

Heterogeneity and Cooperation: Youth and Social Engagement in the Philippines

EDNA E. A. CO AND ARTHUR NEAME*

Heterogeneity is a possible social accord among development players only when they reckon with differences in views, approaches, resources and interests. However, bringing together the differing social players requires managerial skills and a smartness to apply these skills in a political context. The multi-sectoral program on the out-of-school children and youth (OSCY) is an off shoot of the trailblazing efforts of the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and the World Bank (WB) under the latter's "Business as Partners for Development" brainchild. A salient feature of the program is the engagement of government and non-government, the business sector as well as corporate foundations, in the enhancement of economic vestibules for the out-of-school youth (OSY).

*Live in hope,
Unlock the energy of youth...
- Christian Aid 1998*

Introduction

The Philippines officially classifies the out-of-school youth (OSY) as one of the four youth sub-sectors, along with the in-school youth, working youth, and special youth. The current assessment on the out-of-school youth reckons that it is an emerging priority in the national and international development agenda. In the Philippines specifically, out-of-school youth involvement is emerging as a political agenda as well; given the increasing number of out-of-school youth who are potential electorates and stakeholders. The Philippine Republic Act 8044 otherwise known as the "Youth in Nation-Building Act," approved by then President Fidel Ramos on 7 June 1995, defines youth as "persons whose ages range from 15 to 30." However, the definitions of "youth" vary according to organizations or agencies working on youth (See Table 1.).

In this article the "youth" refers to age levels 7-14, and 15-24. The age levels used are adopted from the definition by the out-of-school youth Interagency Committee on Education and Manpower Development Statistics, which recognizes as out-of-school-youth those 7-14 year-olds not enrolled in any formal or technical/vocational school;

*Assistant Professor and College Secretary and Director, Center for Public Administration and Governance Education, National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines; and Senior Programme Officer for Southeast Asia, Christian Aid London; respectively.

Table 1. Definition of Youth by Age Range, According to Agencies

<i>Agency/ Organization</i>	<i>Age Range of Youth</i>
Department of Social Welfare and Development	7-18 years old
Department of the Interior and Local Government	15-21 years old
Department of Labor and Employment	15-24 years old
Department of Health	10-24 years old
United Nations	15-24 years old, without prejudice to definitions of member states

Source: NYC 1997; UN 1996.

or, those 15-24 year-olds not enrolled in any formal or technical/vocational school; not employed, and not a tertiary level graduate. This same definition is adopted by the Program on out-of-school youth sponsored by the Children and Youth Foundation of the Philippines (CYFP) upon whose project experience, this paper has been based.

In 1998, the CYFP, the partner organization of the International Youth Foundation (IYF) in the Philippines worked closely with the World Bank's (WB) Resident Mission Office towards formulating a program for the out-of-school youth. A series of consultation meetings with the business sector, civil society, and government agencies was held. All these organizations showed enthusiastic support for framing a "multisectoral program for out-of-school youth," thereby resulting in the formation of a multisectoral consortium. The CYFP served as the consortium secretariat. A technical working committee was subsequently organized to help carry out the detailed work of the program development. The program was subsequently referred to as "Enhancing Socioeconomic Opportunities for the Filipino Out-of-School Youth: A Joint Venture for Youth Development."

Consultations with the 15-24 age group out-of-school youth were held in eight areas nationwide. Simultaneously done with the consultations was a study on the programs of government organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions and foundations for out-of-school-youth. The consultations revealed that nothing much by way of programs and development agenda had focused on the out-of-school youth. This convinced the World Bank-CYFP to embark on a nationwide program on out-of-school youth.

Out-of-School Youth Situation in the Philippines

The 1997 joint survey of the National Youth Commission (NYC) Social Weather Station (SWS) established that about 28 percent of the Filipino youth were neither studying nor working. The 1994 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) of the National Statistics Office (1994), placed the out-of-school

youth at 3.4 million, or 14.1 percent of the population aged 7-24. However, estimates of the number vary considerably, with the low end of the range placed at 4.7 million while the high end at 11.2 million based on a seven percent annual growth implied in the 1994 FLEMMS survey. At any rate, the incidence of out-of-school youth continues to increase from 1994's 14.1 percent of the youth population.

Heterogeneity therefore starts at the level of definition and statistics. As illustrated above, different agencies have different definitions of out-of-school youth. The highest figure emanates from NYC at 11.2 million—on the basis of the FLEMMS figure plus a seven percent annual growth rate—the basis for such a growth rate is unclear. More reasonable might be a growth of 2.3 percent, equivalent to the country's annual population growth, and even then such a figure would have to incorporate percentage growth in jobs in the economy with overall unemployment rates also factored in. Amidst this confusion of terms and statistical figures what is clear is that even at the level of definition there are varied discourses (Foucault 1977) taking place. For instance, the NYC has an obvious political and financial interest in determining a high-end figure for out-of-school youth. Such figures, if not the motivations behind them, must be treated with a degree of skepticism. As Apthorpe (1984, quoted in Arce, Villareal and de Vries 1994: 156-157) states, "facts never speak for themselves, they are spoken and spoken for."

Also apparent is the extent of the "go-it-alone" mentality of the various agencies that are mandated to engage with out-of-school youth. There is clearly little cross-referencing between agencies. In this sense the discourse among such agencies appears to be one in which the actors talk "past" one another rather than "to" one another. The World Bank-CYFP involvement has had the effect of revealing the disjointedness of the discourse.

Nevertheless, despite the wide variation in the figures, all of them indicate the significant size of the youth bloc in the Philippines, and specially the significant numbers of out-of-school youth, ranging as they do from between 5 percent and 15 percent of the total population.

A number of national agencies are mandated to attend to youth concerns, if not specifically to the out-of-school youth. Among these agencies are the National Youth Commission (NYC), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Under the decentralization policy mandated in the Local Government Code of 1991, the DSWD had devolved much of its functions and responsibilities on youth welfare to the local government units. Despite the devolution of the welfare function, the youth remain invisible in most development programs of local government units, partly because the sector has not been considered as a priority by many local government units and gets low priority in resource allocation from the government. Certainly, the out-of-school youth is of little interest among a number of powerful agencies, including the *Sangguniang Kabataan* (SK), the nationwide youth organization, partly because the organization is not dominantly composed of out-of-school youth. Furthermore, in the

SK there might just be the lack of influence, or lack of interest, since they are not made up of genuine out-of-school youth.

Whatever the numbers of out-of-school youth may be, all the empirical studies and consultations conducted since late 1998 establish that poverty is the major cause of the high incidence of out-of-school youth. The NYC report of 1998 says, for instance: "although free primary and basic education is widely available, household poverty and the need to contribute to family livelihood oftentimes override the concern for basic education" (NYC 1999). The attendant cost of education is said to be beyond the reach of the poor. Despite free basic education, the costs of sending children to school such as uniform, school supplies, daily allowance, and school projects—make education prohibitive to the poor. Meanwhile a 1995 report commissioned by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in the Philippines called "Education and Child Labor in the Philippines" notes that one to two children of a typical poor family quit school and go to work to support the education of siblings. The cost of sending siblings to school amounts to at least 20 percent of the family income (ILO 1995).

Other reasons for being out-of-school include:

1. The traditional bias against girls/women pursuing higher level education, especially in the Muslim areas in the southern part of the Philippines. This, despite the higher completion rates for girls who are placed in higher education.
2. The inadequate public spending on basic education, leading to inadequate facilities (including teachers and teaching aids), particularly in the rural areas.
3. The increasing lack of interest in schooling due partly to ineffective teaching methodology (but which probably has to do with the lack of motivation among state school teachers).
4. Various other factors such as early marriage especially in poor rural areas, peer influence, and break up or death of parents.

Many out-of-school youth do come from a background where families have single-earning heads or where families depend on primary income sources that are seasonal in nature (such as construction work). Furthermore, many out-of-school youth come from families whose parents are themselves either completely unschooled or little schooled in formal education. Many out-of-school youth come from large families of up to 12 children.

On the psychosocial side, the out-of-school youth are said to be at an intellectual level that ranges from low average to average, able to tackle simple to moderately complex things, and most of them have difficulty verbalizing their thoughts and ideas. However, their strengths lie in their artistic abilities such as in illustration, music

and dance and in their aptitude for working with their hands to create things. Based upon the consultation and survey conducted, the out-of-school youth do have a strong desire to be needed and for others to think of them as useful. It is interesting that there appears to be no significant difference in the incidence of youth-related problem such as drug use. The incidence of drug use and abuse is 11 percent among the out-of-school youth compared to a slightly higher 12 percent among working and studying youth. The out-of-school youth believe that their lives will improve only when they find a job or get help from the government. Having a good education and getting a stable job remain the two most important aspirations of the out-of-school youth. Education, they believe, leads to a good, steady and decent job.

Agenda and Initiatives on the Out-of-School Youth

The Philippine Government's National Program on the Out-of-School Youth

The Philippine 1987 Constitution mandates the state to provide free public education up to the high school level. The Constitution also declares that the State shall encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems as well as self-learning, indigenous, and out-of-school youth study programs, particularly those that respond to community needs. Furthermore, the Constitution says that the State shall provide the out-of-school youth with training in civics, vocational efficiency, and other skills.

The Philippine Medium Term Youth Development Plan (PMTYDP) 1999-2004 envisions the out-of-school youth "to be skilled and empowered with access to basic services and job opportunities which will transform them into dynamic, productive, and value-laden members of society" by 2004. The plan outlines the following strategies to fulfill this mission:

- a. provide opportunities and support to out-of-school youth with inclination for formal education through scholarships for secondary and tertiary education;
- b. promote, develop and encourage alternative education opportunities for those with different learning needs and in different circumstances –alternative learning systems, education equivalency program, on-the-job training;
- c. widen access of the out-of-school youth to skills training;
- d. increase livelihood opportunities for the out-of-school youth;
- e. greater participation of the out-of-school youth in community development efforts, cultural and sports programs, advocacy and campaigns against drug and child abuse;

- f. develop more relevant and realistic information on the out-of-school youth (PMTYDP 1999-2004).

None of this is to presume that there are no social problems associated with out-of-school youth, but to determine their being through the absence of values, social responsibility and productivity begs many questions. There are many examples of the display of values, social responsibility, and indeed productivity, on the streets in which out-of-school youth care for one another, fend for one another, or provide much-needed services to contradict such views of this particular category of youth. For example, out-of-school youth on the streets who vend food, flowers, or cigarettes do these jobs because they feel responsible for their families, siblings, and unfortunately, even for their parents. The youth do protect and support each other. The point is to recognize that "development intervention goes together with forms of labeling which stigmatize people—as poor, resourceless and dependent—and hence reduce their capacity to engage in independent organization" (Arce *et al.* in Booth 1994: 157). Such labeling is in itself an exercise of power and the creation of "knowledge" through the generation of specific kinds of discourse.

An initiative currently under way, as a part of the development plan is the formulation of a development plan for children covering 2000-2005 by the Council for the Welfare of Children. The Social Reform Council, through the Social Reform Agenda encourages the development of the children and the youth, so that they could be represented politically, socially and culturally in most of government structures.

The DSWD has a nationwide program called *Unlad Kabataan* (Youth Progress) which aims to turn the youth into self-reliant, economically productive, and socially responsible citizens to contribute to the development of the family and the community. Through the service providers who include the welfare workers, local government workers and youth workers, the strategy is to organize the youth into the *Pag-asa* (Hope) Youth Association (PYA).

The *Kabataan* (Youth) 2000 is another government flagship program on youth hoping to put the youth to productivity through projects such as literacy, culture and arts, health outreach, tourism training and appreciation program, and reforestation program.

The Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) hopes to pay special attention to the out-of-school youth by promoting educational achievement of the poor and basic and functional literacy through the intervention called the Alternative Learning System (ALS).

The National Youth Commission was created to execute youth development services, but the commission has been crippled in its project implementation due to the inadequacy of funds. Some quarters reckon however, that the problem lies more in the flimsy vision and direction of youth service. Then, there is the Children and Youth Sector in the National Anti-Poverty Commission under the Estrada

Administration, but which is limited to policy formulation and direction. Many remain unconvinced about the performance and effectiveness of the flagship programs cited earlier.

There is reason to believe that many national programs on the out-of-school youth remain at the level of rhetoric. Youth organizations themselves, development agencies and local government units continue to challenge the national agencies in making their performance felt at the basic level.

Except for TESDA, which absorbs the apprenticeship program of the Department of Labor and the Bureau of Technical and Vocational Education, no other national agencies of the government seem to have taken roots among the unemployed and the out-of-school youth. TESDA offers basic skills training in the development of fundamental knowledge, skills and work attitudes. The training is short-term and is oriented towards employment. It offers courses in the areas of general automotive, general building construction, general electricity, general electronics, general machine shop, refrigeration and air-conditioning and welding and steel fabrication. Livelihood courses are offered at the provincial and satellite centers and community training units. There is an average of 600 hours devoted to theoretical knowledge and 320 hours for on-the-job training. Placement assistance is also offered by the agency. TESDA also implements and promotes the Dual Training System (DTS) and the Apprenticeship and Learning Programs (ALP) in skills development and training. The DTS provides quality technical and vocational education, where learning occurs both in school and in the production sites. In-school training provides learners or trainees with a theoretical foundation, basic training and guidance, while in-site training develops skills and proficiency under actual conditions (TESDA 1997).

The latest update given by TESDA in 1998 informs that there are 59 regional and provincial training centers and community-based programs in 1,800 municipalities. The annual training capacity is approximately 203,000, of which 85 percent are out-of-school youth. However, the single, biggest weakness of TESDA is that it excludes those who are not high school graduates, of which there are many among the out-of-school youth.

However the very statement within the PMTYDP: that it aims to "transform them into dynamic, productive and value-laden members of society" and the emphases in other plans on "productivity" and "social responsibility" are of themselves such value laden-statements as to diminish the space within which out-of-school youth can engage with them from the start. They clearly assume that out-of-school youth are neither dynamic, productive, nor value-laden if being laden with values means being as presumptive as such plans suggest then it is hardly surprising that, as we shall see, the energies of the out-of-school youth have not been voluntarily mobilized thus far. Nevertheless the plan clearly recognizes an hitherto barely recognized sector of society, and may therefore permit the formation of programs involving the youth in which they are able to form the networks and assemble the power to see their own needs met.

Local Government Units

Since the devolution of functions and powers of the DSWD and the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) in 1991, the local government units have been trying to muster the initiatives on youth and youth development at the local level. In the municipalities and *barangay* (village), youth service is largely dependent on the local government officials, their interests and commitment to youth development. As such, youth service and involvement in the governance and development processes are varied and remain at the discretion of local governments. Too often, the decisive factor in many local governments commitment to youth service and development is the personal interest and engagement of local government officials. This then also implies that resource allocation to youth programs depends on local government officials' bias for this sector.

The most widespread youth organizations are the *Kabataang Barangay* (village youth-KB) which is a regular structure at all levels of the *barangay*, the lowest political unit in Philippine governmental structure. The KB, through its Chair, is represented in the local council, the local legislative unit. The KB's activities are confined mostly to sports development of the youth, a program that some organizations and agencies of the government bewail as being very limited. Despite the KB's budget allocation from the local government, many KB units still fail to capture the enthusiasm and participation of the youth in many villages. Nevertheless, it remains the biggest and most extensive youth organization, being attached to the network of the local government.

Again, depending on the interest and commitment of the DSWD and the DECS at the local level, activities on youth could be quite spirited. The local government's commitment to youth service also determines the resources allocation for youth projects and activities. In many cases, these agencies link with local civic organizations, for projects such as *Alay Lakad* (Walk for a Cause) which raises funds for scholarships or modest livelihood projects for the out-of-school youth.

The inconsistency of local government agents' initiatives points to the central theoretical importance of the concept of agency. The importance of individual responses at the local level can be over-stated in establishing a deterministic pattern of causality, just as the importance of structure can also be a deterministic concept used to belittle the room that actors have for maneuver. The point, in the context of programs for out-of-school youth, however, is to be clear that little takes place without a discursive approach that incorporates agency at all levels and among all the actors, including the out-of-school youth themselves. The failure of the KB to capture the enthusiasm and participation of the youth, despite being itself made up of youth representatives, is precisely formulated in its use as a tool of local entrenched political forces. These may attempt to force upon youth a particular conception of themselves, and therefore a particular agency with which they are frequently uncomfortable—their failure to participate could perhaps be seen as one of the “weapons of the weak” (Scott 1985).

Nongovernmental Organizations' Agenda on the Out-of-School Youth

The programs on youth are high in the agenda of a number of development agencies—local and international, albeit very little of these are focused on the out-of-school youth. In 1995, Perla Santos, et al., listed a total of 321 organizations serving children and youth and compiled these in a “Catalogue of Institutions and Agencies for Children with Special Needs.” According to her list, albeit partial, most of these institutions and agencies cater to children, with a few of them providing education-related support. However, the list does not capture other major agencies which are involved in the children and youth, such as the Children and Youth Foundation of the Philippines (CYFP). The joint study done by the CYFP, the World Bank and the Community and Family Services International (CFSI) in 1998 among 74 organizations in the country, reveals that:

1. The thrust of most out-of-school youth projects is on education. Some 51.4 percent of the agencies are involved in educational assistance and development while 39.2 percent are into skills training.
2. About 2/3 of the agencies involved in the study expressed their willingness to expand the out-of-school youth programs. The expansion of the programs was seen to be in the aspects of geographic coverage and the number of beneficiaries.
3. The weakness of these projects could be attributed to the lack of funding, dropout of clients involved in the projects, inadequate number of agency personnel, and inadequate facilities, equipment, materials, supplies, and technical support.
4. The greatest strengths of many projects are the commitment and dedication of the staff to the vision of their work.

Among the well-known international agencies involved in the youth are the Plan International, Save the Children Fund, Christian Children's Fund, World Vision, Pearl S. Buck Foundation, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Among these however, not one is known to have focused on the out-of-school youth.

Church-based and religious institutions in the Philippines by tradition are bound to include welfare projects for the youth. They provide a range of welfare services such as child sponsorship, orphanage and adoption, drop centers for street children, and nutrition program often coupled with values education. However, the out-of-school youth remains to be an unattended sector of the youth in many of these projects.

The CYFP which is the partner organization of the International Youth Foundation (IYF) based in the United States, is a major organization supporting about 50 programs covering child and youth care, youth empowerment, advocacy, capability building, research and evaluation. Very recently, the CYFP together with the World

Bank, embarked on a nationwide program on the out-of-school youth. This initiative on the out-of-school youth is the subject of this paper.

It is worth noting that the non-governmental sector, whether local or international, is an enthusiastic player in youth service provision and development. There are a variety of approaches to their interventions on youth service and are felt much more at the base than are the government agencies. However, the out-of-school youth continue to be marginalized as it appears low in the list of the target groups by these agencies, considered to be the most ardent of all.

Enhancing Economic and Social Opportunities for Filipino Out-of-School Youth: A Joint Venture for Youth Development

Objectives, Components, and Strategies of the Program

The multisectoral program on the out-of-school children and youth (OSCY) in the Philippines is a result of the pioneering effort of the IYF and the World Bank under the latter's "Business as Partners for Development" initiatives. A crucial feature of the program is the engagement of the business sector as well as corporate foundations, in the enhancement of economic opportunities for the out-of-school youth. The business sector had traditionally been kept out of most development services for the children and youth, and more so for the out-of-school youth. The cutting edge of this program is precisely to engage the business sector in the social engagement for the youth.

Under this program, a consortium of agencies—government, nongovernment, and business, including corporate foundations—was organized. The consortium through its National Steering Committee, served at the helm of the country program. The program focuses on five priority regions in the country, namely, Region III (Central Luzon in Northern Philippines), Region IV (Southern Luzon), National Capital Region (Metro Manila), Region VII (part of the Visayas in the central part of the Philippines), and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The priority regions were chosen on the basis of needs. That is, regions known to have the highest incidence of out-of-school youth and poor families, and balancing this criterion with the regions which have a good chance of success ("potential for success" criterion) as there are available programs and therefore, the joint undertakings could be locally pursued and sustained.

The program reckons that Metro Manila, Region IV and Region III present the best opportunities for success. In these three regions, there are factors that are promising for the program's success, namely:

1. Concentration of major corporations that could be tapped;

2. Availability of institutions and agencies involved in the youth and which are sources of "best practices" in youth interventions; and,
3. Presence of activities that can generate employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

In terms of productive economic opportunities for out-of-school youth aged 18-24, Metro Manila is primarily a commercial, financial and institutional center and hence should be able to offer opportunities in the service industry such as retail and wholesale trade, restaurants and food chain, and Information Technology-related services among others. In Regions III and IV, there are Freeport zones (Subic and Clark, which hosted the former US military installations and facilities) and industrial estates (28 of the 53 operating ecozones are in Region IV), which could provide technical jobs. Since these two regions (Regions III and IV) are also the largest agricultural sector in the country, accounting for a combined 30 percent of the sector, agri-business is also a potential source of gainful activity. In the ARMM, the opportunities lie in agriculture, comprising about half of the region's economy, and in small infrastructure projects which the government and international financing agencies pour, to address the huge inequality among the regions.

Finally, Region VIII has a substantial industrial sector—with the presence of heavy industries and geothermal power plants. Its proximity and economic linkage to Cebu province, which is the social, economic and political capital of the Visayas, should enable skilled and trained out-of-school youth to find employment in Cebu's commercial and industrial districts.

The program aims to address the basic needs for quality and appropriate education, technical skills training, life skills development, and income generation either through employment or entrepreneurship among the out-of-school youth. Recognizing the vicious cycle of poverty and the desperate need to generate income as among the root causes of an increasing number of out-of-school youth, the program adopts the following interventions as a strategy:

1. Provision of educational opportunities and assistance specially to children aged 7-14, either that they can go back to school or that the number of out-of-school-youth could be prevented and reduced;
2. Provision of options especially for youth aged 15-24 to engage in social and economic activities, if and when they choose to do so, either because income generation is severely needed or because they find the formal education uninteresting and irrelevant to their needs.

The first strategy is virtually an attempt to re-integrate the out-of-school youth into the formal school system.

Given the second strategy, the Program envisions preparing the out-of-school youth for various other possibilities; hence, the need for skills training, technical

education, life skills development and capacity for income generation. The program considers exploring options for the out-of-school youth through the so-called alternative learning system, or the equivalency program for qualifying into technical training program, which might give them a better chance of employment in the industries and agri-business. Furthermore, the program reckons, that in as much as the out-of-school youth usually are hesitant to integrate with the mainstream society, are low in self-esteem, or generally have poor coping mechanisms to enable pursuit of higher goals, it is important to develop their ability to deal with the demands and challenges of day-to-day living. Thus, there is a need to develop the psychosocial competencies through the life skills education.

The intervention framework of the program is reflected in a cluster of components summarized as follows:

1. **Research and Policy Development:** The component focuses on a continuing effort to establish and systematize data bank on the out-of-school children and youth, as well as on advocacy and promotion of policies regarding out-of-school children and youth, meant for policy change, public education, and generating support and commitment to the out-of-school children and youth from various sectors.
2. **Life Skills Development:** The component attends to the development of the psychosocial needs of the out-of-school youth, eventually leading to their full participation in the Program.
3. **Basic Education and Technical Skills Development:** This component responds to prepare and see the out-of-school children and youth through to get back to the formal school system or to equip them with the appropriate skills required to face the demands of employment and entrepreneurship.
4. **Income Generation:** This bridges and matches the out-of-school youth to the job and entrepreneurial opportunities through the crucial support of the business sector.

How to proceed with these strategies such that there is collaboration among different stakeholders and service agencies in the focused areas suggested, is a challenge to the Program.

To facilitate the implementation of these strategies, the Program identifies a number of institutional development goals as follows:

1. To institutionalize national and local consortia of agencies that match the competencies and resources of members for the benefit of the out-of-school children and youth;

2. To organize and expand the involvement of the business sector through the national and local consortia;
3. To systematize the participation of children and youth based on their evolving capacities; and,
4. To build the capabilities of the NGOs in the management of out-of-school children and youth programs and projects (CYFP 1999).

At least 20 organizations from the different sectors—national and local levels of government, business, civil society including corporate foundations, technical institutions and schools, and religious organizations—joined the national consortium. The composition of the consortia at the local level similarly reflected the national consortium. Consortia were formed in the five (5) regions, each of which organized a Secretariat that would link with the national consortium. The consortia consisted of the various agencies that have existing and/or planned projects and which share the vision and strategies of the Program on the out-of-school children and youth. By involving agencies and organizations that are actively engaged in children and youth development, the Program is confident that it works within existing infrastructures, thereby guaranteeing cost efficiency and sustained efforts.

Social Mobilization

1. *Advocacy and Networking*

Bringing together diverse agencies, perspectives, approaches, work habits, personalities, and organizational behavior into a common platform of action was extremely difficult, as in many attempts at development collaboration. CYFP as the Secretariat of the National Steering Committee, was on top of these initiatives—convening various sectors and agencies and linking with government agencies during the start-up activities.

CYFP's key strategy in the mobilization of co-operation and support of various sectors was to initiate an advocacy and networking campaign from the onset. The advocacy and networking campaign had a two-pronged focus: to institutionalize a network of believers in out-of-school youth program and to zero in on crucial issues for advocacy in policy reforms.

The campaign promoted the Program—its objectives and strategies—among CYFP partner organizations and new contacts such as civic organizations, the business sector, local government units, entrepreneurs' councils, technical institutes and corporate foundations, in each of the five regions. CYFP sought the assistance of known agencies in the local area to convene inter-agency consultations. In some cases, CYFP virtually banked on the contact agency to organize the consultations. In the absence of any contact in each region, CYFP went through the local government unit through which

Table 2. Composition of the Consortium on the Out-of-School Youth Program

<i>Key Sectors and Agencies</i>	<i>Involvement in the Consortium</i>
1. National Government Agencies	
a. Department of Social Welfare and Development (lead agency)	Co-Chairs the Steering Committee, participates in all Program components
b. Department of Education Culture and Sports	basic education component
c. Department of Labor and Employment	technical skills development component
d. Technical Education and Skills Development Authority	technical skills development component
e. National Youth Commission	Assists in all Program components
2. Local Government Units (5 regions)	Ensures participation of counterpart agencies and services through local DSWD, DECS, and Planning and Development offices in implementation and endorsement of the Program
3. Nongovernmental organizations	Implementation of Program through their respective projects
a. CYFP (Secretariat)	
b. Preda	
c. Pearl S. Buck Foundation	
d. 25 other small NGOs spread out in 5 regions	
4. Corporate Foundations	Counterpart funding and implementation of Projects
a. Ayala Foundation (Co-Chairs Steering Committee)	
b. Philippine Business for Social Progress	
c. Meralco Foundation	
d. ABS-CBN Foundation	
e. 5-6 other private foundations	
5. Business and Enterprises	Funding support and potential job placement
a. LEMDC	
b. Pilipinas Shell	
c. Small and Medium Enterprise Council	
6. Technical Schools	Technical skills development
7. Civic Organizations in the 5 regions	Funding support and life skills development component
a. Rotary Club	
b. Lions International	
c. Jaycees	
8. Youth Organization	Implementation of projects through their respective organizations
a. Youth organization under PREDA	

See Appendix A on acronyms.

CYFP came to know about other agencies working on out-of-school youth. To muster the support of government agencies, including the local government units, CYFP found it useful to "name-drop" by mentioning the DSWD Secretary (who is also the Philippine Vice President) as Co-Chair of the Steering Committee. However, the leadership of a government agency did not spark the interest of the business circle. Instead, having someone like Jaime Zobel de Ayala of the business elite was much more effective in drawing in business enthusiasm for the Program. CYFP, therefore, capitalized on both credentials to draw in government units, business, corporate foundations, and other potential stakeholders of the Program.

This approach follows Long and Van der Ploeg's view that effective agency "requires the strategic generation/manipulation of a network of social relations and the channeling of specific items (such as claims, orders, goods, instruments and information) through certain nodal points of interaction" (Booth 1994: 66). By putting to use its claims and information, CYFP determined for itself a role as the nodal point.

The campaign started with the consultations which eventually won the commitment of most participating agencies. Some pledged to implement projects based upon the priorities set forth as interventions of the program. Others, particularly the local government units, were enlightened as to how they could formulate and carry out social services on the youth. While in yet others, there was rekindled what seemed to be a floundering agenda on children and youth. The consultations, for many of them, inspired and made them realize that there are many other players to be engaged in youth social development

Media, national and local, were also brought in by CYFP both as potential participants in the consortium, and as natural amplifiers of the Program.

The local government units generally were as ardent about the Program as expected. The Program came at an opportune time when in the midst of the decentralization bandwagon, every local government unit would welcome any formula that would enhance its social welfare agenda.

CYFP scanned both standing policies as well as pending proposals on children and youth in the Legislature. CYFP believed that it was crucial to advocate for policy changes particularly on two aspects: (1) policy reform on the working youth especially as business and enterprises are involved in some controversial practices in this regard, and (2) the greater need for public spending and allocation that government ought to provide on public education, infrastructures, facilities, equipment and materials that bear upon the quality and relevance of Philippine education, and which consequently affects the rate of school drop-outs.

The first strategy in social mobilization was meant to educate, to enlighten and to market the Program. Substantially linked to this social marketing strategy was organizing the "believers" of the Program into a consortium that would organically

consolidate the diverse views and approaches, thereby putting weight and substance to what was otherwise a sporadic and rather muffled social development agenda.

Organizing a consortium and mobilizing the commitment of various agencies and sectors into the fold were not a smooth task for CYFP. The diversity of interests and the background of relationships among some organizations were not easy to ignore. For example, a strong element of distrust suffused the relationship among NGOs in Muslim Mindanao. The awkward relationship between government and NGOs in this region goes as far back as the Martial Law period, or even earlier. In another region, it was unacceptable for the NGO to take the leadership over a government agency, which had never shown either any visible or convincing plan or projects on the out-of-school youth. An awful mix of suspicion, turfing, apathy and a tradition of individualism and separatism were in the air, but all these gradually dissipated as the national and regional consultations progressed. Crucial to the behavioral shift of some organizations was the manner by which CYFP convinced the various sectors about inclusion on the one hand, and respect for differences on the other. The agencies were gradually convinced about CYFP's attempt to bring together an inclusive list of social players, and the assurance that the management of the Program, if it pushes through, shall be transparent and participatory as far as possible.

At the end of the first phase on Advocacy and Networking Campaign, there were: (1) a National Consortium containing a long list of participating agencies and sectors; (2) five regional consortia each slightly varied in structure but connected to the National Consortium, and (3) a Steering Committee constituted by premier personalities and leaders in their respective fields.

Through the Consortium, the Program was enabled to pool resources together, and to match the program requirements with the capabilities and available resources of the involved agencies and sectors. Complementing resources and co-ordinating projects to enable a greater impact on the out-of-school youth was the purpose of the Consortium.

It was interesting to note how diverse agencies and organizations were essentially interest-bearers whereby each one, in spite of the variances in project approach and levels of commitment to the out-of-school youth, emerged to bridge these differences and made collaboration still possible through the Consortium.

The ability to muster credentials, interests, personalities, and resources is a managerial skill, but its application is clearly political. What works in a given political culture is certainly worth reckoning. Collaboration in the midst of heterogeneity is certainly a mix of good management with political savvy.

2. Youth Participation

The participation of the youth, specially the organized youth, is an essential principle of the Program. The Program aimed to bring together all agencies and

sectors involved in youth development. A huge number of agencies responded to the challenge. Ironically though, the youth sector was not fairly represented in the consortium. Except for one youth group in Region III, no other youth organizations joined the consortium. This remains to be CYFP's target for its campaign in enhancing the consortium.

Some agencies vehemently reacted and were strongly critical about the present program of the *Kabataang Barangay*, which is singularly focused on sports activities. The KBs were regarded by yet others as an irrelevant organization that does not serve the out-of-school youth. The KBs are neither into meaningful social engagement. It was difficult to identify youth organizations, for two reasons: there are not many known youth organizations who are socially inclined, and the more basic reason being that there are simply hardly any formal youth organizations.

Whereas various agencies and organizations increasingly provide support to the youth, the youth themselves are "badly" organized. Their engagement on matters that affect them is virtually nil. The paradox in such social development intervention is that all other social players have risen to the challenge of youth service, except the most affected sector that ought to look after itself. The social development for the youth is weakened by the absence of an effective representation of the sector it wishes to empower. The effort to strengthen the youth involvement in the Program is dissipated by doubt and reproach about the capability of the youth to develop themselves. Besides, youth participation is overshadowed by the squabble of the agencies on various other issues and concerns except on youth participation.

The youth might be organized, but not in the way that agencies wish them to be. If the youth continue to be ill represented in such undertaking, then patronage is a character of such joint undertaking. Patronage, which is about inequitable power relations, looms on a program that is meant to empower. The danger, at present, lies in the form of participation this situation is likely to generate, "originally conceived as a holistic social and cultural force for transforming power relations in society. Institutions such as the World Bank have incorporated the language of participation into their own discourse and transformed the practice. Participation has inherently positive connotations and so provides politically attractive slogans. However, this divorces it from its social and cultural roots and removes its potential for progressive change" (Smerdon 1996: 13). A principle, then, of youth participation is that it must occur through the media of their own language and practices, and it must be socially and culturally rooted in their own realities rather than through a coerced or co-opted subjugation to the discourse of other actors, lest "we are all willing collaborators in this vague and amorphous populism" (Sarwal 1992: 1).

Participation in Project Implementation

The Pilot Phase began as soon the Consortium was put up. In fact, shortly prior to the success of the regional consortia, a number of areas were identified for piloting the Program collaboration. A significant area in the Pilot Phase is Region IV (Laguna).

Laguna is a province about 120 kilometers south of Metro Manila, the country's capital. Since the last few years, Laguna is emerging as an industrial and manufacturing province, as part of the regional economic zone. As such, a number of manufacturers, industrialists and entrepreneurs, including real estate developers have placed their investments in the province, likewise gaining the potentials to absorb bigger employment for Laguna. The Provincial Governor of Laguna, Honorable Jose Lina, has a preference for development projects that are oriented towards the youth. He initiated and strongly supported the formation of the Laguna Employment and Manpower Development Council (LEMDC), which is a consortium of business groups, entrepreneurs, vocational and technical schools, local government units in the Province, civic organizations and NGOs. The LEMDC was created to spearhead skills development for the youth, particularly the unemployed and the out-of-school, for eventual employment in the industries and small enterprises in the Province. As a leader, he mobilized his offices to investigate and conduct a survey on the out-of-school youth in the municipalities of Laguna. The survey which was participated in by the Office of the Governor and the DECS-Bureau of Non-Formal Education, revealed the number of out-of-school youth in various municipalities, what they do as dropouts and unemployed, and what they aspire to be.

The LEMDC served as the local consortium that spearheaded the innovative approach to responding to the out-of-school youth for employment. The Council brought together a partnership among the business sector, civic organizations, technical institutes, corporate foundations and government agencies in Laguna. The business and corporate foundations that keenly responded to the invitation of the consortium were those particularly engaged in the manufacture of car, industry equipment, electronics, and food. The response was prodded by the business interest to identify potential trainees and trainee-employees for the industry, even as they contribute to social responsibility through employment generation. The corporate foundations included the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) which is the top business groups' response to social service. Business groups pitch-in a certain percentage of their profits to the PBSP, which in turn provides social services and micro-credit facilities to households especially in the rural areas. Another formidable agency in the LEMDC is the Ayala Foundation, which is a social arm of the Ayala Group of Companies. A number of other businesses, including local ones, are represented in the LEMDC by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Certainly, there are interesting benefits that the scheme brings to business, the most elusive sector as far as social responsibility and social development are concerned. Whereas the social gestures of income and employment generation, scholarship assistance, or credit for entrepreneurship paint business image glossy and bright, these social acts serve their own employment search. In the end, business is served by ensuring a pool of skilled, trained and guaranteed employees in the out-of-school youth. Small businesses enjoy the benefits of apprenticeship by the out-of-school youth after undergoing training and skills development. Even so, business contributes to remedy the unemployment and other social ills among the out-of-school youth.

Business' contributions were: financial assistance for scholarships and for skills development of youth who then, might be employed in job opportunities rendered by business and industry, and assistance for micro-credit and initiation of small enterprises for the youth who wish to be self-employed. Micro-credit seems to be a high risk as far as business is concerned. Most businesses highly value the technical and skills development for job placement, and secondly, the scholarship assistance.

Moreover, because the technical education scheme is such that the skills required by business and industry are ascertained prior to training, the skills acquired by the youth trainee are suitable to business. Although the youth are diagnosed with regard to interest and capabilities, nevertheless, the "demand" appears to be a dominant consideration to the training and skills development, over the "supply" side. And indeed, the youth eventually ends up as a labor force in the business and industry.

Some development agencies bemoan the utilitarian relationship between business and the out-of-school youth. Others are quick to defend it however, and claim that there is nothing wrong with it because the youth are served through employment generation. This would then mean income for self and family. Moreover, the youth are not fed into the industry as cogs in a machine. The process allows for youth options whereby youth interest and capability are matched with the skills development needs of business.

Business did not actively participate as core members of the consortium. It played very low key in the consortium meetings but sharply anticipated how the sector might assist in the best manner it could, which was principally to input financial investments in training and employment, or in educational assistance through scholarships.

Obviously, business was a powerful force because it assumed a civic and financial leadership. And indeed, business has the tools, the energy, and the capacities for such engagement.

Corporate foundations, many of which are social development arms of business directly engage in social activities such as training, capability building and again, through financial assistance and block grant for micro-credit.

Local government units are into research and planning assistance for youth development. Their position is enough power to organize other official units and to command attention on youth service. Among these other offices are the DECS-BNFE, Social Welfare and Development, and the Planning and Development Office, all of which are under the responsibility of the local government.

The BNFE continues to provide the equivalency test and accreditation to out-of-school youth, whose capabilities and skills are ascertained and are promoted to their equivalent level. This system deters the out-of-school youth from further demoralization and discouragement from avoiding formal education. By doing so, the BNFE facilitates other out-of-school youth to get back to formal education.

To date, the national agency of the National Youth Commission, remains unreachable to the local agencies and organizations. NYC has to come closer to the base if it were to have a meaningful implementation of youth projects.

TESDA and a couple of other technical institutes are involved in the provision of technical education and skills development among the out-of-school youth, focusing on curricula that are meant to put the youth immediately on either apprenticeship or a paying job. Through its participation in the LEMDC, business is informed about how many trainees graduate from the technical education program. The technical institutes are automatically able to field trainees to industries precisely because of the natural connection that binds all stakeholders including business and industry.

The religious organizations, some of which are connected to Diocesan Social Action Centers, engage the out-of-school youth and indirectly their families, through values education.

The NGOs are invariably involved through skills development in micro-enterprise, value education, capability building for self-worth and self-confidence, and appreciation of environmental resource use and management by involving the out-of-school youth in small social forestry projects. Reflecting the self and the social environment, the approach is popularly referred to by the NGOs as part of the life skills development. It builds the competence (and confidence) of the individual to face up to the challenges and to deal with life as it treats the youth.

The active participation of civic organizations such as Jaycees, Lions and Rotary Clubs was clearly in youth-oriented projects including competition and sports as well as scholarship assistance. These civic organizations believe that by engaging in these projects, the youth are weaned away from anti-social habits.

But then again, the weakest point of the LEMDC collaboration lies in the invisibility of the youth. The youth are primarily beneficiaries of services extended by various other social service providers. Empowerment of the youth transforms into a new meaning whereby they are enabled by the altruism of other social actors, though not empowered by their own engagement and achievement.

Within a period of 16 months, more than 500 out-of-school youth were trained under the skills development and technical education scheme; more than 50 percent of them have gainfully been employed by the industries later. A handful went back to agriculture and modest farming. Less than a hundred benefited from the scholarship assistance and joined the mainstream of students under the formal education system.

With the outcome of the training, the local government was easily convinced that the Program is worth replicating. First, it put the separate resources of virtually every social player towards servicing the youth, through nearly a magical social synergy. Second, each agency or sector exercised its functions responsibly and meaningfully, while together accruing benefits in favor of the target group—the out-

of-school youth. A “win-win” situation, as the local government described the collaboration.

The continuing task after the Pilot Phase is to replicate the Program through the consortium. Through the support of the World Bank and other financing institutions, the CYFP, along with other agencies of the government, NGOs, business, civic organizations and other social players, the joint venture on youth development is expected to carry through amidst the varied contributions of the different social sectors.

Lessons and Emerging Conclusions

If CYFP were to help pursue this collaboration, some lessons from the pilot undertaking and the early experiences of consortium building may well be cited:

1. *Business is a partner in youth development, given its special role and contributions, as well as its limitations.*

Bringing in the Business sector into that circle seemed initially far fetched, primarily because business is conventionally oriented to profit and economic growth, but not to development. Whereas Business is by tradition consigned to economic progress—spreading investment and income flows, goods and services, infrastructure, technology and so on—it is challenged by the Program to social responsiveness through the absorption of the youth in gainful employment. By doing so, Business stands to gain on multiple counts. First, it enjoys guaranteed trained labor in the out-of-school youth through job placement into the industries. Second, Business gains social mileage and improved reputation by putting investments into the joint venture. And thirdly, it promotes and advertises itself in the course of participating in the social network. Business is in a functionalist engagement with youth.

Corporations of course, make the link between healthy back streets and healthy high streets in general. This case shows that on occasions, business also looks for social engagement that offers them “a chance to improve their own business specifically and directly” (Smerdon 1996: 10).

Why Business is easily responsive to such partnership can be explained by the following reasons:

The participation in the consortium or the partnership with the rest of the other sectors on youth is attuned to the foundations of corporate wealth. Nelson explains corporate wealth by referring to corporate competitiveness and governance. The cornerstones of corporate wealth have to do with the following: (a) management of reputation, (b) relationship (in this case, community or social relationship), (c) responsiveness to service needs, and (d) resource efficiency and enhancement. The challenges posed by the Consortium upon the Business sector exactly matches with the management of all four elements mentioned. Reputation, which is a complex base of attributes, is centrally tied up to social responsibility. For most

corporations, reputation and credibility have a far important value. Business is making innovations to respond to social and environmental accountabilities. Public goods, which encompass social services to the youth, are increasingly acknowledged even by the private sector, whereas social services to the youth were traditionally assigned to the government and to civil society. As a result of both the public demands and the creativity of effective business, the winds are changing in the direction of greater social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility is one (Nelson 1998: 47).

Business is being creative about its engagement with the youth. By contributing to the creation of the wealth of a nation, Business reflects a strategic thinking regarding its role relative to society. Furthermore, Business discerns that corporate governance is sustainable only if it goes beyond relating with its shareholders, the Board and employees. It reckons that it should also include a relationship with stakeholders outside the company. In the next millennium, the corporate challenge is an engagement with other stakeholders by innovating on new forms of partnership. Corporate competitiveness will also intensify in the coming period, when modes of relationship shift towards the formation of partnerships and alliances, especially with their primary stakeholders—the public. Strategic market positioning is partly based upon corporate partnership with the stakeholders. Therefore, the relationship between the private and the public will be challenged with the blurring of the divide between these two spheres.

2. *A heterogeneous approach is possible under an accord on social development.*

Probably, the Philippines' best asset, second to its ability to wage a peaceful revolution against a Dictatorship, is its penchant for organizing. But then, often there is no agreement on the form and purpose of organizing. Indeed, development initiatives in the Philippines are senseless without organizing, mobilizing and engaging the broadest sections of society around a development issue. Almost all quarters, including the public sector, are convinced that development is bound to fail without the mobilization of those affected by an issue. A relevant question at this juncture is whether it is easier to organize the network without the youth being present? Thus, social development is not just about a goal, as it is also very much about mobilizing wide participation. Furthermore, the participation process involves the cooperation of those who wish to engage and those who have something to say about the development concern either because they are centrally affected, or its consequences bear upon them albeit, marginally. The complexity of the case presented earlier is that while the experience summoned various sectors into the youth service, these sectors do come from differing perspectives, interests and approaches to youth development. Organizing differing sectors towards a coherent action posed as an enormous challenge. The added complexity to this approach is the attempt to draw business, *which* traditionally, is known to be an elusive, non-committal sector as far as social development is concerned.

Consultations, consortium building, or networking still prove to work in the case of a joint venture on the youth. Networking is quite a popular practice in Philippine social development. Past attempts at consortium-building had mostly brought together sectors and agencies coming from the same perspectives. However, in the case of the CYFP experience, the consortium building on youth is a bit more complicated because of the range of players and perspectives from where they come. Moreover, it attempts to draw in non-traditional social development contributors. One of these is business.

Appealing to the sense of empathy for the out-of-school is an effective plea on the business sector. For others such as the NGOs, the civic organizations, the religious and charitable groups, and similar do-gooders, it is a "business-as-usual" commitment—the need to do something, to be an activist, to be a social worker, to extend help to those "in need." This view of people is of course also socially constructed. This perception is part of the charitable discourse. For the technicians and educational institutions, the response to the out-of-school is proving their skills and specialization on training. For government agencies, the call of duty to the out-of-school is for real or for image building; and finally for the local government units, the need to be responsive to its constituents thereby putting meaning to decentralization. There is a specific purpose, for whichever sector and agency and whatever point of view. Certainly there were varying interests and perceptions on youth development; but despite these, the differing motivations and stakes defy the barrier for a social accord.

Youth and youth development is aptly framed as a nexus around which differing sectors and agencies identify a shared platform on social development. It was easily convincing for all to cast their social contribution because as every sector extends inputs, each one stands to gain back from the youth agenda. The social output within such cooperation is not pure altruism, but is also self-serving.

Self-interest, perhaps self-preservation, or the desire to amplify one's self, makes heterogeneity in the social construction of youth development possible. Whereas common good and benevolence are often the visible virtue of social development cooperation, self-benefits are its hidden facet.

Another fascinating dimension of social cooperation is heterogeneity, which is characterized by respect for differences and acceptance of differing motives. And collaboration is possible in spite of the social variances. Differences are viewed as a given in the social cooperation. The Program accented the commonality of the goal amidst differing interests. Youth development and youth service, the intersecting factor to cooperation, are the goal placed above any differences. These then bind the players in a social engagement.

Derek Layder (1994) summarized Foucault's ideas on social construction, and refers to the diversity of actors in the development process as recognition of the dispersion of power and not a single source of power. Power, under a heterogeneous approach to social development is diffused, and does emanate from diverse sources. The formidability and robustness of such power base is precisely in the melange of

social contributions. Despite the variances, an accord is still achieved. The success of such heterogeneity brings forth a synergy, whose biggest asset is the gross strength of the consortium, more than the sum total of the individual player's role and contribution.

3. *Competing power is expected amidst collaboration around a shared agenda, especially as there is diversity of perspectives, interests and approaches.*

In a multi stakeholders' interaction such as that presented here, the construction of an agenda on youth development is a race against separate platforms on the youth—anchored on each agency or institution involved. The agencies and institutions compete against one other. One agency is a rival of the other, as each forwards a strategy. Competition within a heterogeneous collaboration is subtle. It is neither confrontational nor sharply differentiated, precisely because they have agreed to conform and get on together. Rivalry is apparent in the subscription of support from the funders, and from the desire to be included in the integrated CYFP Program. In the case of Business, which does not compete for funding assistance, it asserts power by playing a donor's role. As a mighty financier, it dictates the type of skills and the training that the youth might have to undergo as a requirement of employment. Furthermore, Business is the final arbiter in the job placement of the youth.

Local governments are another type of power holders. The allocation of resources and the inclusion of the youth agenda into the Program, which are largely in the hands of the local authorities, do make or break the youth development agenda. As the vinculum that holds the cooperation, the local government units are to a significant extent, an unavoidable participant in the youth service. The same holds true for the national agencies of government. A pre-condition for external funding by multilateral institution is the involvement of the leadership of a national government agency. Without its participation, no Program design of such magnitude could have been warranted. For a large undertaking on youth service and development, engagement of and with the government is therefore unavoidable.

Again, here is another face of power. Authority, which is equated to government agencies—whether national or local—by its nature is power. Authority power of government permeates the entire mechanism of the collaboration. Government is the one dominant power, the other being Business. Authority power allows government to assemble the various sectors and institutions. Despite the image of government relative to some sectors, the command leadership of the government is necessary to clinch an agreement for funding assistance from multilateral institutions and other donors. The power of authority and position is might, not necessarily liked, but certainly called for under the convention of rules.

NGOs and other members of civil society capitalize on a number of things: capability, experience, track record, intellectual capital, and human resources to carry out youth service. Such institutional resource is power in its own right that is most

crucial in translating the collaboration's vision into reality. Basically the workhorse among the collaborators, the NGOs and similar other members of civil society assert the power of spirit, fervor and physical capability to carry out a program. The NGOs play an interesting role—that of a class arbiter—but a role often said to be one that should be taken up by the state. In this case, the state absents itself from the role that steers the direction, which is why the CYFP, an NGO, has assumed such role instead. This provides the NGO with the space to take control of the discourse on youth. The NGO has occupied the space but then, this cannot be sustained without the presence of the youth at the center.

4. *Youth remain socially excluded by the development process for as long as they stay as beneficiaries, rather than a major participant.*

The youth, who are marginally represented in the collaboration, are largely taking on a role of beneficiary rather than participant. Certainly, the program takes the assumption that the youth are a generation full of problems. The youth are a problem category. But this view of the youth is seen from problem-tinted spectacles (de Winter 1997) and therefore impedes the young people's positive qualities and potential. The prominent absence of the youth in the network is an indication of a social exclusion. Such exclusion therefore begs questions: What is the notion of the various social actors on youth participation? Will the collaboration ever be sustained without the youth participation? And perhaps more fundamental than these queries is whether the social actors in the network ever recognize or respect the youth as fellow citizens who have rights but who also have the responsibility upon themselves? Participation among the youth is a fundamental right of citizenship, which Hart (1992) has referred to generally as the process of sharing decisions that affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. Therefore, allowing the youth to decide on decisions that affect them is the very source of social change. It is a change in worldview from one that looks at the youth as those who should be protected from adult responsibilities, to one that considers them as acting upon their own development. Unless the young people exercise their right to be included, to be allowed, and encouraged to assume duties and responsibilities and to make one's own decision (de Winter 1997), the youth remain to be socially excluded.

The exigency of a social undertaking that sets out without the youth as a major participant, is that it might foster even more difficulty to draw in the youth, because the agenda seemed to have been defined by those outside the youth.

5. *Youth development continues to be challenged by a development approach that pins the centrality of the action upon the youth as prime players.*

The notion of youth citizenship is a daunting challenge to the development approach on youth.

The absence of formal youth organizations is food for thought for development agencies which act upon issues concerning the youth. The invisibility of the youth within the consortium is a disturbing feature of the development intervention. The fundamental question is to ask whether the agencies have ever understood the youth, and to reflect upon the meaning of genuine participation and commitment of the youth to themselves. As in many development approaches, the moral imperative to address what is perceived as a "problematic system" of the youth, falls flat on the development actors who find themselves confronted with the life world where the youth remain undaunted by the problems rather perceived by others on their behalf. Certainly, this is an old question in the development process: who perceives the problems and what is the subject's (youth's) perception and commitment to the problems?

Conclusions

Heterogeneity is a possible social accord among development players only when they reckon with differences in views, approaches, resources, and interests. However, bringing together the differing social players requires managerial skills and a smartness to apply these skills in a political context.

In the coming millennium, the business sector might increase its participation in social development processes and governance, as it reflects upon and comes to terms with corporate governance. Corporate governance shall be an arena of new concern whereby corporation looks at itself and the role of business—both for its own interest and for better social image-building. The rest of the conventional social development agencies must be prepared to face up the presence of business, and must pursue reflectiveness and flexibility in collaborative undertaking that brings in non-conventional social players.

The approach to youth participation in their own development begs re-thinking and poses some interesting challenges to social development players. Everyone is invited to reflect upon these challenges whilst the youth are allowed to take on the decision.

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Appendix A

Acronyms

ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BNFE	Bureau of Non-Formal Education
CYFP	Children and Youth Foundation of the Philippines
DECS	Department of Education, Culture and Sports
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DTS	Dual Training System
FLEMMS	Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey
ILO	International Labor Organization
IYF	International Youth Foundation
KB	Kabataang Barangay
LEMDC	Laguna Employment and Manpower Development Council
LGU	Local Government Unit
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NYC	National Youth Commission
OSCY	Out-of-School Children and Youth
OSY	Out-of-School Youth
PBSP	Philippine Business for Social Progress
PMTYDP	Philippine Medium Term Youth Development Plan
SK	Sangguniang Kabataan
SWS	Social Weather Station
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
WB	World Bank