Effectiveness of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda in the City of Baguio's Youth Peacebuilding Organizations

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Abstract

Young people have an inalienable right to participate in the upkeep of peace and security, whether through political, electoral, or peace processes, or by informal participation at the community level and in digital areas. The active engagement and influence of young people improves the relevance, efficacy, and impact of peace and security initiatives, programs, and choices. This prompted the creation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda as a guide and tool for Civil Society Organizations, Government Agencies, and Youth Organizations to ensure youth inclusion in peacebuilding. The creation of the UNSCR 2250 inspired the Philippines' National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security 2023–2033 which serves as the framework of the National Youth Commission, the Central Government and Civil Society Organizations to involve the youth in peace processes. In this regard, this study aims to present the level of effectiveness of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) Agenda 2023–2033.

Keywords: Youth; Peace; Security; Effectiveness

Introduction

Inclusion and participation of young people in peace and security are critical to achieving more inclusive, sustainable, and successful peace. According to the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, there is growing evidence of the positive impacts of youth when participating in peace processes as well as the prevention of all types of violence. They also emphasized that assisting young people in positive roles in peace initiatives allows governments to harness their contributions in the present and future. In addition to this, the Secretary-General stressed that youth make unique contributions to peacebuilding by engaging their peers, working at the community level, maintaining discourse when others have given up, and bridging differences in polarized environments (UNSC Resolution, 2022). Generally, the United Nations Youth (n.d.) defines "youth" as those persons "between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States." On the other hand, the Philippines' Republic Act No. 8044 or the "Youth in Nation Building Act" defines the Filipino youth as those who are from 15 to 30 years old (NYC, n.d.). Conversely, "Peace" is defined as the absence of conflict (Merriam Webster Dictionary, n.d.). Also, Oxford Languages (n.d.) describes "Security" as the state of being free from danger or threat. Since 2015, the United Nations (2022) has emphasized the essential role of young people in peace and security, which has been increasingly recognized and documented. Following several years of

advocacy by over 11,000 young people from over 110 countries, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted a historic resolution, UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security (UNSC Resolution, 2022), recognizing young people's positive role in international peace and security. This historic resolution outlines five important action pillars: a) Participation, referring to involvement in conflict prevention/resolution/transformation; b) Protection, discussing civilian protection during armed conflict; c) Prevention, ensuring socio-economic development and quality education; d) Partnerships, focusing on collaboration with various entities; and e) Disengagement and Reintegration, supporting reintegration of youth involved in armed conflict. Moreover, following the adoption of UNSCR 2250 in 2015, the Philippines drafted its own version of the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) Agenda through the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda 2023-2033. Launched in August 2022 and pending approval by the current administration, this plan aims to localize implementation through the National Youth Commission and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity. The foundation for all youth-led activities is provided by this National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security (NAPYPS). Building upon UNSCR 2250's five pillars, it seeks to identify and enhance existing mechanisms to address barriers impeding youth participation in peacebuilding. Consequently, young people's actual lived experiences in conflict contexts are often overlooked when policies are developed. Barriers exist that limit academic references necessary for monitoring youth definitions and policy development regarding violence management. This is evident in Hampson et al.'s (2020) study highlighting tensions between integrating academic research into policy practice versus rigid definitions of youth. Further research is needed regarding youth peace actors' participation in peacebuilding to monitor policy impacts on youth sectors. This need is reinforced by Altiok et al.'s (2023) study advocating for further research on youth participation through community-level case studies using participatory methods.

Review of Related Literature

Globally, the study of David Chandler (2015) emphasized that, "over the last decade, there has a been shift towards critical understandings of peace approaches to international intervention which holds the key to effective peace interventions". He also stressed how the peace paradigm, which ruled at the close of the 20th century has come under fire recently for its hegemonic tactics and for erasing and marginalizing diverse perspectives and levels of competence. On the other hand, Mercy Corps (2015) firmly believes that the youth's engagement in this type of approach from a violence and crime reduction perspective may yield positive results. They added that among many active in youth work practice, peacebuilding, and development, this kind of approach is still controversial, especially with those who support nuanced, non-essentialized conceptions of adolescents as change agents. Conversely, the continents of America and Europe has heightened tight security measures since the 9/11 era where surveillance and intolerance of dissent particularly target young people (Giroux, 2013). This is a bold but a promising demand for international peace and security actors to act upon the peace and security challenges of young people. Despite these efforts, such youth demands for political voice still continue to exist in tension with the perceived security interests of powerful states and collective security organizations. In Asia – Pacific, there is an increasing challenge for the youth to be encouraged in policymaking that better promotes youth inclusion for sustainable development (ESCAP, 2018). In this regard, youth inclusion in formal peace processes comes with unique challenges and dilemmas including overcoming stereotypes, tokenism, the natural turn-over in youth leaders and staff, and entrenched elder-power systems. The latter challenge at
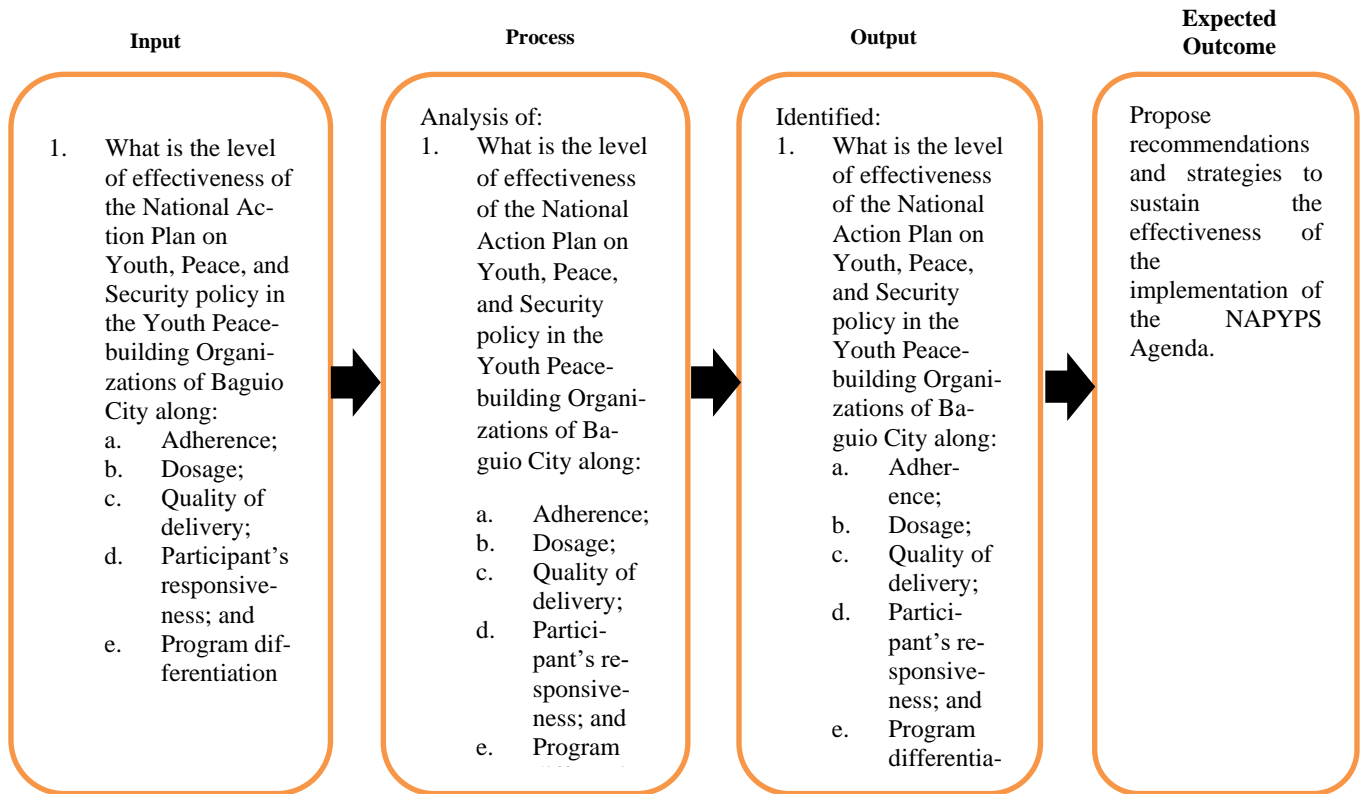
the elite state/intergovernmental organization level is mirrored in local resistance to youth inclusion, especially when it entails real violence. Thus, realizing youth participation in justice reform processes is instrumental in preventing post-accord criminal violence and restoring trust between state and society (O'Mahony et al., 2012). This is further emphasized in the study of Altiok et al., (2023) highlighting the youths' representative participation within peace negotiations and contribution in improving disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and security sector and criminal justice reform processes. In the Philippines setting, similar to other current political processes, youth political engagement and expressions in the context of peace processes often take alternative forms, such as mass protests and social media activism to legitimize or socialize peace processes (Altiok and Grizelj, 2019), and to lobby for and create change in many settings. This demonstrates that the power and leverage of youth in making peace is not solely sourced in young people's proximity to formal negotiation tables or political institutions. Albeit this, protecting and supporting the power of youth movements and activism underscores the need to equally prioritize all forms of engagement. An example of this is the protest of students from the University of the Philippines' Baguio City calling out a Resource Speaker who affiliated some of the said university's students as communist rebels and their call for a Crisis Management Committee composed of students to address similar concerns (De Vera, 2022), which focuses on the participation and prevention pillars of the YPS Agenda. Thus, youth inclusion in peacebuilding is crucial to make the participation of youth meaningful in peace processes. Evidently, common themes found in a comparative analysis of supranational and national youth policy frameworks in the study of Chaskin et al. (2018) included the emphasis on the youth as objects of concern and danger as well as the notion that civic involvement helps youngsters and their society. The YPS policy agenda recognizes young people as peacebuilders and provides a compelling case for why youth political needs to be involved in peace mechanisms. This is supported by Simpson (2018) who highlighted the necessity of YPS approach due to widespread reciprocal mistrust and fear between young people and their governments and multilateral systems. The general objective of the study is to assess the level of effectiveness of the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda in the City of Baguio's Youth Peacebuilding Organizations. Moreover, the youth organizations' evaluation of the YPS Agenda's implementation will benefit other communities, local government agencies, civil society organizations, youth peacebuilding organizations, and other peace actors on what actions are implemented to support the youth sectors' campaign for peace. Finally, the findings of this study will be able to present a piece of comprehensive and updated information on the implementation of the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda in the community level experienced by peace actors in Baguio City and would be feasible as well in other communities for review and analysis apart from the Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security which serves as the existing academic reference covering a global perspective of the said agenda.

THEORETICAL/ CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The active engagement and influence of young people improves the relevance, efficacy, and impact of peace and security initiatives, programs, and choices. They are experts in their own field when it comes to youth programs and policies. Hence, every policy and program introduced to the youth are crucial for their advocacy in implementing the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security 2023-2033. Weiss' (1998) Program Theory introduces the significance of how policies and programs can be evaluated. He stated that, "Programs are complicated phenomena, generally born out of experience and professional lore." Hence, when requesting an evaluation, stakeholders generally want to know if what they are doing

works and how they might improve their intervention as well as their knowledge on the policy or program being implemented. Program theory evaluation provides that kind of information without mobilizing the research efforts of an effect analysis. Weiss (1998) further defines program theory as "the mechanisms that mediate between the delivery and receipt of the program and the emergence of the outcomes of interest." In this regard, logic modelling is generally presented in the evaluation literature as a way to open the black box to better understand finer causal mechanisms. Some sophisticated logic modelling approaches include evidence-based depictions of the causes of the targeted problem to better appreciate the intervention's potential impact (Renger and Hurley, 2006; Renger and Titcomb, 2002). While this is an important step in better understanding the action mechanisms of the intervention, it is still not enough. This research investigates the importance of program integrity within studies. It proposes that researchers should critically evaluate the intervention's causal chain and the underlying theoretical framework. Moreover, for Dane and Schneider (1998), program integrity is "the degree to which specified program procedures are implemented as planned." Dane and Schneider identified different factors and components of fidelity to consider for effective implementation. In terms of factors, it is important that Program Integrity Procedures be consistent with the needs of the intervention setting. It must also be clearly explained in reference materials. Furthermore, training and supervision must make it possible to reduce resistance to change while promoting the acquisition of new practices. In a literature review of studies that examine the evaluation of fidelity of implementation, Dane and Schneider retain five components. With these five components, their conceptual framework also includes these definitions: a) Adherence; b) Dosage; c) Quality of Delivery; d) Participant's responsiveness; e) Program differentiation. Consequently, aligning the components of Program Integrity with the five pillars of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security 2023–2033 will help examine the effectiveness of the policy. Each pillar: Participation, Protection, Prevention, Partnerships, and Disengagement and Reintegration provides a structured approach to evaluate how youth-focused interventions are implemented and their impact on peace processes. For instance, the Partnership pillar corresponds with Adherence because it emphasizes collaboration among various stakeholders, ensuring that NAPYPS is implemented as intended. Similarly, the Participation pillar aligns with Dosage as it focuses on youth involvement in peacebuilding activities. Adequate participation ensures that young people receive sufficient exposure to the program's benefits. The Disengagement and Reintegration pillar corresponds with Quality of Delivery, which examines preventive interventions aimed at reducing violence among youth. Conversely, Protection matches with Participant's Responsiveness, ensuring that young people feel safe within the program. Finally, Program Differentiation aligns with Prevention Pillar as it focuses on addressing root causes of violence. This comprehensive alignment not only enhances clarity but also underscores fidelity's importance in implementing youth-focused peacebuilding initiatives as outlined in UNSCR 2250. Effectiveness in this study can be understood as a peace policy's capacity to meet its intended objectives while fostering stability and enhancing community well-being. This involves not only implementing specific initiatives but also ensuring they resonate with affected populations' needs and aspirations.

RESEARCH PARADIGM

	Input	Process	Output	Expected Outcome

Input

1. What is the level of effectiveness of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security policy in the Youth Peace-building Organizations of Baguio City along:
   a. Adherence;
   b. Dosage;
   c. Quality of delivery;
   d. Participant's responsiveness; and
   e. Program differentiation

Process

Analysis of:
1. What is the level of effectiveness of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security policy in the Youth Peace-building Organizations of Baguio City along:

   a. Adherence;
   b. Dosage;
   c. Quality of delivery;
   d. Participant's responsiveness; and
   e. Program

Output

Identified:
1. What is the level of effectiveness of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security policy in the Youth Peace-building Organizations of Baguio City along:
   a. Adherence;
   b. Dosage;
   c. Quality of delivery;
   d. Participant's responsiveness; and
   e. Program differentia-

Expected Outcome

Propose recommendations and strategies to sustain the effectiveness of the implementation of the NAPYPS Agenda.

Figure 1 Research Paradigm

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology and research design for examining the effectiveness of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda 2023-2033, specifically within Baguio City's youth peacebuilding organizations. It details the population and locale of the study, as well as the data collection and analysis methods employed. The researcher will utilize a quantitative survey method to assess the effectiveness of the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda in Baguio's youth peacebuilding organizations. This approach involves posing a set of predetermined questions to a sample of individuals, allowing for comprehensive data collection on their responses. Survey research is defined as "the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions," enabling researchers to describe or explain characteristics of large groups efficiently (Check & Schutt, 2012).The study will focus on registered youth peacebuilding organizations in Baguio City, located approximately 250 kilometers north of Manila in Benguet Province. Baguio is a highly urbanized city with an estimated youth population (ages 15-24) of around 75,612, constituting about 19% of its total population (PhilAtlas, 2023). The two primary organizations involved are Cordillera Youth Leaders (CYL) and Youth For Peace Baguio Chapter (YFPBC), both recognized for their contributions to peacebuilding over the past three years. The total population of active members within these organizations is 60. The researcher will select a sample of 30 respondents aged 20-25 identified as expert practitioners with at least two years of peacebuilding experience.A structured, modified survey questionnaire based on instruments developed by the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) will be utilized. This questionnaire will consist of five sections: respondent profiles, areas of work and methods, challenges faced, and recommendations. The survey will employ a Likert scale to measure perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the Youth, Peace, and Security

Agenda. Data collection will commence in 2024 after validating the survey tools. The researcher will obtain necessary permissions from relevant organizations before deploying questionnaires and conducting semi-structured interviews.The study will employ content analysis for qualitative data and calculate the weighted mean for quantitative responses using the formula $x'=\sum fx N x'=N\sum fx$, where $x'x'$ represents the weighted mean, $\sum\sum$ is summation, FF is frequency, and xx is weight. The results will be interpreted using a four-point Likert scale to assess effectiveness levels ranging from "very effective" to "ineffective." Additionally, thematic analysis will be applied to qualitatively analyze open-ended responses, identifying key themes that complement quantitative findings regarding the National Action Plan's effectiveness in youth peacebuilding efforts.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The analysis and interpretation of data regarding the effectiveness of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security (NAPYPS) for the years 2023-2033 in Baguio City's youth peacebuilding organizations reveal significant insights into program implementation. The evaluation of various indicators demonstrates a high level of effectiveness across multiple dimensions of the policy. For instance, adherence scored an impressive 3.7, indicating that participants perceive the program as closely aligned with its intended objectives. This strong adherence fosters trust and confidence among community members, which is crucial for the sustainability of peace initiatives. Similarly, the dosage indicator, with a score of 3.6, reflects participants' views on the frequency and intensity of program activities as effective, emphasizing the importance of substantial engagement opportunities that can lead to meaningful impacts in peacebuilding efforts. Quality of delivery was rated at 3.385, showcasing a commitment to high-quality services and resources essential for participant satisfaction. Moreover, participant responsiveness received a score of 3.65, highlighting active engagement from individuals involved in peace initiatives. This responsiveness is vital for cultivating a sense of ownership among participants, which is linked to sustainable outcomes in peacebuilding. Additionally, program differentiation scored 3.596, indicating that the peace policy effectively tailors its approach to meet diverse community needs. Overall, with a total weighted mean score of 3.5862 categorizing the policy as highly effective, these results underscore the program's success in fostering peace while identifying areas for continued focus to sustain its impact. The evaluation further emphasizes the importance of partnerships in peacebuilding initiatives, with an average weighted mean score of 3.7 for adherence to collaborative efforts involving various stakeholders such as UN entities and civil society organizations. This high effectiveness rating suggests that inclusive practices enhance legitimacy and impact within peace initiatives. Local engagement is crucial; when local authorities and civil society are actively involved, peacebuilding efforts become more contextually relevant and empower communities to take ownership of their processes. The role of civil society organizations is particularly significant as they facilitate dialogue and ensure marginalized groups are represented in peace processes.

A. Youth participation also plays a critical role in peacebuilding efforts, with effectiveness ratings of 3.6 for both involvement in conflict prevention and representation in decision-making processes. Engaging young people not only empowers them but also enriches decision-making with diverse viewpoints that reflect their realities. Programs that prioritize youth participation foster a culture of inclusivity and respect for diverse opinions, ultimately contributing to community resilience.

B. In terms of disengagement and reintegration strategies for youth involved in armed conflict, data indicates strong effectiveness ratings (3.33 for meaningful reintegration and 3.44 for addressing young

people's needs during disarmament). These findings highlight the necessity of comprehensive support strategies that encompass psychological aid and vocational training to facilitate successful transitions back into civilian life.

C. Protection measures are equally vital; programs aimed at safeguarding young people during conflicts received high effectiveness ratings (3.7 for preventing gender-based violence). Creating environments free from fear enhances youth activism and participation in civic activities, which are essential for sustainable peace.

D. Program Differentiation in prevention strategies emphasizes socio-economic development and quality education as foundational elements for fostering lasting peace. The Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda serves as a framework guiding local government agencies to include youth meaningfully in peace processes while protecting them from tokenism.

FINDINGS/ RESULTS

The level of effectiveness of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security policy in the Youth Peacebuilding Organizations of Baguio City, along with its components, is as follows. Adherence to the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security (NAPYPS) is notably high, with a weighted mean score of 3.7, indicating that participants strongly believe the policy aligns with its intended objectives and fosters trust within the community. The dosage aspect of the NAPYPS scored 3.6, demonstrating that participants perceive the frequency and intensity of program activities as effective and impactful. With a quality of delivery score of 3.385, the NAPYPS demonstrates a strong commitment to providing high-quality services and resources to participants. The participant responsiveness indicator received a score of 3.65, indicating active engagement and ownership among individuals involved in peace initiatives. Lastly, program differentiation achieved a score of 3.596, suggesting that the NAPYPS effectively tailors its approach to meet the diverse needs of various community groups.

CONCLUSION

The findings from the evaluation of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security (NAPYPS) in Baguio City indicate a high level of effectiveness across various dimensions, including adherence, dosage, quality of delivery, participant responsiveness, and program differentiation. Specifically, the policy achieved an overall weighted mean score of 3.5862, reflecting strong alignment with community objectives and active engagement from youth participants. High scores in adherence (3.7) and responsiveness (3.65) demonstrate that participants feel a sense of ownership and trust in the program, which is essential for fostering sustainable peace initiatives. Furthermore, the effective dosage (3.6) and quality of delivery (3.385) underscore the importance of substantial engagement opportunities and high-quality services in enhancing participant satisfaction and investment in peacebuilding efforts. Overall, these results affirm the NAPYPS's potential to create lasting change within communities affected by conflict while highlighting areas for continued focus to further enhance its impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To sustain the effectiveness of Youth Peacebuilding Organizations in the implementation of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security (NAPYPS) within Baguio City, it is essential to prioritize increased adherence to policy objectives. This can be achieved by ensuring that program goals are clearly communicated and aligned with the specific needs of the community. Engaging stakeholders in regular

dialogues will foster a deeper understanding of the policy's intentions, thereby reinforcing trust and confidence among participants. Additionally, expanding dosage through more frequent and intensive engagement activities will deepen participant involvement, ensuring that they are not only aware of the programs but also actively participating in them. By creating a structured schedule of activities that are both meaningful and impactful, organizations can enhance the overall experience for young individuals, encouraging sustained engagement in peacebuilding efforts. Finally, promoting program differentiation is crucial for tailoring initiatives to meet the diverse needs of various community groups, maximizing the effectiveness of their peacebuilding strategies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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