

RESEARCH NOTE

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL PROCESS: REFLECTIONS OF BANGSAMORO YOUTH ON POLICYMAKING IN MALAYSIA^{©Σ}

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ABSTRACT

This note details our reflections on participating in an academic visit and learning exchange on public policymaking in Malaysia. The Institute of Public Policy and Management (INPUMA) at Universiti Malaya and The Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC) of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority jointly organised the program. Our executive summary covers the event and includes reflections from BYC participants participating in the program and policy lab simulation. We want to thank Professor Dr Khadijah Md Khalid and her team at INPUMA for their impactful and intellectual contributions to the event. During the program, we also considered Malaysia's history of the peace process in Mindanao and the cultural exchange between Malaysians and Bangsamoro. We are grateful to the professors and speakers who have enriched our public policy, governance, and youth development knowledge. INPUMA's commitment to empowering the BYC is commendable, and we appreciate all those who contributed to the program's success. We would like to recognise the BYC Coordinator and their team for their exceptional efforts in coordinating logistics and ensuring a successful learning exchange. Their professionalism and dedication ensured that everyone had a productive and enriching experience.

Keywords: youth participation and local policymaking process, best practices and experiences of Malaysia, reflections of Bangsamoro youth, INPUMA UM and BYC.

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NOTA PENYELIDIKAN

PARTISIPASI BELIA DALAM PROSES TEMPATAN: REFLEKSI BELIA BANGSAMORO DALAM PEMBUATAN POLISI DI MALAYSIA

DATU RAID SALIK DAN
RODOLFO M. MATUCAN

ABSTRAK

Nota ini memperincikan refleksi kami mengenai penyertaan dalam lawatan akademik dan pertukaran akademik mengenai penggubalan dasar awam di Malaysia. Institut Antarabangsa Polisi Awam dan Pengurusan (INPUMA) di Universiti Malaya dan Suruhanjaya Belia Bangsamoro (BYC) Pihak Berkuasa Peralihan Bangsamoro menganjurkan program itu secara bersama. Ringkasan eksekutif kami merangkumi acara dan termasuk refleksi daripada peserta BYC yang mengambil bahagian dalam program dan simulasi makmal polisi. Kami ingin mengucapkan terima kasih kepada Profesor Dr Khadijah Md Khalid dan pasukannya di INPUMA atas sumbangan mereka yang memberi kesan dan intelektual kepada acara tersebut. Semasa program itu, kami juga mempertimbangkan sejarah Malaysia dalam proses damai di Mindanao dan pertukaran budaya antara rakyat Malaysia dan Bangsamoro. Kami berterima kasih kepada profesor dan penceramah yang telah memperkaya polisi awam, tadbir urus dan pengetahuan pembangunan kami. Komitmen INPUMA untuk memperkasakan BYC adalah terpuji, dan kami menghargai semua pihak yang menyumbang kepada kejayaan program ini. Kami ingin mengiktiraf Penyelaras BYC dan pasukan mereka atas usaha luar biasa mereka dalam menyelaraskan logistik dan memastikan pertukaran pembelajaran ini berjaya. Profesionalisme dan dedikasi mereka memastikan setiap orang mempunyai pengalaman yang produktif dan memperkaya.

Kata kunci: *partisipati belia dan proses pembuatan polisi tempatan, amalan terbaik dan pengalaman Malaysia, refleksi belia Bangsamoro, INPUMA UM dan BYC.*

Introduction

The literature surrounding liberal peacebuilding and local peace infrastructure has emphasized the importance of empowering and emancipating young individuals involved in local processes. After years of hard work, the Mindanao peace process successfully led to the passing of the Bangsamoro Organic Law in July 2018. This law replaced the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) with the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), introducing a new administrative structure that includes the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (2019 to 2022). This authority was established to oversee the transitional phase before elect autonomy governance was installed. Although a government body focused on Muslim youth affairs in Mindanao was created 22 years ago through Executive Order No. 1, Series 117 by former Regional Governor Nur Misuari, recent landmark developments have made youth participation in local governance a reality. The Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC) formation has made this possible.

During a recent academic visit and learning exchange on public policymaking in Malaysia, a group of 16 participants and a representative from BYC gained valuable insights into Malaysian policymaking and youth development. The event occurred between June 5 and 10, 2023, and was co-organised by BYC and the Institute of Public Policy and Management (INPUMA) at Universiti Malaya. This research note provides an executive summary of the event and reflections from BYC participants participating in the program and policy lab simulation. The organisers, Professor Dr Khadijah Md Khalid and her team at INPUMA were thanked for their impactful and intellectual contributions to the event. The close cultural exchange between Malaysians and Bangsamoro and Malaysia's history of the peace process in Mindanao were also considered during the event.

The experience at the learning exchange was enlightening and highly beneficial. It gave us a chance to expand our knowledge and perspectives in the areas of public policy and youth development. By interacting with experts, fellow BYC participants, and brilliant speakers from INPUMA, we gained valuable insights and learned from their experiences. This knowledge can significantly contribute to our work at BYC.

We were exposed to some best practices and innovative public policymaking and governance approaches during the learning exchange. The Malaysian experience in policymaking, governance, and strategy to boost their economy, culture, and public engagement was particularly enlightening. As the Planning Head at the BYC, we are excited to implement some of these practical strategies in our work. These best practices can make our sectoral policy development processes more effective and efficient. They will also ensure they are more participatory, effective, and progressive.

Moreover, the learning exchange provided invaluable networking opportunities. Interacting with professionals from Malaysia and creating connections with them opened doors for potential collaborations and access to resources. Building a more comprehensive professional network will benefit the BYC by fostering partnerships, exchanging knowledge, and sharing best practices in youth development.

Our experience in Malaysia and interacting with participants from diverse backgrounds has broadened our understanding of different perspectives. This cross-

cultural learning has expanded our horizons and equipped us with a more inclusive approach to working with diverse stakeholders in the Bangsamoro region. At the micro level, it will help us, as planning officers, better address the unique challenges and needs of the youth we serve. In summary, we have learned several valuable lessons:

- One area that requires improvement is conducting a thorough pre-program assessment to understand our participants' specific needs and skill gaps. By conducting individual assessments or surveys beforehand, we can customise the program content and activities to address those areas of improvement. This ensures we provide our participants with the most relevant and targeted learning experiences.
- We aim to improve our learning exchange program by establishing a reliable participant feedback mechanism. We value their insights, suggestions, and recommendations during and after the program, which will help us enhance future iterations. This will ensure that we better meet our participants' needs and expectations.
- Another crucial aspect we must focus on is developing a long-term strategy for selecting participants for future offshore workshops. While participants gain valuable knowledge and skills during the learning exchange, we must integrate these learnings into their daily work at BYC. This strategy may involve creating action plans, providing ongoing policy guidance and support, and facilitating knowledge-sharing platforms. This will equip participants to implement the acquired knowledge effectively and sustainably.
- To improve future programmes, we will analyse assessment results, customise the content, update assessments, gather participant feedback, create a supportive environment, review feedback, and communicate actions taken.

Concluding Remarks

During our short but intense visit, we discovered transformative practices and sources of inspiration that can be used for local improvisations. As BYC officers, we plan to leverage the knowledge and experiences from the learning exchange to replicate and apply valuable insights in our work.

We aim to identify the best practices and innovative approaches observed during the exchange that align with our goals and objectives. This could include strategies in digital communications, data culture, governance, and public engagement. We will work with relevant departments and stakeholders within and outside the BYC to adapt and implement these practices, ensuring their alignment with the local context and needs of the Bangsamoro youth.

Our goal is to develop policies and programs that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of Bangsamoro youth. We will involve youth representatives, community leaders, and other stakeholders in a participatory policy development process to achieve this. We will encourage active engagement and collaboration through workshops, consultations, and dialogues.

Effective digital communication is crucial for engaging with the youth. To that end, we will strengthen our digital communication channels, including social media platforms, websites, and online campaigns. We will explore new tools and strategies to

optimize our efforts in disseminating information, soliciting feedback, and promoting meaningful interactions with the youth.

We plan to establish knowledge-sharing platforms within the BYC to promote effective policymaking and coordination. These platforms could involve organizing regular workshops, seminars, or webinars where staff members can share their experiences, learnings, and best practices. Creating a continuous learning and collaboration culture can enhance our collective expertise and improve our policymaking and coordinating system.

To ensure the effectiveness of these platforms, we will co-develop a monitoring and evaluation framework with the M&E unit. This framework will assess the impact of applied learnings from the exchange, set key performance indicators, collect relevant data, and analyse the outcomes of implementing new practices. This feedback loop will enable us to identify areas of success and areas that may require further refinement, ensuring continuous improvement and learning within the Commission.

The insights we acquired from this training could assist us, at the Commission, in leading the planning and guiding the office towards a direction that aligns with the hopes, goals, and ideals of the young people of Bangsamoro.

Our familiarity with public policy is at an 8 out of 10. With our academic background and work experience, we have comprehensively grasped public policy ideas, methods, and structures. We are skilled in examining policy concerns, researching, and creating proposals based on verifiable data.

We continuously develop our knowledge of public policy and strive to stay up to date with the latest developments. As Planning Officers, we are confident in contributing to policy discussions. However, we are committed to expanding our expertise to make informed decisions. We value critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, allowing us to explore innovative solutions to the Bangsamoro youth's challenges.

Acknowledgement and Declaration

We thank the anonymous reviewers from SINERGI and INPUMA for their valuable feedback and dedication to our learning exchange program. We also thank the professors and speakers who have enhanced our public policy, governance, and youth development knowledge. The commitment of INPUMA to empowering the BYC is genuinely commendable. Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to all those who contributed to this program.

Moreover, we appreciate the BYC Coordinator's and their team's exceptional efforts, from coordination to logistics, in ensuring a successful learning exchange. Their professionalism and dedication ensured that everyone had a productive and enriching experience.