

**FACTCHECK 2016 #5:
Youth Empowerment and Sangguniang
Kabataan (SK) Reform**

A third of our population is composed of the youth aged from 15 to 30 years old. Out of an estimated 54 million voters, at least 20 million comprise voters aged between 18 to 35, which make up roughly 37% of the voting population.

As the number of young people in the Philippines increases, the need to tap their active participation in nation's growth and development has never been more urgent. Yet, the Filipino youth continue to face vulnerabilities that hinder them from achieving their greatest potentials. One in every ten or about 4 million Filipino children and youth (6-14 years old) was out-of-school youth (OSY) in 2013 according to Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), with ARMM registering the highest incidence of OSY at 14.4% of its total youth population. Out of 2.9 million unemployed workforce, 50% or 1.456 million are youth (2010 Census).

This is particularly disheartening given the historical role of young Filipinos in Philippine nation-building being considered as the "fair hope of the motherland." This importance given to young people and the unique vulnerabilities they confront make it crucial that they are well-represented in governance and are given opportunities to take part in governing.

One of the main avenues for youth participation in governance is the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK). The SK is the governing body of the youth assembly or Katipunan ng Kabataan (KK). The KK is composed of all the youth in every barangay. The SK's main responsibility is to initiate projects and activities for the development and welfare of the youth that will maximize their participation in shaping the country's development agenda and direction.

A study of the University of the Philippines-Center for Integrative and Development

Studies (UP-CIDS) in 2007 noted that while the involvement of the youth in the SK has both positive and negative effects on young people, young people have generally reported a positive impact from their personal experience working with the SK, such as greater appreciation for the country, a sense of service, and improved leadership skills.

A law called the SK Reform Act was passed in 2015 that aims to reform the SK to make it more democratic and effective. It contains a groundbreaking provision that regulates political dynasties in the SK.

**Presidential Candidates on Youth Empowerment
and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Reform**

With the exception of Rodrigo Duterte, all the candidates see the importance of empowering the youth to be active agents of change. Both Jejomar Binay and Mar Roxas see the youth as capable agents for disaster preparedness and climate change. Grace Poe thinks that the youth must have affordable and accessible education and opportunities. Miriam Defensor-Santiago explicitly states that it is important to empower the youth as she they are the future of our nation.

Poe, Roxas and Santiago have mentioned specific programs and actions for youth participation in their platforms. For Poe, the youth must have access to affordable education, paid government internship and fast internet speed. Roxas, on the other hand, specified that the youth must have more access to and must receive assistance with regards employment opportunities. There should also be an efficient skills-job matching among the youth, according to Roxas. For Santiago, her platform indicates the need for the youth to be empowered through various mechanisms and avenues.

Poe and Santiago authored bills on youth participation, while Binay supported youth participation through the Boy Scouts of the Philippines. Poe filed the following bills: Youth Entrepreneurship Act of 2014 and Tulong Kabataan Sa Agrikultura At

Kabuhayan Act of 2013; while Santiago filed the following: Youth Participation in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2014, National Commission on the Impact of Filipino Culture on the Youth Act and Minor Volunteers for NGOs Constructing Affordable Housing.

Both Grace Poe and Miriam Defensor-Santiago voted against the SK Reform Act of 2015. The rest were not legislators and did not have explicit position on the law.

Vice Presidentiables on Youth Empowerment and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Reform

Francis Escudero, Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., Leni Robredo and Antonio Trillanes have signified the importance of youth participation. All these four recognize that youth participation should be given priority attention.

However, only Robredo have youth participation in her platform. Robredo, in her platform, specified that providing skills training for the youth through various programs and projects would support youth empowerment. She also specified the need to provide employment to young people and entrepreneurship training.

Escudero, Marcos, Robredo and Trillanes have concrete track record in addressing the issues of youth participation. They have all written at least one bill in relation to youth participation. No track record and information have been found on Gregorio Honasan and Allan Peter Cayetano with regards to youth participation.

All the candidates except Trillanes have voted in favor of the passage of the SK Reform Bill. Robredo co-authored the House version of the SK Reform Bill, while Marcos sponsored the SK Reform Bill in the Senate as Chair of the Committee on Local Government.

Marcos was criticized for attempting to claim the credit for introducing the anti-dynasty provision in the SK Reform Act of 2015

during the Vice-Presidential Debate in April. Upon factchecking, Marcos was not the principal author of the said piece of legislation and only got involved in its passage as the bill deliberation passed through his Committee. The SK Reform Act 2015, particularly its anti-dynasty provision, originated from the proposal of the National Anti-Poverty Youth and Students Sector (NAPC-YSS) brought to Congress first in the 13th Congress by representatives of Akbayan Partylist, which the same representation carried through until the 16th Congress with other co-authors that included Robredo and Kaka Bag-ao.

What is FactCheck 2016?

FactCheck is a continuing project of the Ateneo School of Government (ASoG), through its Political Democracy Reforms (PODER) and Government Watch (G-Watch) programs, that provides verified information on candidate's position, platform and track record as a voter's basis in making their decisions on who to vote and what issues and agenda to further advance. Now on its third cycle, the 2016 FactCheck, as in the previous 2010 and 2013 elections, probes candidate's position, platform and track record on key issues and agenda identified through consultations with organizations at the local and national levels. It highlights and mainstreams critical issues in the election agenda to contribute in making elections issue- and platform-oriented.

FactCheck 2016 focuses on 10 issues:

- Agriculture, fisheries development and agrarian reform
- Participatory and pro-poor budgeting (BuB)
- The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)
- Political and Electoral Reforms
- Meaningful youth participation
- Education and Health Services to Vulnerable Sectors
- Social Justice for the Bangsamoro and the Indigenous Peoples (IPs)
- Urban Development

- Environmental-ecological Protection and disaster risk and reduction management (DRRM)
- Anti-corruption

The following process was undertaken in coming up with the FactChecks:

- Formal letters were sent out to all the candidates requesting for their position, platform and track record on the agenda we identified.
- Based on the input from the candidates, we did the ‘fact-checking’ by checking on official reports and documents and reports from credible newspapers/ online media. For the candidates who did not send their inputs, our take off point was their official website.
- We then processed the data using a processing table and following our measures and indicators.

***Factcheck 2016
Measures and Indicators***

Position refers to the candidates’ pronouncements about the agenda that can be found in printed materials like news, statements or online. We determine whether the candidate is for, against or neutral.

Platform refers to the candidates’ plans in tackling the agenda as stated in their official platform. We determine whether the agenda is mentioned, not mentioned in the platform.

Track record refers to the direct action taken by the candidates in advancing/ realizing the agenda. We determine whether the candidates’ track record is concrete, not concrete, no record or opposition based on whether the candidates has taken direct action in terms of bills filed, laws passed, decisions made, programs/ projects personally/ directly championed as stated in official or reliable/ verifiable records. We mark the candidates’ track record ‘opposition’ if s/he has taken an

opposition position on the agenda.

- After a researcher prepared the data processing table, at least two other researchers peer reviewed the data and the briefer. We then prepared the infographics and finalize the briefer for posting on FactCheck 2016 Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/factcheck2016/>).
- The final checking was crowdsourced. We allowed anyone using the online platform (Facebook) to point to us any credible source that would correct any wrong data on our FactCheck. Upon receiving such feedback, we checked the source, verified it and corrected the FactCheck (if needed), indicating the correction we made.

Note: The data and figures can still be updated and we are open to additional sources from anyone. Please contact us through our FB page.

PODER/ G-Watch deems FactCheck 2016 mainly as a platform to mainstream critical issues and agenda identified through studies and consultations of PODER/ G-Watch and to facilitate the exchange of citizens and politicians on these issues and agenda.

Sources:

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Copies of platform from offices of Marcos, Poe, Roxas and Duterte.