

GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE FOR THE YOUTH

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The Youth in Nation-Building Act that was enacted in 1995 clearly defined the Filipino youth as those between the ages of 15 and 30. Moreover, the Philippine Constitution states that the youth are encouraged to be involved in public and civil affairs as part of their role in nation-building. Just as Jose Rizal exclaimed, the duty of cultivating the motherland is burdened upon them. It is both an inspiration and motivation to see countless examples of young people pursuing collective action despite diverse voices just to care for their communities. Every young person is a treasured member of society and just because they are young doesn't mean that their political views are not as important as their parents or other members of society.

Given the figure on the national data, more than 42% of Filipinos are under 18 years old and poised to become active participants in our country's democracy.

The idea of governance is not a brand-new concept at all, for it is as old as human civilization. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, governance is merely the process of decision-making alongside, the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented.

Government is one of the key actors or players in governance and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) affirmed that the young believe that the government has a significant or substantial role in achieving the ideal world we want. In our country, it said 49.5 percent of 235 young Filipinos, who took part in the consultations of UNDP, remained hopeful of good governance. Throughout the said consultations, the youth have been curious about how better leaders could be elected to govern the country.

They are looking forward to a better management in the local and national levels of government in the years to come.

For UP Political Science Prof. Ma. Ela Atienza, as cited by Dela Pena (2021), the youth are generally more idealistic and positive with their own theory of change and they place sizeable expectations on themselves, other people and government to do the right thing.

For the ordinary youth, the term good governance refers exclusively to government's commitments and its responsibilities to its residents. In this newest brand of governance, it's about time to level it up. When the youth expect something from the government, they should be willing to contribute to make it very successful.

Dr. Selva Ramachandran (2021), resident representative of UNDP said that the youth are best prepared now than any other time in the past to actively engage with the world and influence sustainable development. This finding is a challenge to Filipino youth not to see education as merely schooling but they must reflect on the society they are part of. Their plans and actions must be correlated with the kind of government they want to see.

Through social media, we see and feel how young people have transformed digital spaces into a microcosm of what the Philippines should or should not be. As stated by Garcia (2016), if only their ideas and zeal in cyberspace could be translated to committed involvement on the ground, the light at the end of the tunnel would be crystal clear. In an event for the Knowledge for Development Community (KDC) network, youth participants stressed out, that they are engaged, optimistic and considered themselves as the next breed of changemakers who want to help.

Noteworthy findings from a project led by the UNDP, Youth Co:Lab Philippines, and Citi Foundation in 2021 shared what young Filipinos aspire for. On top of the list are three major issues - good governance, post-COVID recovery, and education.

It is maintained that for inclusive politics, the participation of the youth is necessary and for this, the young generation today both have the moral duty to act mindfully and moral imperative to act in a Christian way. The question, What do we demand from the government? can be best partnered with, What can we do for the country?

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