

# Challenges and Practices of Youth Leaders: Input to a Sustainable Volunteerism in Community Development

Ma. Melanie Aposaga

Capiz State University, Main Campus, Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines  
ma.melanie\_aposaga[at]yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *Volunteerism is a worldwide phenomenon that has played an increasing role in society. This study determined the volunteerism challenges and practices of youth leaders as input to a sustainable volunteerism in community development of Roxas City in terms of capability building, time management, financial management, and social support. This descriptive research utilized a researcher-made questionnaire. The 215 respondents consisted of Barangay Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Officials of the 47 barangays of Roxas City, Capiz. Results revealed that Roxas City SK Officials were moderately challenged as to financial management, capability building, time management, and social support. For the volunteerism practices, capability building, time management, and social support were practiced by the respondents, while financial management was moderately practiced. An organizational assessment on volunteerism management of the Local Government Unit could be helpful for adopting and strengthening the practices on volunteerism identified in the study.*

**Keywords:** Volunteerism, Challenges, Practices, Youth Leaders, Community Development, Roxas City, Capiz

## 1. Introduction

Volunteerism is a worldwide phenomenon that has played an increasing role in society. It has had long history with the scale of voluntary work varying from country to country implying that volunteerism could be culture-bound. It also contributes towards the improvement of the quality of life of several sectors of society, and is renewable resource for addressing the issues and concerns in the broader context of human improvement and advancement.

In 1999, data on volunteerism have been generated by the John Hopkins University (JHU) Comparative Non-Profit Sector Project in 37 countries. According to JHU, approximately 140 million people in these countries representing approximately 12 percent of their adult population are engaged in some forms of volunteer activities in a typical year. However, starting 2015, according to the School of Public Policy (2018) and Poon (2019), decline in volunteering was observed among Americans.

In the Philippines, volunteerism has had long, rich and diverse cultural tradition. The culture of volunteerism is rooted in the profound cultural characteristics and dominant values inherent in every Filipino. These values, which are embedded in Filipino culture and history, which family, kinship, and community tie, are the core of the people's way of life. Volunteerism remains embedded in the tradition of sharing, of helping. Notions of Filipino volunteerism employ various indigenous meanings such as Bayanihan, Damayan, Kawanggawa, Pahinugod and Bahaginan, which can translate into various types of volunteering such as academe-based and government-supported volunteering, Non-Government Organization volunteering, and foreign-supported volunteering. Whether understood as tulong (help), pakikipagkapwa-tao (a shared sense of one's

humanity), pagbabahagi (sharing) or paghahandog (offering), volunteerism can bring significant benefits to individuals and communities in the Philippines and can help nurture, and sustain a rich social texture and a strong sense of mutual trust and cohesion, essential to the stability of Filipino society (Philippine National Service Coordinating Agency Country Report on Volunteerism, 2020).

In the recent past, many Filipinos have been successfully championing volunteerism. In 2009, Efren Peñaflorida Jr., a young Filipino who voluntarily contributes his time in educating underprivileged children in the slum areas of Cavite through his "push cart" classes, which diverted the youth's attention away from street gangs, was named the 2009 CNN Hero of the Year. Likewise, the Gawad Kalinga originated in the Philippines in 1995 with a vision to build 700,000 homes in 7,000 communities is now known across the globe for its pioneering initiatives to develop communities by providing low-cost housing for the informal settlers and marginalized Filipinos.

However, during the pandemic, there was a decrease in the deployment of volunteers in community works, especially foreign, due to travel restrictions. In an initial conversation with some Barangay Officials, it is common in their barangays with just only few volunteers to participate in community activities. They find it hard to solicit the participation of the community folks, especially the youth. It is in this premise that the study looked into the volunteerism challenges encountered and the volunteerism practiced by the youth of Roxas City in doing their volunteering work for a sustainable volunteerism in community development.

This study determined the volunteerism challenges encountered by youth leaders and their volunteerism practices as input to a sustainable volunteerism in community development, specifically, the challenges

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encountered by the youth leaders in volunteerism as a whole and in terms of capability building, time management, financial management, and social support; the volunteerism practices of the youth leaders as a whole and in terms of capability building, time management, financial management, and social support; if there a significant difference in volunteerism challenges of the youth leaders as a whole and when grouped according to their profile; if there a significant difference in volunteerism practices of the youth leaders as a whole and when grouped according to their profile; if there a significant relationship between the volunteerism challenges and practices of the youth leaders; if the youth leaders' profile a predictor of volunteerism challenges and practices; and what input can be drawn from the results of the study towards a sustainable volunteerism in community development.

## 2. Research Design

This research used the descriptive design. The respondents were the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Officials of Roxas City, who represented the youth leaders. The total SK Officials in the entire city is four hundred seventy (470), given that there are forty-seven (47) barangays and ten (10) SK Officials per barangay. The ten (10) Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Officials per barangay consisted of one (1) SK chairperson, seven (7) SK Kagawad, one (1) secretary, and one (1) treasurer.

The data needed were gathered using a researcher-made survey questionnaire, which was subjected to content validation by the panel of experts. The validators were the members of the examination panel, who were considered experts in their field. It was validated based on its content so that the information gathered served their purposes. The suggestions and recommendations of the validators were incorporated in the final copy before it was reproduced for a reliability test. It was administered to 30 respondents by convenience method and did not participate in the actual survey.

When the instrument's validity and reliability was established, it was reproduced according to the number of respondents and was used to gather the data. The researcher then, coordinated with the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Federation President for the administration of the questionnaire through a personal visit in her office and was followed with a communication letter. Coordination with Sangguniang Kabataan Barangay Chairpersons was also done for the researcher to personally conduct the survey to the 47 barangays except Barangay Olotayan, which is an island barangay. The distribution of the questionnaires for Barangay Olotayan was facilitated through the Sangguniang Kabataan Chairperson of the said barangay. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires in every barangay once schedules were set per barangay.

After the retrieval of the questionnaires, they were collated, scored, and entered in the master data. Then, they were ready for computer processing using a licensed IBM SPSS Statistics 28 program. The researcher made sure that the

responses were properly scored and assigned the respective verbal interpretation for each indicator.

The mean was used to determine the volunteerism challenges and practices of the youth leaders.

A courtesy call to the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Federation President was done to personally ask permission to conduct the study. A letter of approval was secured from the SK Federation President and the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents stating the purpose of the study. Participation in the survey was voluntary. Identities, information, and responses of the participants in the study were treated with utmost confidentiality.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### Challenges Encountered by Youth Leaders in Volunteerism

When all the 215 respondents were taken as a whole group, Table 1 discloses that the grand mean score on the challenges encountered by youth leaders in volunteerism as a whole was 3.16, verbally interpreted as moderately challenged. The result revealed that financial management had the highest mean score of 3.35 compared to capability building, which registered a mean score of 3.23, time management with a mean score of 2.86, and social support with a mean score of 3.21.

The result implies that although the study found that respondents were moderately challenged by volunteerism, but result was able to outline challenges, specifically on the area of financial decision-making, which obtained the highest mean, for obtaining and effectively utilizing financial resources to help achieve volunteerism goals. It was also evident that since most of the respondents were still low income volunteers, they feel that they incur additional expense when volunteering since there are times that the organization had limited funds and does not have enough financial capability to provide for volunteer incentives as among those challenges identified. Likewise, youth leaders were moderately challenged in terms of capability building and this can be attributed to the fact that they are young and lack the experience and exposure to lead organizations. However, continued volunteer work together with additional education in the form of seminars and training will hone these young minds to become better persons of service for their communities to help them reach their goals of minimizing the impact of extreme poverty.

The result of the study was supported by the findings of the Philippine National Service Coordinating Agency (2020), which indicated that among the challenges that surfaced in the course of the study were: (1) funding support to sustain volunteer's package of benefits and incentives, support for volunteer programs, projects and activities, and sustainability of volunteer undertaking; (2) advocacy of volunteerism at the local level; (3) security of volunteers; and (4) synergy of local volunteering initiatives with the Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016 and the Millennium

Development Goals. However, the result of the study of Arcega (2017) differs from the result of this study since he found that student leaders who volunteer have very high knowledge and challenges although their opinions and attitudes were very favorable.

In terms of capability building, the respondents perceived themselves as challenged with adequate skills and abilities on volunteerism. The result implies that working as volunteers for the community is a skill every volunteer is supposed to acquire under the local government initiatives and training. However, since most of the respondents are of young age, had attended a few training, had little exposure to community work, and still seeking higher education, their capabilities are maybe lacking. As such skills development training for volunteers working for community development are of utmost importance, it will likely improve their volunteerism and achieve volunteerism goals. Moreover, they find themselves moderately challenged in terms of preparing reports since most of them are highly engaged in extracurricular activities in school and were made to prepare reports for their school organizations and in their classes. Likewise, reports have readily available formats that they can access, copy, and follow. They also have the barangay officials, who can assist them on this area. The result conforms with the findings of Kweku et al. (2020), which highlighted the importance of training course as a source of motivation, capacity building, and performance for volunteers. Hence, an incentive is of utmost importance to people, who play a crucial role in communal delivery outcomes and increase their effectiveness as community volunteers.

In terms of time management, the respondents were moderately challenged, which implies that the challenges encountered by youth leaders are moderate and may or may not be considered detrimental to the attainment of their volunteerism goals. This can be inferred that in order to encourage people to volunteer for the community, local organizations must typically have their time activities to occur outside of conventional work or school hours. Thus, any individual, whose work or school is unconventionally scheduled will cause the volunteers to experience difficulty in finding time to participate and accomplish volunteerism responsibilities. It is crucial for volunteer organizations to come up with detailed schedule of activities so that volunteers may plan their participation ahead of time to avoid conflict with schedules at work or in school just as financial resources need also to be planned and sourced ahead of time. Qvist (2021) found that, compared to those with regular work hours, the highest degree of flexible work arrangements (including the opportunity to work from home and full autonomy in deciding when to work) increased total annual hours of volunteering by ten hours. But the effect of flexibility was mainly due to increasing the probability of volunteering at all rather than the number of hours contributed, thus, raising the possibility that it can lead workers or students to increase work or study efforts, to the exclusion of volunteering in order to justify their relative freedom.

As to financial management, the respondents were moderately challenged. The result implies that challenges encountered on volunteerism of youth leaders in terms of financial management is more than the average and could be a factor that can reduce their level of volunteerism. The result suggests that the respondents considered volunteerism as work consists of the provision of labor to assist other people. There is a significant reason that income plays much of a role on how respondents viewed volunteerism. Hence, Local Government Units (LGUs) can increase the financial sustainability of volunteerism programs by utilization of alternative sources of funding and provide encouraging incentives to volunteers.

When considering the responses of the whole group, in terms of social support, the respondents were moderately challenged. The result implies that the level of challenges encountered by youth leaders on volunteerism in terms of social support is on the average only. The result suggests that the greater the emotional support coming from the personal network of a person, the greater the likelihood of it to drive that individual to engage in volunteer work and foster greater participation in volunteering. The result further implies that there is an average amount of support received from government agencies causing challenges in other aspects of volunteering such as limited engagement as a result of the need to stay with family or engagement of peers in other school or work activities. This was in conformity with the findings of Paik and Navarre-Jackson (2011), who posited that the relationship between volunteering and support is likely bi-directional. Volunteering may increase depending on one's availability or quality of social support received. It is also possible that individuals with a supportive network are more likely to become volunteers due to greater exposure to recruitment by others. Relatedly, social support from others may foster greater participation in volunteering. In addition, social ties within the volunteer's personal network may provide emotional and instrumental support needed to participate in and enjoy volunteer work according to Pilkington et al. (2012).

**Table 1:** Challenges encountered by youth leaders in volunteerism as a whole

Variables	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Capability Building	3.23	Moderately Challenged
2. Time Management	2.86	Moderately Challenged
3. Financial Management	3.35	Moderately Challenged
4. Social Support	3.21	Moderately Challenged
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>Moderately Challenged</b>

Mean Range	Verbal Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Highly Challenged
3.41 – 4.20	Challenged
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Challenged
1.81 – 2.60	Less Challenged
1.00 – 1.80	Least Challenged

**Volunteerism Practices of Youth Leaders**

When all the 215 respondents were taken as a whole group, Table 2 shows that the grand mean score on volunteerism practices as a whole was 3.61, verbally interpreted as practiced. Of the four components of practices, social support got the highest mean of 4.06, verbally interpreted as practiced. This was followed by capability building and time

management with mean score of 3.49, verbally interpreted as practiced. On the other hand, for volunteers who seek out service opportunities, financial management was one of the practices, verbally interpreted as moderately practiced with a mean score of 3.40. These practices include submitting proposals for support, lobbying with management, conducting fund raising activities, institutionalizing partnership support, establishing financial management literacy system, and engaging in income generating projects.

The result implies that the practices on volunteerism such as capability building, time management, financial management, and social support were generally practiced. Capability building includes activities such as training, seminars, workshops and other related activities that improves knowledge, attitudes and skills to do something well that results to improvement of services rendered while time management constitutes the strategies or activities done to assign specific time slots to activities as per their importance to improve community participation and provide timely services. It can be observed that the local government support was more focused on enhancing the capabilities of the youth in the form of seminars, webinars during the pandemic, and training in their own communities and other provinces to benchmark on the practices and strategies of other Local Government Units. The result further implies that assistance to communities were focused on capability building and planning activities, thus, the practices of volunteers were also focused in these activities. Furthermore, financial management is complicated and depends on funding institutions or agencies, which is beyond the volunteers' control and which limits their participation.

Capability building was practiced by the respondents. The result implies that youth leader volunteers in Roxas City practiced the necessary practices to overcome challenges on volunteerism in terms of capability building. This can be observed in their participation to seminars and trainings to enhance their leadership and management skills. The result suggests that strengthening ties to the community broadens support network, exposing volunteers to people with common interests, neighborhood resources, and fun and fulfilling volunteerism activities. There from, Cordery et al. (2013) support the findings indicating that volunteers connect organizations to their communities and enable them to offer services that might otherwise not exist. In addition, Paik and Navarre-Jackson (2011) postulated that it is also possible that individuals become more confident to volunteer due to greater exposure to recruitment by others, feeling that their capability is recognized and needed.

Time management was practiced by the respondents. The result implies that youth volunteers in Roxas City practiced the necessary practices to overcome challenges on volunteerism in terms of time management. This can be observed in the accomplishment report they submit periodically. This further implies that the respondents found balance between their volunteer time, personal time, work time, and time for other people and interests and accomplished responsibilities. The respondents practically utilized time management as practice to perform community services. Parke et al. (2018) asserted that adapting one's time

to changing conditions means to be responsive and flexible with one's time structure.

Financial management was moderately practiced by the respondents. The number of activities conducted by the youth leaders of each barangay may attest to their efforts to counter the challenges of lack of funds. The result indicates that there is a need for financial management skills development training among volunteer respondents. This would equip them with appropriate tools such as diversification of funding, seed funding, initiation of social enterprise, cross subsidy among programs, strategic partnerships, and growing into learning organization and utilization of reciprocity and local support. With this result, it is noteworthy, according to Cordery et al. (2013), that if financial management mechanism is not utilized, the barriers may exist to valuing volunteer contributions such as resource constraints, organizations being sensitive to those who get counted and what they are worth for, and the lack of organizational commitment to valuation.

Social support of the youth leaders of Roxas City was interpreted as practiced. The result implies that youth volunteers in Roxas City highly practiced the necessary volunteerism practices to overcome challenges on volunteerism in terms of social support. The number of activities conducted by the youth leaders of each barangay may attest to their efforts to counter the challenges in terms of social support. The result further implies that improved access to social support such as moral, emotional, psychological, financial and spiritual support, that are afforded by family, friend and fellow volunteers, community officials and local government agencies could provide an important basis for engaging in higher levels of voluntary activity without being overburdened. Paik and Navarre-Jackson (2011) averred that social support from others may foster greater participation in volunteering. Furthermore, social support within the volunteer's personal network may provide emotional and instrumental support needed to participate in and enjoy volunteer work (Pilkington et al., 2012).

**Table 2:** Volunteerism practices of youth leaders as a whole

Variables	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Capability Building	3.49	Practiced
2. Time Management	3.49	Practiced
3. Financial Management	3.40	Moderately Practiced
4. Social Support	4.06	Practiced
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>Practiced</b>

<i>Mean Range</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
4.21 – 5.00	<i>Highly Practiced</i>
3.41 – 4.20	<i>Practiced</i>
2.61 – 3.40	<i>Moderately Practiced</i>
1.81 – 2.60	<i>Less Practiced</i>
1.00 – 1.80	<i>Almost not Practiced</i>

**Insights on Volunteerism**

The Filipino belief that the youth is the future of the fatherland reflects its hopes on the strength and potential of the young generation. Their participation, commitment, and dedication to help their community to prosper is very important in sustaining volunteerism in community development.



The support of the Local Government Unit in the area of financial incentives for volunteers is needed in the pursuit of youth leaders in volunteering in various development areas they are interested in their community.

An organizational assessment on volunteerism management of the Local Government Unit could be helpful for adopting and strengthening the practices on volunteerism identified in the study such as capability building, time management, financial management, and social support towards a sustainable volunteerism in community development.

An organized advocacy platform established for encouraging, motivating, inspiring, and recruiting the young leaders to volunteer by applying in various volunteerism areas identified in the platform such as on environmental protection, clean up drive, disaster risk reduction mitigation and relief operations, community education campaign, education, and the like. This is like a hub or a group of volunteers ready for deployment in response to a need or program.

**Table 3. Insights on volunteerism.**

Findings	Insights	Possible Actions
Moderately encountered challenges on volunteerism as a whole and in terms of capability building, time management, financial management, and social support	The challenges encountered as a whole was in an average level. This means that the challenges encountered in volunteerism is neither high nor low. It could be that the volunteers treated the challenges as normal on capability building, time management, financial management and social support. However, among the four areas of challenges encountered, financial management got the highest mean which means the highest the mean the greater the challenge. While time management got the lowest mean. Time management was not a challenge to them for they know for sure that when they volunteer, they are willing to share their time.	To lower the degree of challenges the youth leaders encountered, they could be assisted and supported by the Local Government Unit through provision of financial resources in their volunteerism programs, projects and activities. Further, they could be given priority for access to services when they need it most as one of their privileges.
Youth leaders' volunteerism practices as a whole and in terms of capability building, time management, financial management and social support. • Moderately Practiced volunteerism as to financial management.	Among the four areas on volunteerism practices, financial management was moderately practiced which means it was practiced occasionally. While capability building, time management and social support were practiced frequently. The youth leaders need inputs and capability on fund sourcing to sustain their volunteerism.	Capacity building on project proposal preparation to become part of the volunteers' capability building program. Refocus programs, projects and activities by engaging into project-funding partnership, conceptualizing and implementing programs, projects that would bring impact to the community, such as environmental protection, sustainable livelihood projects, research, educational scholarship programs for indigents youth and frontline advocates on policy formulation on youth development in the local Sangguniang.

**4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The volunteerism challenges encountered by the youth leaders in volunteering was moderately challenged. Their experiences in volunteerism exposed them to several challenges in the areas of capability building, time management, financial management, and social support. Among these areas, they highlighted that their most challenging issue was on financial management such as low income for volunteers, for they viewed volunteerism as work, that volunteering was an additional expense on their part for they spend their personal money while volunteering, lack of funds of the organization to support volunteers for any financial incentive, and sometimes they lack financial support from their family for their volunteerism.

The respondents employed or utilized volunteerism practices to address the challenges they encountered. Their practices helped them address their challenges for these did not hinder them to stop. They get social support on top as practiced. The lowest was on financial management, which was moderately practiced and they needed more support. This means that the youth leaders need assistance and capability

to strengthen their volunteerism practices on financial management. The result showed that they need improvements, capability, and skills on areas such as preparation and submission of proposals for support from possible donors and funding agencies to institutionalize through Memorandum of Agreement or Understanding, and financial literacy program for volunteers and organization.

The Local Government Units may expand coordination and collaboration efforts on public-private partnership as domain of support. This may be done by forging partnership with sponsoring agencies through a Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement. The Local Government Units may also develop a comprehensive volunteer incentive program to attract, enhance, strengthen youth leaders' volunteerism in the community. This may be done by first passing an ordinance on volunteerism and ensuring support for sustainability.

Organization to develop a training module for its volunteers on top are the trainings needed for the performance of volunteerism such as financial management skills and organizational planning. Organization may also create a

gender sensitive and gender responsive volunteerism environment by conducting gender sensitivity training to the organization.

In assigning tasks, organizations may consider the limitations of volunteers, particularly married and working women. The same may be taken into consideration when assigning volunteer roles that demands a higher level of educational attainment. Leaders are to be sensitive in the gender capability of the volunteers by assigning tasks not only traditional ones, but also to where they are most productive.

This study may be replicated in other areas to improve the generalized ability of the results. Similar study may be conducted considering other variables not covered in this present study.

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## Author Profile



**Ma. Melanie Aposaga** received the Bachelor of Arts in Economics at Filamer Christian College (now Filamer Christian University), Fuentes Drive, Roxas City, Capiz, Master in Public Administration at Capiz State University, Roxas City, Capiz, and currently the Roxas City Government Administrative Assistant II and GAD Secretariat and Livelihood Focal Person.