

COMMUNICATION PROCESSES AND TOOLS ASSOCIATED TO THE LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION AMONG YOUTH CONSTITUENTS IN GREEN BRIGADE SK PROJECT IN AN LGU

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AB in Communication*

Abstract

Children, youth and other community members envision themselves in participating in every decision making in the society, and according to the Children Act of 1989, every child has the right to express his/her opinions the best way that adults can do. In the Philippines, Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) is the organization that is organized and represented by the youth sector that has the rights to freely participate in governance the way adults can do. In the peak of existence, issues against the image of SK emerged which brought them to the barbs of abolition. Since studies conducted by different organizations such as UNICEF and DILG shows that SK is weak particularly in legislation, reports and consultation with its constituents. The aim of this study is to find out the communication processes and tools associated to the level of participation among youth constituents in the Green Brigade SK Project in Manggalang 1 Sariaya, Quezon, in terms of communication tools and communication processes used as well as the level of participation of the selected Sangguniang Kabataan members of Manggalang 1. This study used quantitative descriptive research. The researchers distributed a survey questionnaire to sixty-eight 2010-2013 valid SK members of Manggalang 1, Sariaya, Quezon according to the list of voters issued by the COMELEC; and facilitated a focus group discussion thereafter. Their age range was 15 to 18 years old three years ago or 18 to 21 years old at present. The data gathered were analyzed using frequency method, percentage and weighted mean. Linear regression was used to determine the communication process and communication tool that predetermined the level of participation of the respondents. Based on the results of the study, most of the respondents answered that the often communication process and communication tool used during project formulation and implementation were Café Dialogue and Rural Radio. On the other hand, since most of the respondents chose the statement: the Sangguniang Kabataan council asks them to support the Green Brigade Project, is under the rung 1 thus, the level of participation of

the respondents is Manipulation. The selected SK members have less participation during the SK Green Brigade project. Furthermore, the communication process cannot determine the level of participation, while there were only three communication tools which determined the level of participation and these are internet, posters and banners, and songs, music, sayings and stories.

Key words: *communication, tools, processes, participation, youth*

INTRODUCTION

Participation is the ability of young people and every member of the community to become a part of a project or process not just by becoming dependent to its outcome but as a contributor to its success. It is the youth's power to shape the process for they have the same values as the adults they were working with as discussed by the Young Minds (2006). It is giving every member of the community a chance to present their opinions and participate in decision making of every developmental concern projects. Giving the chance to take part in decision making does not only give chances to the adults but for the entire member of community even the youngest may participate.

Ilboudo (2003) states that participation refers to encouraging the community participation with a goal of developing a community through a strategic utilization of various communication strategies. It means facilitating the active involvement of different community together with the other stakeholders involved. He also added that participation is the essential tool for development to emerge. Development and implementation of development will not impose great impact without an effective participation of the members of the community. Servaes (2003) emphasized that it is the

community that the problem in living condition is discussed. They were the ones who analyze what is the problem that they need to overcome to employ development in their community. Right participation in planning and media content is important. Though not everyone wants to be involved in the implementation, the important thing is that participation is employed through decision making.

Children, youth and other community members envision themselves in participation as useful member of a decision making in a society. According to the Children Act of 1989, it is the right of every child to be informed of what happened to him/her, and should participate if the decision may affect his/her future. Youths have the rights to express their views and to give their opinions (UNRC, 2011). The best way adults can do to look unto the thoughts of the youth is to ask and listen to them. Adults must also respect the youth as well as their voices and their opinions. On the other hand, youth must ready themselves to open up what they think (Hampshire Council, 2005). As a response, Philippines, as to UNICEF in 2007, is the first and only country in the world which gives a way for the youth sector to participate in governance particularly in "Sangguniang Kabataan (SK)". It has been the pioneer in advancing the power of the youth in its region, even before becoming a signatory in UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNRC, 2011). The Katipunang Kabataan is the group of youth in the barangay with the age ranges from 15-17, they elect the official of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) in their barangay which will sit in their council for three years. The elected chairperson has the same privileges as the regular barangay councilor for he/she will serve as the 8th member of the barangay council giving him the position of the ex-officio officer (R.A 7160).

Republic Act 7160 authored by Aquilino Pimentel states that SK serves as a pathway wherein they connect and represent their sector

towards active participation in the affairs of the government and in the country as a whole. It commits itself to the survival, protection, development and participation of the youth toward empowerment, and patriotism, achieved through strong partnership between and among the government, private and youth sectors, serving with the degree of professionalism and competence in an atmosphere of unity, solidarity, teamwork and camaraderie. Its mission is to lead in prioritization and direction of all development programs for the youth, to harness their potential and to encourage their active participation in nation building. It also endeavors to promote and protect the youth's physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual and social well-being and inculcate in them values of civic efficiency, productivity and social responsibility toward freedom from fear, hunger and justice. The SK shall accomplish its mission inspired by idealism, dynamism and integrity and drive for the excellence of the Filipino youth under the guidance of the Almighty God.

In the peak of existence, issues against the image of SK emerged which brought them to the barbs of abolition by the country's solons. Public perception identifies SK as the training grounds for political patronage and maneuver instead of idealism aroused (UNICEF, 2007; DILG, 2007). There have been a lot of persistent calls for the abolition of SK due to different issues and debates heating up between the lawmakers. Thus, this resulted in the filing of two resolutions in congress, the HB 185 recommending SK abolition and HB 2500 recommending reforms to the current system. Hence, this paved way for R.A 9340 stating that the SK elections on October 28, 2013 shall be postponed to a date to be determined by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) which is between October 28, 2014 and February 23, 2015 with no hold over, which means that all incumbent SK officials will leave their post on November 30, 2013 (Official Gazette, 2013).

A study was conducted by the United Nations Children Economic Fund - Manila and the Department of Interior and Local Government to study the status, impacts, and accomplishments of the SK. The study shows that though the SK has both positive and negative image on its official, its function was not practiced to its fullest. SK is weak particularly in legislation, reports and consultation with its constituents. The participatory development processes of the SK projects were measured in this study (UNICEF, 2007; DILG 2007). A study titled "Impact of Youth Governance" reveals that the SK was weak, in terms of consultation to its constituents; the researchers opted to study the communication processes and tools associated to the level of participation among youth constituents in green brigade SK project in a Local Government Unit (LGU). The researchers believe that upon studying this, they will be able to know if the SK in the Philippines is functioning properly and employing the communicative tools in decision making properly. As Geifus (2008) states effective implementation of communication processes and well calibrated methods and tools, as well as carefully honed facilitation skills, are difficult to gain but surely needed for the development process combined with the right participation.

In accordance to this, the researchers chose Barangay Manggalang 1 Sariaya, Quezon as the locale for the study for it was hailed as the best performing SK barangay for three consecutive years, from 2010 to 2013, by the Department of Interior and Local Government-Sariaya. They have shown exemplifying performance for their three year term resulting to a successful SK affair in the barangay. Upon the information gathered regarding SK Projects in Manggalang 1, the researchers opted to study the SK project entitled Green Brigade for it shows that their SK council functioned very well in this project. It is done yearly for three consecutive years to develop their environment. The researchers want to look into the communication processes and tools that can be associated to the level of the participation of

the constituents. Though the projects of SK in Barangay Manggalang 1 was already successful, still there is a need to make a research on the way they prepare for the projects so that the next SK officials will have an idea on what communication processes and tools to use in making projects that will secure a high level of participation from the constituents.

Objectives of the Study

This study is conducted to look into the communication processes and tools associated to the level of participation among youth constituents in Green Brigade SK project in Barangay Manggalang 1, Sariaya, Quezon.

The study aimed to determine the following:

1. the communication processes used in the formulation of Green Brigade project;
2. the communication tools used in implementation of Green Brigade project;
3. the level of youth participation in the Green Brigade Project; and,
4. if the communication processes and communication tools affect the level of participation.

Conceptual Framework

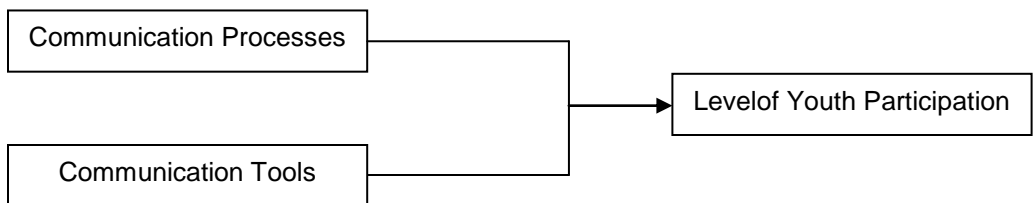


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

The researchers used this framework in the study. In determining the level of participation, there were forty sets of statements formulated by the researchers each statements are under different levels of participation. Communication processes used in formulating SK projects were determined as well as the communication tools used in promoting the project. These communication processes were derived from Krishnaswamy (2003). The following are the list of the communication processes which the study adopted: Café Dialogue, Future Workshop, Picture Circle, Speed Dialogue, Network Circle, Fishbowl Conversation, Open Space Technology, OPERA, Talking Stick, Dotmocracy, Note Card Exercise, Brain Storming Creative Solutions and Venn Diagrams. On the other hand, the following communication tools were the tools that were used in this study: Interpersonal Communication (Discussion and Debate, Visioning Session, Focus Group Discussion, PRA Techniques, Role Playing, Visit, Tours, Workshop and Exhibit), Group Media Tools (Posters and Banners, Audio Recording, Video Recording), Traditional Media Tools (Songs, Sayings, Music, Stories), Mass Media Tools (Rural Radio, Local Press, Television), and Information and Communication Technologies Tools (Internet). The researchers also focused on the effects of the communication processes and communication tools to the level of youth participation.

METHOD

A quantitative research was used in this study. The researchers chose Barangay Manggalang 1, Sariaya, Quezon as the place to conduct the study. The researchers chose this barangay because it is hailed as THE best performing SK barangay for three consecutive years (2010-2013) by DILG-Sariaya. The project Green Brigade was chosen by the researchers as the focus of the study for it is very successful and is being done yearly in the said locale. It also shows environmental development catered by the youth.

The participants of the study were the SK officials and their constituents during their term (2010-2013). The researchers employed the G-Power data analysis to get the desired number of the respondents. The respondents are official residents of Barangay Mangalang 1 and members of Katipunan ng Kabataan (KK) during 2010-2013, preferably belong to the age bracket of 15 to 18 years old three years ago or 18 to 21 years old upon gathering of data. Barangay Mangalang 1 Sariaya, Quezon, the locale of the study, has eighty members of the Katipunan ng Kabataan. Thus, purposive sampling was employed. The sample size is considered to be 68 at an error (α) of .05, with a statistical power (β) of .80 and an effect size in medium at 0.35.

Some data gathering tools used for this research are in depth interview with the DILG of Sariaya conducted by the researchers. A set of interview questionnaire was provided. The questions answered the criteria of DILG in choosing best performing SK barangay and the total population of youth who participated in the locale SK election for 2010-2013.

The survey questionnaire was answered by the SK council and constituents. The participants assessed the SK projects in terms of level of youth participation, processes and communication tools. There are three (3) sets of questionnaire. The first and second part of the questionnaire asked the respondents to choose all the communication tools and processes that they believed to have been used by their council. On the third part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to check on the box of the appropriate statements applicable to their council. Each statements were grouped according to the level of participation: 1-5 Level 1, Manipulation; 6-10 Level 2, Decoration; 11-15 Level 3, Tokenism; 16-20 Level 4, Assigned but not Informed; 21-25 Level 5, Consulted and Informed; 26-30 Level 6, Adult-Initiated Shared, Decisions with Young People; 31-35 Level 7, Young

People-Initiated and Directed; and 36-40 Level 8, Young People-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adult.

Lastly, in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), there are sets of guide questions prepared for the SK council and constituents that determined an in depth opinion with regards to the SK projects.

In analyzing the data, frequency count was used to determine the communication processes and communication tools used in formulating and implementing the Green Brigade Project. On the other hand, non-experimental analysis was also used to find out the level of youth participation in the locale. The researchers used the weighted mean formula.

In addition, linear regression was also used in the study. It is to identify the effects of the communication processes and communication tools to the level of youth participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The age of the selected residents in Barangay Manggalang 1 in Sariaya, Quezon are included in the demographic profile. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of the respondents' age. It shows that out of sixty-eight respondents, 55.88% belong to age bracket of 15 to 16 years old garnered while respondents aged 17 to 18 years old is 44.12%.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents in terms of age

Age	Frequency	Percent
15 – 16 years old	38	55.88
17 – 18 years old	30	44.12
Total	68	100.00

The gender of the selected respondents in Barangay Manggalang 1 in Sariaya, Quezon are also included in the demographic profile. The table below presents the frequency and the percentage of the respondents' gender. It shows that majority of the respondents are males having 57.35% of the total respondents while the female respondents is 42.65%.

Table 2. Profile of the respondents in terms of gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	39	57.35
Female	29	42.65
Total	68	100.00

According to the result of the study, café dialogue is the most used communication process in the locale. It is a fun, informal and effective way to discuss and come up with the new solutions to particular challenges.

When the constituents are asked on the communication process they had during project consultation, they just simply stated that: *“Dinidiscuss muna nila ‘yung mga project namin ‘yung mga gagawing project o kaya ‘yung mga nagawa na, gusto na ng lahat halimbawa, ganito magpapa-assembly ako next month tapos sa December mag-memeeting tapos ginagawa tayo ng court diyan sa may sitio tapos ang sinasabi ko sa kanila lahat ng mga gusto nilang ipagawa”*.

According to Schieffer et al. (2004), c afé dialogue is a method that encourages people to take part in discussions on current topics in informal and comfortable surroundings. It enables a practical way to enhance a human capacity for collaborative thought. On the other hand, Slucom (2005) states that café dialogue must be used when a group has more than 12 members and that the goal is to generate input, share knowledge, stimulate

innovative thinking and explore action possibilities around real life issues and question.

Table 3. Communication processes used in Green Brigade Project

Communication Processes	Respondents' Responses	Percent
Café Dialogue	59	86.76
FutureWorkshop	54	79.41
Venn Diagrams	46	67.65
Open Space Technology	44	64.71
Dotmocracy	38	55.88
Opera	37	54.41
Network Circle	35	51.47
Fishbowl Conversation	32	47.06
Field Based Tools	28	41.18
Brainstorming Creative Solutions	27	39.71
Talking Stick	27	39.71
Picture Circle	26	38.24
Speed-Dialogue	20	29.61

However, in terms of communication tools, the rural radio rank as number one communication tool used in Green Brigade Project. On the other hand, based the ranking of the communication tools according to their category, interpersonal communication tools are the most used during the project formulation and implementation with 50.73%. Interpersonal communication tools use non-verbal and verbal communication wherein there is the presence of an immediate response.

According to the result of the FGD, the constituents say that the top three most used communication tools they liked are PRA Techniques (Pagbabahay-bahay) which is under the interpersonal communication tools, posters and banners which is under group media tools and Internet which is under the communications technologies tools. They also stated that they

were already informed about the project one week after it is formulated. The constituents added that for them “facebook, mga post, sa Internet sa facebook”, is one of the most effective way because they have FB group that aids a faster means of communication.

SK Chairman said that “Nagpapatawag ako ng meeting sa mga syempre sa mga councilor ko, tinatanong ko din muna sila kung tama ba yung project namin o okay lang ba sa kanila. Kasi may karapatan silang magdesisyon kasi tinutulungan sila ng mga SK”. This statement clearly shows that there is the presence of discussion and debate during project formulation.

Rural radio is a powerful and effective communication tool, a media outlet for important and potentially life-saving messages and a space for people to voice their concerns and put appropriate pressure on their local authorities to deliver services (UNICEF-Mozambique, 2011).

Table 4. Communication tools used in Green Brigade Project

Communication Tools	Respondents' Responses	Percent
Interpersonal Communication Tools		50.73
Focus Group Discussion	59	86.76
VisitTours, Workshops, and Exhibitions	57	83.82
Discussion and Debate	41	60.29
PRA Techniques	22	32.35
Visioning Session	19	27.94
Role Playing	9	13.24
Mass Media Tools		49.27
Rural Radio	66	97.06
Local Press	1	1.47
Television	0	0
Information Communications Technologies Tools		22.06
Internet	15	22.06

Group Media Tools		15.68
Audio Recording	25	36.76
Posters and banners	4	5.88
Video Recordings	3	4.41
Traditional MediaTools		7.35
Songs, Music, Sayings, Stories	8	11.76
Theater	2	2.94

A study of Abraham et al. (2010) states that word of mouth is one of the most powerful information-disseminator for the consumers because it typically involves the use of friends as trustworthy. Word of mouth is the best way to know that there is something happening because people are naturally born curious.

However, in terms of the level of youth participation, among all the statements on the level of participation, statement 1, which is under the level 1 ranks the highest. It garnered a weighted mean of 3.53 and a verbal interpretation of *Strongly Agree*.

SK Chairman Glorioso stated that “*Bale, kaya nagpapa-project minsan may nagsa-suggest sa amin tapos tinitingnan namin kung kapaki-pakinabang ‘yung sina-suggest nila, kapag tama naman ‘yung sinasabi nila alam na maraming makikinabang o matutuwa sa amin, ginagawa namin nang aksyon, para maipatupad namin ‘yung project na ‘yun’.*”

The Executive Order No. 52 of the Office of the President, dated January 1999, states the creation of the environmental corps also known as the implementation of Green Brigade Project. It states that it is a mandatory that every SK has the mandate to have a Green Brigade project, thus, automatically allotting 10% of the total budget of the council for one year. This secures that every member of the Katipunana ng Kabataan (KK) must be asked by their SK officials to participate in Green Brigade Project.

According to Fletcher (2011), the level of participation does not mean to represent a whole community as one, but rather, it represents each youth a voice in a specific instance, and rather than saying a whole group is at certain level of participation.

To identify the significance relationship between a dependent and an independent variable in this study, a linear regression equation was used. The study shows that below 0.05 values over the overall level of participation has significance. There was no communication process that best predicts the level of participation of the respondents. Since according to the result of the linear regression, there is no specific communication process that garnered a value that is lower than 0.05.

Table 5. Level of youth participation in Green Brigade Project

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION	WEIGHTED MEAN	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
1. The SK Council sincerely asked me to support the Green Brigade Project.	3.53	Strongly Agree
2. I know how I become involve in the Green Brigade project	3.46	Agree
3. The SK council initiated the Green Brigade project.	3.43	Agree
4. The SK council shared the decision making with me	3.38	Agree
5. I know why I was assigned the Green Brigade project.	3.34	Agree
6. The SK Council ask you to take part in the implementation of the Green Brigade Project.	3.32	Agree
7. I participated in the decision making together with the SK council.	3.29	Agree
8. The SK council encourage me to join because he said that the Green Brigade project is for the youth.	3.28	Agree
9. I was assigned on the role on the spot.	3.28	Agree
10. The SK council states that the Green Brigade Project was suggested by the Katipunan ng Kabataan.	3.26	Agree
11. We had a brainstorming activity to decide on the Green Brigade	3.26	Agree
12. The SK council informed me on how my input will be used in the Green Brigade Project.	3.22	Agree

13. The SK council is involved in the Green Brigade Project only in a supportive way.	3.22	Agree
14. My inputs are appreciated by the SK council and used in the Green Brigade project.	3.22	Agree
15. The SK council and the KK members support each other.	3.19	Agree

On the other hand, the statistical data show that among the fifteen communication tools used in this study, only three communication tools have significance to the level of participation. Internet, posters and banners and songs, music, sayings, stories are the three communication tools that have a regression value of 0.004.

According to FAO (1992), people are living in an era wherein there is a rapid expansion on the reach of mass media to improve interpersonal exchange of ideas. There are lots of communication tools that emerged to secure a communication within different places, groups and people.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

This study focuses on the communication processes and communication tools associated to the level of participation among youth constituents in Green Brigade SK Project in an LGU.

The SK Council and KK members of Barangay Manggalang 1 Sariaya, Quezon are frequently using café dialogue as the communication process. Using the café dialogue, it allows the constituents to take part in discussions. Due to the informal and comfortable characteristics, constituents tend to suggest and take part in solution making without limitations.

The researchers found out that the youth constituents in Barangay Manggalang 1 Sariaya, Quezon prefer using rural radio as the most reliable communication tool. Interpersonal communication on the other hand, is the most used category of communication tool because youth in Manggalang 1 trusts immediate information from words of mouth from someone whom they believe to be trustworthy.

Based on the results of the study, the SK members in Barangay Manggalang 1 Sariaya, Quezon has the lowest level of the participation. Since most of the respondents chose statement number 1: “the Sangguniang Kabataan Council asks the KK members to support the Green Brigade Project” which is under the level 1, this study only shows that their level of participation is very low.

However, results show that the communication processes have nothing to do with the level of participation, thus, whatever the process used in the formulation and implementation of Green Brigade Project, the level of participation will not be affected. The level of participation might stay on the same level or might also get high or low disregard with the communication processes used in the formulation and implementation of the project.

On the other hand, though the level of participation may not be affected by the communication process, some of the communication tools have significance to the level of participation. Tools such as Internet, poster and banner and songs, music, sayings, stories affect the level of youth participation.

Recommendations

1. The results of the study give the researchers an opportunity to recommend the future researchers to conduct a study that focuses on the demographic profile, characteristic and profile of the SK

officials towards becoming an SK official that affects the level of participation of their constituents.

2. Since the focus of this study is only Barangay Mangalang 1 Sariaya, Quezon, the researchers also recommend that the locale should include other barangays and other calendar year to further enhance the study and to feature the impact of the Green Brigade project to other barangays on the previous years of its implementation.
3. The researchers also recommend to further use the community radio station in the information dissemination not only in Barangay Mangalang 1, but to the whole municipality of Sariaya since this study shows that using rural radio, information is easily disseminated.
4. The use of PRA techniques, posters and banners, should continuously be used in the locale since the SK members stated that it is very useful for them in getting information on upcoming events.
5. The use of new media, specifically Internet, must be employed not only for the use of SK but of other organizations as well.
6. Café dialogue must be employed during project formulation in order to create a favorable environment so that the members of the KK can express themselves well.
7. The researchers recommend that this study be a reference for the upcoming set of SK officials for them to have harmonious relationship and high level of participation towards their constituents.

8. The researchers also recommend that the DILG should add the level of participation of the constituents as a criterion for choosing the next best performing SK in barangay.

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