

CLAIMING IT! EXPANDING SPACES FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE



YOUTH CASE STUDY: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES

SUMMARY

The impact of young members of Amnesty International Philippines on activism is long recognized. In 2005, a 'YouthRep' position was institutionalized as part of the National Board, ensuring that the needs, interests, and concerns of young people are considered in every policy and campaign and enabling channels for the Section's youth activists to proactively participate in governance.



STORY OF CHANGE

The membership of Amnesty International Philippines has always been vastly composed of young people at the forefront of mobilization. While their role in activism was recognized, young people did not have a seat at the table in decision-making processes. They wanted to be the prime movers of their own campaigns instead of implementers or recipients only. In 2005, a YouthRep position in the Board of the Section was approved by the Annual General Meeting. The YouthRep, representing the interests of young members, is elected only by youth members at the Annual General Meeting, ensuring accountability of the position to the youth constituency. They are recognized as fully-fledged board members, with a term of two years and full voting rights. In 2012, an Annual Youth Assembly (AYA) for youth members was created with the scope of discussing organizational and youth-related issues within the movement - from resolution making and review, to the creation of a Youth Action Plan highlighting the priority campaigns for the Section's Youth. The first Youth Assembly also adopted the creation of the Youth Core Group (YCG) tasked to lead and coordinate the implementation of the Youth Action Plan. Together, the YouthRep, the AYA, and the YCG create the youth governance structure in the Section, enabling opportunities for young people to make

decisions about their advocacy direction, and to participate in internal policy-making.

"Having a Youth Representative to the Board can stand as a symbol that the youth membership has a say in Amnesty International."

- Paul Tecson, Youth Activist

OBJECTIVES

- Representing the interests and needs of the young people in Amnesty International Philippines in policy-making and decision-making processes undertaken by the Board;
- Initiating and advising on resolutions, policies, and other relevant documents supporting and addressing the needs of young people in the Section;
- Increasing youth participation in the Section's governance through consultations and other appropriate mechanisms;
- Enabling a structure for the youth membership to directly participate in the decision-making processes for both policies and campaigns.

IMPACT

- There is an institutionalized structure for youth representation in the decision-making processes, ensuring young people's ability to influence internal policies, the development and delivery of campaigns and to voice their needs and perspectives.
- Youth-led campaigns and activities are consolidated and streamlined through the Youth Action Plan drafted on an annual basis.
- The YouthRep ensures accessibility of the Board by regularly connecting with members through group visits and on social media, functioning as a bridge between the Amnesty International youth movement at the national and international level, internally and externally.
- Increased resources and organizational support allocated to youth representation, including youth specific budget lines in the Section's annual budget.

"You need to frame the importance of youth participation in governance as a core aspect of our work. A role in governance can let you decide the way the Section can better meet your needs within your role as human rights activist." - Tiffany, Growth and Activism Staff Member

TIPS AND TRICKS

- *Take a moment to reflect!* How does my Section see young people? Why is youth representation necessary and valuable? This will clarify the core motivations to make changes and why.
- *It has to be youth-led!* Encourage spaces where young people can engage in the decision-making processes and let them determine what that space means to them.
- *Allocate Budget!* Set a separate budget to ensure costs related to guaranteeing youth participation is planned for and realized.
- *Representation in the Board is not the end in itself!* Once you have a space for young people at the decision-making table, remember that this is just the beginning.



RAY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Ray Andrew Villafuerte was the YouthRep from 2015 to 2017 and shares: "Despite the structure in place, and the support given during my term, I never became complacent about the continuous challenge that there is for the youth's voice to be heard in the Section. Questioning the role of young people in the Section was a catalyst for us to serve better collectively, as it shows our struggle. This includes lobbying the Board for support of youth-led and initiated projects, allocation of enough resources, and also the development of a clear structure and strategy for young people. The collective effort of young people is important to achieve successes for youth empowerment and participation; but it is also critical in achieving human rights successes overall."

STAKEHOLDERS

- Members of the Board: work together with the YouthRep within the Board;
- The Annual General Meeting: approved the resolution to establish a YouthRep in the Board and holds the YouthRep accountable;
- Youth Membership: elects the YouthRep to the Board;
- Annual Youth Assembly: the YouthRep's main platform for consultation, resolution-making, and action planning with the youth membership;
- Youth Core Group: Convened by the YouthRep to the Board; works with the YouthRep to coordinate with the youth membership in the planning and implementation of the Youth Action Plan.

LEARN MORE!

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