awards program are as follows:

**“From mere compliance to a strong commitment to Strengthening Children and Youth Participation in Governance.”**

**Allen Berbon**

Provincial Youth Development Officer and concurrent  
Provincial Information Officer of Northern Samar



## KADASIG AWARDS

*Northern Samar*

Kabataan Ipadayon ang Sigasig (KADASIG) Awards was established as an awards mechanism of the Provincial Government of Northern Samar to support and recognize outstanding initiatives of the youth. Its overall objective is to further encourage youth in public and civic affairs, and it aims to achieve this through appreciating, facilitating, and incentivizing the ideation and implementation of adaptive and innovative youth-led initiatives for the children and youth of the province.



*In Kadasig Award winner's Kumustahan sa Gitna ng Krisis by Gios Kabataan, youth received mental health and psychosocial support during the pandemic*

In the culminating activity of the SCYPG, which was held during the 2022 Youth in Governance Fair, Allen Berbon, Provincial Information Officer of Northern Samar, revealed that his journey in the program transformed his perspective on the role of youth in local governance. He shared that he only attended the sessions because Governor Edwin Ongchuan instructed him to do so, but he ended up seeing the capabilities of the youth to partner with them in serving their communities. The gradual change in mindset led to his active participation in the program. But more than that, it motivated him to mobilize leaders from different government agencies to serve as selection committee members of the Kadasig Awards-Northern Samar's localized version of the Galing Kabataan Awards. This legitimized their Awards program and expanded the stakeholders of the youth's projects as the awareness raising throughout the selection process reached a wider audience. Ultimately, the winning programs of the Kadasig Awards proved to have undergone a rigorous assessment as they have gained international and national prominence.

Open to all SK Councils, SK Federations, and YDOs in the province. Selection is program/project-based with participating organizations allowed to submit multiple entries. Five winners were selected and received a cash prize of P20,000.<sup>10</sup>

KADASIG Awards opened opportunities for 22 youth councils and organizations to learn and share effective initiatives

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1144395>

implemented in their respective communities. It has involved the youth of Northern Samar in the following centers of participation:



### Health

Projects related to mental health awareness, promotion of active lifestyle, and nutrition were the focus of projects under health. Project Kamustahan sa Gitna ng Krisis: A Mental and Psychosocial Support Service was identified by the Provincial Government as the best project for this category.

Other projects also allowed youth volunteers, participants, and the community to participate in programs revolving around health and well-being like IsTOURyahe ni Allen, a campaign on biking started by sports enthusiasts and young athletes and Project COVEGE-20 which provided the community of San Roque with ideas on backyard gardening. It is important to note that these projects were more or less a response of youth organizations for the needs of other young people and their communities while adjusting to the new norms due to the pandemic.



### Education

Due to the shift of primary learning venues from school to homes because of the COVID-19 restrictions, many youth organizations initiated programs that assisted both students and families in this transition. In Northern Samar, there were youth organizations that focused on providing access to educational materials to children and youth through community libraries.

One example of a project under this category is Project i-SHARP (Improving Access and Study Habits towards Accelerating Reading Performance). This provided the youth

with access to internet connectivity and devices so they can catch up with the transition to online classes.

Project IsTOURyahe on the other hand, developed children's multiple intelligences as their approach to bridging the gaps in education.



### **Economic Empowerment**

Project COVEGE-20 provided opportunities for families to provide nutritious foods to their families while being able to sell produce from their backyard gardens. As students who struggled with school expenses, this was a huge help to the youth and their entire families.



### **Active Citizenship**

IsTOURyahe spread their enthusiasm for sports, culture, and the arts to small children through introducing the use of multiple intelligence approaches. They allowed children to discover their talents, interests, and history through educational and cultural books and activities.



### **Environment**

In the Municipality of Mapanas, Northern Samar, the youth members of KKK conducted Disaster Management Orientation (DMO) which included training sessions on Disaster Risk and Reduction (DRR) for community members and P3D mapping in three barangays to assist citizens in defying areas prone to landslides and disasters. Children and the youth were mobilized in awareness and information dissemination efforts before, during, and after disasters in the municipality.



### **YES AWARDS**

**Samar**

Youth Empowered Samar (YES) Awards was established as an award mechanism of the provincial government of Samar. It also aims to mainstream youth participation in core development agenda and plans of local governments and build on NYC's Mandatory and Continuing Training Program with GPF's Adaptive and Innovative Leadership Program. Open to all SK Councils, SK Federations, and

*Galing Pook Executive Director Georgina Hernandez-Yang meets members of CUYA, awardees of Samar's YES Awards*





YDOs in the province. Selection is program/project-based with participating organizations allowed to submit multiple entries.

In relation to the objectives of the SCYPG, YES Awards also aimed to strengthen the capacities of adolescent leaders and members of the youth development council on local planning and budgets, and to improve the mechanisms for adolescent and youth participation in LGU processes. Further, it aimed to improve the ability of LGUs to develop innovations and adaptive programs for children and adolescent youth by mainstreaming youth participation in the local development agenda.

YES Awards recognized 10 projects, with the top 3 receiving P100,000, P70,000, and P50,000 respectively. The projects submitted were classified under the following centers of participation:



Sidlak Award's BESH (Bringing Exceptional Services for Humanities) Program by SK Jose Dalman focused on mental health support, reproductive health education and quick response to emergency cases

***“Ang kabataan natin ngayon ay may alam, hindi sila basta-bastang nawiwindang lalo na kapag may ganitong existing conditions [such as disasters and pandemics]. Bagkus dito lumalabas ang kanilang creativity, ang kanilang innovation.”***

***“Our youth today know a lot, they don’t just get carried away when there are existing conditions [such as disasters and pandemics]. Rather, this is where their creativity and their innovation comes out.”***

**Dr. Clarita Menda**  
DepEd Samar Division



## Health

Under health-focused projects, JCI Catbalogan Balud, Inc. gave two project entries: Oplan Kaagapay: COVID-19 served as the youth arm of the provincial government when it came to rescuing and recovery.

Project SHIELD (Safeguarding Heroes in Encountering Lethal Disease), the second project entry from JCI Catbalogan Balud, Inc., focused on providing much-needed medical equipment for medical frontliners as they worked to protect the community from COVID-19 infections. Likewise, the #SKCOVID-19 Program by SK Brgy. 13 prioritized protecting the community from contracting the fatal disease.



## Livelihood

To make more productive use of their time, members of the Cantongtong United Youth Association (CUYA) of Jiabong pursued Egg Layering & Vegetable Production. This youth group was able to promote agriculture within their community while providing income for their own needs, and their families' as well.

Obra Mula sa Basura by SK Minarog mobilized the youth in making beautiful masterpieces out of waste materials, which promoted taking care of the environment and also showcased the culture and the artistry of the Paranas youth. This project also falls under “Environment” and “Active Citizenship” as Centers of Participation.



## Education

As active responses to the learning challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the the other YES Awards finalists focused on providing assistance to students: Nijaga

***“The awards demonstrate to leaders and other policymakers the importance of young people’s role in development. The awards also serve to inspire other young people to take action in their communities.”***

**Allen Berbon**

Provincial Youth Development Officer and concurrent  
Provincial Information Officer of Northern Samar



*Project COVEGE-20 by SK San Roque helped feed the community with healthy food by teaching them backyard gardening.*

Konekta: Kabataan E-learning Hub by SK Nijaga, Binalhasan nga Gugma by Migara Youth Organization, Project EXCEL by Begaho Youth Environment and Community Organization (BY-ECO), Re-awakening the Spirit of Paranasnon through Action by PYAP Paranas, and Isang Alay, Isang Buhay (Alay Kapwa Program) by Supreme Student Government (SSG) Pagsanghan.



## SIDLAK AWARDS

*Zamboanga del Norte*

SIDLAK or the Sumbanang Inisyatibo ug Dalayong Lihok Alang sa Kabatan-onan (Model Initiative and Praise-Worthy Action for the Youth) Awards Program recognized brilliant youth programs and projects by giving them a seal of excellence for their youth programs and incentivizing them with cash prizes. Open to all SK Councils, SK Federations, and YDOs in the Province of Northern Zamboanga. The selection

***“ It encourages community participation. Pag narinig ninyo yung programa, the next time around, they will be encouraged to join and come up with programs and strengthen current programs. It [the award program] helps yung government to engage our partners.”***

***“ It encourages community participation. When they hear about the program next time, they will be encouraged to join and come up with programs and strengthen current programs. The program helps the government in engaging our partners.”***

**Janneil Balongoy**

Local Youth Development Officer, City Government of Dipolog

is program/project-based with participating organizations allowed to submit multiple entries. Three winners were selected out of the 16 project entries received. The entries were classified in the following centers of participation:



## Health

Some of the projects under SIDLAK Awards focused on health, nutrition, ASRH, and well-being of the members of the community.

Bringing Exceptional Services for Humanities (BESH) Program conducted youth forums tackling teenage pregnancy and mental health. They also conducted a teen clinic that provided relevant health services to the youth of Brgy. Jose Dalman. Project PaHIValo on the other hand focused its efforts on increasing the awareness of HIV and AIDS and community screening.



## Economic Empowerment

Multiple projects were focused on sharing valuable technical skills to community members like bread and pastry production, table skirting, and agri-organic production. Another example of a project under this center of participation is the Food Court: Pakals Center, a project by the Supreme Student Government of Sibutad National High School to set up a student-run canteen where sellers and managers are officers of the school student council.

The Family Disaster Resiliency Program by ZAPEYA also included in its resiliency program the promotion of backyard gardening which ensured health, food security, and livelihood.



## Education

Most of the education-related projects under SIDLAK Awards focused on assisting students and families in the transition to remote learning due to the pandemic. The Sangguniang Kabataan of Brgy. Salvador in the Municipality of Gutalac provided free printing of modules while the Supreme Student Government of Gutalac National High School offered peer tutorials through their KAAGAPAY Project.



## Environment

Several groups focused their efforts on initiatives that are environment-related, for example, WASUP (war Against Single-Use Plastics) conducted clean up drives and webinars as part of their advocacy campaign. Project E-YAZ also focused their efforts in advocating for environmental awareness.

The Family Disaster Resiliency Project on the other hand educated families the need for measures in preventing





Representatives from the Positive Youth Development Network (a member of the #BagoTayo coalition) in the Youth Governance Fair 2022

disasters or minimizing their impacts. Mangroves Reforestation and Conservation Project focused on the preservation of current environmental resources.



### Peacebuilding and Security

There were three (3) projects that focused on the promotion of the participation of youth and children in peacebuilding and security.



### Active Citizenship

Two (2) projects under the SIDLAK Awards encouraged the appreciation and integration of native Filipino games in modern gaming.



## MUGNA AWARDS

### Catarman

Dipolog City MUGNA Award for Exemplary Children, Youth, and Community Initiatives is an awards mechanism of the City Government that supports and recognizes outstanding and brilliant initiatives of the Sangguniang Kabataan, youth and youth-serving organizations and the community at the purok level. Open to all SK Councils and YDOs in the city, the selection for MUGNA Awards is by type of organization and project. Organizations that complied with the requirements

and have reached the required points are automatically considered as winners and ranked accordingly. The top-ranking SK Council and YDO are accorded special prizes.

MUGNA Awards involved the youth in the following centers of participation:



### **Environment**

Multiple groups within the City focused on environment-related projects like the Mugna Kinaiyahan project which mobilized many students in eco-clubbing.

Project Environmental Youth Activities (EYA) by Dipolog City Eco Club also involved young people in different environmental activities. The Supreme Student Government (SSG) of the DMC Integrated School initiated a campaign in lessening the use of plastics and its effects in the environment with their Plastinction project.

The Red Cross Youth Council also capacitated young people to be involved in emergency response in times of environmental disasters.



### **Health**

Some of the projects recognized by MUGNA Awards focused on mental health support. For instance, the Sangguniang Kabataan of Barangay Galas launched the SK Depression Hotline to provide support to their fellow youth especially during the height of the pandemic.

While the impression of eco-clubbing is its impact on the environment, Mugna Kinaiyahan ensured that children are eating healthy by encouraging healthy lifestyles and planting vegetables in the backyard of schools and homes.

The Sangguniang Kabataan of Brgy. Estaka also started their project Sanitary Health Klts and Disinfectant Health Aid which not only engaged youth in COVID-19 response but became an aid to the LGU in times of health emergencies.

In Barangay Miputak, the leaders in Purok Sakayanon launched highlighted the importance of proper nutrition among families within their community through their Purok Sakayanon Health and Nutrition Warriors Feeding Program.



### **Education**

Multiple youth-serving organizations in the city focused on education-related programs. READ Program and Summer Mentors, a group of teachers and willing mentors, provided assistance to learners and parents especially to those who experienced difficulty in the transition to online classes.

Other initiatives under education include the Red Cross Youth Council's Leadership Development Program and the Youth Formation Training Seminar of the Sangguniang Kabataan of Brgy. Estaka.



### **Active Citizenship**

There were also projects that sought to promote culture and arts among the youth. For example, the Treasure behind Drums by Tresborn Dipolog featured drummers in the promotion of culture and enriching the talents of the youth.

The Sangguniang Kabataan of Brgy. Miputak on the other hand encouraged young people to become allies in protecting the environment and showcasing their talents in converting waste into useful and beautiful art pieces through their Pinta Workshop.

The remaining three (3) Galing Kabataan Award Programs- GKAKARITI Awards of Catbalogan City, JOVENTUSIASMO Awards of Zamboanga City, and Catarman's SIRAK Awards also recognized SKs, school-based and other community-based organizations.



**GKAKARITI AWARDS:** Galing Kabataan  
Katbalogan Recognizing Innovative and  
Transformative Initiatives

## GKAKARITI AWARDS

### *Catbalogan City*

Galing Kabataan Katbalogan Recognizing Innovative and Transformative Initiatives or the GKAKARITI Awards is a program of the City Government of Catbalogan which recognizes SKs, school-based and other community-based organizations that are exceptional and excellent in their pursuit to promote youth development in their respective areas of concern. GKAKARITI is a slang and colloquial term in Binisaya, which means a superlative of being exceptional and excellent.

It was opened to all SK Councils, SK Federations, and YDOs in the city and the selection for GKAKARITI Awards was program/project-based with participating organizations allowed to submit multiple entries. The GKAKARITI Awards recognized the 5 best projects and ranked them based on the points garnered. These projects generally fall under the following centers of participation: Health, Education, Economic empowerment, Security and Governance.



## JOVENTUSIASMO AWARDS

### *Zamboanga City*

Joventusiasmo Awards was open to all SK Councils, SK Federations, and YDOs in the City of Zamboanga. Its selection is program/project-based with participating organizations allowed to submit multiple entries. Organized by the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), the 1st JOVENTusiasmo Awards in 2021 recognized outstanding projects and innovations of the youth at the local level; it acknowledged the contribution of the young generation on the growth and development of the community and to recognize and award deserving youth organizations for their participation, involvement and commitment in improving quality of life.

Joven is a Chavacano word, which in English, translates to “young or youth”, and Entusiasmo is a Chavacano word, which in English, translates to “enthusiasm” - which refers to the strong excitement of feeling or something inspiring zeal or fervor. Combined, JovEntusiasmo refers to the unique rigor that the youth are able to infuse into projects that they pursue. The Zamboanga City LGU recognizes this inspired energy and aims to harness it to inspire even more groups to contribute to their community’s development, now and in the future.

Winning programs for Joventussiasmo awards are Lettuce Do It Jovenes by SK Divisoria, SALyUDahan by SK Sta. Catalina, and Reviving Hearts with Hope by Rotaract-Metro Zamboanga.



## SIRAK AWARDS

### Catarman

SIRAK Awards was opened to all SK Councils, SK Federations, and YDOs in the City Government of Catarman. Selection was program/project-based and participating organizations were allowed to submit multiple entries.

Youth groups in Catarman who joined SIRAK Awards sought to address issues in the community concerning Health, Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) and Education.

In May 2021, faith-based group Sinag at Hilaga initiated Isang Landas at Wangis (ILAW) -open forum sessions where the youth of Silvino Lubos (a town in Catarman) were given a space to voice out their concerns and sentiments as young people living through a pandemic, in order to aid their mental health. More than the comfort it provided the participants, this also gave way to productive discourse on what the root of the problems are, and how the community can help address it. ILAW followed a framework called Cycle of Progress and Empowerment (COPE), which entails the following steps: holding open forums, identifying the problem, empowering the youth, then addressing the issue. ILAW does not aim to solve all the youth's problems, but hopes that they are able to influence positive change little

by little. As Catarman was the pilot area for ILAW, Sinag at Hilaga proposed for it to be replicated in other Sinag at Hilaga chapters province-and nation-wide.

The Catarman youth arm of the LGU was highly active as participants of the SIRAK Awards:

- The Sangguniang Kabataan Educational Assistance Program (SKEAP) implemented by the SK officials of Brgy. Casoy, Catarman extended financial assistance to students as they were struggling to keep up with the demands of school - especially since they were forced to shift to modular learning. SKEAP aims to ensure that students stay in school to learn, thrive, and become the next generation of youth leaders that will help out the community.
- The SK Officials of Brgy. Casoy also implemented the Barangay Youth Emergency Response Team to train and mobilize the youth in their area in case of emergency situations.
- Likewise, Andam Kabataan, a project by the Catarman Municipal Youth Development Office and the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office aimed to equip the youth with knowledge and training to manage disasters. While before, the youth was seen as a vulnerable sector during disasters, Andam Kabataan sought to capacitate them and use their enthusiasm to learn and help as assets during emergency situations

# 3 | Characterizing Youth Programs and Innovations

In total, there are about 97 youth-led and implemented programs recognized under the Galing Kabataan Awards. A number of these are already gaining national and even international attention such as the Egg Layering and Vegetable Gardening Project of CUYA, and the Disaster

Managemeng Orientation, a disaster response program by KKK from Northern Samar.

The Galing Kabataan-awarded programs can be classified into five (5) typologies:

Typology	Key Features	Programs
Grassroots people’s organization-led projects with gradual increasing support from government institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiated by citizens (not affiliated with LGU)</li> <li>Received recognition from LGU at the beginning of the project launch and while implementation was ongoing</li> <li>Enjoyed more support from LGU after recognition from Galing Kabataan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Egg and Vegetable Layering by CUYA (Catontong United Youth Association) - Jiabong, Samar (YES Awards)</li> <li>Disaster Management Orientation (DMO) &amp; Climate Change Adaptation Program (CCA) by KKK (KADASIG Awards)</li> <li>IsTOURyahe (KADASIG Awards)</li> </ul>
Projects led by local chapters of National Organizations	Local communities enjoyed nuanced implementation from larger/anchor organizations which provide: funds, access to wider network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COVID Response Projects by JCI Catbalogan Balud (YES Awards)</li> <li>Red Cross Leadership Training Program by Philippine Red Cross Zambonga del Norte Chapter - Red Cross Youth Council (SIDLAK Awards)</li> <li>Reviving Hearts with Hope by Rotaract Metro Zamboanga (JovEntusiasmo Awards)</li> </ul>

Typology	Key Features	Programs
Sangguniang Kabataan/LYDO/ PYDO-led projects	<p>This classification can be further segmented into two types based on project inception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project initiated by SK/LYDO/PYDO</li> <li>• Independent from LGU, then “expanded” to tapping current SK bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SKEAP (SIRAK Awards))</li> <li>• Co-Vege 20 (SIDLAK Awards)</li> <li>• Lettuce Do It (JOVENTusiasmo Awards)</li> <li>• i-SHARP Learning Community (JovEntusiasmo Awards)</li> <li>• Obra Mula sa Basura by SK Minarog, Paranas (YES Awards)</li> <li>• Kumustahan sa gitna ng Krisis by Gios Kabataan (KADASIG Awards)</li> </ul>
Projects led by school-based organizations	Project was initiated to address needs of the school community, and operated within that community as well -operations feasible because it was sourced from there too.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dipolog City Eco-Club (MUGNA Awards)</li> <li>• PAKALS (SIDLAK Awards)</li> <li>• All Supreme Student Government (SSG)-led projects</li> </ul>
Projects led by faith-based organizations	Project was initiated by local church community/faith-based group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILAW by Sinag ng Hilaga (SIRAK Awards)</li> </ul>

**Table 4.** Typologies Galing Kabataan-Awarded Projects

### Grassroots, People’s organization-led projects

People’s organizations, as defined by the Philippine 1987 Constitution are “bona fide associations of citizens with demonstrated capacity to promote the public interest and with identifiable leadership, membership, and structure.”<sup>11</sup> These collectives allow citizens to participate in all levels of social, political and economic decision-making through consultation mechanisms. These types of projects deserve

much support because they are borne out of citizens’ proactive initiatives to address concerns they encounter, and not just by waiting for action from the government.

One example is YES Awards winner Cantongtong United Youth Association (CUYA)’s project “Egg and Vegetable Layering Project” in Jiabong, Samar. CUYA’s founding members are teenagers who got involved in their parents’

<sup>11</sup> <http://ldb.org/philcon/role.htm>





*IsTOURyahe volunteers organized by the Allen District Volleyball Organization brave land and water to help children read*

mixed-crop farming activities to help support their families and generate income for their own needs as well.<sup>12</sup>

CUYA started in February 2018 with 30 basketball players who spent their semestral breaks joining barangay leagues. Inspired by their mother people's organization Cantongtong Agrarian Rice Farmers Association (CARFA), the youth athletes formed and registered CUYA at the Department at the Labor of Employment (DOLE) in February 2020. Composed of members aged between 13-35 years old, they started with a backyard vegetable garden owned by one of the member's parents where they planted vegetables such as ampalaya, okra, eggplant, and others, earning a net income of Php 8,274.

As of July 2022, CUYA has been recognized by other organizations for their hard work. They plan to sustain their current operations and venture into Hydroponics and

Mushroom Culture. They also want to deepen their initiative and assistance to the community and include Out of School Youth (OSYs) in their efforts.

The Allen District Volleyball Organization recognized that one of the biggest challenges brought on by the pandemic was faced by learners. Because of this, the IsTOURyahe project was created, an initiative of road cycling enthusiasts to help students develop both physical and mental skills. Volunteers in the IsTOURyahe team travelled far to assist younger children and promote the love of reading, which aimed to eventually help them improve their comprehension. They also designed other activities creatively to encourage learning and active participation.

Kabataan, Kabubwason, Kauswagan (Youth, Future, Progress) or KKK, a youth organization in Mapanas, Northern Samar, advocates for child participation and youth involvement in

<sup>12</sup> SAADVentures Region 8 (DA Magazine) <https://saad.da.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/SAADvetures-Region8-07252022-c.pdf>

disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness and climate action. With other young volunteers, they conducted P3D mapping in three barangays to assist citizens in identifying areas prone to landslides and disasters. Children and youth members were also mobilized in awareness and information dissemination efforts before, during, and after disasters in the municipality.

### Projects led by local chapters of National Organizations

Non-government organizations with nationwide scale like the Philippine Red Cross usually have chapters in key locations all over the country. The national bodies are strengthened by their local chapters, and likewise, local divisions benefit from the legitimacy and resources that a national presence affords the organization.

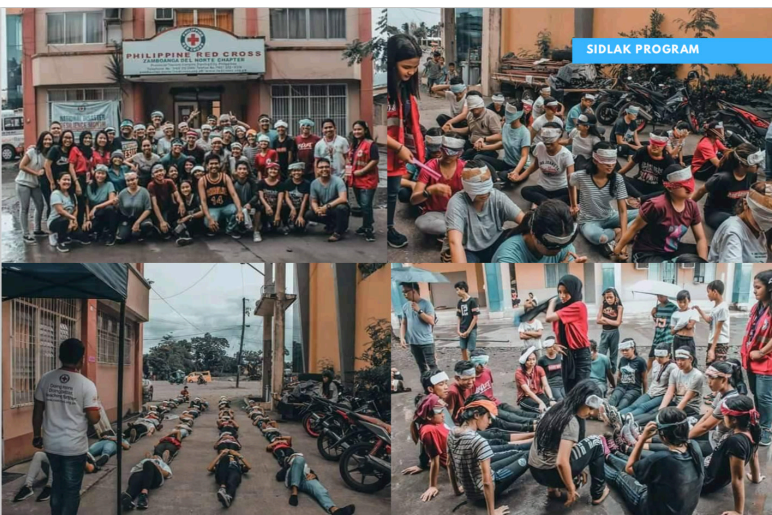
In Northern Zamboanga, one of the projects under SIDLAK Awards is led by the Philippine Red Cross Zamboanga del Norte Chapter-Red Cross Youth Council. Their project focused on capacitating young people through their Leadership Development Program (LDP)-a training program that provides basic leadership training and promotes good leadership in the community.

The LDP has three courses: 1) Youth Volunteers' Orientation Course; 2) Leadership Formation Course; and 3) Basic Leadership Training. These courses aim to prepare youth participants in becoming full-fledged RCYC members through assessing one's strengths and weaknesses, clarify and reassess their values and integrating Red Cross Youth corporate values to further increase their leadership ideals. The courses also provide activities and group dynamics to further increase social relations and understanding their needs and interests that will motivate them, inherently.

Another example of a project under this typology is the Reviving Hearts with Hope of the Rotaract Metro Zamboanga which helps trafficking survivors with their basic needs such as food and safe spaces.

Human trafficking is the third biggest criminal enterprise in the world. Zamboanga is one of the exit points used by traffickers in Southeast Asia who travel by sea. Through the project, Rotaract Metro Zamboanga works with its international counterparts in the region as well as other local organizations. The team joined hands with "Lettuce do it Joveness" in launching an income generating project for human trafficking victims.

Red Cross and Rotaract are two of the most recognized organizations in the country with multiple chapters. Both Red Cross Zamboanga del Norte Chapter and Rotaract Metro Zamboanga have the advantage of being easily



Leadership Development Program by PH Red Cross Zamboanga del Norte Chapter-Red Cross Youth Council



recognized by people with the influence of their national organizations. Another advantage is the potential of having bigger partnering opportunities for their organizations. Their affiliation with national organizations increases the chances that their programs will be replicated in other communities by their counterparts in other cities/municipalities.

### **Sangguniang Kabataan/Local or Provincial Development Youth Organization-led projects**

The Sangguniang Kabataan is often judged or misrepresented as a body that implements only sports events and does not do much to explore other events that will provide opportunities for civic engagement for the youth. Through the Galing Kabataan Awards, this perception was challenged by project entries from Northern Samar.

The SK Municipal Federation President of Northern Samar Ness-Lei Lagrimas recounts that their project, Co-Vege 20 began when SK San Roque explored ways to address the food security issues raised during the pandemic. They tapped the youth to participate in background gardening activities, and they were also able to mobilize 4Ps members to join. This became an income-generating project for the youth, 4Ps members and farmers-all while ensuring a steady and sustainable food supply for the community.

During the implementation of their project, the provincial LGU pitched in and provided additional incentives for participants. Zamboanga City's SK Divisoria had a similar project with "Lettuce Do it Joveness" where they created a hyperlocal food security system in their community to ensure that all families had a stable food supply by training 10 youth leaders in sustainable farming. After undergoing training, these young leaders are expected to share this knowledge with others and scale this effort.



Young organisers in the Good Governance Fair 2018 are aware of current challenges the SK face, and pose questions how to address them

In a similar manner, The i-SHARP Learning Community/ Project Tawid Kaalaman in the Municipality of Lavazares, Northern Samar responded to learners' needs during the pandemic by providing a learning space, digital resources, and volunteer tutors to aid children in the island of Bani in honing their basic literacy skills. Likewise, Brgy. Casoy, Catarman's SKEAP focused their efforts on providing for students who needed financial assistance, especially those who struggled with modular learning.

This responsiveness to relevant concerns of the time - especially during the COVID-19 pandemic goes to show that SK Federations are in touch with what their constituents need, and are dedicated to finding effective solutions for those.

## Projects led by school-based organizations

The Food Court Pakals Center (FCPC) is a student-run canteen and fund-raising project created by the Supreme Student Government (SSG) of Sibutad National High School to address the problem of insufficient funds for financing school projects and school activities, which resulted in unsustainable, inefficient and short-term projects. FCPC showcased the entrepreneurial and culinary skills among the SSG officers while raising awareness about healthy habits among the entire students, school faculty, and other stakeholders, and was a telling lesson for young leaders to be resourceful and proactive despite having limited resources.

KA-AGAPAY Projects (Kabataan Kaagapay Laban sa Krisis), on the other hand, was organized by the Supreme Student Government (SSG) of Gutalac National High School to support fellow students in dealing with the crisis brought about by challenging circumstances, especially the COVID-19 pandemic. The KA-AGAPAY Projects encompassed a series of programs and activities such as Psychosocial Support Activities, creation of Learner's Support Group (LSG), Garden Scaping, and creation of Gutalac National High School Official Facebook Page where it was able to promote its various activities, advocacies and campaigns.

***“Mag-amot lang sa ta  
karon kay way budget.”***

***“Let’s just chip in because we  
don’t have any budget yet.”***

Sibutad National HS SSG Officers' pro-active mindset on ensuring that despite limited budget and resources, they will still be able to host activities for their fellow students

Many projects submitted to the award programs fall under this typology, and a factor that has driven many school-based organizations to submit their innovative initiatives to the award programs was the involvement of the Department of Education. For instance, in SIDLAK Awards, the assistance of their local DepEd was recognized, especially where mechanisms for communication were fully utilized. DepEd helped a lot in terms of promotion of the award program to different schools.

It is also important to note that leadership and members of the school-based organizations received guidance and support from their teachers and parents, which can be seen as a good example of good youth-adult collaboration. Moreover, since students spend most of their time in schools, projects under this typology promote a sense of belongingness to a community and shared responsibility at an early age which is a good foundation for a person's formation.

## Projects led by faith-based organizations

The church is one of the earliest encounters of community outside the home that one has, as a Filipino child. This is because Filipino families are notably religious, and have incorporated the practice of faith in their lives, i.e. most families spend Sundays in church. This is significant to note for children and youth because as they are growing up, faith-based communities provide the most immediate space for them to meet friends and find a support group. Belonging to faith-based groups provide the youth a safe space to begin socializing, and eventually extend themselves to serving other people, all while receiving moral guidance from their chosen religion.

When Sinag at Hilaga, a faith-based organization in Catarman initiated the ILAW project in Silvino Lubos, Catarman, they



Sinag ng Hilaga's ILAW project is a good example of a community project anchored on faith-based practice

hoped to provide guidance and refuge to members of the community during an unprecedented time that caused mental and emotional distress on most, if not all youth.<sup>13</sup> The project was received very well by young members of the community who were struggling emotionally and mentally during the pandemic.

Together with other youth members and adult mentors, participants were able to process their emotions, discuss social ills and what they can do to solve them as a community. These were valuable exchanges because the youth participants themselves identified how they experienced difficulties, and became active in suggesting possible solutions for them. Adult facilitators were led by Pastor Peter Paul Reynaldo, Adviser of Sinag Ng Hilaga. He hopes that the safe space they were able to create equips the youth with skills that will help them identify patterns in social issues that are present and address the concerns in the community.

<sup>13</sup> Covid-19 related mental health issues growing among the youth, Business Mirror Article "<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/10/13/covid-19-related-mental-health-issues-growing-among-the-youth/>"

***“The thrust of ILAW is not to address all issues, but the little issues that get opened up during the open forum, we can address those little by little. If this will be a cycle in the community, this will help solve the issues the youth are facing.”***

**ILAW Project, SIRAK Awards Winner Pastor Peter Paul, Adviser of Sinag ng Hilaga on how he believes that good communication leads to the gradual resolution of municipal problems.**

#### **Key themes covered by the GK-awarded projects:**

In addition to the typologies discussed above, we can also classify the winning entries for the Galing Kabataan Awards under five themes: Education, Covid-19 Response, Health, Livelihood and Employment, and Agriculture & Food Security. Given current events, these are the most relevant areas to respond to-which Galing Kabataan project entries also attempted to address. However, finalizing this topic requires further data collection and documentation of the existing projects in order to aid a more detailed discussion.

***“ Marami palang mga organizations or grupo na many ginagawa para solosyunan ang problems and issues in the community, and hindi lang pala government ang gumagawa. Kailangan silang i-recognize especially ang mga young people, kailangan silang i-tap kasi nakakatulong talaga ang partnership ng NGOs, government, and organizations.”***

***“ There are many groups and organizations that try to solve problems and issues in the community - the government is not alone in these efforts. We need to recognize them, especially the young people - we need to tap into these actions because partnerships with NGOs, government and organizations are very helpful.”***

**Janneil Balongoy**

Local Youth Development Officer, City Government of Dipolog

### **Partnerships between youth organizations, local governments, and members of the communities**

Partnering with different stakeholders provides opportunities for better implementation of projects. For instance, through the MUGNA Awards in Dipolog City, the local government saw the positive impact of active involvement of the youth in providing assistance to children and youth and to the whole

community. The LGU saw the need to recognize and enhance meaningful youth participation in decision-making and they were also able to learn through their conversations with young people that they should give focus on the following:

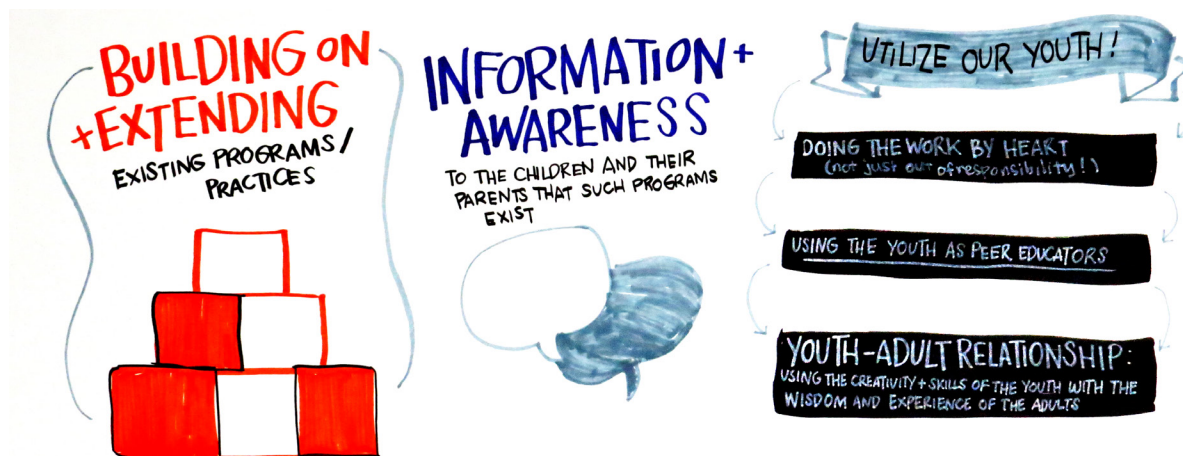
- Expand economic opportunities for the youth;
- Provide mental health and emotional health support;
- Engage young people in environmental activities.

One of the projects in MUGNA Awards, “Unity & Households Cooperation to showcase development in our purok and barangay” highlighted the role of the adult purok leaders in improving their respective areas in terms of home cleanliness & beautification, Environmental Protection, Food Production and Livelihood. Their active involvement in the project was significant in enabling the entire community to work toward collective development and in opening opportunities for the youth to take part in local governance. With their participation, the projects were able to develop initiatives that address specific challenges in the community grassroots.

### **Sustainability and integration with the goals of LGUs, NGAs, and other partners**

Since the implementation of the different awards programs, youth-led organizations with Galing Kabataan-awarded projects established relationships with their respective LGUs. For instance, Type 1 projects received increasing support from their respective LGUs while Type 4 organizations had close coordination with DepEd for their projects.

Across all typologies mentioned, active participation of young people in governance and community development is present. Youth organizations responded to the needs of their respective communities parallel to the efforts of the national and local governments. And there is opportunity for



Leaders, young and old alike, bring important perspectives into local governance - collaboration between generations is crucial to maximizing positive impact.

integration of these youth-led projects to the goals of the government. For instance, these projects can influence local policies and the priority programs of their local governments. Outstanding projects may be adopted as key programs of the local government to ensure continuity.

The presence of these projects are also important to national agencies such as the National Youth Commission and Department of Education in identifying policies and programs where young people are active. We can see from the available data that entries in the Galing Kabataan Awards program are focused on education, health, and COVID-19 response.

### Youth-Adult Collaboration in Leadership

Across the identified Typologies 1-5 of Galing Kabataan-awarded projects, youth-adult collaboration among leadership roles can be observed in varying levels. By default, adults will always take the lead roles in organizations. For the Galing Kabataan-awarded projects, deliberate and strategic planning went into making sure that the adults

empowered the youth members to craft and execute their own approaches to leadership in planning and implementing their initiatives.

Under Type 1, CUYA was created because its members were influenced by the work that CARFA does. The members also saw the type of work that their parents/elder members of their family did in agriculture and went ahead and pursued similar, inspired initiatives. In faith-based organizations where senior members are seen as clear mentors (pastors/formators) to younger generations, wisdom is especially valued. Under Type 5, ILAW project lead Peter Paul Reynaldo ensures that in doing the open forum sessions, he provides guidance for younger facilitators so they are able to conduct themselves in a mature and open manner that helps establish the safe space the young participants need. In school-based organizations, the relationship is straightforward. The school setting already precludes that teachers are present to guide the learners in formal school lessons, but an added layer of ensuring that they also pass on leadership and organizational skills are especially considered.





Reminders for youth organisers: solutions grounded on heart and hard work, and the 7 mindsets of an innovative leader

It is also significant to note that Dipolog’s Mugna awards recognized the importance of effective community engagement and activation among youth and adult residents so they opened the competition to not just youth organizations. This is a significant demonstration that while age does not limit social contribution, it is important to recognize the different perspectives that youth leaders and adult leaders can bring to the table, resulting in genuine and effective collaboration which benefits the entire community.

## Cross-sector Partnerships and Effective Alliances

Collaboration among organizations with different approaches but aligned objectives is another key element that was demonstrated across Galing Kabataan-awarded projects. KKK’s efforts to help their community in Mapanas deal with disasters better all started when an NGO started tapping the youth in the area to do it. This inspired them to start their own organization. Now, KKK President Faye Banilla and her team regularly collaborate with the LGU, and have been invited to functions abroad such as the 2022 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Indonesia as the youth representative of the Philippines through UNICEF Philippines to share their best practices as a youth organization.

Another KADASIG Award winner, CUYA enjoyed recognition and cash prizes from other agencies such as DOLE and the Foundation to the Philippine Environment (FPE) which helps them sustain their project and expand its reach and depth further. Zamboanga City’s SK Divisoria partnered up as well with other organizations from the community for “Lettuce Do It Jovenes”. These include Rotaract Zamboanga City East, Kids Can Compost and Kids Who Farm. Catarman’s Sinag ng Hilaga project, ILAW also credits their success to the teamwork they had with other organizations.

This meeting of minds and efforts was crucial to the success of the projects themselves because it created a resource pool that could be tapped for specific needs. The goal of affecting positive, sustainable change became a shared responsibility that was easier to bear, and proved to have a wider reach as opposed to if the youth organizations chose to take on the mission on their own.

## 4 | Recommendations

Based on the documentation and discussion of the Galing Kabataan-awarded projects, we find that the most impactful initiatives were those that have empowered youth leaders who possessed a clear goal and plan in relation to addressing urgent problems in their communities. Empowered leaders also have the ability to mobilize financial and non-financial resources from stakeholders including their LGU officials from barangay to municipal/city to provincial, private sector partners, other NGO partners, and their mother organizations or national counterparts (in the case of local chapters of existing national organizations).

The coordination between youth organizations and LGUs is a prerequisite to any planning stage for a project. This element of integration between the stakeholders added to the effectiveness, sustainability, and scalability of the initiatives—just like Northern Samar’s COVEGE-20 project by SK San Roque which was replicated across other areas. What started as an initiative to address the food security issues brought about by the pandemic became a project that held its own well. SK San Roque was able to tap 4Ps beneficiaries, residents and youth for starting and cultivating community gardens that addressed food insecurity and also added to their family’s income. Insights from these different project participants enriched the project because they offered the specific nuances needed to make COVEGE-20 efficient.

LGUs may be able to provide support for the implementation of the projects especially when it is aligned to the local development plan of the province/city/municipality. This may be in terms of financial support, staff complement, data gathering and management, communication with existing networks, logistics, etc. When a project is successful, it can be

***“I was in this international stage with government leaders, decision-makers and fellow youth, all gathered to discuss the gaps and development in reducing disaster risks around the world. I used the moment to encourage them and emphasize the importance of my generation’s views and abilities.”***

**Faye Bandilla**

Youth leader & president of KKK, winner of KADASIG Awards 2021



Faye Bandilla, through UNICEF Philippines, attended the 2022 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Indonesia as the youth representative of the Philippines. (Photo and caption from this UNICEF.org article: <https://bit.ly/2ZTQCXk>)

implemented at a city/municipality-wide level, LGUs may issue an executive order or an ordinance for the institutionalization of such projects. This demonstrates strong youth participation in governance within the LGU and will ensure the continuation of the initiative regardless of changes in the administration.

Because of the global pandemic, a notable number of projects submitted by youth organizations to the Galing Kabataan Awards were focused on responding to the effects of the COVID-19 lockdowns. In cases like this, coordination becomes even more crucial because restrictions are in place to ensure health and safety protocols that will prevent the spread of infection. This amplifies the need for youth organizations to be able to access data on current cases, guidelines from professionals, and instructions on how to go about logistical considerations.

Youth organizations, however, are limited to providing solutions that community members may pursue, like addressing the food security gap that COVEGE-20 is dealing with. Solutions that for example involve the provision of vaccines and other health measures that require more expert opinions need more involvement from the LGU and even the national government. Nevertheless, these are valuable contributions to initiatives under the category of health. Other projects which address health-related concerns are ILAW (Isang Landas at Wangis) which focuses on mental health, and Project PaHIValo which focuses on sexual and reproductive health concerns - both of which are lauded for pursuing difficult but highly-important conversations especially for young people who need essential support.

Awards programs such as the Galing Kabataan Awards have proven to be a fruitful means to engage the youth and bring them into the space of governance-not in the future, but as active contributors even now. The vigor and energy of youth organizations are effectively harnessed in awards programs such as this because they are nuanced to the local setting but expanded in the sense that it's connected to a national program like Adapt + Innovate Program that builds on current and potential capacities of the youth alongside the LGUs that activate them.

Projects such as The Galing Kabataan Awards bring in partners from development, national agencies, and even the international sector. This cross-sector collaboration among stakeholders lend these initiatives credibility and help them sustain efforts that they already began.

Youth organizations who joined the Galing Kabataan Awards were able to tap into their creativity, resourcefulness, and innate leadership during a time when their communities needed the most assistance. The effort, energy, and enthusiasm that the youth consistently displayed in community initiatives are qualities unique to them, because they are at this specific stage of their lives. The youth provides a fresh perspective to otherwise purely traditional approaches to governance that sometimes need to be reviewed and updated. When coupled with the experience and wisdom of more experienced leaders, youth leaders' participation in governance may be a rich source of effective and ground-breaking solutions to community concerns.

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