

BRIDGING RESPONSIBLE DIGITAL USAGE IN TODAY'S DIGITAL AGE

By Denise Rafaeli Cadorniga



Titayan & CABCEP preparing for their workshop on Digital Citizenship

A group youth-led organisations in Maguindanao province is helping young people, parents, and guardians strengthen their capacity against online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) and other types of cyber violence. We went behind the scenes with two youth organizations, namely Titayan: The Bridges of Youth and Council of Active Bangsamoro for Community Educational Progress (CABCEP)'s Kadttag Magungaya: A Youth Initiative of Active Digital Citizenship Workshop to capture their initiatives in responsible digital usage.

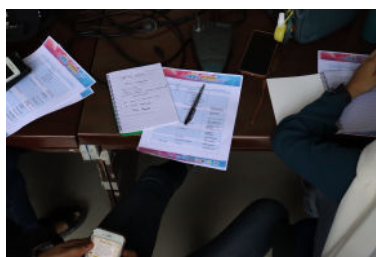
BUILDING RESILIENCE

For Dimple Salazar, a 27-year-old young Muslima, growing up in Datu Salibo, Maguindanao meant navigating between the acutely different worlds of toilsome and transient places of the everyday and increasing interconnected global populace of the world wide web. As we

become more digitally connected than ever, online sexual crimes against children are being perpetrated. With the changes in guardianship due to widespread poverty, the Filipinos' inability to speak international languages, and social norms that reinforce secrecy and victim-blaming, negative effects on youth's well-being and relationships may result from all of these factors. Fortunately, communities today are also taking steps to deal with this new and growing problem.

Titayan: The Bridges of Youth (which means "Bridge" in Maguindanaon) is a coalition of youth leaders that provides training to its officers and youth members towards strong personal, professional, and technical competence, driven by its aspiration to be the 'bridge' of youth, especially out-of-school youths (OSY), in empowerment and education.

On the other hand, Council of Active Bangsamoro for Community Educational Progress (CABCEP) is a nonpartisan and nonprofit youth organisation that aims to encourage the Ulama (Islamic scholars) and professionals on working together for a balanced education of the community.



Recently, Titayan and CABCEP, under The Bridges Project, had worked together in the municipalities of Datu Saudi-Ampatuan, Datu Salibo, and Datu Unsay, Maguindanao province, in conducting an awareness activity called Kadtag Magungaya, which introduced Shariff Aguak, Pagatin, Mamasapano, and Salibo United Youth Leaders (SPMS box UYL) and Ummahat Women's Association topics on cyber safety, addressing issues and safety investigations on OSEC and online violence. The participants, who ranged in age from 16 to 53, learned crucial skills for the 21st century's digital crimes that would help influence sustainable policies and programs on cyber violence and digital safety for internet users today.



Nash Dunding, a Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC) Commissioner, greatly mentioned, ***“Here in BYC, we are very proud (of Titayan and CABCEP) sa nakikita naming napakaraming pagpupulong at patimpalak. Nakikipagsabayan kayo sa mga issues na kailangan i-represent at iba pa. Ibig sabihin, effective yuong ating mechanism at engagement. Without that, ay***

hindi gagalaw ang konteksto natin. Ituloy natin ito. Padayon lang!

Two most important things in advocacy in youth empowerment and youth engagement are the conversation like this and appreciating the process. We must be part of the solution, and to be part of the solution, we need to find ourselves where we are in the process." [Here in BYC,

we are very proud (of Titayan and CABCEP) of what we're seeing with several activities and training that they are conducting. You are joining issues that need to be represented by youth. This means, the mechanism and engagement that we are conducting are effective. Without you, we wouldn't be able to move towards our goal. We should all continue this! Go forth!

Two most important things in advocacy in youth empowerment and youth engagement are these types of conversations and also, appreciating the process. We must be part of the solution. And to be a part of the solution, we need to find ourselves where we are in the process.]



DISCOVERING A DIGITAL WORLD OF SAFETY



Addressing the awareness gap has the potential to impact communities far beyond the local area. With the support under the Bridges Project, with the implementation of Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) and Magungaya Mindanao, Inc. (MMI) with the funding of Plan International Philippines through the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), the workshop

pointed several online websites and applications, including social media platforms, gaming platforms, and search engines, in tackling online grooming, online sextortion or blackmail, sexual predators, and other issues affecting youth minorities in the online world. It has equipped over 60 participants with the importance of children's privacy and personal data, reducing their exposure to intrusion and risk.

*Dimple Salazar, a member of Titayan: Bridges of Youth, added **“Na-aware na kami ngayon (sa digital citizenship) kaya dapat ipalaganap din natin ito. Lalo na sa mga teenagers na marami palang nangyayari sa digital world. Marami rin kasing issues dito na nangyayari sa amin. Kaya para ma-aware ang iba at para hindi na nila gawin ang mga nangyari (viral nudity and pornography, early child marriage, and OSEC) dito. Gusto nating hindi na tayo maka-dagdag sa cases na iyon at dahil sa pondo ng NP nagawa namin ito.”*** [We have been informed about digital citizenship that's why we feel the need to spread this information that has been happening in the digital world, especially with teenagers today. There has been a lot of issues within our communities that linked with digital citizenship including viral nudity and pornography, early child marriage, and OSEC. They need to be aware here. We want our youth not to cause and bring anymore cases of violence, and we've done all of this with the help of NP.]

Titayan and CABCEP believes transforming education is one of the best tools for improving the lives of Maguindanaon children and helping develop their communities. This marks a new era of community responsibility in making the digital world less intrusive for children.

Titayan: Bridges of Youth and members of Council of oActive Bangsamoro for Community Educational Progress (CABCEP) are some of the beneficiaries and training participants of the BRIDGES: Promoting Peace through Community-based Conflict Resolution and Empowerment of Young People is funded by PLAN International through German Federal Foreign Office

(GFFO) and in partnership with Nonviolent Peaceforce and Magungaya Mindanao Inc. BRIDGES is being implemented in Maguindanao to strengthen the local capacity of communities in resolving conflict through non-violent and people-centred approaches. It also provides socioeconomic empowerment programs for the disengaged and at-risk youth.

Tag: Plan International, German Embassy in the Philippines, Magungaya Mindanao, Incorporated, Titayan, CABCEP