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CORDILLERAN YOUTH CENTER INC.
KABATAAN PARTYLIST CORDILLERA
NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS OF THE PHILIPPINES



Kasasaad ti Agtutubo:

The Cordillera Youth Situation and Challenges



INTRODUCTION

This paper is designed to provide relevant information and situational analysis of the Cordillera youth for the promotion and protection of Cordillera peoples' legacy, to ensure the sustainability of youth organizations and to empower the Cordillera youth for political, social and cultural participation.

This is a compilation of data from various government agencies and private institution corroborated with results of series of consultations and youth summits conducted by regional youth formation such as the Cordilleran Youth Center Inc., Kabataan Partylist Cordillera, National Union of Students of The Philippines.

The project was implemented by the College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP) Cordillera, the broadest and oldest formation of student publication in the region. It serves as a binding organization that advocates alternative journalism to amplify the voices from the margins.

The project is supported by the Voice Empowerment, a grant facility of that supports the most marginalized and discriminated people in ten countries in Africa and Asia aiming to amplify and connect thus far unheard voices in efforts to leave no one behind.

We hope that this paper may be of use to youth organizations and youth workers as well as government units to be a guiding framework in policy-making and further advancement of the rights and welfare of the youth.

PREFACE

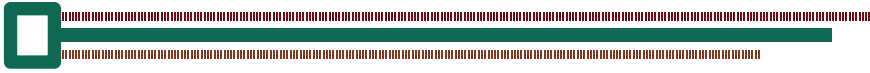
Cordillera is home to our Igorot peoples who continuously strive to preserve and safeguard their rich culture and tradition. However, the ever-changing character and (mal)development of our society leads Cordillera culture to significant changes, resulting in the fading of customs and traditions especially among the youth.

Along with the worsening state of national oppression endured by national minorities, including the Igorots of the Cordillera—manifested in the plunder of their land and resources, militarization of their communities, displacement, lack of social services and discrimination embedded in social institutions—passing indigenous traditions and practices from generation to generation inevitably weakened. Undeniably, a need exists for our active involvement in combatting these issues that confront the Igorot in these times. The task to aggressively forward venues for the defense of the rich culture and tradition as Cordillera people remains urgent.

In many areas of the Cordillera, much of these concerns are felt especially when communities are confronted with heightened militarism. For example, communities in Malibcong, Abra were bombed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in 2017, illegal detention and interrogation of youth-leaders and minors were conducted aside from intensified political persecution among community members resisting human rights violations. Classes were interrupted, and even humanitarian aid were blocked.

With these, the youth, as a potential catalyst in heightened political participation of marginalized sectors, must rise. However, the lack of education and capacity to empower them impedes advancement of the community's welfare. For one, education remains inaccessible in the region. A 32% drop-out rate was recorded in Ifugao in 2016 for the Senior High School (SHS) primarily for its excessive costs. Moreover, college education became a privilege only for those who are financially capable. In the region, there are only 7 public higher educational institutions (HEIs), only 1 per province and 1 in Baguio, while there are 45 privately-run HEIs with skyrocketing tuition and other fees costs.





SITUATION OF INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN THE PHILIPPINES



Generally, there are no disaggregated data on indigenous peoples, especially in the national level, which can be easily accessed by the communities. Based on estimates, there are about 12 million indigenous peoples in the Philippines and about 2.9 million are youth aged 15–29 years old.

The participation or engagement of most of the indigenous youth in the Philippines are primarily through non-state processes, these means that they campaign and lobby their issues as youth to the wider public in coordination with various progressive and democratic sectors such as the peasant, women, workers and the Filipino youth in general. Usually fora or workshops enable indigenous youth to pinpoint issues within their communities and having to evaluate it with other groups; through the workshop, they are able to identify issues particularly in education, employment, environment, human rights, democratic rights, etc. And with the collated information they could start with written statements, complaints and lobby this with institutions or agencies.

Through the initiatives of indigenous peoples' community organizations and the help of support groups, NGOs & advocates, relevant programs are being implemented such as alternative schools for indigenous peoples, health program and trainings, program on sustainable agriculture, psycho-social intervention especially in militarized communities and others.

Majority of indigenous youth are helping their parents in farming, and are deprived with basic social services, primarily services for education and health. There are also observations that most of the indigenous youth gets married at early age through parental arrangement or due to lack of opportunities or options. The lack of education pushes some indigenous youth to migrate to urban centers to find job or better source of livelihood. Most ends up as domestic helpers or contractual workers.

KEY ISSUES FACED BY THE INDIGENOUS YOUTH

Education

The characteristic of education in the Philippines is becoming more commercialized and corporatized. To gain more profit, policies were implemented by privately owned schools for instance the Education Act of 1982 that allows private academic institutions to increase tuition fees without restrictions resulting to high cost of education, a contradiction to one of its sections stating that the youth has the right to affordable and quality education. This Act also paved the way for the K-12 and the RPHER Program that are patterned to the education system/program of the United States. These education programs also promote the colonial character of the education system in the Philippines, meaning, the students are taught subjects and values needed by big foreign corporations and the capitalists states especially the US. With this, the indigenous practices, values and language are not encouraged. With the increased tuition and other fees, IP youth could no longer afford to go to school leading them to look for jobs for the survival of the family.

Students from far-flung areas are experiencing the impact of the lack of priority of the government to education such as: students have to walk for hours just to reach their school, lack of teachers, classrooms, books, chairs and other materials needed in school, and even classrooms.





In 2012, the Philippine government through the Department of Education (Dep-Ed), decided to institutionalize teaching or using the local language for the basic education. This is the program of the Philippine government in the implementation of the IP-education (IPED), a program/campaign initiated and lobbied by the various IP organizations from the local to international level. However, only some schools adopted this resolution because of the lack of technical and financial support from the government to train educators.

Different youth and indigenous groups are constantly submitting complaints to national and international agencies specifically school authorities such as the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, the Office of the President and UNICEF demanding for a quality education for all and better facilities. Our fight and call to have a nationalist, scientific, and mass-oriented education is still at large. In addition to that, that the government should allocate 6% of the gross national product to education. The formation of networks, alliances and organizations also as a way to unite students and the youth, and in which they could lobby their concerns.

In remote indigenous communities, the government seldom puts up public schools. Nine out of 10 Lumad children have no access even to basic education, according to the child rights organization Salinlahi. The lack of, more often the absence of, basic education further marginalized the indigenous peoples. This exacerbates their conditions of displacement, landlessness and poverty.

Through the collective efforts of the community and non-governmental organizations, appropriate literacy-numeracy programs and alternative learning systems or schools were set up to provide a patriotic, mass-oriented and scientific education for children and adults. However, these initiatives aimed to service the poor and rural communities are under constant threat. The implementation of the BS Aquino counter-insurgency program Oplan Bayanihan has resulted in an upward trend in the military attacks against these schools. The Children's Rehabilitation Center, an NGO that respond to state-perpetrated child rights violations, have documented 36 cases of attacks on these alternative schools in Mindanao alone.

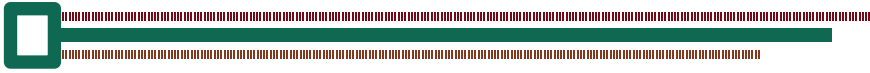
In March 2011 the Blaan Literacy School and Learning Center in Upper Suyan, Malapatan, Saranggani Province was occupied by elements of the 17th and 73rd IB soldiers of the Philippine Army, forcing the school to shut down and students to flee. Teachers and students were repeatedly harassed by the military.

In Baguio City, Grade 6 and high school students were required to participate in AFP-conducted counterinsurgency lectures during class hours. By virtue of Memorandum No. 68 of the Department of Education-CAR, the 5th Civil Military Operations Battalion, 5th IDPA is allowed "to conduct a counter-insurgency campaign, a 1-hour symposium, in all public elementary and high schools in this Division. This memorandum facilitates the entry of military elements in all public schools.

Employment

The Philippines is amongst the ASEAN countries with the highest unemployment rate according to International Labor Organization (ILO) on their last survey last 2013, this haven't changed since 2005 and may increase for the succeeding years. The result of unemployment for people causes them to look for work that has a substandard salary or look for jobs that are contractual (six months). Underemployments for new graduates making them work in the field in which they did not graduate in. And usually most of the courses offered in most of the schools are those that benefit the needs of the MNC's and mono capitalists and not their communities or even state.





Most of youth not attending school are found in factories, export processing zone, business processing outsources. Most are found in farms as a characteristic of the Philippines as an agricultural land. Some are in call centers or in English tutorial schools for foreign students that render services to other countries.

In the Cordillera, young workers can be found in the mining community, in small scale agricultural production, industrial economic zone, service sector and the call centers. Workers in the industrial areas receive around P 250- P350 or roughly \$4.6 – 6.5 per day. Agricultural workers receive P150-P190 or \$2.7 –\$3.5 per day. With the situation of indigenous youth wanting to have a better life, they migrate and find better opportunities outside their communities.

The state is conducting job fairs however this does not accommodate the increasing number of unemployed people.

Health

Medical clinic and hospitals are not accessible for indigenous peoples. Doctors and health workers visit the community once or twice a year or none at all. Medical facilities are not upgraded and continuous monitoring on the health situation is not implemented.

Culture

Colonial and mainstream cultures are regarded as superior culture in the education curriculum and mainstream media, with this indigenous youth become ashamed of their own culture and identity. Also, media industrial complex use/show indigenous culture inappropriately in their shows and programs.

Some indigenous youth are often times not included in rituals, Indigenous ceremonies and decision-making in their communities so they lose interest in learning and using their indigenous culture.

These situations also worsen the migration of youth to find better opportunities outside their communities.

CORDILLERA YOUTH SITUATION

According to the United Nations, members of the society within the age range of 13–24 years old are considered youth. However, the UN also recognizes the definition of youth in terms of age by other member states such as the African Youth Charter wherein youth are within the range of 15–35 years old. In the Philippines the youth are those within 15–30 years old. For this paper, we combined the youth definition in terms of age from 13–35 years old.

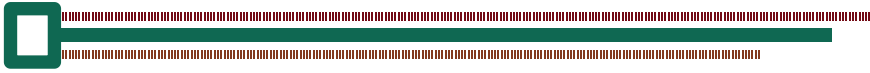
This 2016, based from the Worldometers, Philippines has an estimated total population of 102, 250, 133 with a growth rate of 1.54%. Of this, an estimate of 35,824,423 are youth ages 15–35 years old.

Meanwhile, the Cordillera has an estimated total population of 1,862,550 in 2016, of which an estimate of 694,545 (around 37.29% of Cordillera's population) are youth also ages 15–34 years old. The province of Benguet registered the biggest number of youth and is followed by Baguio City.

From the latest Philippine census (2010) the distribution of the youth in the Cordillera by population ages 15–34 years old is as follows:

Province	Youth Population (2010)
Abra	79,149
Apayao	39,148
Benguet	156,678
Baguio City	129,420
Ifugao	70,870
Kalinga	71,237
Mountain Province	54,463
Total	600,965





In addition, from the 600,965 youth population in the Cordillera in 2010, 307,077 are young men while 293,888 are young women.

Characteristics of the Cordillera youth

The period of youth is the peak of vitality. The youth possesses the physical strength and is not yet committed to production and responsibilities such as raising a family. Many of them have time to study theoretical concepts especially those who are able to avail education. As youth, they have favourable characteristics such as being critical and receptive to new ideas, sharpness of the mind, creativity, and initiative.

However, despite these strengths, the youth also have negative tendencies. These include aggressiveness, wavering principles, impatience, and particular leaning to decadent culture and lifestyle. It is important to recognize these weaknesses in order to see what should be struggled with and overcome in the youth's process towards remoulding and maturity.

If the youth are properly guided, these negative tendencies can be prevented. Moreover, their strengths can be maximized and they can greatly contribute to the movement towards the advancement of the people's rights and welfare. Considering these, it is essential to provide them the opportunities and avenues where they can use and improve their positive characteristics.

In Cordillera, the community elders play a big role in sharing knowledge about history and culture to the young ones. More importantly, such sharing also help in solidifying the consolidation and upholding the identity of the indigenous peoples in the Cordillera among generations. The youth, in exchange, should be in the forefront of the struggle to defend land and rights.

The youth, as the reputed "hope of the future", maintains to be the replete and continuously replenishing well of positive forces for the progress of the society. They play an indispensable role in shaping the society. What the society will be depends on how the youth decides it to be. Having said this, it is only imperative that their positive attributes are nurtured and directed towards the solution of the people's problems.

SITUATION OF EDUCATION IN THE CORDILLERA

Educational Institutions

There is an increase of Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEI's) from 31 in 2008 to 39 in 2014 while the State Universities and Colleges (SUC's) remained to be the same (7).

In 2013, the Philippine Government started to include the branches or campuses of the main SUC's so the number also increased from 8 in 2008 to 18 in 2014. However, in terms of the situation of the campuses and budget allotted for each, there were no significant developments. Only 1 main State University or College can still be found in each province except for Baguio where there are 2 SUC's. However, for Baguio, the Philippine Military Academy is a specialized state college while the University of the Philippines Baguio can also only accommodate around 2,500 students to include those enrolled for masters' degree.





Budget Allocation for Education

CAR will also receive the lowest budget allocation for the primary and secondary division of education sector. From the P317.1 billion, P 6,387,060,000 (2% from the total budget) will be allocated to CAR. Similar to the other SUC's in the country, the budget for CAR SUC's also increased for 2015, however, this increased will meagerly cover the needs of the SUC's as most of the CAR SUC's budget decreased in 2013 and 2014. For fiscal year 2019–2019, 4 State Universities in the region were trimmed of their budget, namely: Benguet Sate University, Kalinga Sate University, Ifugao State University and Apayao State College.

Enrollment

The record from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) showed that a total of 110,145 students were enrolled for the Academic Year (AY) 2013–2014 both for the SUC's and PHEI's in CAR. There is a minimal increase of 3,940 from the total enrollees for AY 2012–2013. For AY 2013–2014, 36,696 (33.32%) students were enrolled in the CAR SUC's including the University of the Philippines Baguio and the Philippine Military Academy. More number of students are found in the Private Higher Educational Institutions, mostly in Baguio City, because the CAR SUC's cannot accommodate a big number of students due to limited basic facilities such as classrooms, laboratories and books and academic and non-academic personnel.

However, for the primary and secondary level, a big number of students are found in public schools. From the DepEd record for AY 2012–2013, the total enrollees for both public and private schools reached 505,693 from pre-school to tertiary level wherein 367,250 (mostly primary and secondary level) are enrolled in public schools.

The distribution of enrollees per province for the tertiary level is shown in the table below where Baguio City still registered the biggest number of enrollees.

Province	Average enrolment		Total
	Male	Female	
Abra	3,047	3,715	6,756
Apayao	811	1,053	1,864
Baguio City	28,569	37,205	65,774
Benguet	5,593	10,001	15,594
Ifugao	2,782	4,374	7,156
Kalinga	2,944	4,871	7,815
Mountain Province	2,142	3,038	5,180
Total	45,888	64,257	110,145

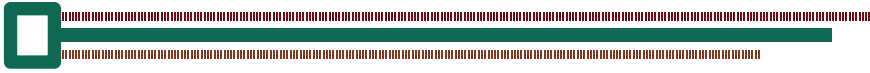
The data from DepEd included the students (most of them are in the tertiary level) who came from other regions to study in the Cordillera thus the number of youth who are in school is high. Also the data from DepEd included those enrolled starting from the pre-school level.

Although there are more young men in terms of population, it is noticeable that a bigger number of young women are enrolled in the tertiary level. Almost every year since 2002, the student population in the Cordillera is increasing. Since 2006, among the courses popular to the students and with the highest number of enrollees are the following:

- Medical & Allied
- Business Administration
- Engineering & Technology
- Education & Teacher Training
- information Technology related
- Law and jurisprudence
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery & Veterinary Medicine
- Other disciplines (including criminology)

It is notable that the number of enrollees for the other disciplinary courses shoots up from 5,531 in 2006 to 10,046 in 2012. The top three courses mentioned are also the in demand courses in the global market since 2006. Most of these courses are also offered in almost all





of the higher educational institutions in CAR and some also specializes on some of the courses such as those related to medical, business, information and technology. Although the country, including the region is still agricultural based, the courses related to agriculture are only offered at the Benguet State University in CAR.

CONTINUING CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION IN THE CORDILLERA

Dropouts and high costs of education

Although the number of enrollees is increasing every year, the actual number of graduates is very low compared to the high number of enrollees every year. In the latest CHED data (2010), for the 93,000 average enrollees in the tertiary level every year, only 14,000 actually graduated every year. This means that many of the students dropout from school. This is also the case with the primary and secondary education level.

From the research conducted by the UP Population Institute in the Cordillera in 2013 (as shown in the diagram below), among the youth in CAR ages 15–24 years old, only 8.60% did not attend any formal education. Although the Cordillera has a higher rate of educational attainment compared to the other regions especially those where indigenous peoples are also concentrated, only few actually graduated from college and even from high school level. From the same study, only 30.60% reached tertiary or college level, 33.80% reached secondary or high school level and 9% for vocational (short courses), and only 18.10% graduated from high school.

In addition, based from the DepEd report, the dropout rate in primary or elementary education level in the Cordillera increased from 4.7 in 2002–2003 to 5.1 in 2012–2013.

This is also consistent with the overall education situation in the Philippines where the dropout rate is yearly increasing leading to the increasing number of out-of-school youth in the country. Based on the 2013 report from UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, although the Philippines has a high rate of educational attainment, the country is among the top 5 countries which has the biggest number of out-of-school children with a record of 1.5M out-of-school children. The first top 4 includes Nigeria (10.5 million); Pakistan (5.1 million); Ethiopia (2.4 million) and India (2.3 million).

According to the Child Poverty in the Philippines by Celia Reyes, Aubrey Tabuga, Ronina Asisand Maria Blesila Mondez, among the primary reasons why the dropout rates remain very high is because many families could hardly afford to keep their children in school. It is also a fact that even if public primary and secondary education is almost free or require a minimal fee, schooling still requires allowances, clothing, and learning materials. Most of the public schools, even in the Cordillera, also require the students to contribute for the salary of the guards, for cleaning materials and other donations requested by the schools.

During the round-table discussion (dialogue among the education sectors in Baguio City) in 2012 and 2013, the DepEd and CHED regional offices in CAR also said that the increasing dropout rates of youth in schools in the region may be attributed to various reasons, and poverty is among them. Other reasons may include bullying of fellow students or strict handling of teachers.

For those who were fortunate to reach the tertiary or college level, as mentioned earlier, many have to dropout from school because most of them cannot afford the high school fees. This is especially true for those who were enrolled in Private Colleges and Universities where the tuition and other school fees are increasing almost every year. Most of the major PHEI's in CAR increased their tuition fees for the AY 2018–2019 from 6% to 10%.

In addition to the tuition and other school fees, the students studying in Baguio City and La Trinidad and who are in boarding houses needed a minimum of P3,000/month for their basic allowance to cover the cheapest rent for boarding house, twice a day meal (usual for most college students), transportation (excluding taxis) and basic other school related materials and activities.





Free education

Despite the passing of the Universal Access to Free and Quality Education Act or RA 10931 in 2017, following the massive demonstrations and decade-long demand of the youth for free education, the sincerity of the administration in realizing the youth's aspirations is still in question.

CHED and UniFAST have expertly played their tricks in RA 10931 and its IRR, manifested in the collection of 'minimal fees', stricter admission policies and the questionable Return Service System (RSS) which will serve as recompense for the supposed free education.

For AY 2018–2019, millions of Filipino youth is set to pay 'minimal fees' that were not included in the list of 'defined' fees of RA 10931. In the Cordillera, Kalinga State University (KSU) charged each enrollee of fees amounting to Php 1000 – 2500.

Meanwhile, Mountain Province State Polytechnic College (MPSPC) and Benguet State University (BSU) have institutionalized the 'registration fees' for Student Council candidates. Cordillera SUCs are also collecting 'penalty-type' fees for students who were not able to attend college and university activities.

On the other hand, the RSS is also set for full implementation this coming academic year. This new system is drawn out from the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the RA 10931, Rule 2, Sec 4, stating that "SUCs and LUCs shall formulate and implement a Return Service System for students befitting from the free higher education provision of this Act, as part of their admission and retention policies"

RSS is a payment scheme for the free education through forced and unpaid labor for either school or government offices. While BSU has yet to release its quota time for their RSS, reports have been confirmed that Cagayan State University students were contracted to work 15 hours every week. If they will be deployed to these offices as student assistants, their working time will amount to Php 18,000 per semester which is even higher to the actual tuition cost!

The neoliberal agents of the government has been ever since relentless in their effort to sabotage the call for free education. Instead of expanding free education, they are desperate in limiting its access. Stricter admission policies and higher passing scores for entrance exams became suspiciously frequent. To add, MPSPC's admission tests have been administered to 'filter' students despite having no such mechanisms in the past years.

K-12 program

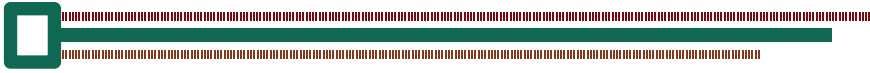
In 2011, the administration of President Aquino III proposed to implement the K to 12 program to decongest the basic education curriculum and to increase the competencies of the students so that they can already apply for jobs after finishing the program. This proposal immediately took effect at the start of the AY in 2012. While its impacts are still on the process of evaluation, initially, K to 12 is seen as an additional burden for parents, especially the poor families.

The additional two years of studying in the basic education level is an additional burden to poor families. In addition, this will further worsen the increase of dropout rates among children whose families cannot afford the rising costs of education. According to the Child Poverty in the Philippines by Celia Reyes, Aubrey Tabuga, Ronina Asisand Maria Blesila Mondez, "there is no point in adding two years when children are leaving school starting at age 13. Society must address poverty first."

The public basic education sector is also forced to implement the program with just a meager budget and poor training. Until now, DepEd are still conducting basic trainings among the teachers of the basic education level when in fact, the K to 12 program was already implemented in 2012. Most of the teachers are also still not confident and are still adjusting on the changes of the curriculum. The books needed for the new program for the upper grades are also still not complete.

During the round-table discussion held in Baguio City in 2013, the secretary general of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers – Metro Baguio Chapter presented their study on the impacts of K to 12 on the faculty members in the tertiary level especially to those teaching in the Social Sciences division. According to their study, there will be a gap of 2 years where there will be no college students in the universities. These means that the college teachers will be out of





job for 2 years. The fate of the teachers of the social sciences subjects in college is also uncertain as there is a big possibility that they will be out of jobs as the social sciences will no longer be a priority in college because this is already taught (in a collapsed version) in the basic education level.



There is also no assurance that students who completed the program will easily find employment because until now, opportunities for employment in the country is limited and also competitive. Many students who graduated even in prestigious universities and colleges encountered difficulty in seeking better jobs. Most of them ended either in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) usually as call center agents, online writers or tutors or as overseas workers. There is a greater possibility that those who will finished the K to 12 program and will not pursue college will end up being an overseas workers or as call center agents as this is also among the goals of the program – to develop students who are competitive in the global market.

Continuous violation of students' rights

While the students are suffering from the economic burden brought by the rising costs of education and low quality and limited school facilities, their democratic rights to organize, speech and expression are suppressed by the school administration. Those who speak or expressed their sentiments on the yearly increase of tuition fees and/or on the poor condition of their school facilities are harassed by authorities of the school. The credibility of the student leaders are also shattered by accusing them of being communists or members/recruiters of the New Peoples' Army which are also branded as terrorists.

Others are threatened from being expelled from the school or may not graduate on time as their grades may be affected with their actions.

These actions of the school administrations triggers fear among the students thus making them passive on many issues they are confronted with. Most of the student leaders also have to seek the approval of their faculty advisers or school authorities before they can implement an activity inside the school.

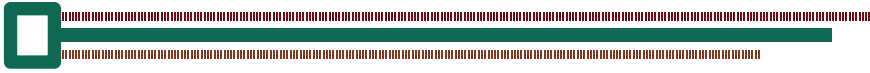
It is for these reasons that the Philippine education system is now characterized as Commercialized Colonial and Fascist by many progressive youth in the country. However, even if most universities and colleges do not accredit the progressive organizations inside the schools, the students still organized themselves in these organizations in order to campaign for an affordable, if not free, and quality education

Employment

With education being expensive and of dissatisfactory quality, unemployment and underemployment after graduation become inevitable. Because of the unavailability of enough jobs particularly in provinces, many of the graduates year after year have difficulties in securing themselves with jobs that match the degrees they hold. Some resort to low-paying jobs. In a report by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), in October 2014, about 37,000 individuals, mostly youth, seek for jobs in CAR alone.

Moreover, this 2014, the unemployment rate in the region increased from 5.4% to 6.5% in 2013 while the country's unemployment rate is 7.5%. On one side, the underemployment rate in the region decreased from 18.4% in 2013 to 14.4% in 2014. The employment rate also rose from 93.5% in 2013 to 94.6% in 2014. On the other side, there is still no job security due to the prevalent contractualization policy companies implement backed by the government. Majority of companies also set high standards and rigid process in selecting employees. According to the 2013 report of DOLE-CAR, there are 162,929 vacancies in different private agencies, more than enough for the 83,161 jobseekers, but they cannot all be absorbed due to the stringent application process.





In schools, there are schemes that are imposed to students that, if analyzed carefully, are actually forms of contractualization that allow companies to reduce costs. Some of these are on-the-job training, volunteer work, internship, or the rendering of service as practitioners or cadet workers. The students get work load similar to regular employees yet they receive little or no compensation at all. For example, nursing students, aside from their service to hospitals, are asked to pay for certification.

There is an estimated 10 companies in the export processing zone in Baguio, mostly were call centers or outsourcing companies. Contractual jobs that are dependent on the internet are also widespread. There is a significant increase in the number of call center agents in Baguio and Benguet from 2,000 agents in 2010 to almost 10,000 in 2014. Many in BPOs transferred or started new offices in major cities outside Manila such as Baguio City. Majority of the employees are youth with ages 18 to 30.

At first glance, a call center agent's salary (basic pay of 10,000 pesos per month) is relatively big. However, if we look at their working conditions, the pay actually do not compensate justly. Due to the frequent shifting of working hours, the agents suffer from lack of sleep causing their resistance to weaken. In spite of this, the agents are only provided with health insurance after three months of work. There are also cases where their psychological health is affected due to stress. Even worse, some graduates opt working abroad as care givers, factory workers, waiters or waitresses, and other odd jobs.

Another subject of concern is the ballooning number of children in the region with ages ranging from 5 to 7 that are engaged in labor. It has reached 70,000 in 2011 according to a survey conducted by the International Labor Organization (ILO). Most of these child workers are found in farms and mining sites in Cordillera. DOLE's program, Special Program for the Employment of Students (SPES), defies the department's campaign against child labor as it pushes for high school students to work. Also, the process required for them to claim their salary takes a long time.

Those who are fortunate enough to secure themselves jobs are also subjected to difficulties due to low pay. According to DOLE-CAR, this 2014, the minimum wage is only 280 pesos per day in Baguio, La Trinidad, Itogon, Sablan, and Tuba (BLIST) and 263 pesos in other parts of the region that are non-agricultural with eleven workers and above. The minimum wage for workers in agriculture and retail and service sectors with ten workers and below is 268 pesos

in BLIST and a lower amount of 247 pesos in other parts of the region. The minimum wage has not changed much since 2010.

Despite the marginal increase in minimum wage in 2014, the workers and their families barely felt it as the costs of basic and primary needs such as gas and rice also increased. According to the National Wages and Productivity Commission and the National Statistics Office-Philippine Statistics Authority (NWPC-PSA), in 2014, a family of six needs an amount of 1,076.84 pesos per day to provide for their barest need of food. This amount does not include other expenses for shelter, electricity, water, and schooling. Such amount is far from the daily minimum wage in the region and anywhere else in the country. It is no surprise how many of the youth stops schooling.

Majority of the youth in the region who stopped schooling are forced to take low-paying contractual jobs or work in fields where they earn 200 to 250 pesos and 150 to 200 pesos daily respectively. Others work as foresters where they earn 6,000 to 8,000 pesos a month or engage in Small Scale Mining where they earn 5,000 to 15,000 pesos per operation depending on its turn-out. These jobs however are contractual or project-based so there is no security.

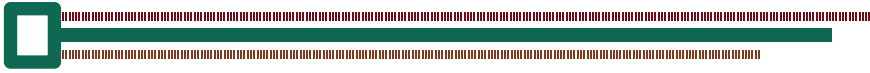
THE DUTIES OF THE FILIPINO YOUTH FOR CHANGE

Poverty and decadent culture push many youth to vices, prostitution, drugs, and crime. Moreover, the youth are also forced to work instead of go to school. The semi-feudal and semi-colonial condition of our country engenders further exploitation of the indigent youth by low pay, lack of benefits, and abusive working conditions.

The rising costs to education aggravate this situation. Further, the educational curriculum does not address the necessities needed by our country. Such system teaches, trains, and moulds students after the demands of neoliberal policies. Such system hones students to be cheap semi-skilled laborers or professionals and technocrats our limited industries and bu-reaucracies need.

With education being treated as a privilege instead of a right, the state continues to execute policies that render education inaccessible to the youth. Public schools receive low subsidies





while private schools are allowed to increase their fees without much question. In addition, the democratic rights of the students in colleges and universities are violated.

These cases call for the youth and students to step up and change their conditions. Using the youth's positive characteristics, they are at an advantage to decisively take part in shaping public opinion that favours the interest and welfare of the Filipino people.

The central and primary responsibility of the youth is to arouse, organize, and mobilize their peers towards social change.



Particular duties

1. Advance nationalist, scientific, and pro-people education.
2. Advance the legitimate interests, rights, and welfare of the youth and the students.
3. Solidify the unity with the concrete condition of the Filipino families.
4. Amplify the actions for the rights and livelihood of the youth and the people of Cordillera.
5. Strengthen solidarity with the people including the youth towards change and progress of the society.
6. Strengthen own organizations and broaden mass support towards genuine change.
7. Promote and revive appropriate indigenous culture and knowledge in the Cordillera.
8. Strengthen ties and cooperation among progressive organizations and institutions outside the country for the advancement of the democratic movement for change.

Sources:

Department of Education
Department of Labor and Employment
Commission on Higher Education
Records of consultations and youth summits

