

**YOUTHLED**

YOUTH LEADERSHIP FOR DEMOCRACY

# DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY GUIDEBOOK for YOUTH LEADERS

AN INTRODUCTION



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# DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY GUIDEBOOK for YOUTH LEADERS

AN INTRODUCTION



# **Deliberative Democracy Guidebook for Youth Leaders: An Introduction**

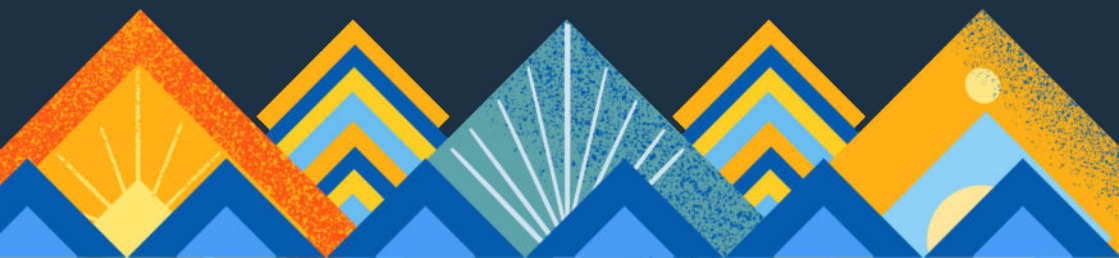
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This guide was written by Nicole Curato and Septrin Calamba with the support of Yasmira Moner, Ferdinand Sanchez, Joel Jan Alvarez, and Cille Bayron.

The artwork is by Claudine Delfin, Bianca Malbas, and Trizha Ko



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

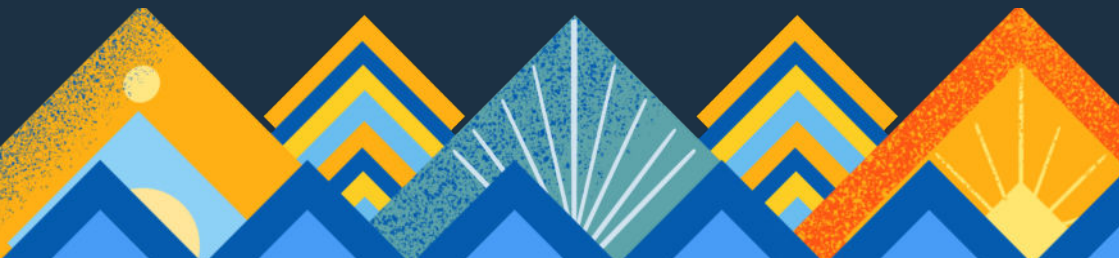
The “Deliberative Democracy Guidebook for Youth Leaders: An Introduction” is a product of a collaboration between the Youth Leadership for Democracy (YouthLed) project of The Asia Foundation and the team of Dr. Nicole Curato.

We would like to thank Dr. Nicole Curato, Septrin Calamba, Yasmira Moner, and the rest of the technical team for spearheading the development of this timely and relevant guidebook for youth leaders. As it is the first of its kind, crafted specifically in the Philippine context, we are grateful for the valuable insights and contributions you have captured in this publication. This endeavor is a product of our unwavering commitment to strengthening Philippine democracy.

We also thank the youth leaders who actively participated in the national deliberative democracy workshop conducted in February 2023. Your stories inspired us to develop this guidebook and empower more young people to champion deliberation and democratic values in communities.

Our gratitude to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for their support of this collaboration.

This guidebook is dedicated to our young champions of democracy.



*A message from*

# **Sam Chittick**

*Country Representative  
The Asia Foundation*

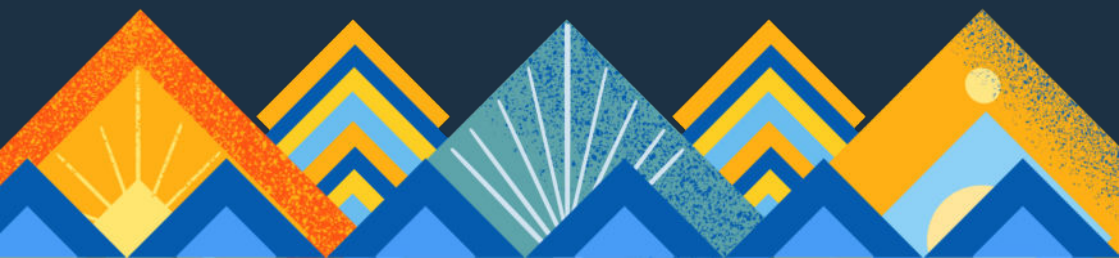
In an ever-evolving world, the voices of young people are a potent force for transformation. The Philippines boasts a vibrant and significant youth demographic, and harnessing their potential is pivotal for our nation's progress.

This "Deliberative Democracy Guidebook for Youth Leaders: An Introduction," a publication by our Youth Leadership for Democracy (YouthLed) program, is offered as a valuable tool for young Filipinos eager to shape the future of the nation.

The Guidebook provides tools for young people in advancing deliberative practices. With fresh perspectives and strong commitment to change, young Filipinos can be champions of deliberation in the communities.

Deliberative democracy, as introduced in this publication, is an approach that seeks to involve citizens, particularly the youth, in shaping public policies and decisions through informed and inclusive dialogue. This publication presents the essence of deliberative democracy, making it accessible and relevant to the dynamic Philippine context.

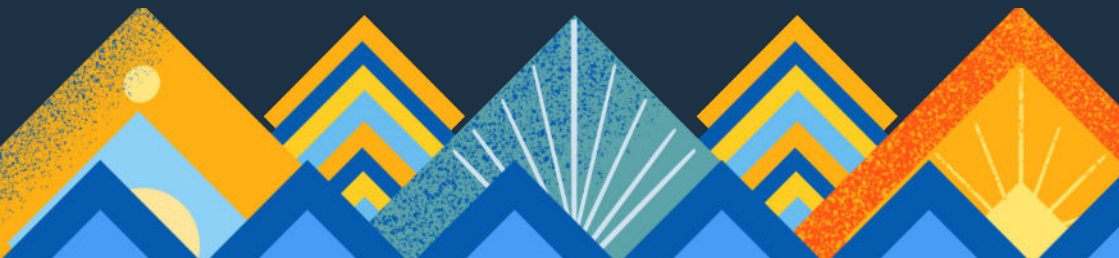
Contained in this introductory guidebook are tools for youth leaders to apply deliberative principles in an imperfect world. It encourages critical thinking and the exploration of innovative ways to engage in decision-making processes. It also offers practical insights and real-world applications, demonstrating the power of deliberative democracy to address diverse

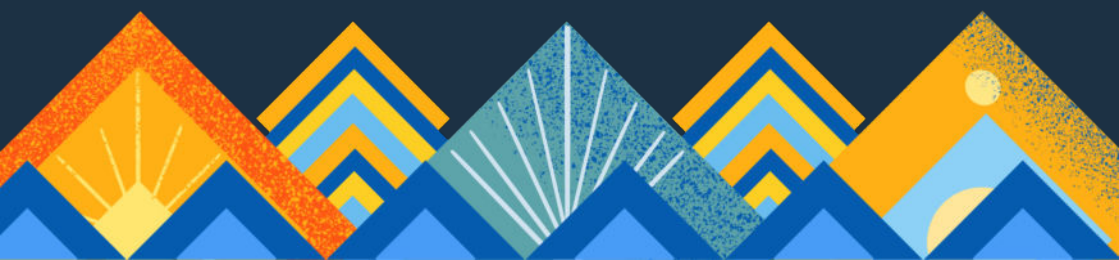


issues and inspiring youth leaders to take action and make a difference. “Deliberative Democracy Guidebook for Youth Leaders: An Introduction” is more than just a guide, it is a call to action. This guidebook encourages you to ask critical questions and engage in dialogues with fellow youth leaders. In these conversations, you will not only deepen your understanding, but also collectively weave the narrative of why deliberative democracy is important.

Through the YouthLed program, The Asia Foundation, in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development, actively engages with local collaborators to implement initiatives and strategies centered on issues that resonate deeply with young people. Our goal is to increase the involvement of Filipino youth in civic matters, empowering them to champion democratic ideals within their communities.

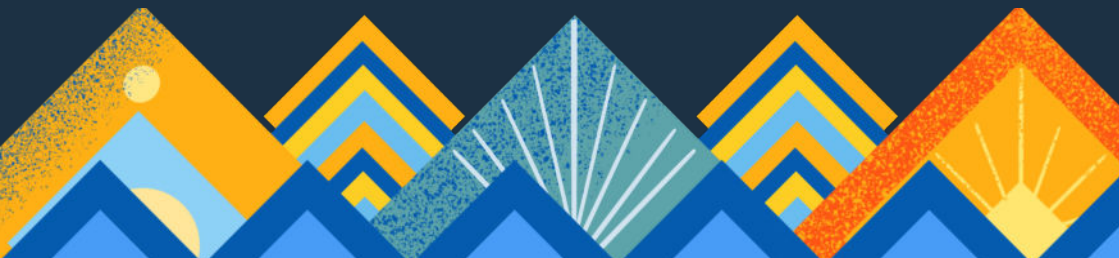
As you embark on your journey with this guidebook, remember that your actions and insights are essential threads in the tapestry of the nation’s deliberative democracy story. We, at The Asia Foundation, are proud to support this publication that empowers young Filipinos to become agents of change, advocates of informed decision-making, and prime movers of a more deliberative and inclusive Philippines.





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We've been doing this for a long time.  
But now it has a name.

**Mahatma M. Sangacala**  
Youth leader from BARMM, on deliberative democracy



## PREFACE

### **What is your most treasured conversation?**

Perhaps it is a conversation with a friend who listened to your worries without judgment. Maybe it was a conversation with indigenous communities who taught you the importance of defending their land. Maybe it was a conversation with a stranger on the bus, who made you realise why people vote for politicians you do not like.

Our most treasured conversations reveal what matters to us when we engage with others. Often, we treasure these conversations because they bring deliberative democracy to life – opening our minds, listening, talking, learning, empathising.

### **How can our conversations be like this more often?**

The Deliberative Democracy Guidebook for Youth Leaders: An Introduction seeks to inspire young Filipinos to build your own deliberative democracy story. The Guidebook provides an overview of deliberative democracy, how its principles can be applied in an imperfect world, why young people are best placed to advance deliberative practices, and points at various examples, case studies, and resources that can advance further learning.

The aim of the Guidebook is to provide a vocabulary for youth leaders to make sense of practices you are already doing using a deliberative lens and inspire you to experiment on new ways of doing politics. It invites readers to ask critical questions and continue the conversation with your fellow youth leaders, and, in so doing, to build our nation's deliberative democracy story together.

## DEFINING DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

The Philippines is no stranger to deliberative democracy. It has a rich tradition of engaging in free and open discussion before making collective decisions. This practice goes by many names – *malayang talakayan* in Tagalog, *harampang* in Waray, *pulong-pulong* in Bisaya, and *bitiyara* in Mëranaw.

At its core, deliberative democracy is about building a society where people make decisions together through reasoned discussion.



## DEFINING DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Inclusiveness makes deliberative democracy democratic. Everyone affected by a decision should have a fair shot at getting their voices heard.



Deliberativeness makes deliberative democracy deliberative. It is through sharing perspectives, listening to others, weighing evidence, and reflecting on a range of considerations that we can make fair and intelligent decisions.

## BARRIERS TO DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

It remains difficult for deliberative democracy to flourish today due to several reasons.

Power remains concentrated in the hands of a few families. People suffer from short attention spans. Many fall victim to “fake news”. Various issues pose a serious challenge to free speech, including digital surveillance, tech platforms that profit from hate speech and disinformation, data poverty, and weaponization of libel laws. Polarization has also plagued our communities, both online and offline, such that we now find it difficult to engage in meaningful discussions with people who espouse different political beliefs.

But all is not lost.



## PROMOTING DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD

Deliberative democracy can be promoted in various ways.



In schools, we can develop a curriculum where students learn how to communicate with people whose views differ from theirs.



In youth organizations, we can build and strengthen collaboration to allow members to showcase their skills and ideas in solving complex problems, and not only relying on “the best and the brightest,” the university students, and the SK officials.



On social media, we can incentivize the creative industry to produce content that inspires thoughtful conversations and empathetic understanding instead of promoting hate, cancel culture, and hyper-partisanship.



In our families, we can democratize our domestic life by deliberating on family decisions and considering the views of all concerned members.

These may be easier said than done, but democracy takes hard work.

## PROMOTING DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD

Deliberative democracy plays a role in transforming our political system.



In policymaking, we can demand our elected representatives to develop a mechanism for deliberation with their constituents, the outcome of which should be taken into account in their legislative agenda and votes.

In policy implementation, local and national government can empower ordinary citizens to deliberate and decide on how policies should be implemented. Naga's People's Council is one example, as well as community-driven development projects.



In policy monitoring and evaluation, citizens can take part in developing score cards to monitor the quality of projects and hold officials accountable. Ratings in scorecards are determined through deliberation.

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Deliberative democracy shatters the myth of youth apathy. It sees young people not as 'citizens-in-the-making' but as creative political actors who are shaped by various social circumstances and ready to take responsibility in addressing collective problems.

Contrary to stereotypes that the youth today are entitled, self-involved, and easily distracted, studies around the world find that young people have a strong desire to participate in democratic politics if they are taken seriously. Young people are well-placed to establish channels of communication that can give full expression to their grievances and anxieties, while creating opportunities for energising conversations that foster inclusive collaborations to produce outcomes acceptable to all.

Young leaders can contribute to building deliberative democracy in the country through several ways.

**First, on the micropolitical level, youth leaders can **model deliberative behavior** in their leadership style.**

This includes reaching out to communities whose voices are not always heard or are systematically silenced, as well as practicing intellectual humility and recognizing that no single leader – not even the smartest, most competent, and most morally upright – has all the answers to complex problems.

Elitist assumptions on citizens' capacity to participate in politics need to be unlearned. The challenge for youth leaders is to take the responsibility of creating conditions where all citizens aspire for and work toward better political futures.



## YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY



**Second, youth leaders can serve as connectors.**

Connectors convince actors to come together on the same table and deliberate on a coordinated approach to problem-solving. Critical to this role is creating a seat for marginalized communities, such as indigenous groups, small-scale farmers, non-unionized workers, out-of-school youth, and other people who have traditionally been silenced or ignored in public conversations.

This practice, if sustained, has a huge potential to transform the Philippines' dysfunctional democracy to an inclusive one through deliberative practice.

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY



**Finally, youth leaders can become *innovators* of deliberative practice.**

Being an innovator does not mean having to come up with wildly novel ideas or blindly importing practices from other countries. Innovation may mean building on existing practices – those that communities are already familiar with – and infusing deliberative practices in these activities.

Organizing community deliberations is one example. Filipinos are familiar with barangay assemblies and townhall meetings, as well as public consultations online or even festivals. These may serve as starting points for innovating deliberative practice.

# COMMUNITY DELIBERATIONS

How exactly does community deliberation work? Here's a short guide in 10 steps.



## 1. Choose the topic of deliberation.

The subject of deliberation may be a policy reform area, a draft legislation, or a specific problem the community is facing. The key is to choose a concrete and actionable topic for deliberation.



## 2. Persuade decision-makers to engage with the process.

People with power should ideally be willing to share their power. Deliberation is not a talk shop. It is a purposive form of communication with clear aims and consequences. For community deliberation to work, public authorities who have power to make decisions should, at the very least, commit to listening to the recommendations of the community based on their deliberations.



### 3. Define the community.

It's easy to say "everyone affected" should have a voice, but who is "everyone"? Who are the members of the community? Do they include only the residents or do transient workers and students also count?

Once the community is defined, participants need to be selected. The deliberations may be among the community members only, or the members may engage in "vertical deliberation" with public authorities.

### SORTITION



### 4. Recruit participants.

How should community members be recruited? Some deliberative democrats advocate for "sortition," or the random selection of participants to ensure fairness in participation. After all, everyone should have an equal opportunity to be selected. One may consider holding a public raffle, for instance, or going house-to-house and picking one participant for every five houses.

You may also opt for "stratified random selection," where people who have been randomly selected are further vetted to maintain fair representation of gender, age, geographic location, educational background, and political views. This ensures diversity of perspectives and experiences in deliberations.

Some find sortition to be unnecessary. Participants may instead be chosen to represent their sectors and speak on their behalf. During deliberations, these representatives convey their sector's concerns and views, and subsequently report back to their sector members what has been deliberated.

## 5. Design the program.

Community deliberations often take place in three phases.

1

### Learning Phase

Participants hear from credible, independent, and impartial experts about an issue they are facing. Participants are encouraged to ask questions from the experts to deepen their understanding of the issue. They may even challenge the experts' testimonies if they find it questionable or inapplicable to their communities.



2

### Deliberation Phase

Participants deliberate on the issue at hand in plenary sessions and breakout groups. These discussions are often conducted with the help of facilitators who are trained to ensure that participants stay on task. Techniques of deliberative facilitation are important here so norms of respect, reason-giving, and making arguments that appeal to the common good (instead of self-interest) are amplified and scrutinised.



3

### Recommendations Phase

Participants develop a common position or recommendations to turn over to decision-makers. Minority positions should also be documented in the report.



## 6. Present output to decision-makers.



Public authorities receive the recommendations, typically through a public ceremony, and acknowledge the work of participants and commit to giving serious consideration to their recommendations.

## 7. Evaluate.



Independent evaluators assess the extent to which the process has been inclusive, deliberative, and consequential. Evaluation is crucial in documenting lessons learned and in improving future programs.

## 8. Decision-makers report back.



Public authorities provide a report to participants explaining why they are accepting, partially accepting, or rejecting the recommendations. This is a critical step to ensure accountability.

## 9. Plan for sustainability.



Deliberative democracy does not end with one forum. Participants in community deliberation, together with the youth leaders who organize them, may deliberate on the next steps to take to ensure the sustainability of this form of communication. One possibility is to institutionalize community deliberation as part of the policy cycle or project implementation.

## 10. Monitor impact.



Youth leaders identify gaps in the implementation and come up with possible solutions by monitoring the impact of the community deliberations.

## CASE STUDY 1: BOOST BANGSAMORO



The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, in collaboration with the BARMM government, ran a series of citizens' assemblies to empower Bangsamoro communities in charting their economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic.

This was the first time that participants were selected through sortition, a recruitment innovation that sought to make the assembly inclusive and reflective of the communities' diverse needs.

**Watch the video here:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kcHvGA\\_osc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kcHvGA_osc)



## CASE STUDY 2: NAGA PEOPLE'S COUNCIL



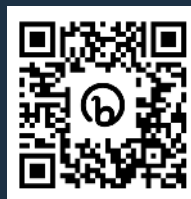
The Naga People's Council is a mechanism to empower civil society groups to have influence in all stages of local governance – from policymaking to implementation.

It connects NGOs and peoples' organizations which represent various sectors, such as urban poor communities, PWDs, and senior citizens, and gives them the space to deliberate on policies that may impact their daily lives. They enrich deliberations in the Local Development Council by providing citizen input and scrutinizing arguments put forward by local officials.

Because people take part in the deliberations, Naga City has been able to make difficult decisions, including raising taxes and rents in the marketplace, all with the support of its constituents.

**Watch the video here:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFIcQVrmkU4>



### CASE STUDY 3: DELIBERATIVE FORUM ON DISINFORMATION



Deliberative forums demand time and attention from citizens. Often, these forums last for at least five full days, requiring participants to take time off work and spend time away from their families.

The Deliberative Forum on Disinformation is an example of short-form deliberation. It used creative techniques for participants to deliberate on Facebook and via Zoom for two hours each day over three days. In this short period of time, participants were able to learn from experts, exchange their views, and generate recommendations on how to address disinformation in the country.

**Source:**  
<https://participedia.net/case/7601>



#### CASE STUDY 4: THE GLOBAL ASSEMBLY ON THE CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

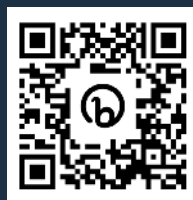


What's the point of citizen deliberation if the most powerful people are not part of deliberations?

The world's first Global Assembly is an example of a civil society led deliberation that brought together 100 citizens from around the world to develop a People's Declaration for the Sustainable Future of Planet Earth delivered in COP26. The Declaration sought to exert pressure on states to accelerate climate action.

The Global Assembly's aim is to give everyone a seat at the global governance table. If the United Nations is the forum for states, and the World Economic Forum is a forum for business, shouldn't there be a global forum for citizens?

**Source:**  
<https://globalassembly.org/>



## RESOURCES

To learn more about putting the principles of deliberative democracy to life, check out these resources which may be downloaded for free.

### Deliberative facilitation

What skills do facilitators need to run a deliberative forum? What techniques are useful to promote listening, reflection, and overcome confirmation bias? Kath Fischer – one of the most experienced facilitators in deliberative facilitation – shares her experiences in this podcast.



Listen here:

<https://facilitatingpublicdeliberation.libsyn.com/episode-40-reflecting-on-deliberation-and-valuable-techniques-with-kath-fisher>

### Deliberative democracy in the Global South

Demo.Reset is building a global network and knowledge base of deliberative democracy practices in the Global South. Get involved!



Visit their website:

<https://www.demoreset.org/en/>

### Deliberative democracy and voting

How can principles of deliberative democracy help us choose among imperfect candidates during elections? Nicole Curato shares some ideas with historian Leloy Claudio.



Watch here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MenzBLERgXc>

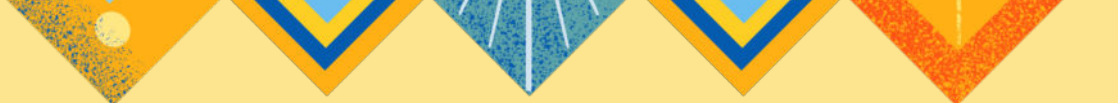
### What's next for democracy?

What if elections were not the heart of democracy? What if we shifted political and legislative power to everyday people? What if we reintroduced the democratic practice of selecting assemblies by lot instead of election? Watch founder and CEO of DemocracyNext Claudia Chwalisz testify before the United Nations.



Watch here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsJZDiLaFcA>



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United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the world's premier international development agency and a catalytic actor driving development results. USAID leads international development and humanitarian efforts to save lives, reduce poverty, strengthen democratic governance and help people progress beyond assistance.



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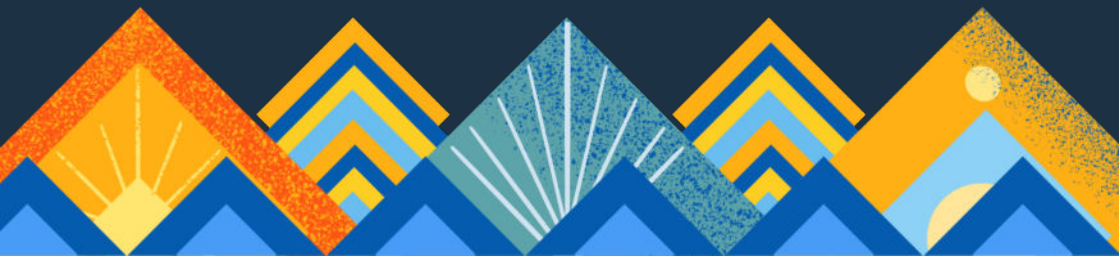
The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Informed by six decades of experience and deep local expertise, its work across the region addresses five overarching goals — strengthen governance, empower women, expand economic opportunity, increase environmental resilience, and promote international cooperation.

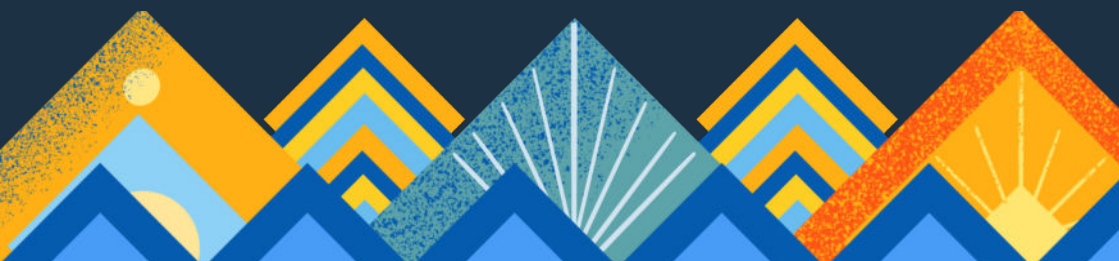
## YOUTHLED

YOUTH LEADERSHIP FOR DEMOCRACY

The Youth Leadership for Democracy (YouthLed) is a youth-focused program implemented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and The Asia Foundation that aims to increase the civic engagement of Filipino youth, leading to strengthened participation in democratic governance. It aims to increase civic engagement through leadership development, coalition-building, and civic education.

YouthLed's approach is anchored on the principles of Positive Youth Development, creating an enabling and productive environment for the youth.







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