USAID’s Mindanao Youth for Development Program

Increasing Youth’s Resilience to Violence

The Mindanao Youth for Development (MYDev) Outcome Harvest Report

Report Contents

Table of Figures ........................................................................................................................................ iv
Table of Tables ........................................................................................................................................ iv
Acronyms ............................................................................................................................................... iv

Executive Summary ..................................................................................................................................... v

I. Introduction ............................................................................................................................................... 1
II. Evaluation Design ................................................................................................................................... 4
III. Methodology .......................................................................................................................................... 5
    Informant Engagement Sample Selection Criteria ........................................................................... 5
    Informant Engagement Data Collection .......................................................................................... 5
    Substantiation Sample Selection Criteria .................................................................................... 6
    Substantiation Data Collection ........................................................................................................ 7

IV. Main Findings ......................................................................................................................................... 8
    Conceptualizations of Violence ........................................................................................................ 8
    Youth’s Resilience to Interpersonal Violence (Outcome 1) .......................................................... 10
        Outcome Description: ............................................................................................................. 10
        MYDev’s Contribution ............................................................................................................. 11
    Youth’s Resilience to Collective Violence (Outcome 2) ............................................................. 13
        Outcome Description .............................................................................................................. 13
        MYDev’s Contribution ............................................................................................................. 15

V. Conclusions and Implications of Findings ......................................................................................... 16
    Life Skills are Foundational ........................................................................................................... 16
    Start from Youth’s Positive Assets ............................................................................................... 16
    Inclusive and Participatory Program Development ..................................................................... 17
    Civic Engagement ......................................................................................................................... 17
Table of Figures
Figure 1 Heat Map of Respondent's Conceptualizations of Violence........................................................... 9
Figure 2 Phrase Map of Youth’s Responses to Interpersonal Violence Before MYDev Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 3 Phrase Map of Youth’s Responses to Violence in the Community Before MYDev......................... 14

List of Tables
Table 1 Informant Engagement Data Collection Statistics ........................................................................... 6
Table 2 Substantiation Data Collection Statistics ......................................................................................... 7

Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALS</td>
<td>Alternative Learning System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASG</td>
<td>Abu Sayyaf Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOLE</td>
<td>Department of Labor and Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTI</td>
<td>Department of Trade and Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDC</td>
<td>Education Development Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FoR</td>
<td>Foundations of Resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISIL</td>
<td>Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KII</td>
<td>Key Informant Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Outcome Harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSY</td>
<td>Out-of-School Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYDev</td>
<td>Mindanao Youth for Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PESO</td>
<td>Public Employment Service Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAMEO INNOTECH</td>
<td>Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNA</td>
<td>Social Network Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TESDA</td>
<td>Technical Education and Skills Development Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YDA</td>
<td>Youth Development Alliance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

Introduction

Implemented by Education Development Center (EDC), USAID’s Mindanao Youth for Development (MYDev) program was launched in 2013 to carry out youth life skills, basic education and livelihood skills initiatives in eight conflict-affected areas of Mindanao: Cotabato City, Isabela City, Lamitan City, Marawi City, Zamboanga City, the municipalities of Parang in Maguindanao, and Jolo and Indanan in Sulu. These initiatives contribute to USAID/Philippines Development Objective 2: Peace and Stability in Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao, by strengthening local governance and increasing youth civic engagement for peace and development.

Over the past six years, MYDev has reached more than 25,700 vulnerable youth and mobilized local government officials, local businesses, and other stakeholders into Youth Development Alliances (YDA) aimed at coordinating multi-stakeholder support to job skills training and livelihood pathways.

Evaluation Design

Originally developed by Ricardo Wilson-Grau and his colleagues, outcome harvesting is an evaluation method that begins by collecting evidence of a change (in behavior, relationships, policies, etc.) and then works backward to determine if and how a project has contributed to that change\(^1\). For the purposes of this evaluation, the outcome harvest model was adapted to look retrospectively at potential outcomes relating to youth’s resilience to violence, including data from all MYDev project sites and the entire 6-year duration of the MYDev program.

Accordingly, the key purpose of MYDev’s outcome harvest is to answer the following question:

> What outcomes reflect youth’s resilience to violence and to what extent did MYDev program elements contribute to these outcomes?

Methodology

A modified outcome harvest was conducted to answer the evaluation question (above). Following established outcome harvest methodological steps, the evaluation team first conducted a thorough desk review of internal and external project documentation. Second, the evaluation team conducted twenty-two (22) focus group discussions and thirty-two (32) key informant interviews with those closest to and most informed about the ‘actions’ (outcomes). These respondents included MYDev alumni, staff, government partners, and implementing partners. Third, the information collected from MYDev-affiliated respondents was verified and substantiated through an additional sixteen (16) focus group discussions and sixteen (16) key informant interviews with respondents that were not affiliated with MYDev, but in a position to observe the behavior of MYDev youth. These respondents included immediate and extended family members, friends, and neighbors, among others.

Limitations

This study was modified from a traditional outcome harvesting approach to examine a specific category of outcomes (youth’s resilience to violence). Consequently, this evaluation does not contextualize the importance of the outcomes identified against other potential outcomes. An additional limitation arises from the timing and sample selection. This evaluation was retrospective in design and conducted in the

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Main Findings

Youth’s Resilience to Interpersonal Violence (Outcome 1)

When personally confronted with a violent or a potentially violent situation, MYDev youth act more judiciously: considering the consequences of their actions and managing their anger and emotions.

Youth shared that, prior to MYDev, they frequently responded to situations where they felt hurt or insulted (e.g. verbal insults, bullying, discrimination for being OSY) and discrimination based on other characteristics (ethnicity, homosexuality, religion) with violence. The overwhelming majority of MYDev youth respondents were clearly able to articulate the change in their behavior from reacting quickly to reacting less. Key themes that developed centered around acting more judiciously: ignoring things or not responding to verbal taunts (bullying) and considering the consequences of their actions.

During the substantiation phase of data collection, respondents related to MYDev youth were better able to corroborate these changes than respondents that were not related to MYDev youth. For example, a mother of a MYDev youth alumni said of her: “She has more control of her emotions. Things in our family have become better. It helps because she is no longer hot-tempered. Now we can talk things through.”

When asked to elaborate on the factors contributing to this change, MYDev youth often mentioned MYDev programming, particularly the Life Skills and Foundations of Resilience (FoR) trainings. Notably, MYDev’s contribution to youth’s increased resilience is not only present in the content of the trainings, but in creating the spaces and opportunities, throughout all of its trainings, for youth to interact with each other and resolve conflict or disagreement in a positive way, develop their self-confidence, and their sense of belonging.

Though the majority of MYDev-affiliated and non-affiliated respondents stated MYDev’s impact as having created lasting changes, some respondents expressed skepticism. For example, one respondent cited that changes in attitude and resilient behaviors are not likely to last because the youth’s environment is not changing and may not be supportive to the changed behaviors.

Youth’s Resilience to Interpersonal Violence (Outcome 2)

When there are instances of collective violence, MYDev youth appear to engage in their community more deeply, including initiating activities to help others, sharing their own learnings with others and promoting non-violence, despite increased challenges or risks.

MYDev’s theory of change is grounded in strengthening the social contract between local government and communities and vulnerable OSY through incremental gains in mutual trust. Youth’s increased
feelings of belonging can be interpreted as a proxy for strengthened social contract and increasing trust of their government and community.

In times of violence or crisis in the community, respondents highlighted that MYDev youth not only engage actively to help, but also take the initiative to develop a response to the situation. For example, one respondent stated, “They now have a sense of volunteerism and are initiating the things that they will do.” MYDev-affiliated respondents highlighted activities that youth initiated to help victims of the Marawi Siege (2017) and the Jolo twin bombings and fire (2018). Though those unaffiliated with the MYDev program were less able to substantiate whether or not youth had initiated the activities themselves, all strongly affirmed that MYDev youth actively participated in organized community service activities, including peace-building activities.

Youth and other project-affiliated respondents emphasized the civic engagement module component of the project as a key contributor to this change. The module increases youth’s awareness of civic engagement, exposes youth to positive roles that they can play in their communities, and has youth apply their learned skills through community service projects that youth identify, plan and implement. Respondents noted that the community service activities have helped youth to foster empathy and civic engagement by helping youth realize that there are others in need of help. Respondents further noted that the project’s emphasis on interaction with local government and community leaders, as well as interaction with different types of people, more generally, was a contributor to youth’s behavior change.

Conclusions and Implications of Findings
MYDev’s outcome harvest has found that a workforce development project that builds assets of youth along with strengthening systems to provide the support, the safe spaces, and agency for youth to engage meaningfully in their community seems to have significant impact on the individuals and their communities.

These findings present key implications for future youth programming:

- Interpersonal skills, leadership skills, and overall life skills serve as an effective foundation for youth to engage meaningfully and productively in society.
- When given the right tools and support, youth take ownership of their own development and take action to contribute to their communities.
- Youth programs can greatly benefit by including and engaging other stakeholders, along with youth, in purposeful and meaningful ways to create an enabling environment for positive youth development.
- Outcome harvesting methodology can complement participatory programming by creating a participatory evaluative process.
- Civic engagement can be an effective mechanism for re-engaging youth in positive roles in their communities and changing perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes.
I. Introduction

Implemented by Education Development Center (EDC), USAID’s Mindanao Youth for Development (MYDev) program was launched in 2013 to carry out youth life skills, basic education and livelihood skills initiatives in eight conflict-affected areas of Mindanao: Cotabato City, Isabela City, Lamitan City, Marawi City, Zamboanga City, the municipalities of Parang in Maguindanao, and Jolo and Indanan in Sulu. These initiatives contribute to USAID/Philippines Development Objective 2: Peace and Stability in Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao, by strengthening local governance and increasing youth civic engagement for peace and development.

In the original five-year program implementation and in the one-year extension, MYDev has focused on three main components:

- Strengthening services delivery for vulnerable out-of-school youth (OSY) through capacity building of local government units, communities, and stakeholders to improve education and training services for out-of-school youth
• Increasing out-of-school youth access to education through the Department of Education’s Alternative Learning System (ALS)
• Increasing out-of-school youth employability by providing equitable access to relevant education and skills training

Over the past six years, MYDev has reached more than 25,700 vulnerable youth and mobilized local government officials, local businesses, and other stakeholders into Youth Development Alliances (YDA) aimed at coordinating multi-stakeholder support to job skills training and livelihood pathways.

In May 2017, a five-month-long armed conflict broke out in Marawi City between Philippine government security forces and militant groups associated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), including Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). The aftermath of the battle, referred to in this report as the Marawi siege, was felt throughout the Mindanao region. In February 2018, as part of its response to assist vulnerable youth affected by the Marawi siege, USAID approved a one-year cost extension which allowed MYDev to scale up the successful aspects of the project to 3 additional sites affected by the Marawi siege: Balo-i, Lanao del Norte; Iligan City; and Saguiaran, Lanao del Sur.

In the extension, MYDev also expanded its focus in two critical areas: 1) interventions to support the recovery of areas and youth affected by the Marawi siege and 2) interventions to continue to strengthen the resiliency of Mindanao youth through introducing specific training (Foundations of Resilience) along with deepening services that address root causes of instability in conflict-prone communities in the eight original sites.

MYDev is a complex program targeting a vulnerable population and operating in a dynamic and challenging environment, and has been required to respond to numerous changes, not the least of which was the escalation of insecurity and risk resulting from the Marawi siege. Despite the project’s robust monitoring system, project management noted that certain notable outcomes shared anecdotally through other data collection and project activities were not being captured through existing monitoring and evaluation systems.

The purpose of this evaluation is to establish, using a modified Outcome Harvesting approach, the most significant outcomes achieved by youth in the area of improved resilience to violence (including violent extremism) and the contribution made to these outcomes by the MYDev project.
A central feature of MYDev intervention is its Life Skills training which equipped youth with knowledge, skills and attitudes to be productive, resilient, and work ready. Life Skills is a 9-module training focused on work readiness, life, and civic engagement skills over a total of 80-100 training hours. The Life Skills training is specifically designed to equip youth with transferable skills to navigate changing life and work environments, thus, preparing them to pursue and succeed in a wide range of trajectories. MYDev Life Skills training culminates with community service projects that youth identify, plan, resource, and implement as a way to apply the skills and attitudes that they learn during the training and to contribute to their communities. Over the years, MYDev youth completers have remained active members of local youth networks and continued to volunteer in community service activities. Being able to give back to one’s community, and being respected and valued in the process, is a life-changing experience, particularly for out-of-school youth.

MYDev also partnered with the Department of Education’s Alternative Learning System (ALS) to increase vulnerable youth’s access to education and with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) to enhance their employability.

During the extension period, the MYDev Life Skills content was deepened by including Foundations of Resilience (FoR) training that was designed for youth to identify and strengthen positive coping skills and understand how they can develop positive thought processes and react appropriately to events which are out of their control. It includes activities to better understand violent extremism in their communities, to practice thinking processes such as cause and effect, and to strengthen their social support network. FoR trainings further deepen youth’s community engagement by culminating in resilience activities led by youth to promote stronger social support system and build awareness about all forms of violence in their communities and how to cope with them.

After completing MYDev training, youth explore various paths and options that will bring them closer to their education and livelihoods goals. Through the support of Youth Development Alliances (YDAs), MYDev supported youth to navigate pathways to a productive and engaged life. ALS completers particularly those that passed the ALS Accreditation and Equivalency, or technical skills completers interested to complete their college education were referred to partner agencies or directly to higher education institutions for scholarship programs. Technical skills completers who took the employment track were linked to employers, or participated in livelihood coaching and job fairs conducted by DOLE, DTI and PESO, or experienced job exposure through work-based learning or on-the-job training.
II. Evaluation Design

This evaluation was carried out with the understanding that there are *multiple intended users* of this evaluation process and findings.

The originally identified primary users of MYDev’s outcome harvest are:

- **USAID Washington** can use findings to inform its understanding of the types of programming to fund in the civic engagement space.
- **USAID Philippines-Education Office** can use findings to better understand how education projects play a role in peace and stability, which can, in turn, inform planning.
- **USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA)** can use findings for the purpose of theory-building and contributing to the body of knowledge on what works and what doesn’t in development.
- **Education Development Center (EDC)** can use findings to inform program design in the area of peace and stability.

In addition to those identified above, there are several other potential audiences for the outcome harvest findings communicated in this report.

- **Mindanao universities and think tanks**: This study will contribute to the body of research on youth development programs in the region.
- **Local peace-building institutions** may be interested in the peace-building tactics used by MYDev that contributed to the outcomes found.
- **MYDev’s implementing partners and Youth Development Alliances (YDAs)** may be interested in understanding how their work and the program in which they participated contributed to the outcomes found.
- **Regional and local government agencies** may be interested in using the findings to explore the institutionalization of the program elements used by MYDev that contributed to the outcomes found.
- **Youth Development sector**—including those involved in Youth Power communities of practice, the Global Youth Economic Opportunities Summit, and international NGOs in general—can use the findings to not only understand MYDev’s approach and outcomes, but also the potential usefulness of an outcome harvesting approach.

This outcome harvest study defined the scope to specifically focus on outcomes in the area of youth’s resilience to violence. This allowed the study to mine the data collected more deeply for the specific outcomes related to youth’s resilience.

Accordingly, the key purpose of MYDev’s outcome harvest is to answer the following question:

*What outcomes reflect youth’s resilience to violence and to what extent did MYDev program elements contribute to these outcomes?*
III. Methodology

Originally developed by Ricardo Wilson-Grau and his colleagues, outcome harvesting is an evaluation method that begins by collecting evidence of a change (in behavior, relationships, policies, etc.) and then works backward to determine if and how a project has contributed to that change. For the purposes of this evaluation, the outcome harvest model was adapted to look retrospectively at potential outcomes relating to youth’s resilience to violence, including data from all MYDev project sites and the entire 6-year duration of the MYDev program. Within this evaluation, an outcome is defined as an “observable change in the behavior, relationships, activities and actions of MYDev youth, the direct beneficiaries of the MYDev project.” Guided by the evaluation question (above), this evaluation was implemented using the following methodology:

1. Review of documentation and drafting of potential outcome description: The evaluation team conducted a thorough desk review of internal and external project documentation to identify potential outcomes that might suggest youth’s resilience to violence. In total over 100 unique internal and external sources were reviewed. Internal resources included field staff weekly reports, annual and quarterly reports, recorded testimonials from YDAs and OSY, narrative reports from service providers, evaluation reports, and other project research reports. External resources included related published studies from other organizations, research on the Mindanao-region and context, news clippings about Mindanao, among others. These documents helped MYDev achieve the first step in formulating the modified outcome harvest approach: the drafting of outcome description statements. An outcome description is a written statement that depicts the change in behavior or actions of MYDev youth.

2. Engagement with Key Informants: Outcome harvesting is highly participatory not merely on principle, but for a basic methodological reason: the people closest to the ‘actions’ (outcomes) are those who have the most knowledge of and who can therefore best describe these ‘actions’. Within the context of this evaluation, this means those who are best placed to observe youth’s actions and those that are most aware of MYDev programming. In February 2019, the evaluation team conducted 22 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 32 key informant interviews (KIIs) totaling 108 respondents (Table 1).

Informant Engagement Sample Selection Criteria
Respondents were selected from all 11 MYDev geographic sites using the following criteria: 1) knowledgeable about MYDev youth and MYDev programs, 2) willing to speak on the record with their knowledge, and 3) available to devote 1-2 days (including travel time) to engage with the evaluation team.

Informant Engagement Data Collection

FGDs and KIIs were led by trained facilitators under close supervision of the evaluation team. Note-takers (assistant facilitators) were also recruited and trained in conjunction with

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facilitators to take detailed notes during each interview and focus group discussion. Facilitators and note-takers were selected specifically for this data collection and successfully completed an intensive three-day training, which included data collection ethics, interviewing/facilitation best practices, and role play exercises. FGDs and KIIs were conducted in local language and subsequently transcribed and translated by note-takers into English.

In the FGDs and KIIs, facilitators led respondents through the draft outcome description, asking them to clarify the description, share evidence of the observed changes, and suggest additional dimensions or outcomes to explore. As a result of this phase, the draft outcome description was further developed and divided into two outcomes to capture key differences in youth’s conceptualization of violence (explained in the following section).

Table 1: Informant Engagement Data Collection Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Respondents</th>
<th>Total # of Respondents</th>
<th># of FGDs conducted</th>
<th># of KIIs conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Leaders (MYDev alumni with Youth Network leadership positions)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Members (MYDev Youth Network members)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Development Alliance Members</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Providers</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Office Staff</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYDev Staff (management and field staff)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID Staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>108</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Substantiation of Outcomes:** In order to ensure that the outcomes described are sufficiently reliable for evaluative purposes, the outcome harvesting methodology necessitates the collection of substantiation data. Since all the informants engaged in the data collection were either direct beneficiaries or closely affiliated to the MYDev project, the evaluation team sought to include an objective perspective: respondents that were unaffiliated and not benefiting from the project.

Substantiation Sample Selection Criteria

The selection of respondents was guided by the following criteria, which was purposefully different than the respondents in the previous stage of data collection in order to maintain objectivity: 1) respondents were independent of the project (not directly benefiting from MYDev) 2) knowledgeable about youth’s actions, 3) were familiar with the youth prior to his/her
participation in MYDev, 4) willing to go on the record with their knowledge, and 5) available to devote 1-2 days (including travel time) to engage with the evaluation team. Two categories of respondents were selected: 1) those directly related (immediate family, relative) to a MYDev youth and 2) those not related to a MYDev youth (friend, neighbor, employer, local government staff, etc.).

Substantiation Data Collection
In April 2019, the evaluation team conducted a second round (substantiation) of data collection, including 16 additional FGDs and 16 additional KIIIs with respondents from all MYDev project sites (Table 2). This data collection was implemented by the same trained facilitators and note-takers, and followed the same protocols with the exception of revised interview/discussion questions.

Table 2: Substantiation Data Collection Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Respondents</th>
<th># of respondents</th>
<th># of FGD</th>
<th># of KII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directly related to a MYDev Youth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Immediate family member, relative)</em></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not related to a MYDev youth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(Friend, neighbor, employer, local</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government staff, etc.*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methodological Considerations
Outcome harvesting is not experimental research. It is not intended to demonstrate causality or estimate a quantifiable program effect, as might be expected in traditional impact evaluations. Nonetheless, it is no less rigorous and follows the established best practices of other evaluation methods to ensure quality, reliable, and accurate data.

The reliability of the outcomes harvested and presented in this report lies in the following:

- The sources of information for the outcomes are the direct beneficiaries or the people who worked directly with the MYDev project.
- Unaffiliated respondents largely substantiated the outcomes described by MYDev-affiliated respondents. Several aspects of the outcomes described were not substantiated by external respondents, and these are explained in the findings. This likely indicates a lower likelihood of positive response bias in the findings.
- The informants served as sources knowing that the information they gave would be made public (though anonymized) and that it would be verified with other respondents.

Limitations
There are some limitations in the evaluation design and implementation:
Evaluation Scope: This evaluation was modified from a traditional outcome harvesting approach, which harvests a range of outcomes throughout the course of a project, to examine a specific category of outcomes (relating to youth’s resilience to violence) at the end of the project. Consequently, this evaluation does not contextualize the importance or level of substantiation of the outcomes identified against other potential outcomes.

Sample Selection: This evaluation was retrospective in design and conducted in the final year of the project. While all efforts were made to select respondents that would be knowledgeable about the outcomes and youth’s actions and have engaged with the project at different points in time, it is possible that differences in responses across respondents are related to how well they remember specific aspects of the project. For example, it’s possible that recent graduates are better able to describe the specific MYDev activities or modules that contributed to their changed behavior than those that graduated four or five years ago.

Feasibility Constraints: The timing of the evaluation presented several critical feasibility constraints, especially relating to data collection and sample selection. MYDev is a complex project that operates in 11 distinct project sites. Due to timing and other constraints, data collection was conducted in short intensive rounds. The timing of the data collection also happened to overlap with the election season, which prevented the participation of several municipal-level government and community leaders.

Sensitive Topics: This evaluation asks respondents to share their knowledge and actions as they relate to violence and violent extremism. These are sensitive topics and in conflict-affected areas like Mindanao even more so. While respondents were informed of the topic and gave consent to the data collection, there is a possibility that the extent of the information shared was curtailed due to the sensitivity of the topic. This may be especially true for questions that invited respondents to share their personal experiences with violence, including participation or observing interpersonal violence, crime-related violence, communal violence, and violent extremism.

IV. Main Findings

Conceptualizations of Violence

In formulating the evaluation question and in the initial drafting of the outcome description, the evaluation team did not limit the scope of the concept of violence. Instead, the evaluation used a participatory approach to identify the scope of the term violence. During the first round of data collection, facilitators asked respondents to share their definitions of violence and examples of violence with which they are familiar or by which they have been affected. In undertaking this exercise, the evaluation team noticed a divergence in the responses between youth (members and leaders) and adult respondents (service providers and YDA members).

Figure 1 presents a heatmap showing the frequency of the types of violence reported across the different types of respondents. When examining youth respondents, the most commonly mentioned

3 The World Health Organization (WHO) categorizes violence into three sub-types: 1) Self-directed violence, 2) Interpersonal violence, and 3) Collective violence. Interpersonal violence refers to violence between individuals and includes violence that occurs between family members or intimate partners, as well as between acquaintances.
types of violence were types of interpersonal violence, such as bullying and verbal abuse, and more severe examples, such as interpersonal shootings. Responses citing bullying were especially prevalent, with all youth member FGDs/KIIs and most youth leader FGDs/KIIs citing bullying. This theme is evident in the response shared in a youth member FGD:

“Bullying a person [is violence]. Because I experienced bullying before to the point that I didn’t want to go in school anymore. Bullying is not just physical actions [...], but also their harsh words.”

Figure 1: Heat Map of Respondent’s Conceptualizations of Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Violence (alphabetical)</th>
<th>Youth Members</th>
<th>Youth Leaders</th>
<th>Service Providers</th>
<th>YDA Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collective Violence (general)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extremism/Terrorism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnappings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killings (general)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marawi Siege</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rido (Clan/Family Feud)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Shootings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal Abuse</td>
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In contrast, bullying only came out in some of the service provider and YDA member FGDs/KIIs, and verbal abuse was mentioned even less frequently. Instead, adult respondents more frequently cited types of collective violence, including mentioning collective violence generally and extremism or terrorism. Religious intolerance was often cited in connection to collective violence. A YDA member shared this response when asked about different types of violence:

“In these areas: when you say violence, the Muslim-Christian relationships or dynamics seem to influence the violence existing in these areas. It's like the violence is embedded in that kind of dynamics or environment.”

Respondents’ (both youth and adult) descriptions of youth’s behaviors differed when confronted with interpersonal and collective violence. Considering these differences, the initial outcome description was revised into two separate descriptions specific to each sub-type of violence.

or strangers. Collective violence refers to violence committed by larger groups of individuals and can be subdivided into social, political, and economic violence. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en
The following sections will present the answer to the evaluation question for each sub-type of violence, first sharing the outcome description and then the contribution of MYDev to the outcome.

**Youth’s Resilience to Interpersonal Violence (Outcome 1)**

**Outcome Description:**

*When personally confronted with a violent or a potentially violent situation, MYDev youth act more judiciously: considering the consequences of their actions and managing their anger and emotions.*

Throughout the evaluation, respondents shared that out-of-school youth are often discriminated against by the community as well as from their own families. MYDev youth often shared that they felt they weren’t a part of their community. Feelings of belonging and connectedness have significant effects on human behavior. Attachment theory has demonstrated that the quality of children’s earliest connections with their caregivers dictates much of their ability to form close, supportive relationships as youth and adults. Secure, caring connections serve as a mechanism to help youth to cope with distressing experiences⁴ (Ainsworth et. al., 2015; Bowlby, 1979). Violence, whether turned outward or inward (e.g. suicidal behavior) represents a dysfunctional response to a distressing experience, an intolerant response to distress.

Youth shared that, prior to MYDev, they frequently responded to situations where they felt hurt or insulted (e.g. verbal insults, bullying, discrimination for being OSY, discrimination based on other characteristics (ethnicity, homosexuality, religion) etc.) with violence. A phrase map of several responses to challenging situations shared by respondents, highlights youth’s prevalence to respond with violence (Figure 2). Respondents also highlighted how quickly youth would react to these situations with either physical violence or verbal abuse (“harsh words”) with descriptors like “immediately,” and “right away.”

*Figure 2: Phrase Map of Youth’s Responses to Interpersonal Violence Before MYDev*

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Notably, the overwhelming majority of MYDev youth respondents were clearly able to articulate the change in their behavior from reacting quickly to reacting less. Key themes that developed centered around acting more judiciously: ignoring things or not responding to verbal taunts (bullying) and considering the consequences of their actions. For example, an adult respondent noted:

“[Youth] used to speak roughly. Now it’s like they think about the things that they’re about to say first instead of just letting it out.”

Respondents also described lack or absence of actions and disengagement from the situation. For example, one MYDev alumni respondent noted that when faced with an argument, “I usually tell myself ‘Wait. Let us calm down because if we continue to fight, the situation might get worse.’” During the substantiation phase of data collection, respondents related to MYDev youth were better able to corroborate these changes than respondents that were not related to MYDev youth. For example, a mother of a MYDev youth alumni said of her “She has more control of her emotions. Things in our family have become better. It helps because she is no longer hot-tempered. Now we can talk things through.” Other respondents also echoed this sentiment sharing that youth were previously “hot-tempered,” but that now they think about the consequences of their words and actions.

**MYDev’s Contribution**

When asked to elaborate on the factors contributing to this change, MYDev youth often mentioned MYDev programming, particularly the Life Skills and Foundations of Resilience (FoR) trainings. In fact, most respondents mentioned the two trainings together though respondents did not enumerate specific activities or modules. This is, perhaps, to be expected as this information was collected at the end of the project and there was a considerable gap for many respondents between their trainings and this data collection.

**MYDev’s contribution to youth’s increased personal resilience** skills is further supported by findings from MYDev’s FY18/19 (extension period) performance evaluation. The performance evaluation asked youth to rate their abilities in performing five key personal resilience skills before and after the MYDev program. The skills measured were emphasized during FoR training and included calming down when you’re made, talking out a disagreement, and staying out of fights, all of which were echoed by respondents during the OH data collections. MYDev’s performance evaluation found that across each of the five skills measured, MYDev youth rate their abilities significantly higher at endline than baseline (p<0.000) reflecting the increased confidence levels in their own resilience skills and abilities.

Notably, MYDev’s contribution to youth’s increased resilience is not only present in the content of the trainings, but in creating the spaces and opportunities, throughout all of its trainings, for youth to interact with each other and resolve conflict or disagreement in a positive way, develop their self-confidence, and their sense of belonging. For example, one training facilitator highlighted the second interpersonal communication module of the Life Skills training as particularly influential, stating “it built [youth’s] self-confidence to share their thoughts and act accordingly.” Findings from impact evaluation studies, implemented by MYDev for each of its youth cohorts, further demonstrate youth’s improved

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5 Full descriptions of the content of Life Skills and Foundations of Resilience trainings can be found in the introduction (p.12)
interpersonal skills. In each evaluation conducted, over 70% of MYDev youth rated themselves as having improved in their life, work readiness, and leadership skills from baseline to endline. These skill dimensions measure interpersonal skills, which also contribute to increased resilience: problem-solving, peaceful conflict resolution, and communication skills, among others. In FY15, MYDev and comparison group youth improved similarly. In FY16 and FY17, MYDev youth improved their skills significantly more than comparison group youth. And in the FY18 performance evaluation, MYDev youth rated their skills significantly higher at endline than baseline.

The opportunities for youth to participate in associations is a key component of MYDev’s programming. Youth engage with each other through the organization of Youth Networks (a MYDev alumni network) and with other community members through other voluntary associations (e.g. barangay youth council, community service organization, etc.). In March 2019, MYDev undertook a Social Network Analysis to examine the nature of OSY’s (not limited to MYDev youth) engagement with voluntary associations and the connection between OSY’s engagement and their perceptions of the acceptability of violence and their personal resilience skills. The SNA findings further support the findings of this outcome harvest study. The SNA found that OSY in general (not MYDev youth necessarily) are not deeply engaged with voluntary associations. Only about half of OSY are engaged in voluntary associations, and the overwhelming majority of OSY who are engaged, engage superficially: registering when it is required, attending meetings infrequently, etc. Very few OSY hold leadership positions in voluntary associations or attend meetings frequently. Though these findings are compelling, they are not surprising. Many voluntary associations source members through formal schools, inherently excluding OSY from participation. The discrimination against OSY for their status, which was often highlighted by respondents during both rounds of data collection, likely further limit OSY’s engagement. This disengagement means that youth have fewer opportunities to practice key interpersonal skills, make connections with others in their community, and build the social capital needed to manage challenges in healthy ways. MYDev contributes to bridging this gap through its intervention.

One adult respondent noted:

“I see how different [youth] have become compared to before they got involved with MYDev. I think it was because of the impact of what they learned from Life Skills and FoR trainings that changed how they see things; how they think about what they see; or what they have been thinking ever since they were born; and how they have differently reacted to whatever situation that they might have encountered in their lives.”

A study conducted by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH) on behalf of MYDev also found that MYDev’s contribution to OSY’s increased interpersonal skills and increased self-confidence helps to improve community perceptions of OSY. The study found that “[OSY’s] development of these soft skills increases not only OSY’s employability but more importantly builds their self-esteem, self-determination and self-confidence, a belief in the value of education, and sense of hope and personal empowerment...[It] facilitates their engagement as members of civil society with confidence to engage in social-political processes. It thereby helps shatter traditional community stereotypes of OSY as


sources of social alienation and threats to peace and social order. In contrast, they are now viewed as valuable contributors and assets to the community.”

Respondents also connected the theme of youth acting more judiciously to youth’s perceptions and responses to recruitment by lawless or extremist groups. Though this situation was not as commonly mentioned as others, both youth and staff respondents cited the project’s contribution to helping youth think about the consequences of their actions, which, in turn could serve as protective factor against recruitment. MYDev’s contribution to this outcome is highlighted below by two quotes from youth:

“Before MYDev, if someone would recruit me, I might probably join because of financial needs. After MYDev, my actions would be different... I am always thinking of the possible things that might happen with my actions.” – Youth Member

“MYDev really teaches young people about the possible outcomes and consequences of joining [lawless] groups. What could happen to your family, your community, yourself? The loss of freedom, the need to hide and you can even go to jail! ... That’s why MYDev has such an impact on us. It just stresses the reasons why young people shouldn’t involve themselves in groups that espouse violence and gives you the chance to think about the consequences of these types of decisions for you and your family.” – Youth Leader

Though the majority of MYDev-affiliated and non-affiliated respondents stated MYDev’s impact as having created lasting changes, some respondents expressed skepticism. For example, one respondent cited that changes in attitude and resilient behaviors are not likely to last because the youth’s environment is not changing and may not be supportive to the changed behaviors. In contrast, MYDev youth frequently reported that they interact with a wider network of people than they did prior to MYDev, perhaps indicating that although their physical environment (their town or barangay) remains unchanged, their more abstract environment (the people and relationships with those around them) does change after the MYDev project.

Youth’s Resilience to Collective Violence (Outcome 2)

Outcome Description

When there are instances of collective violence, MYDev youth appear to engage in their community more deeply, including initiating activities to help others, sharing their own learnings with others and promoting non-violence, despite increased challenges or risks.

Increased self-confidence and feelings of belonging were also prevalent themes when respondents described the ways that MYDev youth engaged with their communities. MYDev’s theory of change is grounded in strengthening the social contract between local government and communities and vulnerable OSY through incremental gains in mutual trust. Youth’s increased feelings of belonging can be interpreted as a proxy for strengthened social contract and increasing trust of their government and community. This increase is also manifested in MYDev youth’s care and interest in their community, particularly in times of community or large-scale violence.

Youth’s apathy or nonresponse to problems or violence in their community emerged as a theme when respondents spoke about youth’s behavior and attitudes prior to MYDev. The quotes highlighted in the phrase map below highlight several aspects of this theme (Figure 3). Respondents shared that, prior to MYDev, youth seemed to perceive violence in the community as normal and a common occurrence. This

theme is further corroborated by the literature on the Mindanao-context and MYDev’s SNA study. Mindanao is a conflict-affected area with a long history of communal violence, which is exacerbated by and contributes to challenging economic conditions. MYDev’s SNA study found that OSY, in general, express disapproval of violence as a concept, but find violence justifiable when presented with specific scenarios. During the outcome harvest, youth respondents also highlighted that, prior to MYDev, they felt that they were unable to do anything to address violence in the community. Other respondents didn’t echo these sentiments perhaps indicating that feelings of powerlessness may have translated to behavior that was interpreted by others as apathy.

Figure 3: Phrase Map of Youth’s Responses to Violence in the Community Before MYDev

We thought that

- we can't do anything in the face of violence or violent situations.
- we have nothing to contribute to the community.

the usual reaction when somebody is gunned down was, “It’s just a normal thing, it always happens anyways.”

I didn’t really care whether they were fighting, beating each other.

youth are not concerned with whatever happens in the community.

The change from inaction or apathy to active engagement in the community emerged as a strong theme expressed by the majority of respondents during both the informant engagement (MYDev affiliated respondents) and substantiation (non-affiliated respondents) phases. Many respondents expressed that youth cared about others and became more empathetic, even towards those who are not part of youth’s families or environment.

In times of violence or crisis in the community, respondents highlighted that MYDev youth not only engage actively to help, but also take the initiative to develop a response to the situation. For example, one respondent stated, “They now have a sense of volunteerism and are initiating the things that they will do.” MYDev-affiliated respondents highlighted activities that youth initiated to help victims of the Marawi Siege (2017) and the Jolo twin bombings and fire (2018). For example, respondents cited that MYDev youth in Parang initiated an activity to help the victims of the Marawi siege by raising money and collecting used clothes “even though they are not affected by the siege” (YDA member). One respondent further emphasized that even leaders who were in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps still had meetings with the YDA so that they could contribute to relief operations.”

In addition to taking initiative to organize community service projects or collections to support victims, respondents also emphasized that youth organized informal trainings to educate others on things that they had learned from MYDev, including coping skills. “They wanted to share their learnings from the trainings with other non-MYDev youth. They are...telling other youth not to be afraid, not to make war,
and to be resilient despite what happened in Jolo.” Youth Network Activity Reports reviewed by the evaluation team found further evidence of MYDev youth organizing events to educate others, including a three-day training of CRS called “Singing to the Lions,” to support children and youth who have experienced or witness violence to develop positive coping skills (Youth Network of Cotabato City) and an inter-religious dialogue “Learning Conference on Peace and Dialogue in the Quran and the Bible” (April 2018) (Cotabato City)10.

Though those unaffiliated with the MYDev program were less able to substantiate whether or not youth had initiated the activities themselves, all strongly affirmed that **MYDev youth actively participated in organized community service activities, including peacebuilding activities.**

**MYDev’s Contribution**

When asked to elaborate on the factors contributing to this change, youth and other project affiliated respondents emphasized the civic engagement module component of the project as a key contributor to this change. The civic engagement module was developed for MYDev specifically and added to the Life Skills training package to address the project goal of peace and stability. It aimed to strengthened the social contract between out-of-school youth and their communities and to help increase youth’s positive perceptions of the government and their communities. The module increases youth’s awareness of civic engagement, exposes youth to positive roles that they can play in their communities, and has youth apply their learned skills through community service projects that youth identify, plan and implement. Respondents noted that the community service activities have helped youth to foster empathy and civic engagement by helping youth realize that there are others in need of help. As one respondent noted, “Some of them used to think that they are the most vulnerable people ...But later they realized that there are others who [have] bigger problems everyday compared to [youth].” Notably, the civic engagement module and the MYDev project, more generally, appear to have contributed to youth’s increased participation in other organized community service activities. This is particularly significant in light of MYDev’s SNA findings, which document low and nominal levels of OSY engagement with voluntary associations.

Respondents further noted that the project’s emphasis on interaction with local government and community leaders, as well as interaction with different types of people, more generally, was a contributor to youth’s behavior change. In the community engagement portion of MYDev, youth are “trained to talk to their leaders to negotiate for some support to their activities”, giving youth “confidence [to interact] with officials who they had perceived to be above them.” This sentiment was also echoed by youth: “Prior to MYDev, we felt like Local Government Unit (LGU) officials were very distant from us. We could never talk to them face-to-face like this...When MYDev came and we were elected as YDA representatives, all of a sudden, it felt like they’re within reach. We could talk to the mayor face-to-face and exchange ideas with them [LGU officials] for the project that we we’re doing.”

Through the community service projects and the organization of Youth Development Alliances, MYDev contributed to the stronger relationships between MYDev youth and local government and community leaders. As expressed by a YDA member respondent, MYDev has created “the enabling environment [for youth] to strengthen and practice their skills and to continue providing services and giving back to their communities.” The environment that MYDev created, in turn, contributes to MYDev youth’s positive

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response to violence in their communities: initiating activities, engaging closely with local leaders, and supporting their communities.

V. Conclusions and Implications of Findings

MYDev’s outcome harvest study has produced rich and powerful testimonies of the outcomes that point toward youth’s increased resilience to violence. These outcomes can be seen across the different project sites and in both informal interactions and formally organized activities. MYDev’s outcome harvest demonstrates that change is possible and that an intervention like MYDev can help to bridge the gap between vulnerable populations, like OSY, and the government.

When drawing conclusions, it is worth noting that MYDev engaged in this research because of existing evidence – though anecdotal and offered through informal conversations – of the outcome studied. Additionally, the respondents selected represent the geographic diversity of the Mindanao-context and their responses, at times, reflected the differences between project sites. While the feasibility challenges limited the respondent base and the sample size is relatively small when considering MYDev’s programmatic reach, the triangulation of information acquired from desk review, elaborated upon and further defined by respondents affiliated with the project, and further validated by respondents not affiliated with MYDev supports the credibility to draw conclusions about the outcomes harvested and the contribution of MYDev to these outcomes.

In conclusion, a workforce development project that builds assets of youth along with strengthening systems to provide the support, the safe spaces, and agency for youth to engage meaningfully in their community seems to have significant impact on the individuals and their communities.

These findings present key implications for future youth programming including the following:

Life Skills are Foundational

Interpersonal skills, leadership skills, and overall life skills serve as an effective foundation for youth to engage meaningfully and productively in society. Youth programs can benefit greatly not only by including these skills in vocational or educational training curriculum, but also in creating safe and supportive spaces for youth to practice these skills with each other, other program stakeholders (employers, local government, etc.), and the larger community. Additionally, in projects, such as MYDev, that operate in conflict-affected areas and with vulnerable youth, a trauma-informed approach can greatly enhance youth programming in creating a safe space for youth to practice resilience and life skills.

Start from Youth’s Positive Assets

A prevalent approach is to assume that disengaged or OSY are naturally inclined towards negative behavior or criminality. Instead, these findings show that when given the right tools and support, youth take ownership of their own development and take action to contribute to their communities. Future programs should start with the assumption that youth have a range of valuable skills. By engaging youth meaningfully in programming (from design to implementation to evaluation), programs can build on youth’s positive assets to empower them for positive change.
Inclusive and Participatory Program Development

Youth programs can greatly benefit by including and engaging other stakeholders, along with youth, in purposeful and meaningful ways to create an enabling environment for positive youth development. Youth do not operate in a vacuum, but in within an ecosystem, which plays a role in youth’s development.

The outcome harvesting methodology is well suited to this goal by creating a participatory evaluative process that includes program stakeholders (beneficiaries, government counterparts, service providers, program staff, donors, etc.) and others actors to validate findings and seek input, thereby demonstrating accountability.

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement can be an effective mechanism for re-engaging youth in positive roles in their communities and changing perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes. Youth programming that includes opportunities and support mechanisms for youth to participate actively in their community can serve a dual purpose: addressing youth’s own perceptions of their roles and self-value as well as people’s negative perceptions of out-of-school youth.