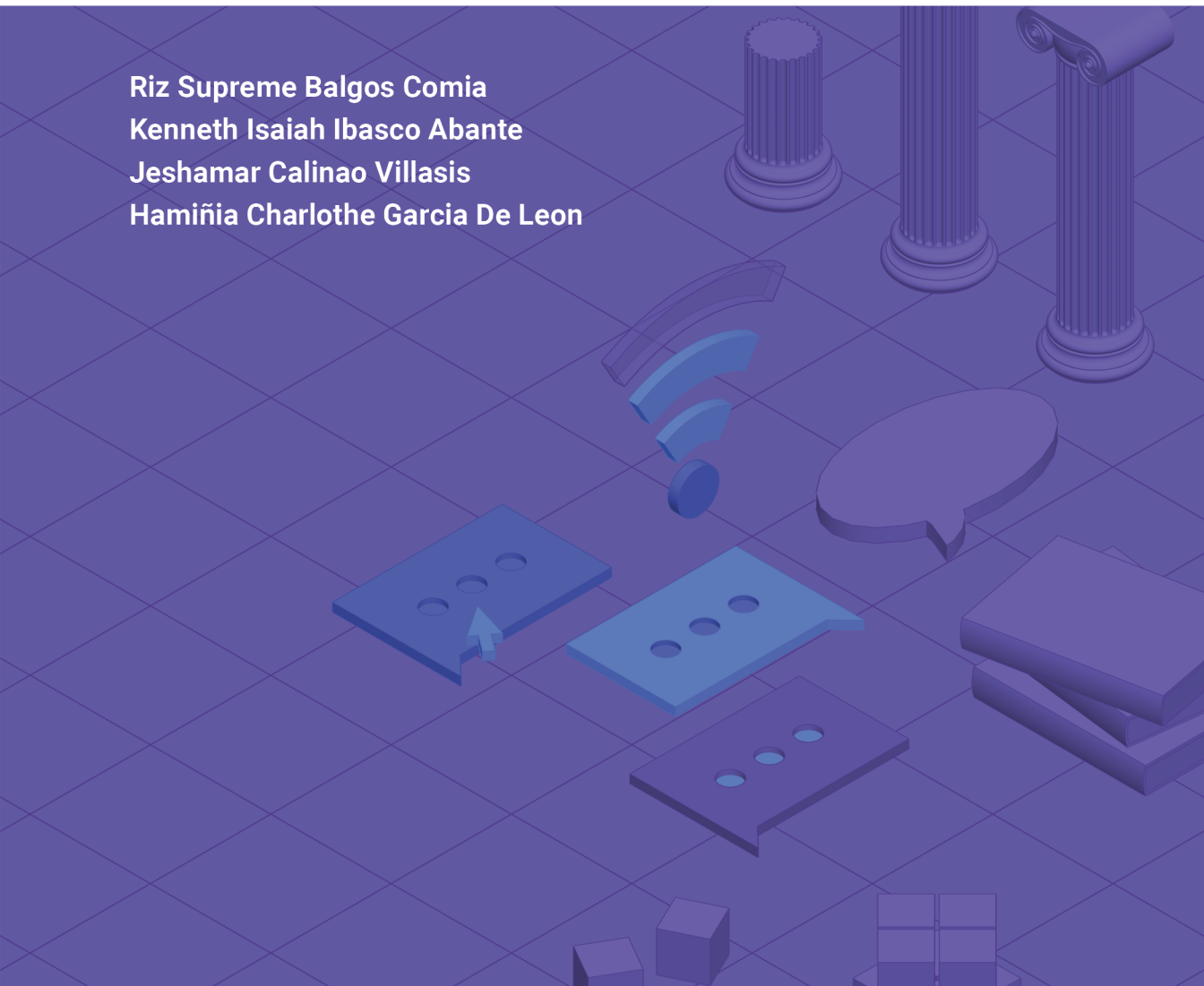
ON GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

Kakayanin Natin

Empowering Citizens to Participate in Improving Education Governance in the Philippines

Riz Supreme Balgos Comia
Kenneth Isaiah Ibasco Abante
Jeshamar Calinao Villasis
Hamiñia Charlothe Garcia De Leon



UP CIDS | MONOGRAPH SERIES

is published by the

University of the Philippines
Center for Integrative and Development Studies
Lower Ground Floor, Ang Bahay ng Alumni
Magsaysay Avenue, University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City 1101

Telephone: (02) 8981-8500 loc. 4266 to 4268 / (02) 8426-0955
Email: cidspublications@up.edu.ph
Website: cids.up.edu.ph

Copyright 2024 by the
UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies.

The views and opinions expressed in this discussion paper are those of the author/s and neither reflect nor represent those of the University of the Philippines or the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies. No copies can be made in part or in whole without prior written permission from the authors/editors and the publisher.

ISSN 2719-0722 (Print)
ISSN 2719-0730 (Online)

Cover image credit
Cover design by Jose Ibarra Cunanan and Jessie Feniquito, UP CIDS Publications Unit

UP PRESIDENT
EDGARDO J. ANGARA
FELLOWSHIP

The **UP President Edgardo J. Angara (UPPEJA) Fellowship** is a grant for pioneering policy research. It aims to promote high-level policy discussions and research on a wide range of topics that address national development goals and imperatives, such as science and technology, economic development, environment and climate change, good governance, and communications.

The Fellowship was established by the University of the Philippines Board of Regents on September 29, 2008 in honor of the late Senator Edgardo J. Angara, who served as UP President from 1981 to 1987 and concurrent UP Diliman Chancellor from 1982 to 1983.

Angara, also a former Senate President, is known for his contributions to Philippine education, serving as the Chairperson of the First Congressional Commission on Education in 1990, which was credited with a number of pioneering reforms in the education sector, including its “trifocalization” and the Free Higher Education Act.

In addition to his notable contributions as a legislator, Angara’s leadership also gave rise to the **UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (CIDS)**, which he initiated during his presidency.

Officially established on June 13, 1985, and originally called the University Center for Strategic and Development Studies (UCSDS), CIDS serves as a think tank that leverages the multidisciplinary expertise of UP to address the nation's most pressing challenges. The core objectives of CIDS encompass the development, organization, and management of research on national significance, the promotion of research and study among various university units and individual scholars, the securing of funding from both public and private sources, and the publication and wide dissemination of research outputs and recommendations.

For 2024, the Higher Education Research and Policy Reform Program (HERPRP) served as the UP PEJA Fellowship Awards secretariat in partnership with the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II).

From the Executive Director of UP CIDS

It has been a long time in the making, but I am pleased to see the UP PEJA Fellowship finally coming to fruition. After all the forums, meetings, presentations, and threads of communication between and among the PEJA Fellows, UP CIDS' Higher Education Research and Policy Reform Program (HERPRP), and the Second Congressional Committee on Education (EDCOM 2), we now have a series of papers that tackle the various facets of Philippine higher education. The series includes the study you're reading.

For much of its history, the UP PEJA Fellowship has been housed in and implemented through the Center for Integrative and Development Studies (CIDS), the University of the Philippines' policy research unit. Over the years, the Fellowship has funded and published the studies of policy scholars, many of them luminaries in their respective fields.

In 2023, after a few years' hiatus, not least because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UP PEJA Fellowship resumed and began looking for a new set of Fellows. This time, however, UP CIDS, through its Higher Education Research program, embarked on a historic partnership with the Second Congressional Committee on Education (EDCOM 2).

Linking directly with the government in administering the UP PEJA Fellowship was a first for UP CIDS. And that this was a partnership with a national-level policy-making body made it even more special.

As I have always maintained, this type of linkage is exactly what UP CIDS, as a policy research unit, must do: embedding research within a framework of stakeholder engagement.

Guided by the policy objectives of EDCOM 2, the PEJA papers not only tackle the complex issues in education, but also show stakeholders – the state, civil society, and the teachers themselves – how we can tackle them. For all our efforts in improving education in the Philippines, what else can and should we do?

Many thanks to the PEJA fellows for their valuable contribution, and to the UP CIDS Higher Education Research Program for shepherding this important undertaking. With collaboration, great things do happen.

Rosalie A. Hall, PhD
Executive Director
UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies

From the Convenor of UP CIDS-HERPRP

We at the Higher Education Research and Policy Reform Program serve as a convening body that builds partnerships and networks that pursue a shared research agenda and build an evidence basis for policy. Our activities include fellowships for scholars who publish with us and consultancies for junior researchers who wish to begin a career in higher education studies. We maintain databases, conduct events, and publish various manuscripts on higher education.

For 2024, our full attention was devoted to the UP PEJA Fellowship Program, serving as a secretariat for the researchers who studied higher education as it intersected with government and finance, industry and agriculture, regulation and tuition and technical and vocational education, training and lifelong learning, the UP PEJA Program awards grants for pioneering work on a wide range of topics that address national development concerns. This was the very first time that the program focused on a singular topic. This demonstrates the commitment of the University of the Philippines to higher education.

With the support of the UP Foundation, we have assembled what we have been calling the *Avengers* of Philippine education. They are preeminent scholars whose findings and recommendations directly address key policy concerns. Their papers at once draw from empirical data as well as their professional expertise for which they have been identified as a UP PEJA fellow.

Fernando dlC. Paragas, PhD
Convenor
Higher Education Research and Policy Program
UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies

Letter from the Executive Director of EDCOM II

The **Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II)** is collaborating with scholars across various institutions to provide valuable insights for the development of evidence-based policies that address the unique challenges and opportunities in the Philippine education landscape.

Our commitment to excellence, integrity, and ethical conduct in advancing research and disseminating knowledge, which we share with our research partners, is defined by the following principles:

The Commission is dedicated to upholding the highest standards of academic rigor in the evaluation, review, and dissemination of research publications. Our pledge is to ensure the integrity and quality of the knowledge we contribute to the scholarly community.

The Commission is committed to fostering transparency and data integrity in all aspects of research. This includes transparent communication, disclosure of methodologies and data sources, and providing clear guidelines to authors, reviewers, and the broader academic community.

The Commission promotes ethical research conduct, emphasizing the responsible and respectful treatment of research participants.

The Commission places a strong emphasis on accessibility. We are committed to facilitating the translation of research findings into accessible formats in order to engage the broader public, taking into account ethical and legal considerations. Our goal is to promote public understanding and awareness of scientific advancements.

In adherence to these principles, the members of the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) pledge to be stewards of good scholarly research for a better, more inclusive educational system for the Filipino people.

Karol Mark R. Yee, PhD
EDCOM II Executive Director

Declaration of Funding

This research was conducted in collaboration with the Second Congressional Commission (EDCOM II).

The funding source played no role in the design of the study, data interpretation, or decision to publish the findings as the author(s) maintained complete autonomy in the research process, ensuring objectivity and impartiality in the presentation of results.

Declaration of Interest

None

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 1

Background 4

Research Design 6

- Research Questions 6
- Scope and Methodology 6
- Possible Limitations and Biases 7

Key Findings 7

- Existing Mechanisms for Participation 7
- Need for Open Education Data 9
- Prevailing Culture of Compliance 11
- Overburdened Public School Workers 12
- Abundant Sense of Possibility 13

Policy Recommendations 14

- Advocates to Maximize Participation Mechanisms through our Matrix 14

DepEd, CHED, and TESDA to Build Team to Open up Education Data 15

DepEd to Build Learner-First Referral Networks 17

DepEd to Hire School-Based Social Workers and Non-Teaching Personnel 19

DepEd to Flip the Bureaucracy to support the Frontlines from a "Culture of Compliance" to a "Culture of Genuine Participation" 20

Areas of Further Research 21

Acknowledgements 23

References 24

Appendix 26

List of acronyms or abbreviations

BEA	Basic Education Assessment
BEIS	Basic Education Information System
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSV	Comma-Separated Values
DepEd	Department of Education
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DO	Department Order
EAU	Education Affairs Unit
EDCOM II	The Second Congressional Commission on Education
GPP	Gulayan sa Paaralan Program
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INSET	In-Service Training
LAC	Learning Action Cells
LGU	Local Government Unit
LIS	Learner Information System
LSB	Local School Board
MISD	Management Information Systems Division
NCR	National Capital Region
NCPC	Naga City People's Council
NGO	Non-government Organization
Phil-IRI	Philippine Informal Reading Inventory
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RSCC	Reception and Study Center for Children
SBM	School-Based Management
SGC	School Governance Council
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SPTA	School Parent-Teacher Association
TDC	Teachers' Dignity Coalition
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

Kakayanin Natin

Empowering Citizens to Participate in Improving Education Governance in the Philippines

Riz Supreme Balgos Comia, Kenneth Isaiah Ibasco Abante, Jeshamar Calinao Villasis, and Hamiñia Charlothe Garcia De Leon[1]

Executive Summary

Research Questions

1. How might we show opportunities for stakeholders in education to empower them to claim their participation space in governance and policymaking for enhanced and inclusive education outcomes?

2. What are the best practices and the challenges encountered in existing education governance activities?

3. What data, resources, partnerships, and strategic approaches are needed at the classroom, grade level, subject, school, district, local school board, division, provincial, regional, and central level to make education governance more participatory?

Key Findings

1. **Existence of Participation Opportunities.** We map the existing 30 mechanisms for people's participation in education governance[2] as laid

1 Affiliations: Comia, Abante, Villasis, and de Leon, WeSolve Foundation, Inc.
Comia and Abante, University of the Philippines President Edgardo J. Angara Fellows.
Abante, Research Faculty, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Ateneo de Manila University.
Villasis, Faculty, Department of Political Science, University of Sto. Tomas.
Corresponding author: riz.sbc@gmail.com.

2 Access our participatory mapping tool here: https://bit.ly/participate-matrix.

out in different national policies and the Department of Education (DepEd) Memorandums, but what is in policy is rarely what is on the ground. There are many entry points where people can participate in education governance as laid out in different national policies and local ordinances, but meaningful engagement can further be strengthened. Ordinary citizens often do not know how they can engage or contribute to improving the education system.

2. **Need for Open Education Data.** There is an urgent need for open education data to enable and facilitate more targeted, effective interventions in response to education problems on the ground. School leaders emphasize this need for proactive disclosure of data to identify school needs, target initiatives, and open spaces for collaboration. Civil society and partners outside the school still want to participate in the education system but have difficulty identifying the support needed due to a lack of access to publicly available, timely, and usable education data.

3. **Prevailing Culture of Compliance.** The 113 education stakeholders interviewed, including students, parents, teachers, and school heads, have a limiting belief that only the Department of Education Offices can shape policies, curriculum, and mandates within schools, with stakeholders serving mostly only as complying officers. Teachers always emphasize the culture of compliance or obedience within the Department once a memorandum or an order has been issued. Master Teachers and school heads cite how unclear policies deter them from fully engaging with other stakeholders for academic reforms. Root causes include politics, overlapping activities, and diverse and conflicting mandates of each level.

4. **Overburdened Public School Workers.** On top of the already overburdened teachers providing quality education, public school workers are proactively delivering social services beyond their mandate. This limits their capacity to ensure targeted parameters for academic initiatives and social services, as well as their capacity to upskill and improve.

5. **"Kakayanin natin." There is an abundant sense of possibility in the public education system.** Whether or not responsive mechanisms exist, education leaders find or make a way to support and address the needs of their learners. Through the school head, teacher, parent, and student leaders, and government officials, leadership is a major factor in the ability

of the public schools to motivate proactive action and facilitate participation in education governance.

Key Recommendations

1. **Based on a "Kakayanin" attitude, advocates can use our matrix to navigate the education system and map priorities and possibilities** to address challenges and cultivate strengths in the school community. The vision is for education stakeholders to go beyond their siloed roles and recognize the possibility of them being watchdogs, mentors, co-implementers, or links to government decision-makers and civil society. We illustrate this using two cases: enrollment and malnutrition in schools.

2. **DepEd, CHED, and TESDA should invest in an Open Education Data Team** to proactively disclose open, timely datasets like tables, dashboards, and scorecards. Investing in Open Education Data Teams will be beneficial to the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). Open data is an effective tool for genuine participation, as this will help empower education reform advocates, the surrounding community, and civil society to participate in improving learning outcomes and conduct evidence-based support programs for the education system.

3. **DepEd should build "learner-first referral networks" in school communities to harness the network of support for learners.** Learner-first referral networks[3] in school communities can broaden the network of support that education frontliners deliver. These must be learner-centered, address the social determinants of education, empower a network of social and community workers, adapt to gaps and resource availability, and address power imbalances in existing institutions through the concept of first-best and next-best referrals.

4. **DepEd should hire School-Based Social Workers and Non-Teaching Personnel** to help lessen social services-related tasks from teachers and actively build and manage the learner-first referral network within the communities. From the Department of Education's report during the

3 Access our sample learner-first referral network here: https://bit.ly/participate-matrix.

deliberations for the 2025 national public budget, DepEd identifies the resource gap in which they need to hire 20,668 non-teaching personnel, requiring a budget allocation worth PHP 7.9 billion.

5. **DepEd should support a culture shift to "flip the bureaucracy" to support the frontlines,** from a "culture of obedience" where stakeholders are "complying officers" to a "culture of genuine participation." **We need to capacitate citizens to participate** by creating enabling mechanisms for ordinary community members to engage with decision-makers in improving the education system. Along with open data, education advocates can use our map to help navigate the education system. The map can also be used as a learning resource.

Background

The World Bank's report on the state of global learning poverty (2022) revealed that nine (9) out of ten (10) students struggle with basic reading and comprehension at age 10. This result came off the back of the Philippine education system's slow climb out of the pandemic— a prolonged period of school closure that resulted in learning losses and a ballooning number of students who cannot read. This mirrored the finding of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) as reported by the Department of Education (DepEd) (2018), which indicated that only one (1) in five (5) Filipino students reached a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics. Another PISA report in 2022 revealed that the Philippines ranked as one of the poor-performing countries in creative thinking (OECD, 2024). With these, the EDCOM II Standing Committee recommended the establishment of a national-level coordinating mechanism that will require close collaboration among agencies, such as:

- system-wide planning, projection, and target setting
- pathway design through key stages and transitions
- teacher training and quality
- sharing of educational statistics and information
- monitoring of learning outcomes and targets
- enactment of policies

These will specify the level of representation, regularity of convenings, and ensure support from a highly technical secretariat capable of preparing issues for agreement.

However, despite the suggestion, the first-year report of EDCOM II (2024) highlighted how the absence of support staff overburdens teachers with administrative tasks, which detracts from their primary responsibilities and negatively influences learners' outcomes. The lack of a permanent and established high-level coordinating body also led to ineffective coordination between academic agencies since the 1990's trifocalization. Efforts to empower schools and local communities on school-based management (SBM) are also constrained by reliance on foreign-assisted projects, frequent leadership turnover, and a hierarchical organizational culture stemming from centralization. These constraints limited SBM's potential to transform basic education at grassroots levels. Despite continuous support for decentralization with informal and ad hoc devolution of educational responsibilities, the absence of a formal policy still disables local actors to facilitate targeted, efficient, and innovative solutions tailored to local needs.

In terms of policy, the Local Government Code of 1991 provides mechanisms for involvement at the local level to ensure a responsive government that addresses critical issues raised by the community. It further cited the incorporation of civil service participation to local governance. However, Aceron et al. (2013) disclosed that despite the existence of formal machinery, the nature of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the quality of their engagement often remain procedural and tokenistic. In fact, cities with high CSO index demonstrate adherence to institutionalized mechanisms yet lack engagement with local school boards and local development councils. Many CSOs are also created by the local government and are financially dependent on it, which leads to a cooperative rather than countervailing relationship.

Accordingly, the implementation of Republic Act (RA) 9155, known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, is not maximized. While the Student Governance Council aims to capacitate school stakeholders and Local Government Units (LGUs) as partners to provide learners with accessible and quality education, uphold children's rights, and promote respect and well-being in the learning environment, its actualization remains a challenge for schools as teachers and school heads also prioritize administrative tasks, among others. The implementation of DepEd Order No. 02., s. 2024, which aims to reduce teachers' administrative load, also has not reached its full potential due to the lack or absence of competent administrative officers. This reverts the load to the teachers.

Promoting civic participation in education governance is imperative to overcome these challenges and construct a more relevant and accountable education system in the

Philippines (Aranas et al., 2023). By fostering increased engagement of stakeholders in the policymaking process, we can ensure that a diverse range of perspectives is considered, thereby contributing to a more equitable and effective education system that better serves our learners and their communities.

Research Design

Research Questions

This study aims to respond to the following questions:

1. How might we show opportunities for stakeholders in education to empower them to claim their participation space in governance and policymaking for enhanced and inclusive education outcomes?

2. What are the best practices and the challenges encountered in existing education governance activities?

3. What data, resources, partnerships, and strategic approaches are needed at the classroom, grade level, subject, school, district, local school board, division, provincial, regional, and central level to make education governance more participatory?

Scope and Methodology

1. **Interviews and Community Listening.** We formally interviewed 26 education stakeholders in Quezon City (10 teachers and Department of Education employees, 10 student leaders, and six parent leaders) based on purposive sampling.

2. **Validation of Themes.** We also conversed with 13 education stakeholders across the country to confirm our themes.

3. **Education data inputs.** For our education data section, we had community listening sessions with a total of 74 education champions from the academe, civil society, the Department of Education's Regional offices, and the Department of Education's Central Office, drawing from a previous WeSolve study on Data for Empowerment in Education (Abante et al., 2022) and a WeSolve paper on Data for Empowerment (Benito et al., 2021) where we discussed concerns on data governance.

Possible Limitations and Biases

1. Purposive sampling may be subject to external validity concerns (i.e., lessons in Quezon City might not hold for other locations). We tried to minimize bias by validating themes on education governance with more stakeholders from municipalities across Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

2. Anonymizing interviews creates a safe space for feedback, minimizing social desirability bias.

Key Findings

Existing Mechanisms for Participation

We map 30 existing mechanisms for people's participation in education governance[4] as laid out in different national policies and DepEd memorandums, but what is in policy is rarely what is on the ground. There are many entry points where people can participate in education governance, but meaningful engagement can further be strengthened. Ordinary citizens often do not know how they can engage or contribute to improving the education system. At all levels of governance, from the classroom to the national level, individuals, community-based groups, and non-government and people's organizations should be empowered and capacitated to help improve the quality of education in their school communities.

National regulation of the implementation of RA 9155 is necessary. The School Governance Council (SGC) provides an avenue for parents, learners, teaching and non-teaching personnel, internal and external stakeholders, and the school head to work together towards continuously improving learning outcomes. This is meant to ensure that children's rights are respected, protected, fulfilled, and promoted in a gender-responsive, non-discriminatory, and inclusive physical and social learning environment. However, while the policy aims to capacitate school stakeholders and Local Government Units (LGUs), its actualization remains a challenge for schools as teachers and school heads have administrative tasks to prioritize, among others.

Examples from local government units have proven that people's participation is key to solving complex societal problems. Before it was recognized for its best practice,

4 Access our participatory mapping tool here: https://bit.ly/participate-matrix.

Valenzuela City had issues and challenges in its education system. They conducted consultations and town hall meetings, school summits, and workshops with the residents, teachers, and parents to know the realities they face and to be informed about the City's state of education. The insights gathered helped in the creation of Valenzuela City's Education 360° Investment Program. Through Executive Order 2019-324, Valenzuela City expanded its Local School Board (LSB) to include a representative from the Association of Private Schools, the Chaplain of Our Lady of Fatima University, the president of the *Liga ng mga Barangay*,[5] and more representatives from non-government organizations. The LSB formed multiple committees led by action officers to ensure efficiency in decision-making and active engagement of each member. This enabled more ownership and accountability from the teams. Under the Mayor's supervision, the teams are challenged to deliver their commitment to education (Synergeia Foundation, 2021).

Quezon City has a dedicated Education Affairs Unit (EAU) established by the City Mayor in 2019, which serves as the principal advisory, monitoring, and coordinating arm for education-related policies, plans, and activities. The EAU recommends evidence-based and performance-based programs where appropriations are driven by expected learning outcomes. The EAU can make recommendations to the City Mayor. It initiates strategic partnerships with stakeholders, regularly gathers data on the city's state of education, and exercises policies concerning all education programs of the city government. It is also tasked to maintain an orderly records management system. Most schools, such as one we interviewed, seek the EAU as a partner for their projects (Quezon City Local Government Unit, 2023).

Barangay Sto. Cristo officials in Quezon City shared about the openness of their barangay in partnering with Sto. Cristo Elementary School. They highlighted the interagency work they do for the school's *Gulayan sa Paaralan* Program[6] (GPP), a nationwide effort to address malnutrition in schools (Department of Education Memorandum No. 223, 2016). Because the school lacked the physical space for vegetable gardens, the Barangay bridged the school with the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Reception and Study Center for Children (RSCC) within the barangay. The RSCC was located near the school and had a lot of underused garden space, seamlessly integrating Gulayan sa Paaralan in

5 *Liga ng mga Barangay* translates to "League of Barangays", an association of *barangay* government officials. In the Philippines, a *barangay* is a small territorial and administrative district forming the most local level of government.

6 *Gulayan sa Paaralan* translates to "School-based Vegetable Gardens", a year-round activity that advocates the importance of planting, taking care, and teaching learners about the importance of eating vegetables and nutritious meals. This is facilitated by the teachers, sometimes with parents.

that location. The barangay also facilitated the establishment of smaller plant nurseries across the barangay's official administrative buildings. However, this arrangement is not present in all barangays. Another school shared that they are quite disappointed because they do not have the same relationship with their barangay. They felt like politics was getting in the way of their potential collaboration, prompting them to seek partnerships beyond their barangay.

Individuals, community-based groups, and non-government and people's organizations should know where and how they can engage the public schools and local governments to improve the education system. While there are mandated councils such as the LSB where people can engage in education governance, participation is focused on recognized or accredited civil society and people's organizations. We have to acknowledge that there may be individuals or citizens from different sectors who may want to participate but do not know how to do so. One teacher shared that in a planning workshop they conducted involving their learners, one high-level school official noted that the learners provided valuable insights that were helpful in the plan they were crafting. Students, even those who are not part of the student government, should be given the space to participate and contribute to decision-making.

In working with schools, some well-intentioned CSOs tend to provide or offer their services and programs without necessarily responding to the assets or needs of schools. They sometimes face resistance from the teachers and learners, impeding avenues for collaborative partnerships toward improved education outcomes. It is important that CSOs be enabled to facilitate an assets-based or needs-based approach in partnering with schools. School data should be open, updated, and transparent to education stakeholders as it will enable them to identify and tailor-fit interventions and provide targeted support to schools.

Need for Open Education Data

There is an urgent need for open education data to enable and facilitate more targeted, effective interventions in response to education problems on the ground. School leaders emphasize this need for proactive disclosure of data to identify school needs, target initiatives, and open spaces for collaboration. Civil society and partners outside the school still want to participate in the education system but have difficulty identifying the support needed due to a lack of access to publicly available, timely, and usable education data. To illustrate: a newly formed volunteer organization wants to provide free tutorial and remediation sessions for learners in need of additional support, but they do not know

which schools, grade levels, subjects, or specific learners would benefit most from their program. Considerable time and resources need to be allocated to get the data needed to formulate a tailor-fit program before it can be implemented.

Education professionals gather numerous assessments from learners and teachers of all grade levels multiple times per academic year, but the results of these assessments are not made accessible or available in a timely manner. We compiled 26 different types of student and teacher assessments across the country's education sector, but 23 of them are not publicly available. Of the seven publicly available assessment results, only two (or 7% of total assessment types) are accessible in usable, open formats that lend easily to analysis, such as Excel sheets and CSV files (Comia et al., 2024). These are international exams like Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) and PISA.

Based on the experiences shared by education stakeholders from the academe and civil society organizations, the process of requesting and reporting data from the Department of Education (DepEd) encounters several issues: timeliness, underdefined processes, and varying data retrieval levels. Getting basic education data takes considerable time as DepEd's data cleaning, validation, approvals, quality assurance, and on-demand retrieval processes are lengthy and extensive. One interviewee from the academe describes it as *"[DepEd's] bureaucratic process delays the approval of the data request, the retrieval of the documents, or even the actual preparation of data upon demand."* Interviewees from the Department of Education explain that the release of official data goes through a thorough process of generating, cleaning, validating, and approving. For example, enrollment data is collected through the Learner Information System (LIS) and has specific cut-off dates so that cleaning and validation by the Central Office can commence. While cleaning the data, the Central Office still needs to wait for the submission of schools that were unable to encode enrollment data by the cut-off date. After extensive cleaning and validation, the processed enrollment data is sent for the Secretary's approval.

According to education stakeholders, the protocols for data requests, data approvals, and data sharing vary across different types of requestors (i.e., individual researchers, partner organizations, schools, offices, and levels of governance), prolonging the process and making it difficult to access data easily. Some data is available only in schools (such as the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory or Phil-IRI), districts, divisions, regional offices, and national offices. Depending on the governance level, the granularity of the data also changes. For example, learner-level data is often only available in the classroom because at the school, district, or regional office, the data is already aggregated and does not provide enough information for targeted programs. Overall, education stakeholders agree that the Department of Education does respond to data requests, although it takes considerable time to provide the data requested.

Prevailing Culture of Compliance

The 113 education stakeholders we interviewed, including students, parents, teachers, and school heads, believe that only the Department of Education Offices can shape policies, curriculum, and mandates within schools, with stakeholders serving mostly only as complying officers. Student council officers of the Supreme Secondary Learner Government express that they receive very little guidance or reception from their council adviser and are only mobilized for administration-initiated events. There are instances where the learners themselves proactively initiate funding opportunities by conducting room-to-room solicitations and even seeking financial assistance from their networks. Parent officers are aware that the perception of parent engagement in schools is to provide financial support for projects and initiatives on "beautification", relief operations, and procurement of educational technology devices. Because of this, most parents are discouraged from engaging or participating in school activities or School Parent-Teacher Association (SPTA) leadership.

Teachers always emphasize the culture of compliance or obedience within the Department, once a memorandum or an order has been issued. As one teacher noted, "Our school is more policy compliant. *Kung anong binaba from DepEd, 'yun ang ginagawa.* [Whatever instructions are handed down from the higher-up DepEd offices, that is what we do.]" Sometimes, teachers are tagged as "*pabibo* [attention seekers]" when performing tasks beyond their memorandum-aligned mandates and expected roles. This lessens their confidence in proactively speaking out and initiating changes towards quality and inclusive education for their learners.

Master Teachers and school heads cite how unclear policies deter them from fully engaging with other stakeholders for academic reforms. Some root causes are politics, overlapping activities, and the diverse and conflicting mandates of each level. For example, the Teachers' Dignity Coalition-National Capital Region (TDC-NCR) urged the Schools Division Office of Manila City to clarify a memo released on the teacher's submission of their Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) in June 2024. According to the TDC-NCR, this instruction by the Schools Division Office of Manila contradicts three directives[7] from the DepEd Central Office. TDC-NCR President Enguerra said, "We know that policy-making is centralized and only the DepEd Central Office has the power to

7 Department of Education Order No. 003, s. 2024; Department of Education - Office of the Undersecretary for Operations Memorandum Order (DM-OUOPS) 2024-02-01300; Department of Education - Office of the Undersecretary for Human Resource and Organizational Development Memorandum Order (DM-OUHROD) 2024-0290.

create policies, and all DepEd offices are duty-bound to comply, especially if they are for the benefit of the teachers" (Malipot, 2024).

Through genuine participatory education governance, students and learners are more than just beneficiaries; parents and guardians are more than just fundraisers; and teachers and administrators are more than just complying officers.

Through genuine participatory education governance, students and learners are more than just beneficiaries; parents and guardians are more than just fundraisers; and teachers and administrators are more than just complying officers.

Overburdened Public School Workers

Beyond providing quality education, public schools are expected to provide social services and uplift learners' hurdles in studying. Laws, policies, and department orders mandate teachers to deliver quality education for all learners, with teachers facing the societal conviction that learners' performance is directly associated with teachers' competence and skill (Tarraya, 2024). However, from our interviews, some teachers feel that education governance decisions have overloaded the curriculum and increased their workload, lessening their time and capacity for career or skill development. This also takes time away from implementing responsive, targeted programs for their learners. The unbalanced curriculum is exacerbated by school suspensions, modality mismatches, and challenges in acquiring and using prescribed learning materials (i.e., delayed textbook procurement, lack of textbooks in schools, outdated or uncontextualized books, and long process of textbook approvals).

Teachers are eager to respond to the learning gaps they observe among their students (i.e., struggle in reading), but they are unable to do so because of their workload. DepEd Order 002 series of 2024 aims for the immediate removal of administrative tasks from public school teachers, amounting to around 50 additional tasks, and wants to "bring teachers back to the classroom". However, implementing this mandate remains a challenge, as schools still suffer from a lack of appropriate staffers, and without more administrative officers, the tasks revert to the teachers, who will still do the invisible labor. One teacher narrates that since the release of that memo, she was still tasked to create one of the school's administrative reports but was also instructed to indicate the name of their school janitor as the report writer.

On top of teaching and other duties, public school workers are expected to provide social services that address the immediate needs of learners and their families. In schools, public health services such as nutrition monitoring, vaccinations, and feeding programs

are facilitated by the teachers and school staff. Other government executive agencies recognize that, as an institution placed strategically in each locale, public schools have the capacity to mobilize and enable change in their respective communities. For instance, one reason that children are unable to go to school is their lack of financial resources to sustain their basic needs. To address this, in a Quezon City public high school, the Principal shared that they are organizing livelihood training for unemployed parents of their learners. In a Misamis Oriental hinterland public school, a teacher leader organized their Gulayan sa Paaralan program so that the parents of their learners can tend to the school-funded gardens. A portion of the vegetables harvested by the parents go to the school's canteen for the learners' nutritious meals, while the parents can sell the remaining harvest (i.e., to teachers or other community members) or take home for their families' nutritious meals.

These initiatives may be beyond the written mandate of public schools, but these recognize that access to education is also about empowering the families of the learners. The adage "It takes a village to raise a child" proves true in the case of public schools. Public schools should be adequately staffed, complemented, and supported by the local and national government in bridging the necessary social services to their learners and their families.

Abundant Sense of Possibility

"Kakayanin natin." There is an abundant sense of possibility in the public education system. Whether or not responsive mechanisms exist, education leaders find or make a way to support and address the needs of their learners. Through the school head, teacher-, parent-, and student-leaders, and government officials, leadership is a major factor in the ability of public schools to motivate proactive action and facilitate participation in education governance.

School heads and teacher leaders can pave the way for partnerships for the betterment of the community by providing livelihood training for parents of learners, establishing a mechanism where a portion of the revenue from school canteens is allocated as funds for the School Leadership Governance, and maximizing their networks through various initiatives. Take, for example, a former Quezon City school head who worked with her supportive mayor and barangay officials to improve enrollment in her school's catchment area when she found out enrollment was dropping and out-of-school youths were increasing. In another Quezon City public elementary school, a concerned teacher leader worked with their barangay to situate Barangay Order and Security Officers along the pedestrian lanes in front of their school due to multiple counts of their learners getting hit or swiped by vehicles passing through the main road.

Involving education stakeholders is a must, as it gives a sense of belongingness and makes them feel more inspired to help in addressing the needs of learners.

Policy Recommendations

Advocates to Maximize Participation Mechanisms through our Matrix

Based on a *"Kakayanin"* attitude, advocates can use our matrix to navigate the education system and map priorities and possibilities to cultivate strengths, address challenges, and harness our communities' immense sense of possibility to reform education. The vision is for education stakeholders to go beyond their siloed roles and recognize the possibility of being watchdogs, mentors, co-implementers, or links to government decision-makers and civil society (Department of Social Work and Development, 2015).

BANTAY watchdog	projects geared towards monitoring, promoting social accountability, and preventing corruption
GABAY mentor	projects enhance technical capacities and/or direct service workers for expertise and technical assistance
KAAGAPAY co-implementer	projects are done together to address agreed-upon needs and/or target agreed-upon communities
TULAY link	projects facilitate action, feedback, and linkages between government and communities or partners

Support makes a big difference in the growth, development, and success of learners. Contrary to "star" sections and scholarships that benefit students who already receive high grades, the support given to learners who need it most will have the greatest impact. Among young learners in an elementary school, one underperforming student was given financial, academic, and formation support by his community. Despite being at the bottom of his class when the year began, he emerged at the top of his class after receiving targeted support.

In another Quezon City public secondary school, some student leaders who were not prioritized for support from their council were supported by Rotary International[8]. Through Rotary's youth club, these student officers developed leadership skills in capacity-

8 Rotary International is a global network of more than 1.2 million neighbors, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.

building programs, participated in fund-generating opportunities, and executed their projects with Rotary's guidance. One of these student leaders also shared that through his journey from elementary to high school, with four years of alternative learning in between, he was supported by his teachers and his mom to never quit on his education. Amid his struggles, he worked with other student leaders and Rotary to organize learning recovery programs for his fellow students who had been left behind during COVID-19 school closures. As of writing, he is now entering a prestigious state university as an eager undergraduate student.

DepEd, CHED, and TESDA to Build Team to Open up Education Data

As an effective tool for genuine participation, education data must be timely, proactively disclosed, and accessible in an open format. Open data will help empower education reform advocates, the surrounding community, and civil society to participate in improving learning outcomes and conduct evidence-based support programs. From community listening sessions in 2022, stakeholders articulated the specifics of data types, data presentations, and data processes of the open education data system that would enable and empower them to do their work more effectively.

The types of education data needed, including those not yet available, relate to four major themes: learners, teachers, school community, and resources. These data are used to inform policies, interventions, training, and funding.

1. **Learner data** revolve around their context (academic, socioemotional, physical), performance, and outcomes. This data is used to inform, prioritize, and scale holistic interventions or support.

2. **Teacher data** include their context (profiles, qualifications, tenure), best practices or action research (delivery, classroom management, pedagogy, content, ICT use, materials), and performance. This data helps diagnose systemic issues, determine teacher quality, provide contextualized training, and scale up effective interventions.

3. **School community data** encapsulates data within the school (enrollment, dropout, retention) and beyond (socioeconomic situation, LGU dynamics, out-of-school youth, alternative learning, technical-vocational training). This data is used to identify needs and gaps, improve access to education, and match schools with funding priorities (public devolution or private funders).

4. **Resource data** relate to physical resources (classrooms, materials, computers), personnel (student-to-teacher ratio, non-teaching staff), and learning modalities.

This data helps formulate policies, reallocate resources, and determine capacities for face-to-face learning.

According to our education stakeholder interviews, the presentation of data is envisioned as interactive dashboards on websites or portals. Data should be:

1. **timely** (with historical data in time series) and updated (especially with the current academic year)
2. **downloadable** (as spreadsheets with data dictionaries, indices, matrices, absolute values)
3. **consolidated and anonymized** (as subject to data privacy), but including granular levels of the data (learner-level)
4. **disaggregated and categorized** (by basic demographics, disability, ethnicity, geography, and school types)
5. **visual** (graphs, charts, infographics, motion graphics, plots, clouds, maps, networks)

Presenting data in this manner would assist in drawing insights or interconnections, planning, decision-making, budgeting, replicating interventions, and reporting. Preferably, data can be presented in forms accessible to all types of stakeholders: government officials, learners, teachers, parents, civil society organizations, and funders.

Stakeholders recommend process improvements, some of which the Department of Education has already begun doing:

1. **Create a public use file with clean, consolidated data**
    a. Update consolidated historical and current datasets
    b. Link context data (such as the Basic Education Information System or BEIS, and the Learner Informations System, or LIS, from DepEd's Management Information Systems Division or MISD) with assessment data (such as the National Achievement Test Results from DepEd's Basic Education Assessment Division or BEA)
    c. Streamline raw DepEd data and interpret (from researchers) on one platform (e-Saliksik)
    d. Give access to consolidated versions of school-level data (i.e., Philippine Informal Reading Inventory or Phil-IRI results)
    e. Explore possible staff investments to ease the lengthy data-cleaning process

2. **Define the process of data requests, retrieval, and reports at all levels of education governance (school, district, division, regional, national)**

    a. Provide a master list of all available data, indicating which data need Data Sharing Agreements

    b. Align individual school protocols for requesting, retrieving, and reporting data

    c. Articulate the different processes and protocols for individual researchers and organizations

3. **Facilitate regular, unprompted sharing of data to the general public.** Improving current processes to make data retrieval more convenient and accessible will allow government officials, individual researchers, organizations, and funders to determine and prioritize actual needs, craft solution-oriented policies, design relevant interventions, measure impact, and scale effective actions.

To perform these important public functions, DepEd, CHED, and TESDA must invest in an **Open Education Data for Empowerment Team** that will proactively disclose open and timely datasets such as tables, dashboards, and scorecards. This process is aimed at empowering advocates to participate in improving the education system.

This open education data for empowerment teams should include representatives not just from the government but from **key users** such as parents, teachers, learners, education reform advocates, and researchers. It should cover assessments and important datasets such as school building inventories and other learning outcomes.

DepEd to Build Learner-First Referral Networks

The DepEd must build learner-first referral networks[9] in school communities to harness the network of support for learners. Learner-first referral networks in school communities can broaden the network of support that education frontliners deliver. These networks should be learner-centered and responsive to the social determinants of education to help minimize the teachers' load and empower the community to participate. The referral networks aim to adapt to gaps and power imbalances in existing institutions through the concept of first-best and next-best referrals.

9 Access our sample learner-first referral network here: https://bit.ly/participate-matrix.

Take, for example, the case of a teacher we interviewed whose morning shift classes start at 6:00 AM. On her first morning, she is met with students who are extremely hungry, who did not have money or food for breakfast that day and for dinner the night before. Because there were limited food stores open near the school at that time, this teacher decided to use part of her salary to purchase and bring an extra pack of *pan de sal* (bread) for her students.

In a learner-first referral network, if a teacher believes a student is hungry and unable to go to school, the teacher will not bear the burden of feeding their students. There will be a clear process for immediately accessing nutritious food and referring their students to feeding programs and health programs by the school, barangay, municipality, Department of Education, or Department of Social Welfare and Development. Below are more detailed sample referral cases:

EXAMPLE 1: LEARNERS OUT OF SCHOOL; DROPPING ENROLLMENT

Observation	Learner is not enrolled and out of school; School has dropping enrollment rate
Level	Classroom to barangay level
Community listening	Teacher talked to parents and guardians to understand reasons for non-enrollment and share these with the school head; list of out-of-school learners in catchment area not yet identified
First-best referral	1. School head works with barangay officials to go house-to-house to identify learners who need to be enrolled. 2. School head and teachers schedule orientation with parents and guardians of learners in catchment area to address concerns 3. Beyond age 16, enroll learners in the Alternative Learning System or TESDA.
Next-best referral	If the barangay relationship is strained, the school head can work with the local chief executive, municipal social worker, teachers or parent volunteers to go house-to-house in the catchment.
Outcome	Higher enrollment rate and higher cohort survival rates in school

EXAMPLE 2: LEARNER EXPERIENCES MALNUTRITION

Issue observed	Learner experiences malnutrition, so learner cannot go to school (identified as underweight, stunted, wasted, hungry)
Level observed	Classroom / school level
Community listening	School head works with school nurse and social worker to identify list of students who have below-average height and weight for their age; identify list of students who need care for school-based feeding programs

First-best referral	1. Teacher refers to the school leader handling the School-Based Feeding Program 2. School-based social workers monitor the provision of school-based feeding programs 3. Program is reviewed via the School Governance Council and Department of Education
Next-best referral	If a school-based feeding program does not exist or budget is lacking, or implementation is lacking, escalate to the barangay, Quezon City Education Affairs Unit, or the Local School Board to fund the initiative and improve intake of nutritious food.
Outcome	Zero wasting and stunting among children

DepEd to Hire School-Based Social Workers and Non-Teaching Personnel

The Department of Education (DepEd) must hire and fund school-based social workers and non-teaching personnel to help lessen social services and related tasks from teachers and actively build and manage the learner-first referral network with the communities.

To genuinely reduce the administrative burden of teachers, fund and hire non-teaching personnel (David et al., 2019) such as:

- school administrative officers for financial management, data collection, report writing, and secretarial work for the school head's office;
- school health worker for nutrition monitoring, immunizations, and deworming;
- guidance counselor for socio-emotional and mental health support of learners;
- registrar for enrollment and records management;
- librarian for learning materials management;
- property custodian for property management;
- utility personnel for janitorial services;
- security workers for safety and security in the school
- disaster risk reduction and management officer for disaster reduction and response.

According to the Department of Education, during the budget deliberations for the 2025 national public budget, they hired 4,860 non-teaching personnel in fiscal year 2023. From their report, DepEd identifies the resource gap in which they need to hire 20,668 non-teaching personnel, requiring a budget allocation worth PHP 7.9 billion.

School-Based Social Workers have important roles in schools (School Social Work Association of America, n.d.). The Department of Education should fund and hire trained social workers to:

- assess students' social, developmental, and mental health needs
- conduct case management for reported cases of abuse and neglect
- collaborate in promoting holistic improvement of families, schools, and communities
- counsel learners, families, and other stakeholders
- design and implement educational and alternative programs for social welfare
- provide necessary social preparation and immediate guidance during difficult times
- refer students and families to respective public and private organizations
- train education stakeholders on child protection policy and during in-service training programs

DepEd to Flip the Bureaucracy to support the Frontlines from a "Culture of Compliance" to a "Culture of Genuine Participation"

Although policy mechanisms for people's participation in education are available, some individuals and communities are not empowered enough to maximize these opportunities. Spaces for people to participate are often limited to remediation, social services, and material or financial supplies. Spaces to participate in education mandates, such as subject content, learning outcomes, curriculum development, and assessments, are unavailable to citizens. Along with open data, education advocates can use our map as a learning resource to help navigate the education system. In addition, specialized trainers from civil society organizations or the academe can capacitate teachers on how they deliver learning, how they can transform their ways of teaching (i.e., in Learning Action Cells or LACs, In-Service Training or INSET), and how they can innovate.

Local governments may innovate in creating mechanisms to ensure genuine people's participation. In the case of Tabaco City, Albay, the local government has allocated a small budget for the transportation and meals of their civil society representatives to participate in the different council and committee meetings of the city (Lagman, 2024). In Naga City, its People's Budget Ordinance (2017)[10] has empowered the Naga City People's Council (NCPC) to participate in the city's budget process. This policy enables sectors to push for programs

10 Ordinance No. 2017-072

and projects addressing their needs. Recently, the projects lobbied by the sectors, such as creating more learning hubs for young learners and making transportation safer for graveyard or night shift working students, are included in the 2025 Annual Investment Program of Naga City, with the support of the NCPC[11]. When people feel they are heard by the government, they feel more empowered to engage in the governance process.

Areas of Further Research

Given the vastness of education context and experiences in our country, we recognize that many best practices exist in education governance that are not yet known or documented. We must invest more in discovering these innovations across the Philippines for possible replication. We recommend doing more in-depth research on how civil society—community members, grassroots or sectoral organizations, and organized groups— engage with the government to ensure better learning outcomes among learners in various contexts:

- Urban-non-Metro Manila cities (Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao)
- Rural-island areas
- Rural-upland areas
- Rural-coastal areas
- Geographically isolated and disadvantaged communities

11 WeSolve Foundation, Inc. is currently assisting the Naga City People's Council (NCPC) to engage with the budget and planning process of the City Government of Naga. As of July 12, 2024, the City is still in the process of finalizing the budget. In the latest copy of the 2025 Annual Investment Program (as of June 25, 2024), the mentioned projects have already been reflected.

Biographical note

Riz Supreme Balgos Comia, from Nueva Vizcaya, is a person with disability, a former Quezon City public school teacher, and a University of the Philippines President Edgar J. Angara (UPPEJA) Fellow. Currently, she works to help empower communities for civic participation in education, open governance, public finance, and data. She has co-authored a guidebook for engaging the Philippine Budget Cycle, a guidebook on tobacco control strategies, and a study analyzing national bicycle lane contracts. She holds a bachelor's degree in communications technology management and a minor in development management from the Ateneo de Manila University. She earned her certificate in secondary education at the University of Pangasinan through her work with Teach for the Philippines.

Kenneth Isaiah Ibasco Abante is a globally and nationally recognized policy researcher, teacher, and organizer who co-founded and now leads WeSolve as its President. He led and now advises social movements, such as the Move As One Coalition (sustainable transport), People's Budget Coalition (budget transparency and accountability), and Tarabangan Naga (COVID-19 operations). Ken was recognized as The Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines (TOYM 2023) honoree for socio-civic and voluntary leadership. Ken is a University of the Philippines President Edgar J. Angara (UPPEJA) Fellow working to empower citizens to participate in improving education governance. Ken holds a master in public administration in international development from Harvard Kennedy School.

Jeshamar Calinao Villasis is one of the action researchers and project managers of the foundation. Aside from research, she has more than ten years of experience in facilitating programs and projects and building partnerships with civil sector organizations and local governments. She is also currently teaching under the Department of Political Science at the University of Santo Tomas and serves as a policy consultant of the *Sangguniang Bayan* of Mariveles, Bataan. Jesha holds a masters in public administration from the University of the Philippines - National College of Public Administration and Governance.

Hamiñia Charlothe Garcia De Leon is an Associate of WeSolve Foundation and a Program Manager at AHA Learning Center. Her passion lies in co-developing communities where members are empowered to act collectively towards a just and equitable society. She has four years of experience in leading empowerment sessions, producing tele-radio shows, crafting monitoring and evaluation tools, and writing academic content, research, and policies. She graduated from the University of Perpetual Help System-Laguna with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

Acknowledgements

We thank the following community members who attended our community listening sessions and provided important context for our research findings, which improved this paper:

a. Student leaders, parent leaders, teacher leaders, and school heads from public elementary and public high schools in Quezon City Districts 1, 2, and 6;

b. Representatives from Barangays in Quezon City District 1;

c. Representatives from the Quezon City Education Affairs Unit;

d. Representatives from the Department of Education - Schools Division Office of Quezon City;

e. Representatives from the Department of Education - National Capital Region Office;

f. Representatives from the Department of Education - Central Office.

We thank the following team members from WeSolve Foundation, Inc. for their support and input in this study: Daniel Joseph Benito, Paula Britta Apines, Jesa Gutierrez, and Jan Mae Sagdullas.

All errors are the authors' responsibility. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

Aceron, J., David, R., Santos, J., Parrera, K., & Vital, M. (2013). Civil Society Participation and Education Spending of Philippine Cities. *Ateneo School of Government, Philippines. Working Paper No. 80.* Available at: https://www.g-watch.org/sites/default/files/resources//civil-society-participation-education-spending-philippine-cities.pdf. (Accessed: 24 November 2023).

Aranas, M. V. P., Orbeta, A. C. Jr., & Paqueo, V. B. (2023). When students fail to learn: Getting education governance and finance policies right. No. 2023 - 14. Available at: https://pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/document/pidspn2314.pdf (Accessed: 24 November 2023).

Abante, K., Benito, D., and Comia, R. (2022). Data for Empowerment in Education - Community Listening Field Notes.

Benito, D., Abante, K., and Tan, F. (2021). Data for Empowerment: Organizing Principles for an Inclusive Public Data Ecosystem in the Philippines. WeSolve Foundation. http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.36220.26249

David, C., Albert, J., and Vizmanos, J. (2019, February). Pressures on public school teaches and implications on quality. Philippine Institute for Development Studies. https://pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/PUBLICATIONS/pidspn1901.pdf.

Department of Education (DepEd). (2018). PISA 2018 National Report of the Philippines. Pasig City, Philippines: DepEd. https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/PISA-2018-PhilippineNational-Report.pdf

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). (2015). Memorandum Order Circular No. 11, series of 2015: Operational Guidelines on the Engagement with Civil Society Organizations in the Implementation of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's Social Protection Programs. https://www.dswd.gov.ph/issuances/MCs/MC_2015-011.pdf.

Lagman, K. (2024 April). Social Accountability (SAc) Mechanisms and Citizen Engagement. *Presented during the SPACES Showcasing of Improved Food Security and Nutrition Initiatives.*

Malipot, M. (2024, May 20). DepEd-Manila urged to clarify 'possible violation of teachers' mandatory vacation. Manila Bulletin. https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/19/dep-ed-manila-urged-to-clarify-possible-violation-of-teachers-mandatory-vacation

OECD. (2024). Variation within countries and economies in creative thinking performance in *PISA 2022 Results (Volume III): Creative Minds, Creative Schools*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/a1e22325-en.

School Social Work Association of America. (n.d.). Role of School Social Worker. https://www.sswaa.org/school-social-work.

Tarraya, H. (2024, January 29). Teachers' Workload Policy: Its Impact on Philippine Public School Teachers. *Puissant*, 5, 1614-1629. https://puissant.stepacademic.net/puissant/article/view/246

The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) (2024). MISEDUCATION: The Failed System of Philippine Education. https://edcom2.gov.ph/media/2024/02/EDCOM-II-Year-One-Report-PDF-022924.pdf

Quezon City Local Government Unit (2023). Quezon City Education Affairs Unit - Citizen's Charter 2023. https://staging.quezoncity.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/QCEAU-CC-2024-1.pdf

Synergeia Foundation, Inc. (2021). The Governance and Finance of Education by Local Governments. https://www.synergeia.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/PFM-Study-May-2021.pdf.

World Bank (2022). The state of global learning poverty: 2022 update. Washington, DC: World Bank. https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/ publication/state-of-global-learning-poverty.

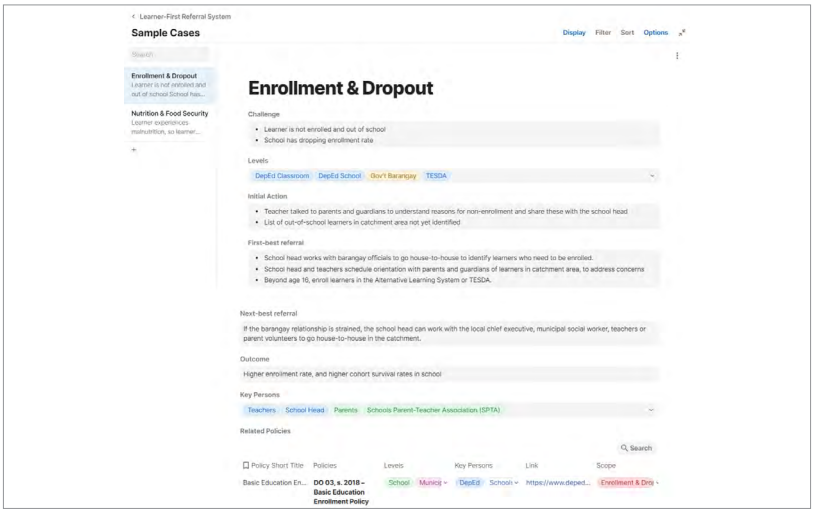
Appendix

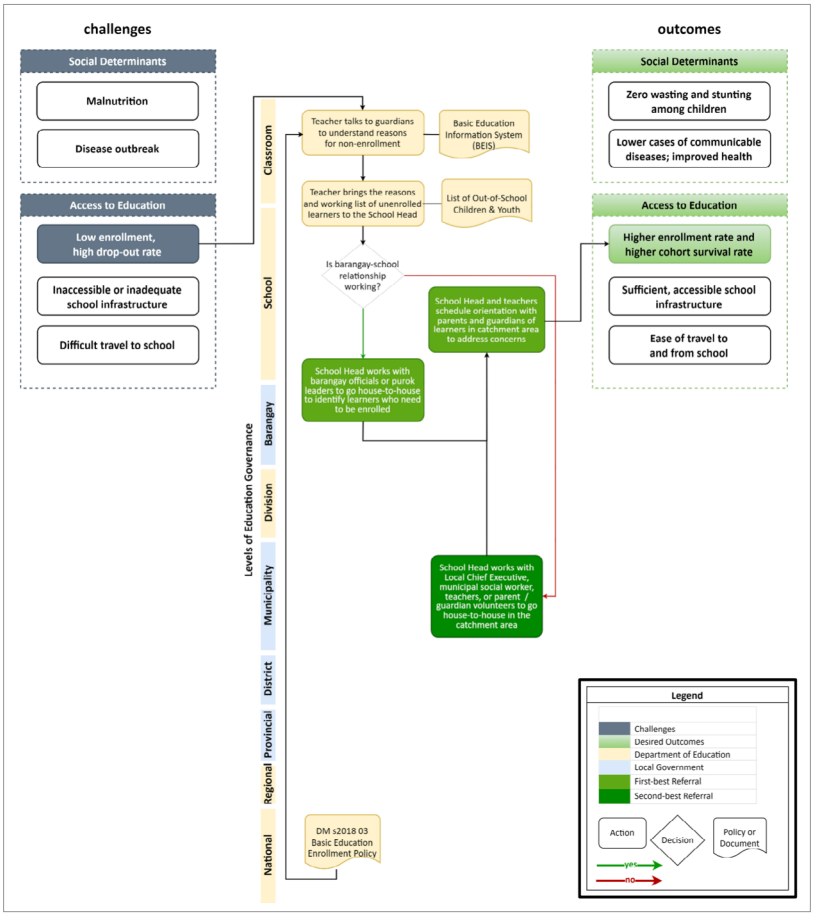
A. ILLUSTRATION OF A LEARNER-FIRST REFERRAL NETWORK TO MAKE LEARNING WORK IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN QUEZON CITY

1.	Principles	**a. Learner-centered:** The referral network aims to respond to issues and experiences of learners. **b. Responsive to social determinants of education:** The referral network addresses the many social determinants of education that affect learning. **c. Lessens teacher workload and empowers the network of social and community workers:** The referral network aims to unload from teachers the non-teaching activities so that teachers can focus on delivering learning outcomes; other social service delivery institutions are empowered to respond to issues faced by the learner. **d. Addresses gaps and second-best institutions:** The referred response should exist as close to the learner and the community as possible. If the institution does not exist, or if the relationship doesn't work, the referrer must find either a parallel network or escalate to the next higher decision maker.
2.	The following structures are the default escalation route. Identify the key actors in the education system in your area.	**a. Classroom:** Teacher, class advisor **b. School:** School head, teacher leader, class advisor; School governance council; Parent-teacher association **c. Barangay:** Barangay head, Barangay councilor **d. City/municipality:** Quezon City education affairs unit (if it exists), Councilor in charge of the committee on education (if it exists), Local School Board chaired by the mayor **e. District:** Congressional / district representative **f. Division:** DepEd superintendent; DepEd division staff **g. Province:** Governor; board member in charge of education **h. Regional:** DepEd NCR regional office **i. National:** Secretary of Education (Undersecretary); Senate and House Committees on Education; President
3.	Guide questions for advocates, learners, and front liners:	a. What is the learner experiencing? b. At what level are learners experiencing the issue? c. Is it an "education issue" within the mandates of the education sector or an issue of "social determinants" (hunger, mental health, hospitalization, parents' jobs, addiction, abuse)?

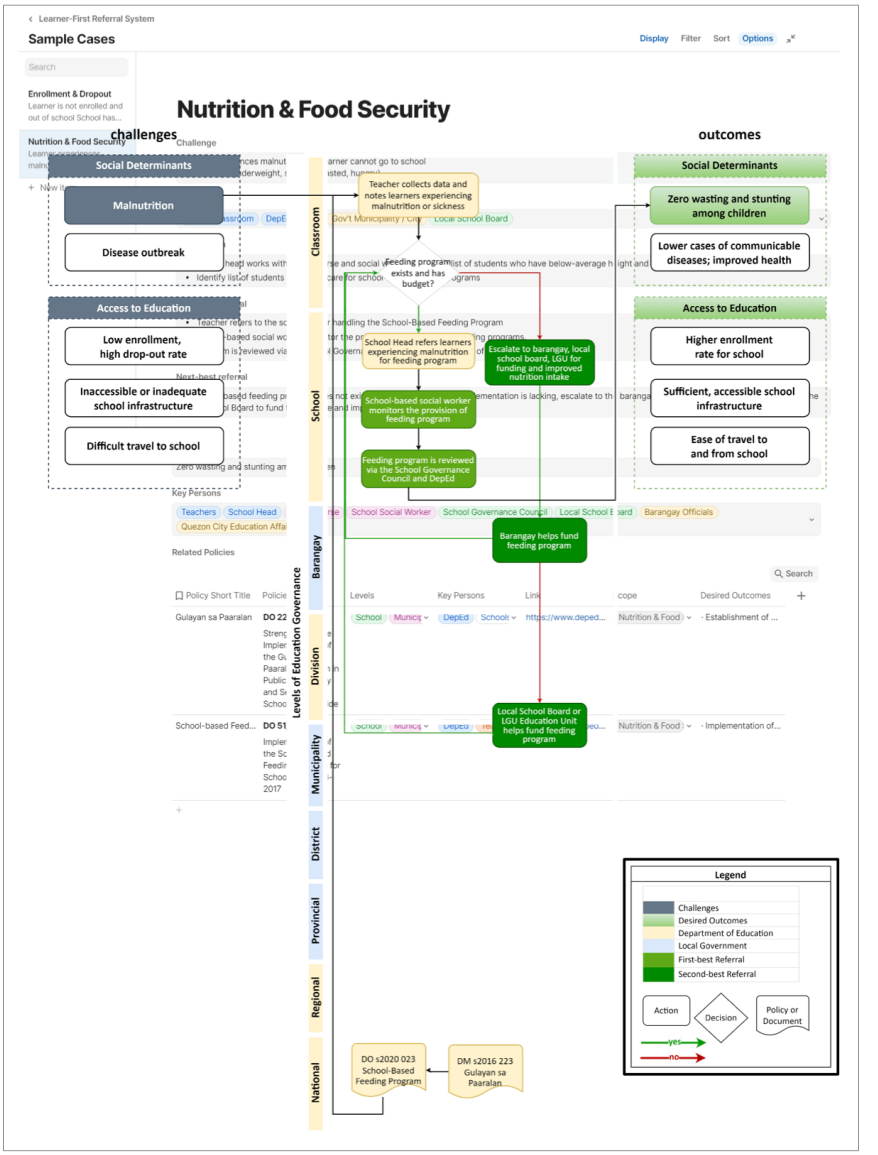
B. PARTICIPATION MATRIX CASE

Example 1: Learners out of school; dropping enrollment





Example 2: Learner experiences malnutrition



The UP CIDS Monograph Series

Monographs contain findings on issues that are aligned with the core agenda of the research programs under the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS).

CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Established in 1985 by University of the Philippines (UP) President Edgardo J. Angara, the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) is the policy research unit of the University that connects disciplines and scholars across the several units of the UP System. It is mandated to encourage collaborative and rigorous research addressing issues of national significance by supporting scholars and securing funding, enabling them to produce outputs and recommendations for public policy.

The UP CIDS currently has twelve research programs that are clustered under the areas of education and capacity building, development, and social, political, and cultural studies. It publishes policy briefs, monographs, webinar/conference/forum proceedings, and the Philippine Journal for Public Policy, all of which can be downloaded free from the UP CIDS website.

THE PROGRAM

The UP CIDS **Program on Higher Education Research and Policy Reform (HERPRP)** aims to chart a research agenda, systematically build an evidence base for policy analysis, and create a network of experts and researchers doing work in the Philippine higher education sector. The program also serves as a convening body which seeks to build partnerships and working collaborative networks among key stakeholders.

This research study is published by the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, the Higher Education Research and Policy Reform Program, and the UP President Edgardo J. Angara Fellowship, in partnership with the Second Congressional Commission on Education and released on irregular basis. Materials published here may not be reproduced, copied in any form or by any means, without the written permission from the Institution.

Editorial Board

Rosalie Arcala Hall
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Janus Isaac V. Nolasco
DEPUTY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

HERPRP Secretariat

Fernando dlC. Paragas, Ph.D.
EDUCATION RESEARCH PROGRAM

Jan Carlo B. Punongbayan, Ph.D.
Maria Jeriesa P. Osorio, MA
CO-CONVENORS

Jake Sumagang
SENIOR RESEARCH ANALYST

Raisa Kirstie Aquino
SENIOR PROJECT ASSISTANT

Mara Lara Pauline Bobier, MAMS
JUNIOR OFFICE ASSOCIATE

Joyce Quitan
SENIOR OFFICE AIDE

UP CIDS Publication Unit

Janus Isaac V. Nolasco
UNIVERSITY RESEARCHER IV

Lakan Uhay D. Alegre
SENIOR EDITORIAL ASSOCIATE

Kristen Jaye de Guzman
Leanne Claire SM. Bellen
JUNIOR EDITORIAL ASSOCIATES

Jheimeel P. Valencia
COPYEDITOR

Jose Ibarra Cunanan
Jessie Feniquito
LAYOUT ARTISTS

HERPRP EDCOM2 Publication Team

Petronilo Figueroa III
Lora Faith Batino
Giselle Manuel
COPYEDITORS

Mikaela Anna Cheska D. Orlino
LAYOUT ARTIST

This policy paper is funded from the UP President Edgardo J. Angara Fellowship Award for 2024, and is released under the Monograph Series published by the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies.

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
Lower Ground Floor, Ang Bahay ng Alumni, Magsaysay Avenue
University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City 1101

Telephone (02) 8981-8500 loc. 4266 to 4268
(02) 8426-0955

Email cids@up.edu.ph
cidspublications@up.edu.ph

Website cids.up.edu.ph