

Challenges Experienced by Youth Organizations during the Ratification of Bangsamoro Organic Law

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ABSTRACT

Acknowledging the role of the youth in nation building as stated in the Republic Act also known as Youth in Nation-Building Act in the Philippines, youth organizations take part in the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law for the Bangsamoro people in the said country. However, various challenges have been faced. This study aimed to determine the challenges these youth organizations have experienced during their participation in the law's ratification. It also sought to identify the coping mechanisms they have employed to cope with those challenges during the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law. To determine the challenges faced and coping mechanisms of the youth organizations, a qualitative type of research was used, and data was presented in narrative form. The participants which were selected purposely were officers of Al-Jalis As-Salih, Inc. (AAI); United Youth for Peace and Development (UNYPAD); Ittihadun – Nisa Foundation (INFO); Bangsamoro Youth Project Organization (BYPO); Young Centrist Union (YCU); and United Youth of the Philippines – Women (UNYPHIL). Purposive sampling was used in selecting the participants. The study found out that the youth organizations faced series of challenges during the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law such as receiving threat and having a hard time convincing people to vote for "YES" which means agreeing for the law's ratification. The youth also faced challenges during the posting of materials in Cotabato City, Philippines since the City Mayor is not in favor of the Bangsamoro Organic Law which led to various heated situations. Other challenges experienced are related to local traditional politics, different dynamics within the ground, differences of religion, capacity and resources of organization, financial concerns, the misinterpretation and misconception and myths on Bangsamoro Organic Law. It is then concluded that despite the challenges faced by the youth, they maximized their utmost participation and did not give up. Their steadfastness in achieving their goal is what made them tough to counter the waves of challenges.

KEYWORDS

challenges; youth organizations; ratification; Bangsamoro Organic Law

INTRODUCTION

Tracing back the history of the armed conflict in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, it can be known that it is one of the longest-running armed conflict in the world and the said region became the home of the Muslims who fought for their self-determination and aspirations for a peaceful and progressive region. Past administrations

have initiated various peace negotiations with rebel groups in the region such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) who turned to violence and demanded for a separate state but none have succeeded.

The Bangsamoro community, after years of attempting, made a historic event on January 21, 2019 and February 6, 2019 as they successfully conducted the plebiscite on the ratification of Bangsamoro Organic Law – replacing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. This law could possibly cover a much larger territory, have a different form of government and would expand to other municipalities and barangays and would give more autonomy to the people in the region.

As historic as it is, the campaign period awaken many people campaigning their interest – the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law and the inclusion of other neighboring places. The youth, with the various youth organizations played vital role in the campaign period and undeniably faced many challenges. The presence of youth in the ratification of the law is a milestone in terms of actively raising consciousness to the citizens of the region. However, they are not excused in going through hardships and challenges as they are considered by some to be vulnerable and have limited capacities. Hence, this study was conducted to identify those challenges and determine the how they cope with those challenges that made them survive the process.

This study aimed to determine the challenges these youth organizations have experienced during their participation in the law's ratification. It also sought to identify the coping mechanisms they have employed to cope with those challenges during the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

Focusing on the challenges faced by the youth organizations as having participation in the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, the result of the study will be a great help to various groups such as peace advocates in which they will be well-informed on the challenges that they may encounter in the promotion of peace in Cotabato City and other neighboring places in the Bangsamoro region. It will also make the Bangsamoro government aware that different youth organizations are participating towards the attainment of long-lasting peace in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The findings of the study will enlighten the youth sector on their significant contribution in the development of the Bangsamoro region and recognize the challenges they surpassed in the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

The study concentrated on the challenges experienced by youth organizations in the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law. Coping mechanisms arouse out of those challenges were also included in this study.

The data were gathered through interviews in the selected youth organizations through their officers. These youth organizations are operating in Cotabato City and other neighboring places in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Youth and their Nature

The United Nations, for measurable consistency over locales, characterizes youth as those people between the ages of 15 to 24 a long time, without preference to other definitions by individuals states. The African Youth Charter, on the other hand, characterizes youth as each individual between the ages of 15 and 35 a long time. For exercises at the national level, for illustration when actualizing a community youth program, youth may be caught on in a adaptable way.

The Philippine national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, popularized the statement, “The youth is the hope of the nation.” Organization or individual – youth can make a huge impact in our

society. They are vital members of society but are said to be vulnerable. They are special because they fulfill the positions left by the elders. They are anticipated to ensure their culture and convention whereas at the same time make it superior and grasp changes in society. If the youth are the future, it is a must to shape their minds on working towards peace.

According to Parama Devi, founder and director of Jagannatha Vallabha Vedic Research Center, young generations find themselves with a package of cultural, ethical, financial, social, and family inheritance that the older generations have created. However, there's a require for collective and superior understanding of what youth cooperation includes, how it can be actualized for all ages. Youth cooperation can be moved forward through different approaches, such as instruction, capacity building and understanding the problems they faced in their endeavors.

Role of the Youth/Youth Organizations in the Society

“Youth voices in peacebuilding are display all over, but in some cases not recognized.” The creation of spaces for youth to precise their supposition to choice making and broader society guarantees that they have the opportunity to be listened. In hone, this could be done by empowering youth, grown-ups, guardians, non-profit laborers, community or devout pioneers to bolster the arrangement of youth organizations that offer youthful individuals a chance to define their suppositions (Flemming, 2015).

Youthful individuals regularly don't have the same monetary capacities as more seasoned eras, and they may not be able to form a gift to bolster causes around which they are enthusiastic. Be that as it may, cash is as it were one component of charity. Endowments of time and ability can have a considerable affect in a community and youth can utilize these instruments to ended up dynamic donors. One study found that in spite of the fact that 93% of youthful individuals are fascinated by volunteering, the reality is that 20-55% take after through (DoSomething.org, Youth Benefit America). The incorporation of youthful individuals in peacebuilding prepare is bound to encourage feasible peace in a society by diverting the energies of youthful individuals to the execution of useful peace ventures. Joining and utilization of young people in peacebuilding forms would encourage their change from operators of savage strife to specialists of peace in their social orders.

Youth Engagement in Peacebuilding and Community Activities

Youth groups work to keep neighborhoods safe and raise awareness of small arms and violence. One such example is the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Illegal Small Arms Control (ISAC) project in Kosovo. The project has three regional youth awareness projects, involving 38 youth groups and his 18,000 youth. To mobilize youth against illegal small arms and violence, project members coordinated through radio, television, public demonstrations, concerts, community forums, sports tournaments, art and photography exhibitions, concerts and theatrical performances. Directly involved in conducting and participating in campaign events. A key achievement of the initiative was a Kosovar youth documentary titled *In the Hands of Youth*, which "breaks the taboo of publicly speaking about the possession, use and effects of weapons" and police (<http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org>).

Youth are playing an important role in Myanmar's peace process. Peace processes often last for years, so next-generation engagement is needed to ensure that the agreements made are carried forward. Against this background, the Joint Peace Fund supports many projects of young people working towards a peaceful future for Myanmar. The Joint Peace Fund met with Philip Soe Aung, Project Manager of the Karenni State Youth Union (UKSY). He will join UKSY in late 2021, in the early stages of the peace process. He believes

young people have a key role to play in the peace process and describes them as a peace task force that bridges the gap between senior leaders and communities.

Bangsamoro Organic Law

The Bangsamoro Basic Law sets out the basic laws of the Autonomous Region of the Bangsamoro Region in Muslim Mindanao and repeals Republic Act No. 6734, “Law Prescribing the Basic Laws of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao,” as amended by Republic Act No. 9054. A law to strengthen and expand the organic laws of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) said the Bangsamoro Basic Law was the result of 17 years of difficult peace negotiations, four years of painstaking drafting, and collaboration with a wide range of Bangsamoro stakeholders, prominent constitutionalists and legal experts. said it was the result of consultations between In addition, the Bangsamoro Basic Law realizes the self-determination rights of the Bangsamoro people, addresses their historical grievances, promotes good governance in a region ravaged by decades of conflict, and improves service delivery. I hope to introduce the necessary reforms to improve. . According to the Jose Lorena of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, the Bangsamoro Organic Law will End the conflict because the revolutionary movement agrees to it. It will put an end to the marginalization we have and provide effective governance for the region.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study used a qualitative type of research which determined the challenges faced by the youth during the promotion of the Bangsamoro organic Law. The coping mechanisms in addressing the challenges were also determined and described. The presentation of the data is done in narrative form.

The participants of the study which were selected purposely were officers of Al-Jalis As-Salih, Inc. (AAI); United Youth for Peace and Development (UNYPAD); Ittihadun – Nisa Foundation (INFO); Bangsamoro Youth Project Organization (BYPO); Young Centrist Union (YCU); and United Youth of the Philippines – Women (UNYPHIL). These are non-partisan, non-profit, and non-government organizations led by youth, professionals and Ulamas (Islamic Scholars) which aim to develop skilled young leaders who meaningfully contribute to society. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the participants.

The information was obtained through interviews and observation. A tape recorder was also used by the researcher.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study yielded that youth have faced various challenges during the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law. Those challenges they experienced are receiving threats from the opposition side, difficulty in persuading and convincing people to vote for the “YES” which equate to agreeing for the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, removal of the promotional materials they posted in conspicuous areas, difficulty communicating with local traditional politicians, difficulty in completing various transactions related to the Bangsamoro Organic Law in Cotabato City due to the stand of the City Mayor who do not agree and support the law’s ratification which resulted to some unfriendly treatment from the people, and other varying dynamics within the ground. Other major challenge faced by the youth organizations is the differences in religion. Since the existence of the law, some non-Muslims believe that once the law will be ratified, they will be ousted in their hometowns. Other challenges they encountered are related to the misinterpretation,

misconception and myths on the Bangsamoro Organic Law. The youth also experienced scarcity of resources, lack of sleep, fatigue, pressure and scarcity of time.

One of the participants has this statement:

"During the plebiscite, there are those who prevent people from voting."

- Participant

The youth managed to face and cope with the challenges they have faced by employing different coping mechanisms. They have handled those challenges with "sab'r" (patience) and faith. This pertains to being steadfast and relying all their undertakings to God. Preparing back-up plans is also an effective alternative to face the challenges. Other coping mechanism they have utilized are disseminating information through unified messages, by exposure to social media with professionalism and unity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the youth indeed played an undeniable role during the ratification of the law. The youth participated in their own unique ways despite the severe challenges they have encountered, and they did not give up but instead faced the challenges fearlessly. The challenges they faced, though, difficult, were surpassed without resorting to unpeaceful means.

It is also concluded that their steadfastness in achieving their goal is what made them tough to counter those waves of challenges.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were offered: first, the principle of inclusivity in every organization must be maximized so as to prevent divisiveness and myths from existing. Second, youth organization managers should promote understanding among youth to get along with the dynamic characteristics of the new generation of youth. Lastly, the government and other sectors in the community must recognize the efforts of the youth organizations in peace promotion and nation building as they are one of the most active members of society.

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