



Graduate School of Development Studies

**POP POLITICS:  
Popular culture as a democratic space for active  
citizenship among Filipino youth**

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# Contents

Acknowledgments	v
List of Figures	vi
List of Acronyms	viii
Abstract	viii
Key Words	viii
<b>Chapter 1</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 The Filipino Youth and Media in Recent Philippine History	10
The Marcos Regime: Youth in the Streets	10
The 1986 People Power: The Culmination of Protests	11
The Post-1986 Youth: Disengaged or Disillusioned?	12
People Power II: The Rise of GenTxt	13
Postscript 2001: ‘People Power Fatigue?’	14
Media and Technology: Expanding Youth Spaces	15
1.2 Research Objectives and Questions	16
1.3 Case Studies	16
Philippine Educational Theater Organization (PETA)	17
Dakila	17
RockEd Philippines	18
1.5 Methodology	19
1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study	20
<b>Chapter 2</b>	
<b>Analytical Framework</b>	<b>22</b>
2.1 Youth, Citizenship and Popular Culture	22
Conceptualizing Youth and Generation	22
Democratic Participation and Citizenship	24
Popular Culture: Arts, Media and the Youth	26
<b>Chapter 3</b>	
<b>Art against Apathy, Media for Movement</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1 A Tale of Two Generations	28
3.2 Popular Culture: Widening Democratic Spaces for Youth	31
Challenging the Poverty of Hope	31
Art Speak, Youth Speak	32
Artistic Citizenship: Arts as Advocacy	33
“The Fun Theory”	37

<b>Chapter 4</b>	
<b>People Power 2.0: From Information to Action</b>	<b>39</b>
4.1 Youth Speaks: Three Stories	39
Hya: From TV to Reality	39
Ayah: Amplifying Proactivity	40
Irish: Awakening Consciousness	41
The Arts and Social Imagination	42
4.2 Looking at the Bigger Picture	43
Mellow Yellow: Mourning in the Age of Internet	43
Ondoy and Bayanihan Online	45
4.3 From Social Tools to Collection Action	47
<b>Chapter 5</b>	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>49</b>
References	52
Appendices	60

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## List of Figures

Figure 1. Photo from “The Battle of Mendiola”	10
Figure 2. Photo of vigil in 2001 People Power	13
Figure 3. Ilena’s painting “Art is Weapon”	36
Figure 4. Photo of a Bamboo Concert	37
Figure 5. Collage of Facebook and Twitter profile pictures as Cory tributes	44
Figure 6. Photo of youth-powered relief operations for Ondoy victims	46

## List of Acronyms

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>NAME</b>
CARPER	Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reformss
COMELEC	Commission on Elections
DA	Department of Agriculture
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ECY	Episcopal Commission on Youth
EDSA	Epifanio De Los Santos Avenue
E-GIG	Election Guide for the Interactive Generation
E-VAT	Extended-Value Added Tax
FQS	First Quarter Storm
LFC	Loyola Film Circle
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MTTL	Metropolitan Teen Theater League
NAMFREL	National Movement for Free Elections
NYC	National Youth Commission
PETA	Philippine Educational Theater Organization
TIE	Theater-in-Education
UN	United Nations
UP	University of the Philippines
WB	World Bank
WDR	World Development Report
WYR	World Youth Report
WVU	Western Visayas University

## **Abstract**

The ubiquity of popular arts and new media in the life of urban Filipino youth has become undeniable. On the other hand, they tend to avoid participation in formal bureaucratic systems and the practice of street politics has also declined throughout the years. Based on their minimal involvement in these, the youth have been labelled as apathetic. This paper looks at how intergenerational struggle play a role in defining the present generation of youth. It also investigates how popular culture, like the arts and media, can be utilized in making democratic and political involvement more accessible to the youth. To answer the question, three organizations practicing the use of popular culture to increase awareness and civic involvement were chosen as case studies. Interviews of staff and youth volunteers, as well observation of their activities were conducted. The study shows that the arts and new media can provide young people alternative spaces for participation, whether through organized civic groups or independent avenues. The paper suggests the concept of 'Pop Politics,' in which democratic and political expressions are popularized through youth cultural practices.

## **Keywords**

Youth, Popular Culture, Arts, Media, New Media, Generations, Democracy, Politics, Participation, Citizenship, Philippines



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

There has been an observable trend in the Philippines regarding the increasing number of organizations which encourage youth towards a more socially-conscious and civically-responsible exercise of citizenship. Various forms of popular culture, like music, film, theatre and the internet are being used as platforms for information-dissemination and youth advocacy. With the increase in access and use of technology among media-savvy young people, there is also growing recognition that these can be used as creative avenues to engage the allegedly apathetic youth population.

The present generation of Filipino youth are sometimes labelled as apathetic, comparing them to a previous generation who played a visible activist role in historic political movements. To understand this generation of youth, however, they should not be viewed merely in juxtaposition with another, but to be perceived in their own right and within the specificities of their social location. By analysing youth apathy in its present context, it can give a clearer idea how active youth citizenship can be encouraged.

The ubiquity of the arts and media in the life of an urban Filipino youth life has become undeniable. On the other hand, people tend to avoid formal bureaucratic systems, given the political culture in the Philippines. The practice of street politics has also declined through the years. Yet, freedom to participate in political processes is one of the advantages of a democracy that should be exhausted more. While popular culture has often been blamed for deviant youth behavior, it would be interesting to look at possibilities of using it to facilitate a more committed youth participation in democratic practices outside institutional or street politics. It is worth exploring given the penchant of Filipinos for technology. This research suggests the concept of 'pop politics, in which democratic principles are popularized through common youth practices.

The paper has five sections. The first chapter contains an overview of youth political participation in recent history as well as their current technological context to locate the perceptions of youth apathy and participation. It also presents the research question and methodology. Chapter 2 discusses the analytical framework entrenched in Mannheim's concept of generations, citizenship and popular culture. The third chapter looks at how the arts and media are being conceptualized as a democratic space, while Chapter 4 deals with how forms of popular culture are being used for inspiration and mobilization. The last chapter presents the conclusion and synthesis of the research paper.

## 1.1 The Filipino Youth and Media in Recent Philippine History

The present generation of Filipino youth has been perceived to be disconnected and apathetic to current socio-political issues. In the call for the CFBCI<sup>1</sup> National Essay-Writing Contest, the introduction to the contest stated, ‘Our youth today have forgotten what it is like to love our country. They have become apathetic to the conditions that plague our Motherland’ (DepEd Memo 162, 2005: 3). This pessimistic perception of the youth comes from comparing them to another generation who lived in a time when street protests and civil disobedience against the government was the ultimate expression of citizenship and love of country.

A glimpse of certain events in Philippine history reveals how generations of youth have constantly shown their active involvement through street protests and public rallies. Thus, when there is sparse youth attendance in protest actions, they are immediately dubbed as apathetic and unconcerned. It is important, however, to look at the youth and their actions not with intergenerational comparisons but within their current socio-historical location.

### *The Marcos Regime: Youth in the Streets*

The 1960s saw widespread youth activism all over the world, including the Philippines. It was the kind of activism that brought them to the streets censuring government abuse of power. Local demonstrations were mainly anti-imperialist in nature, criticizing President Ferdinand Marcos for being America’s puppet (Pimentel, 2006: 22-23). Massive student protests constantly hounded the Marcos administration.



Figure 1: Photo from “The Battle of Mendiola”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chinese-Filipino Businessmen Club, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> Image from: <http://www.bulatlat.com/images/4-5/People%27s%20March%20-%201970.jpg>

The ‘First Quarter Storm’ (FQS) was considered the pinnacle of youth demonstrations (Labao, 2009), with the ‘Battle of Mendiola’ as one of the most violent student demonstrations during the time. Rodel Ramos, who was present then, recalled the violent police dispersal which left four students dead. Despite the violence and loss of life, anti-Marcos student protests still continued after that (Ramos, 2009).

On 21 September 1972, Marcos signed Proclamation 1081 declaring the Philippines under Martial Law. He cited increasing communist and Muslim insurgency as reason, but many knew he also feared the growing threat of dissent among the populace. Marcos took control of the major dailies and broadcast networks which often withheld information on political killings and disappearances (Nieva, 1988:20). The *writ of habeas corpus*<sup>3</sup> was suspended, allowing the military to arrest anyone without due process (Thinkquest, 2000d). Checkpoints were set up in universities considered hotspots of student activism. The right to assembly was outlawed, forcing student-activists to go underground (Pimentel, 2006: 69-70).

### ***The 1986 People Power: The Culmination of Protests***

Many of the students continued the struggle against Marcos underground. In the early 1980s, youth organizations re-emerged. There were also farmers and labour groups who fought alongside with them. Many student leaders lost their lives fighting for freedom (Espejo, 2008) but it was their tireless efforts that eventually built up towards 1986 People Power, also known as the EDSA<sup>4</sup> Revolution.<sup>5</sup>

It was the assassination of major political opposition, Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino on 21 August 1983 that became catalyst to the 1986 People Power. The entire nation saw him get shot as news cameras caught what happened on film<sup>6</sup>. The government accused Rolando Galman, who was immediately shot by aviation security at the scene, as the suspect but everybody believed Marcos was the true mastermind (“The Last Journey of Ninoy,” 2009). Witnessing Ninoy executed on national television might have angered and emboldened those who have been uncertain of what action to take against Marcos. Seeing such impunity made them realize Marcos will never give up power unless it is taken away from him.

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<sup>3</sup> Latin, “you have the body,” A court order demanding to produce a “prisoner at a designated place and time” to determine legality of custody (from <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/writ+of+habeas+corpus>)

<sup>4</sup> Epifaño Delos Santos Avenue

<sup>5</sup> There are debates on the name “EDSA Revolution” since its name tends to not acknowledge the efforts of those who rallied outside the streets of EDSA.

<sup>6</sup> Video of Ninoy Aquino’s assassination  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mt4PsbyFppk>

Three years after, people rallied behind his widow, Corazon “Cory” Aquino, who was chosen by the united opposition to run against Marcos in the 1986 Snap Elections. The government-controlled Commission on Elections (COMELEC) declared Marcos the winner. However, the count by National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), an independent civilian poll watch body, showed that it was Aquino who won (Thinkquest, 2000d). As a result, Aquino and the opposition led a huge turn out of people in a civil disobedience rally on February 16, calling Marcos to step down. Major military officials eventually defected from the government. Jaime Cardinal Sin Archbishop of Manila, called to all the people to gather at EDSA to support and protect the “rebel” soldiers through Radio Veritas (Totanes, 2006). Student groups who have always been at the forefront of the struggle against Marcos along with families, labourers, farmers and religious groups, were among the millions who gathered to peacefully converge and assemble in EDSA. Those outside Manila followed the news through covert radio operations by civilian groups (Thinkquest, 2000a). On February 25, Cory was declared president, while Marcos took oath in Malacañang. The airing of his oath was cut off as reformist soldiers seized the transmission towers. Marcos finally lost control and was forced to leave the Philippines with his family. Upon hearing this, people stormed Malacañang and claimed victory for Cory (Thinkquest, 2000b).

While 1986 People Power was the story of a united Filipino people, it was also the culmination of the long-time struggle of the students, as well as other activist groups, who have opposed Marcos even before Martial Law.

### ***The Post-1986 Youth: Disengaged or disillusioned?***

As a result of the 1986 People Power, the people won their freedom and regained their rights. The 1990s and early 2000 saw relative quiet in the student movement (Espejo, 2008). The youth who never experienced Martial Law and could hardly remember 1986 were perceived to have become complacent and politically uninvolved.

There may be some truth to that claim. A 1996 Social Weather Station (SWS) on Filipino youth revealed only 36% find political involvement<sup>7</sup> an important aspect of their life, while 60% find little or no interest in politics (SWS, 1998). The Episcopal Commission on Youth (ECY) of the Catholic Church also did a survey among Catholic Youth in 2002 which revealed only 11.8% found responsible voting as expression of love for country. The survey also showed only 41.6% are socially involved and 43% are uninterested, while 41.7% are ‘afraid to get involved’ and 30.5% feel their involvement ‘will not make a difference.’ Almost 20% thought of social involvement as ‘a waste of time’ (ECY, 2003: 56-66). The survey excluded non-Catholic youth, but with more than 80% Filipino Catholics, a substantial number of young people were

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<sup>7</sup> Other categories included values related to family, friends and work among others. Respondents may answer as many ‘values’ as possible. What ‘political involvement’ meant was not defined explicitly in the survey.

still covered. It still provides valuable insight on youth perceptions on political involvement.

Feelings towards politics of “will not make a difference” and “waste of time” indicate how cynical the youth were with the formal political system revived by the 1986 People Power. The youth has become distrustful of public officials and the electoral system. Given the political culture of the Philippines, elections can turn into a farce because it tends to be more of a popularity contest than a vote for leadership. Every election is tainted with allegations of cheating. Election candidates often belong to political dynasties or are celebrities with hardly any legal background. Guns, goons and gold are common campaign tactics, more relied upon by candidates than good platform (Velasco, 2005: 106-111). It is no wonder the youth seem to lack trust in the political system.

### ***People Power II: The Rise of ‘GenTxt’***

“Texting” is a verb probably coined in the Philippines, when Filipinos, especially the youth, became captivated with the introduction of short message service (SMS) in mobile phones. What used to be a gadget for the elite was popularized to the masses with cheaper communication exchange (Arnold, 2000). Around the year 2000, there was an estimated 7.1 million owners of cell phones with 65.4 million texts sent a day (Pertierra in Roman, 2002: 1). Back then, no one would have expected the major role the mobile phone could play in the course of Philippine politics.

When then-President Joseph Estrada was accused of graft and corruption, this further aggravated the already fragile trust the people had in the political system. Based on the accusation, the Congress moved for an impeachment trial of the President (Mydans, 2000). The Senate trial was broadcasted live on television, so viewers witnessed how Estrada’s senatorial allies dismissed key evidence. The people saw system fail them again, which drove them to resort to the streets of EDSA. This became known as People Power II or ‘EDSA Dos’.



Figure 2: Photo of vigil in 2001 People Power<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Image from:  
[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/\\_r2WzGeRo9Jw/R8NaigFf0uI/AAAAAAAAA-o/Zi01y0Q0\\_vQ/s400/IMG\\_6811.jpg](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_r2WzGeRo9Jw/R8NaigFf0uI/AAAAAAAAA-o/Zi01y0Q0_vQ/s400/IMG_6811.jpg)

The television and radio provided viewers with information of the events but the mobile phone became the megaphone which called the people back to EDSA. The appeal to protest spread like wildfire from one cell phone to another. Non-government organizations, church groups, universities and other institutions converged. Members of the Estrada administration, including the military withdrew support from the government and called for his resignation. Estrada eventually left Malacañang and his Vice-President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was sworn in as president (Burton, 2001).

Ederic Eder posted on his blog an article he wrote about youth participation in People Power II. He dubbed the youth, 'Generation Txt.' He admitted his generation are known to be fun-loving, but they are also a generation with their cell phones as weapons in times of national crisis. In Filipino, he wrote:

*We are ready to respond the call of the times. Again and again, we will use our strength and our youth, and our gadgets to ensure the freedom of our Motherland and we are ready to guard our quest for justice. We are on the side of history, because according to Jose Rizal, we are the youth, the "hope of the nation... We are Generation Txt!" (Eder, 2001).*

Indeed, the youth was a huge force in People Power II as they came in large numbers to express their indignation against the Estrada administration. They have shown that they are not politically disengaged as they have been perceived to be. The GenTxt youth, in a way, chose to stand by the system by demanding accountability through the impeachment trial. Yet, upon witnessing its collapse, decided to rise up to demand the ouster of the leader who failed them (Rafael, 2003: 411-412).

### ***Postscript 2001: 'People Power Fatigue'?***

EDSA Dos supposedly showed the people's will once again – any government excesses will not escape the notice of the Filipino. However, the Arroyo administration has time and again abused its power, including allegations of cheating, corruption and human rights violations. Martial law victims saw her as worse than Marcos (Remollino, 2009). Yet, despite the constant calls for resignation or ousting of Arroyo, no People Power like 1986 or 2001 happened<sup>10</sup>. There were allegations of "people power fatigue." This was made to mean that people have given up in the spirit of people power. People have supposedly abandoned the idea of crusading against government abuses

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<sup>9</sup> Translated by author, full text in Appendix A

<sup>10</sup> Four months after the installation of Arroyo in the presidency, Estrada supporters tried to storm Malacañang to reinstall Estrada as president but failed. They lacked political and military support which EDSA Dos had. Otherwise, civil society calls for People Power could hardly amass the popular support the EDSA Revolution and EDSA Dos had.

because corrupt officials remain in power. Some have totally given up, choosing to migrate to another country (Romualdez, 2005).

The Gloria Step Down Movement<sup>11</sup> refuted the notion of people power fatigue, stating that people want more than just a change in leadership but now seek more substantial reforms in the system (Dizon, 2005). Vigilance among the people may have disguised itself as something different from the two people powers.

### ***Media and technology: Expanding Youth Spaces***

The experience of the youth in EDSA Dos showed how they can easily learn to harness technology, whether for personal use or for political engagement. They are the ones who are most able to adapt as fast as the changes occur (Buckingham, 2003: 187).

The McCann-Erickson Intergeneration Study (2006), a nationwide survey of youth in urban areas, revealed the traditional media of television and radio remain the main form of leisure among the youth across social classes. There has also been a significant increase in computer-related activity between 2000 and 2005. Playing computer games for more than three hours grew from 14% to 34%, while internet use for three hours or more rose from 8% to 25%. Those who use it for less than three hours reached 63% for computer games and 54% for internet (2006: 1-7). With more than 80% of the youth spending their time with various forms of media, popular media has become an extension of youth activities and cultures.

Both the traditional media, like television and radio, and new media have become ubiquitous in the lives of many young urban Filipinos. From what is being shown on TV, aired over the radio or circulated in the internet, those will be what youth determine as cool, hip or interesting. Advocacies, organizations and political players have come to recognize this social reality; a reality which the markets have long time understood and have utilized it in influencing youth consumption patterns (John, 2003: 105). Media is now a vital way in engaging the youth.

This section has shown how youth participation has transitioned throughout the years. The 1960s, 1970s and 1980s revealed an activist youth generation within the context of dictatorial struggle. They fought to regain their freedom and rights, forcefully taken away by an abusive government. The 1990s youth came across as politically disillusioned when the freedom and democracy won in 1986 was subject to a political culture that thrived on popularity rather than

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<sup>11</sup> “A loose network of individuals and groups calling for the resignation and/or ouster of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo” (Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, n.d.)

platform. Generation Txt went back to the streets against a government which tried to manipulate the system for their own benefit.

The youth of today are still gradually defining themselves as a generation. An important factor to consider is how technology is playing a vital role. Technology has changed by leaps and bounds and will continue to evolve. The challenge then is to find out how this can be used creatively to engage the youth to become more socially aware and more active in their citizenship.

## **1.2 Research Objectives and Questions**

### ***Objectives***

There are two main objectives under investigation in the research. First is to examine if this current generation of Filipino youth are active citizens who get involved with civic and political projects. Second is to explore how popular culture, especially the arts and media, are being utilized as a venue for democratic involvement among Filipino youth. By understanding this, the research hopes to suggest the concept of “pop politics,” wherein popular culture as a youth practice/activity can provide an alternative space for democratic and political principles to the youth. Many information on youth studies often focus on deviant behavior. This study, on the other hand, hopes to contribute to a more celebratory understanding on youth.

### ***Main Question:***

How is popular culture being utilized as alternative democratic space for citizenship among Filipino youth?

### ***Sub-question:***

1. What are the perceptions of young people and arts organizations on youth apathy?
2. How can popular culture encourage active citizenship among young people?

## **1.3 Case Studies**

There has been an increase of organizations using various forms of popular arts and media for awareness and advocacy campaigns specifically for the youth. The choice of the case studies for this study was based on the nature of the organization, its objectives and its commitment to youth as a main target audience. In the organizations chosen, the role of the arts and media is vital. How it is being used to achieve their objective in engaging their youth audience towards their objective is examined. Their objectives should be related to encouraging awareness and critical thought in the exercise of citizenship among the youth. The research explores how they conduct their programs and what can be learned from it. However, examples of popular culture for citizenship will not be confined with these organizations’ projects alone.



Three case studies were chosen based on set criteria. They are not meant to be representative of organizations of similar nature. Neither does the research intend to look at them comparatively. Rather, they are meant to present the diverse ways of using popular culture. The research seeks to identify the wisdom which can be gained from their practice.

### ***Philippine Educational Theater Organization (PETA)***<sup>12</sup>

Founder Cecile Guidote-Alvarez envisioned an educational theatre that would gather schools, communities and individuals together. PETA, conceived in 1967, was the pioneer of a national Filipino theatre that was not just about entertainment but also worked towards nation-building (Samson et al, 2008: 3). As Executive Director, Beng Cabangon confirms:

*PETA is sensitive to what is happening to the country... theatre has a role to play in society, in people... It is to reflect what is happening. It is there to challenge the audiences to think about things...* (B. Cabangon 2009, interview<sup>13</sup>)

Their curriculum-based productions<sup>14</sup> provide PETA steady exposure among high school students. PETA, however, is not confined to merely showing plays to young people. The Metropolitan Teen Theater League (MTTL) is the youth arm of PETA. It is the alliance of drama leagues of secondary schools. Its creation in 1973 provided the youth a learning space for the social issues, as well as a creative expression of outrage against the Marcos government (Samson et al, 2008: 240-245).

At present, the core concern of MTTL through PETA's Theater-in-Education (TIE) program is "to empower children and youth so that they can creatively participate in transformative action" (ibid, 414). Young people are seen as actors in their own right, capable of formulating their own thoughts and ideas about current socio-political issues.

### ***Dakila***<sup>15</sup>

Dakila is the Filipino word for "nobility." The organization is composed of artists and students who envision the Philippines as a nation of heroes. Heroism in the Philippines has often been associated with martyrdom, but Dakila seeks to encourage individuals to use their own talents for the good of others and society. It seeks to make people aware, get them involved and hopefully lead them to act (Dakila, 2009).

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix B for more details on PETA

<sup>13</sup> Interview conducted 12 August 2009.

<sup>14</sup> These are plays based on required reading for private and public schools, e.g. novels of National hero, Dr. Jose Rizal.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix C for more details on Dakila

In 2005, artists banded together in protest of the Extended-Value Added Tax (E-VAT). They were adversely affected by it, with additional 20% tax imposed on them. The artists against E-VAT eventually thought of establishing an organization of artists. Singers, bands, actors, photographers and graphic designers among others have banded together to form a “Philippine Collective of Modern Heroism.” Music, film, the stage and new media are being used as platform for their awareness campaigns (Velasco 2009, personal interview<sup>16</sup>). The youth are their primary targets particularly ‘utilizing the superhero mythology to capture the young audience’s imagination’ (Dakila, 2007).

### ***RockEd Philippines***<sup>17</sup>

It was in 2005 when RockEd was formally established. RockEd’s tagline is “Rocking Society through Alternative Education.” While it recognizes the importance of formal education, it also recognizes a world not confined within the four walls of the classroom and by a structured curriculum. RockEd’s main objective is ‘to find alternative ways to make the young Filipino more interested in socio-civic realities, critical thinking, and having relevant knowledge about the complex issues *du jour*’ (RockEd Philippines, 2006).” The arts and media are seen as alternative learning tools while artists and celebrities are substitute teachers. Any place can be a classroom while lessons can be any issue people, especially the young, are passionate about – whether it be basic hygiene or agrarian reform.

As an organization, it prefers to be non-partisan. RockEd supports the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and its existence is actually co-terminus with it. It seeks a more involved citizenry working towards eradicating poverty. As an organization using arts and media as platform, RockEd primarily targets the poverty of hope in the country. They push for volunteerism especially among students and young professionals.

RockEd Philippines positions itself as a medium of advocacy and as alternative media. They encourage the public, especially the youth, to think and rethink about their stance rather than prescribing a specific position. PETA, on the other hand, has constantly provided a social commentary on socio-political issues with their plays throughout its history. Dakila considers themselves political, choosing to take a particular stand on issues. It also prioritizes educating their members, especially the artists, so they can become legitimate advocates of issues they lobby for. The organizations overlap in objectives and main audience while it is in their strategizing and positioning that they differ. With respect to the research, this will help provide some insight to breadth and depth of how popular art and media can be utilized for citizenship building.

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<sup>16</sup> Interview conducted 12 August 2009.,

<sup>17</sup> See more on RockEd on Appendix D

## 1.4 Methodology

### A. Primary Data

#### *Semi-structured interviews*<sup>18</sup>

The interviews will help provide insight of the interviewees. Flexibility is important for questions that may arise based on how the answers are framed.

Interviewees:

1. **Leni Velasco, Dakila Secretary General.** One of the founding members of Dakila. She is the main manager of the organization coordinating the artists and the students for Dakila programs.
2. **Steph Tan, Dakila Treasurer.** Steph is also a core member of Dakila. Her initial partnership with them began as a student leader of University of the Philippines (UP).
3. **Beng Santos-Cabangon, PETA Executive Director.** Beng has been part of PETA since the 1980s as an MTTL actress and became Executive Director in 1993. She is also one of the editors of the PETA book, “A Continuing Narrative of Philippine Theater: The Story of PETA.”
4. **Hyacinth Obsequio, former head of RockEd Iloilo.** Hya is a 20 year old freshman law student at University of Cebu. It was Hya’s initiative that led to the formation of RockEd Iloilo.
5. **Ayah Christina Madamba, Dakila student-member.** Ayah is a 20 year old Senior Political Science student at the Ateneo de Manila University. Her school organization, Loyola Film Circle (LFC), was a Dakila partner for a project.
6. **Irish Pearl Flores, Dakila student-member.** Irish is a 23 year old Junior Fine Arts student at the Far Eastern University. Her school organization, *Anak-Sining*<sup>19</sup>, worked in partnership with Dakila for a project.

The interviews with Hya, Ayah and Irish, as youth volunteers, was to gather their insight regarding their experience volunteering for the organizations they support.

7. **Noel Cabangon, folk singer and activist.** Noel’s folksy, acoustic music has long been known in the NGO circles. His activism was awakened during the period of Ninoy’s assassination. He has worked in partnership for all three organizations but is most active in Dakila.

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix E for interview questions.

<sup>19</sup> Arts Child

### Open-Ended Interviews

**Gang Badoy, RockEd Philippines founder, RockEd Radio host and documentary film maker.** Gang is the head and founder of RockEd. Gang envisioned RockEd to make education more fun and interesting, particularly using music and other forms of art, instead of the usual lectures.

### Observation

Observation would triangulate information and insights gathered from the interviews and secondary data. It can show the congruence (or incongruence) of what is being said with what is being done. Observing processes and interactions can further contextualize the people and programs (Mack et al, 2005: 14). Some of the events observed were not necessarily for the youth but utilize popular culture approaches for people on the legal, political and economic margins (e.g. prisoners, farmers, etc.). The observations as they happen are noted down, but some interpretation was already included.

1. **RockEd poetry workshop for prison inmates.** The workshop was a regular RockEd activity. Gang would teach the inmates poetry-writing, who are then asked to make their own poems.
2. **Rock the *Riles*.** Rock the *Riles* is when RockEd brings famous bands to the maximum security prison to do a concert for the inmates.
3. **De La Salle University CARPER<sup>20</sup> Forum.** RockEd was invited to give a talk regarding their experience working with the Sumilao farmers.
4. **Meeting with GMA interactive.** GMA interactive is the internet arm of TV Channel 7. The RockEd meeting was to discuss a new internet show for RockEd.

## **B. Secondary Data**

### Content Analysis

**Song lyrics, visual materials, videos, spiels, web content and similar media used by the organizations.** Analyzing song lyrics, web content, pamphlets and other paraphernalia the organizations use can provide information on how the organizations position themselves to their audience.

## **1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

It was the intent of the research to observe RockED school concerts, Dakila education seminars and PETA plays for a better insight on how the organizations practiced the use of popular culture as an awareness and information tool on socio-political issues. In the case of RockEd concerts, what would usually be a busy period for school visits were postponed due to the Department of Education moratorium on large-scale school gatherings, in

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<sup>20</sup> Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms

response to the H1N1<sup>21</sup> pandemic. There were also no scheduled Dakila education seminars and PETA plays during the time of field research.

The artist interview was only limited to Noel Cabangon due to the busy and erratic schedules of artists. In lieu of interviews, news articles, websites and body of work were used as secondary data. The student interviews are not representative of the entire youth demographic. Findings from their interviews do not provide generalization since they belong to a particular demographic of university-educated youth, with a context different from out-of-school or employed youth. Their active participation in the organizations may be biased in the affirmation of its objectives but their insights can still provide understanding on how they were encouraged to join the cause.

Two things have to be made explicit regarding the research limitations. One, university-educated youth, often belonging to the middle to upper economic class, have played an active, visible role in historical events. Two, the centrality of popular culture to the research tends to exclude youth who have limited or no access to technology, usually those in rural areas. The research, therefore, would concentrate on university-educated urban middle-class youth who have better access to the arts and media in greater frequency and duration. They are the ones who are usually first in harnessing new technologies and maximizing its capabilities.

Popular culture has time and again been blamed for youth misbehaviour, but it would be interesting to look at the positive things that can be done with it. It has become intrinsic to young people's lives that it would be unfair and even dangerous to dismiss or fear it. The insights and observations would not be able to provide a generalization or conclusive answers, but qualitative research in this area can help provide a deeper understanding in the importance of how the youth of today can practice their citizenship in an age of creative expression and technological advances.

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<sup>21</sup> Popularly known as "swine flu."

## Chapter 2

### Analytical Framework

The objective of this chapter is to understand youth, particularly with regards to their citizenship and participation within a democracy. They can be better understood when seen as a social category, in relation to other social actors and as a distinct “generation.” The generational feature of the Filipino youth will be explored to determine why there are certain perceptions of them as apathetic. Finally, popular culture, particularly the arts and media, will be contextualized to assess how it can contribute to the discussion of youth citizenship and democratic participation.

#### 2.1 Youth, Citizenship and the Arts

##### *Conceptualizing Youth and Generation*

Understanding “youth” has always been a challenge since there has been no consistent definition of it whether in policy or government use (Tyyska, 2005: 3). Age continues to be a gauge of youth particularly for the purpose of policy making and implementation, though it often varies depending on who constructs the policy (Herrera, 2006: 1427). The United Nations (UN) classifies youth as those between 15-24 years old (UN, n.d), while the World Bank categorizes them as people between 12-24 years old (World Bank, 2009). The Youth in Nation-Building Act of the Philippines defines youth as those between 15-30 years old (NYC, 1995).

As an age cohort, the youth are formidable in number. This is in part because those below the age of 25 make up around 50% of the world population, with 90% found in developing countries (Herrera, 2006: 1426). In the Philippines alone, youth between 15-24 years old comprise 15.1 million or 20% of the population according to the 2000 census (Commission on Population, 2003: 3). In the coming 2010 elections, should first-time voters be convinced to register, they can reach five million. This number can thus largely influence the outcome of the elections (Dimaculangan, 2009).

The youth can also be seen from a physiological perspective, focusing on the physical changes young people go through to signal the body’s readiness to procreate. In psychology, it is seen as a transition from a dependent child to a more independent adult (Morgan and Muebner, 2008). However, such definitions can be limiting because it looks at youth without examining their social context.

Beyond looking at the youth as a physical or psychosocial stage, they need to be seen as a social category, where the nature of their relationships and connections with other social actors in society are crucial in understanding

them (Jones, 2009: 11). They cannot be analyzed in a vacuum, rather their social position is given meaning in comparison to other social groups like adults or younger children. Studying youth draws attention to the social context, structure, relationship and landscape they are located in. They can also be seen as “social shifters,” having dynamic and multiple contexts rather than an absolute fixed category (Christiansen, 2006: 11, Durham, 2000: 116). A 15-year old may be expected to be responsible for a younger sibling because he is “mature enough” to handle it, yet is not allowed to go on a date because he is still “too young.” Their social position may also shift depending on their gender, class and ethnicity among other things. They may hold a position of power in one context and be marginalized in another. A school bully may muscle his way with other children in school, but may experience physical abuse at home.

The social shifting of youth becomes most evident with how they are seen both as “youth as being” and “youth as becoming.” However, there is the tendency to see them as future adults, states investing in them so they can become “good and responsible” citizens. This conceptualization works with the premise that young people are still incomplete and are “adults in the making” (WYR, 2005: 111-115). This is already indicative of a position of power for adults, where adulthood is seen as the end point of a growth process, while youth is a mere transitory phase. Youth are generally perceived according to their potential, instead of what they are and what they are capable of at present. Alanen (2002:12) describes children as actors who contribute to the formation of their own childhoods. In this case, the youth contribute to the formation of their own “being.” The youth deserve attention not just because they can be “something” someday, rather they are already “someone” in the present capable of many things. The challenge then is to recognize that the youth are actual social and political actors rather than just potential ones.

“The youth is the hope of the nation” is an age-old Filipino adage from national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. The idea of “hope” is often associated with an act of looking forward, so this may then be perceived to treat the youth as “people of the future”. But the youth can still be perceived as the “hope” of the nation by accepting them for who they already are. Time and again, they have exhibited vigour, passion and energy which have, in one way or the other, influenced the course of history.

While Rizal may have dubbed the youth as the nation’s “hope,” some counter this by calling them “apathetic.” For this research, Mannheim’s study of generations will understand the intergenerational struggle on perceptions on youth apathy and citizenship. The understanding of generation begins with social location, wherein members of an age-cohort have the potential to experience the same socio-political and historical processes (Mannheim, 1952: 290-291). A generation reaches its actuality when a strong bond is created with shared experience through exposure to same social realities and symbols generating a common consciousness and identity, which often manifest itself through political and social attitudes (Alanen, 2002:15). Thus, references to

“GenTxt” imply the youth during the period of EDSA Dos, who are often associated with their affinity for their mobile phones. Members of an actual generation experiencing a similar social event may react differently, thus creating separate generation units which have a stronger bond than that of the actual generation (Mannheim, 1953: 303-304). Within the “Generation Txt”, there are those youth who went to EDSA Dos to express anger to that government. There are also those youth who showed support to Estrada. Within a generation, there are already tensions between generation units. It is no surprise then that there is an intergenerational struggle between different age-cohorts, social locations and experienced historical realities. Labelling the current generation of youth as this or that is most seen through a lens of a period long gone.

The research shall look at youth as members of an actual generation with generation units which have situated themselves within the current socio-political backdrop of the Philippines. This current social location is a period of technology which makes communication easy and information accessible, largely influence how youth socialize and express themselves.

While there is no specific age range that is being looked at, the main focus will be on university-educated urban youths. This narrowing is based on two things. First, as illustrated in the limitations section, the urban middle-class<sup>22</sup> youth have been at the forefront in initiating youth movements, often borne within university grounds. Second, it is the urban middle-class youth who are more likely to have easy access to the internet compared to rural youth. The Yahoo-Nielsen Index Study on internet use reveals internet users are ‘likely to be below 29 years old, single and better-educated.’ An interesting finding indicates that ‘Filipino internet users are more likely to be opinion leaders.’ Those between 10-19 years old followed by those between 20-29 access the internet frequently. 51% visit social networking sites. The study suggests that the internet is an ‘effective way to reach and engage with target consumers’ (Yahoo-Nielsen, 2009). It must be noted, however, that the study was concentrated in major urban centers, which should factor in how results are interpreted. However, the study is still indicative of how urban youth are primary internet users in the Philippines.

### ***Democratic Participation and Citizenship***

When the Martial Law regime ended, it supposedly revived the democracy and freedom of the people. The right to vote as prerequisite to any democracy has been achieved, but its power still depends on the system and the institution running it (Todd and Taylor, 2004: 8). While older youth are able to participate in this democratic process, the emphasis on electoral politics tend to systematically exclude those below 18 years old (Milzen, 2004: 11).

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<sup>22</sup> Referring to socio-economic status



It should be realized, though, that political rights and citizenship are not confined to the ballot box (John, 2003: 211), nor are they determined by age. The youth, with or without voting capacity, are political actors. The democratic system ideally allows those unable to vote, like the youth, to still exercise political participation. It is only in a democracy that citizens are within their rights to challenge state misconduct (Mohanty, 2006: 70), with procedures in place to ensure that state powers are not abused. Systems are set-up to allow for checks and balances of the state. It also provides citizens freedom of expression and association (Todd and Taylor, 2004: 8). These are, of course, all in the ideal. There is hardly any democratic system, or any form of government for that matter, free from political controversy. The call for active citizenship then underscores the importance of demanding social justice, holding public officials accountable and maintaining solidarity with fellow citizens (WDR, 2007: 160). An engaged and informed citizenship as opposed to a passive citizenry can create necessary pressure on the government to comply with their duties. Rousseau expressed that to relinquish power to public officials and representatives would be to lose our true freedom. This framework emphasizes the importance of an active democratic participation among the citizenry (Todd and Taylor, 2004: 9), including the youth.

In the study, citizenship is used to refer to active participation in the democratic processes. Active citizenship is seen to begin with an informed citizen aware of socio-political issues, rather than one confined merely to passive acceptance of rights and mere compliance of duties. As opposed to apathy, it visualizes an informed youth, who takes action not only during times of urgency, but is constantly vigilant in supporting or challenging the state to perform their duties, depending on the situation.

Formal channels of political participation for Filipino youth are available. The *Sangguniang Kabataan* or Youth Council was established to allow youth representation from the grassroots level. The National Youth Commission (NYC), on the other hand, was created to promote youth welfare and participation in national government. While both institutions aim to get youth more formally involved in politics, it is surrounded by controversies like its adult counterparts. The Sangguniang Kabataan has become a training ground for children of public officials being groomed for higher office. The NYC, on the other hand, lack transparency in appointment of its officers, and its program implementation remain unclear (Velasco, 2005: 88-97). There is also uncertainty whether they are able to dialogue their youth constituents. Such institutionalized channels could hardly provide the inspiration or access for youth participation.

With the shortcomings of the political system, there needs to be a rethinking in terms of defining politics and political participation. Presenting alternative platforms and new spaces of participation become necessary if sustained youth involvement in nation-building is desired.

### ***Popular culture: Arts, Media and the Youth***

Popular culture has an infinite potential in providing alternative democratic space to the youth. Media has always been a space for self-expression for the youth. Their choice of music, film or books were often meant to proclaim their identity. With the rise of new media, their venue for creative expression has expanded exponentially.

Traditional media like television, radio, stage and print were designed to communicate in one way, with one “sender” towards “many receivers.” The audience hardly have control of message content. They can, however, make the choice whether to watch or listen to the program or not. With the rise of new media, this set-up has changed. The power of information-dissemination has been decentralized from media moguls (Shirky, 2008: 88-104). Any individual with internet access can create user-generated content. People, especially the youth, have seized to be just “receivers” and have become active in shaping the messages. This is known as “symmetrical participation” (ibid: 107).

The MacArthur Foundation’s Digital Youth Project is a study on how digital media has influenced youth practices and cultures. New media allows them to “hang out” with friends, enhancing their relationships through social networks. They can “mess around” or tinker with new media tools like create videos or develop blog lay-outs. They also “geek out” or immerse themselves in a particular topic or enhance a particular talent (Ito et al, 2008: 13-28).

Shirky’s concept of “symmetrical participation” and the Digital Youth Project findings illustrate how the youth are exercising agency and autonomy through self-directed and peer-based learning in new media. “Messing around” and “geeking out” in the internet provide youth a wider space for creative expression, with only their imagination as limitation. With available technology like digital cameras, mp3 recorders and computer editing programs, young people are not just listening to music or watching shows anymore. They can now make it themselves and broadcast it to an audience through the internet (ibid: 1-2). Halpin (2008: 60) also sees the exercise of imagination as one of the most certain ways wherein youth can be more in control of their lives, rather than be mere victims or followers of circumstances orchestrated by those around them.

This expression through arts among the youth via popular media, allows them to create the extraordinary and imagine beyond what exists. The arts has the gift of telling a narrative, not just of the present social realities but imagined possibilities. Imagination awakens the senses, opens up new worlds and stirs ideas (Greene, 1995: 4-5). Even the receivers are evoked to think critically about the art. Denis Donoghue (in Greene, 1995: 28) says, ‘With the arts, people can make a space for themselves and fill it with intimations of freedom and presence.’ By looking at the arts this way, it is not difficult to relate it with

active youth citizenship. It becomes an unconventional manner of check and balance to the state. Sharing a narrative through popular arts like songs, movies and books spread the message to more people. For example, the Black-Eyed Peas, a famous US hip-hop group, was able to take a jab at the US war on terrorism, capitalism, racism and greed through the music video of “Where is the Love?”<sup>23</sup> The arts then can develop or create opportunities for a more pro-active and imaginative youth who is informed and has the social imagination to participate in democratic practices.

Media content, however, is seen to have a large influence in risk behavior among children and youth. Youth exposure to media is believed to have causal relations to violence, obesity, alcohol consumption and early sexual initiation (Escobar-Chaves and Anderson, 2008: 169-170). On the other hand, social marketing on traditional media and the internet have also had positive effects on improving health behaviours among young people (Evans, 2008:189). The two studies show that media should not just be dismissed as a fad, but should be considered in understanding youth cultures because they are highly influenced by it. For this research, it looks at how the arts and media can be utilized for the positive, particularly towards democratic participation.

The paper shall look at traditional media and new media as complimentary partners in providing a democratic space for active citizenship among youth. The use of the terms “popular media” or “media” would hereon refer to traditional media and new media collectively.

In summary, the paper examines how understanding the youth according to their social location, rather than by intergenerational comparisons, can help provide a better understanding of how they can be encouraged to practice active citizenship. Integral to their social location is the evolution in communications technology and popular culture, which has largely influenced youth practices. These then can be utilized for widening existing spaces for youth political participation.

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<sup>23</sup> See lyrics on Appendix F, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJpyskHMwRs>

## Chapter 3

### Art against apathy, media for movement

This chapter seeks to challenge the assessment of the current generation of youth as “apathetic” in relation to the previous generation. It tries to understand where this accusation of apathy comes from. The chapter also discusses how popular culture can become alternative platforms to formal bureaucratic institutions in terms of youth participation. It explores how the arts and media can enhance critical thinking and encourage more active political involvement among youth.

#### 3.1 A Tale of Two Generations

“Apathetic” has been used time and again, often too loosely, to describe the youth. Alfie Vera Mella (2008), a columnist for website ‘Filipino Journal,’ wrote about a conversation with a senior citizen who said ‘young people would rather spend their ‘precious’ time on indulgences and other useless activities... “They don’t care about what’s happening in the world today.”’

Even some young people themselves seemed to have acquired this belief. Florianne Jimenez (2004: 217) wrote in a youth opinion column:

*The biggest problem with our generation is that we’ve stopped forming our own opinions. I’m starting to envy the youth of the 1960’s, who made good use of their freedom of speech. That was an era when to be apathetic was to be a traitor to your nation.*

Yet there are those who counter this belief as well. In response to the elder, Mella (2009) responds:

*I believe... that —although the elderly will always be a potent source of wisdom and experience—the youth of every generation—with their young blood and young minds—are also instrumental in shaping society into a better mould.*

Raymond Palatino, an activist and 2004 UN Youth Awardee, also refuted how the media portrays youth as apathetic, ‘We should not allow them to brand us as such. The Filipino youth undertakes tasks, responsibilities for the country’ (Vital, 2004).

Dicta License, a rock band in the Philippines, is known for music infused with messages of national pride and social consciousness. They released a song

in 2005 entitled *'Alay sa Nagkamalay noong Dekada Nobenta.*<sup>24</sup> The song challenges young people like them to fight against perceptions that they are apathetic, unconcerned and mediocre (Dicta License, 2009). The translation of song<sup>25</sup> goes:

*Our elders are worried  
They say they are weak,  
These young people  
Spoiled and unprepared.*

*What is the youth's answer  
To this mockery?*

*[chorus]  
Your offering  
Has been left by time  
Act, young one  
Dig for your buried offering*

*When the storm comes  
We shall take our claim.  
They criticize our generation  
That we lack experience.  
That we were not part of true activism.  
So now, I shall chart  
New experiences, I shall share*

*So someday I can remember  
Memories that are mine*

Examining the lyrics shows an awareness of how elders perceive youth as frivolous, spoiled and weak. The song, to a certain extent, states the youth have been dormant in their activism with lyrics like “left by time” and “dig for your buried opening.” The music uses heavy instrumentation as the drums, guitar and bass blend into a steady, aggressive beat. Together with impassioned vocals that rap and sing alternately, the song dares the youth to prove their elders wrong. At the same time, it is a statement to the older generation that the youth are strong, wise and are capable of writing and living their own stories of activism.

Labels and countering labels of young people as “apathetic” presupposes certain expectations, or at least hopes, from them. There is an expectation that the youth must exercise active citizenship and act as vigilant checks and balance to the state. Indeed, it is not an unreasonable desire for any

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<sup>24</sup> Loosely translates as “An offering to those who became aware in the 90’s,” See Appendix G for full lyrics, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYtP7bH1UJQ>

<sup>25</sup> Translation by the author

democratic society which desires a good life for its people. Both young and old are within their rights to demand transparency, accountability and political justice. Yet, in any given society, not everyone will choose to take an active part in this exercise.

Through Mannheim's generational concepts, the struggle within and between generations can be further analyzed. He writes, 'any two generations following one another always fight different opponents, both within and without' (Mannheim, 1952: 298-99) and 'we find for the most part that the opponents of a new generation-entelechy consist mainly of people who, on behalf of their 'location' in an older generation, are unable or unwilling to assimilate themselves into the new entelechy growing up in their midst' (ibid: 318). This struggle between the older and younger set is most likely the result of differing social locations. There is sometimes an inability for the elder generation to see that the times have changed and the current socio-political context is quite different from theirs. This, of course, results in a generational response unlike theirs.

During Martial Law, everyone experienced a common enemy – an abusive government. Even then, a unified response was not easy to mobilize, though there was a consistent show of resistance demanding for the end of Martial Law. Street protests were a logical response to the situation if they wanted to be heard and taken seriously. The options were either to speak out and shout loud or to suffer in silence. After the 1986 People Power, the removal of that common enemy led to a dispersion of concerns among the people. Issues now varied – governance, environment, health, education, etc. The list goes on. There is no monopoly of issue as there once was. Thus a unified movement is more difficult to gather, for there are the questions, 'What do we unite for?' or 'Which takes priority?' It is a debate that has yet to find consensus.

It is not just about politics alone. Technology has changed as well, which largely affected the formation of youth cultures. Popular media has changed the way society communicates and converges. Participation and presence have come to mean something different from what it was known before. It has become easier, sometimes non-committal. With just a click, you already become part of a movement. This shall be expanded later on but for now, to call the youth "apathetic" based on a reality long gone and one they never experienced would be unfair and inconclusive. Much has changed in the last 30 years, and these transformations have contributed much to the character of this generation. Apathy must then be understood not with intergenerational comparisons, but within the present social location of the youth.

## 3.2 Popular culture: Widening democratic spaces for youth

### *Challenging the Poverty of Hope*

Before RockEd formally became an organization, its concept was already being practiced. Gang Badoy, RockEd founder, was often invited by schools to give talks to students about any of the eight MDGs. Not wanting to do the usual powerpoint presentation, Gang decided to bring artist-activist Noel Cabangon to keep audience interest. It was not just about entertainment value but a complement to her lectures because Noel's songs were infused with social consciousness. His music can illustrate the issues the MDGs would like to address (Badoy 2009, interview<sup>26</sup>). From this set-up, RockEd evolved into what it is now. It has become a major player in advocating for various causes. RockEd resonates the basic idea of MDG that poverty must and can end. It believes that everyone has an active part to play in poverty-alleviation. According their website (2006), they 'decided to first target the poverty of hope in our country, especially among the young. They believe that many concrete steps will follow if that is first addressed.'

In a way, addressing "poverty of hope" reflects apathy. With the turbulent Philippine politics, many people are settling in a "there's-nothing-I-can-do-about-it" mode which is a manifestation of hopelessness of the system. This disillusionment can lead to inaction, of letting things be because there is a perceived pointlessness to action. It then makes sense to first address people's perceptions so they can be inspired to act. The main objective of RockEd is to 'make the young Filipino more interested in socio-civic realities...' (RockEd Philippines, 2006). In a similar vein, Dakila's essence is that it is an "anti-apathy campaign," which aims to get more people informed and involved. It is through the arts and media that they find the best way of capturing the interest of the youth in their advocacy (Velasco 2009, personal). Their three goals – awareness, education and involvement – address the objective to get the youth informed about societal concerns for the purpose of achieving the common good (Dakila, 2007). PETA has a similar vision, imagining the Filipino as someone who 'recognizes, respects and defends human rights, actively participates in societal endeavors and... cares for the welfare of others.' The MITL program is specifically advocating for youth participation and empowerment through 'creative discovery, organizing, creating, education and ultimately – action' (PETA, 2009).

The organizations recognize the importance of having the youth educated of the issues. The logical first step would be to think and believe there is a way out of the hopelessness. It is then important to contextualize the understanding of apathy as "not-knowing-what-to-do," rather than as "not caring" or "indifference." By looking at it this way, the success of the campaign against apathy and for more active citizenship becomes more feasible. Positioning relevant issues to something significant to the youth and

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<sup>26</sup> Open-ended interviews with Gang Badoy were conducted several times throughout the research.

in a language they can understand can open up spaces for participation which can encourage them to be more active in their citizenship.

### ***Art Speak, Youth Speak***

Ayah Madamba is a senior Political Science student of the Ateneo de Manila University. Confident in manner and eloquent in speech, she appears up-to-date with current issues. She has chosen to become a Dakila volunteer and has become quite active with them. Ayah narrated how her mother would sometimes recall her experience of Martial Law when students would participate in rallies. Rallies were seen as the highest form of participation and expression of love for country by those on the political left. Counterpoint to that are those who argue for using the available political space the state has established for the youth. The national government has established institutions like the National Youth Commission and the Sangganuiang Kabataan to open up the formal political system to them. However, government bureaucracies have been tainted with controversy that people have become cynical and distrustful of them (Velasco, 2005: 106). These available spaces hardly appeal to the youth today. Thus, there is a need to widen existing spaces for them if their participation is desired. In this case, rallying on the streets or participating in bureaucracy is not as appealing as it used to be. By broadening the available space and utilizing something that is comfortable and familiar to them, chances for a more participative engagement increases.

Ayah says, 'It really just depends how you can help. This is what I am comfortable with, this is what I am going to do' (Madamba 2009<sup>27</sup>, interview). Leni supports Ayah's insight. Leni was an activist in the 1990s yet she recognizes the fact that the old forms of struggle do not appeal to the present youth anymore. There have been constant calls for citizens to protest against the current government, but the response is not as overwhelming as it once was. She acknowledges there is already a large gap between the histories of each generation. Therefore, to capture youth interest and involvement, she sees that organizations and institutions must find channels the youth can easily relate to and take interest in. Leni sees the phenomenon of Dakila and RockEd to be working because it is able to tap the pulse of the youth (Velasco 2009, interview).

As mentioned, the amount of time young people spend watching television, listening to music or using technology is now more than the time they spend in school (Buckingham, 2003: 184). The Filipino youth is also fast catching up with the increased time spent on these various media (McCann-Erickson, 2006). What better way to engage them than using these tools of popular culture? Something as omnipresent and integral in the life of a young individual carries with it a large potential for engagement when properly used. Interestingly enough, political scientists like Putnam (1995:74) assign the

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<sup>27</sup> Interview held on 14 August 2009



decline of civic engagement and interest in politics with the increase of use of television and leisure pursuits. Giddens (in Todd and Taylor, 2004: 22) counters this by saying that political interest has actually increased but it is coursed outside formal institutional politics. “Social capital” is seen as one important theme in modern democracies. It talks about strengthening solidarity, loyalty and trust within the citizenship. It is ‘found in the relationships that exist between people’ (Todd and Taylor, 2004: 20). Civic organizations like Dakila, PETA and RockEd are able to sustain the social capital among people especially since it works on the premise of voluntary participation and commitment. The arts and media provide the alternative political activity which participants may not find political themselves (ibid: 22).

While organizations provide a more structured venue for participation, young people themselves can create their own spaces for active citizenship as well. A blog called “ISpeakNow” (2008) had an interesting premise. It says in its opening page:

*The world is jam packed with young people like us. You know what that means? That means that altogether, we have the power to help our nations reach greater heights. However, only a few of us know this secret. Most of us still opt to lean back and leave the talking to the grown-ups. Not good.*

It posted questions like ‘Does your government make you feel important?’ and asks anyone to comment. There were 14 varied responses from the youth, from ‘yes,’ ‘no,’ and ‘partly.’ The blog<sup>28</sup> shows that through communications technology, young people themselves can create their own spaces outside the critical eye of adults. Without having to rely on institutions, the youth can facilitate their own education.

### ***Artistic Citizenship<sup>29</sup>: Arts as Advocacy***

Popular culture is being seen as an alternative platform for socio-civic education. Each of the organizations strategizes the use of the arts and media to encourage critical thinking among the youth to inspire them towards more active participation in democratic processes.

Theater-in-Education (TIE) is ‘the use of theatre methods and discipline as tools for putting across ideas and content in various academic areas in the schools – the fusion of creative processes in the learning scheme of things.’ PETA sees TIE as a ‘relevant and viable tool to empower young Filipino learners towards social transformation.’ TIE is primarily working within the

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<sup>28</sup> The administrator might have lost steam after four entries, there were no more follow-up questions.

<sup>29</sup> Borrowed from the book “Artistic Citizenship,” a collection of essays about civic engagement of the artist communities, edited by Mary Schmidt Campbell and Randy Martin and published in 2006

context of formal education structures but through drama clubs. The MITTL challenges its youth core group to create plays which tackle issues that affect the youth, as well as to explore and innovate 'popular art forms as vehicles for youth expression' (PETA, 2009). PETA wants to have that kind of theatre:

*Which allows people to become more reflective and to make people a little bit uncomfortable... Once we become uncomfortable and fidgety, that brings a lot of room for questioning and for action (B. Cabangon 2009, interview).*

Dakila, on the other hand, is committed to forming the social consciousness of artists and their audience. Artists as advocates can spread their message to a wider audience given their influence. They are seen on television, newspapers or magazines, or can be heard over the radio. Leni shared they were inspired by the fact that people trust in artists more than they believe in politicians. They have the power to influence people, thus to form the social consciousness and responsibility of an artist would hopefully channel over to their larger audience (Velasco 2009, interview). Dakila also makes use of the "superhero mythology" to capture the interest of the masses (Dakila, 2009). While they use the term "masses," the idea of "superheroes" is something more identified with youth culture. Leni expounds that being a hero is about using one's talent for the greater good. Even in comic books, being a superhero is not about the having powers because villains have them as well. A superhero becomes one when he uses those powers to help and protect society. In the same manner, whatever talent an individual has makes one noble when it is used for the benefit of the bigger community. As Leni explains 'It's not you as a person that makes you dakila. It's the action...' (Velasco 2009, interview).

RockEd believes that the arts is a venue for alternative education (RockEd, 2006). Bands, actors, visual artists, photographers and the like have volunteered their time and talent to educate the youth about varied socio-political realities. There is really no central issue they advocate for, but RockEd is generally motivated by volunteerism and social justice. How they work is something like, "Is there a problem? Can we do something about it? Then let's!" Whenever they have projects, they carry with them the banner that exclaims, "No more excuses, Philippines!" It is as if to challenge the audience, "You're in this concert, you're watching this television program, meaning you have the leisure of time. What's your excuse for not doing anything?" They also advocate the idea that something can always be done with social issues and the world can always be better. Through popular culture, RockEd wants to put issues out in the open with their audience, encourage them to critically think about it and hopefully, decide for themselves to act on it.

The three groups all recognize the power of the arts as a meaningful approach to attracting the youth to pay attention to social issues. Noel Cabangon best summarizes it by saying, 'the arts is a non-confrontative (sic),

non-violent way of delivering the message, to protest and to educate’ (N. Cabangon 2009, interview<sup>30</sup>). Using the arts and popular media can range from gentle persuasion to aggressive prescription. It can compel or intimidate. The possibilities of how it can be used are infinite. Maxine Greene (1995: 4) talks about how the arts is a way ‘to making community, to becoming wide-awake to the world’ as well as in providing ‘new perspectives of the lived world.’ Dakila also has the philosophy, ‘while art may not change the world, it can change the way we view the world for true revolution begins in the imagination’ (Dakila, 2009). In other words, there is emphasis on how art encourages artists and audiences to interpret and reflect on realities and to imagine possibilities beyond what exists. It is the desire for something better than what is present that will motivate the youth to action.

RockEd was asked to give a talk in a university forum regarding CARPER together with Atty. Kaka Bag-ao, one of the lawyers who supported the Sumilao Farmers march<sup>31</sup>. Atty. Bagao narrated how they played the song “*Buhay at Bukid*,” popularized by *Buklod*<sup>32</sup> to motivate the farmers in their journey. Whenever they hear the song, the farmers feel more hopeful and energized to continue their journey. The translation<sup>33</sup> of the lyrics<sup>34</sup> goes:

*The farmers will eventually be free.  
The laborers will help them.  
They will get back their stolen land.  
The nation shall harvest the fruits of the earth.*

Atty. Bag-ao’s sharing illustrates how purposeful music can be. One, ‘art helped engage people as part of a civic operation of mobilization for purposes of dissent, it gave voice and comment to a crowd’ (Martin, 2004: 4). The song provided the farmers an anthem of their plight as it sang of their hopes to

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<sup>30</sup> Interview held on 14 August 2009

<sup>31</sup> The Sumilao Farmers issue was Philippine headline news for 2007. For almost two months, 63 farmers walked 1,700 kilometers to Manila (Aning, 2007). It was their statement that they will continue their more than sixty years of struggle and ten years of legal battle. It was their non-violent struggle, as well as their plea to the Department of Agriculture (DA) to grant them the rightful claim. Despite having the law on their side, the farmers were unable to access their land because it was being claimed by San Miguel Corp., one of the country’s biggest conglomerates. Court rulings and municipal resolutions circumvented the farmer’s legal stake of the farmers. Having tried all legal means, the farmers chose to make a statement that they will remain steadfast in their struggle (Sumilao Farmers Position Paper, 2007). The support of civil society including the Church, students and NGOs pressured the Arroyo administration to distribute the 144-hectares of land to the farmers (Rodriguez, 2007). However, the fight is still ongoing because they have yet to have the actual title.

<sup>32</sup> The duo Noel Cabangon was part of in the 1990s. They were famous for their socially conscious songs.

<sup>33</sup> Translation by the author

<sup>34</sup> Taken from <http://ederic.net/buhay-at-bukid/>, full lyrics at Appendix H.

claim their land. Second, it was a ‘site or physical place, as a representation of civic ideas, or an occasion for people to gather to engage in critical reflection... a way of gathering (ibid: 2). The music kept them inspired and driven with their plight, to continue on despite the difficulty that went with their march.

The way the organizations are structured tend to have a top-down system. But youth participation can also work within their personal spaces. The blog “Ondoy, Untold” (2009) was the project of university students for their philosophy class. It was a collation of pictures, stories and insights regarding the major flooding that recently happened in Manila. The blog allowed the students to reflect about their experience through writing and photos.

Another example is the blog of 20-year old Ilena Saturay, “Art is Weapon<sup>35</sup>,” which documents in part her paintings that depict social justice issues. As the blog title suggests, art as a narrative is a rich space for social discourse. Through art, feelings and reflections on current realities can be transformed into a tangible product which can also lead its viewers to contemplation. Ilena’s artwork below, in a way, is her statement against acts of violence and belief in the power of art. She is able to share these, as well as her insights through her blog, which can be shared to more people through the internet. This shows the ability of new media to facilitate youth self-expression without needing to link with organizations, nor control by adult gatekeepers. They are able to share their take on issues through blogs or social networks.



Figure 3. Ilena’s painting “Art is Weapon”<sup>36</sup>

The arts and media is a creative manner of sharing socio-political narratives to a wider audience. Through popular culture, the youth can learn about current events, but can also interpret and contemplate upon it. Organizations utilize pop culture to educate the youth on democratic practices and political issues, but at the same time, they can act by themselves without having to be guided.

<sup>35</sup> <http://karaniwangtao.wordpress.com>

<sup>36</sup> Image taken from: <http://i96.photobucket.com/albums/1199/ilennon/final.jpg>

## ***“The Fun Theory”***

Volkswagen recently circulated a campaign called “The Fun Theory” on the internet.<sup>37</sup> It introduces the idea of how “fun can change behavior for the better.” The site featured several videos of making simple responsibilities like recycling glass or throwing garbage in the bin enjoyable, which increased the number of people doing it (thefuntheory.com, 2009). In similar manner, using popular culture as an alternative democratic space to enhance active citizenship shares the same principle. The question would be, ‘would the youth practice active citizenship more if it was made more fun?’ Beng says, ‘no matter how important your message is, if no one is listening... what’s the point? It should still be entertaining, it should still be able to communicate effectively.’

Irish Flores<sup>38</sup> recognizes this, ‘You tell the story through music, through song, through film. People notice it. While they are singing, they send a message and you listen...’ (Flores 2009, interview). Ayah recognizes this as well:

*That’s how the art helps in educating the people... The medium is relatable to the youth – music, film. If you make them with social relevance, that’s how you educate them... it urges them to do something... It is important that artists are advocates, these are the people youth look up to. If they’re good role models, these young people follow.*



Figure 4. Photo of a Bamboo<sup>39</sup> concert<sup>40</sup>

One wonders whether the medium will bury the message. It is likely that young people will go to a concert or a volunteer workshop because their favourite artist is there or because it is exciting, rather than going because they believe in the advocacy. After all, being associated with someone famous always scores cool points. The organizations admit that there are those who

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<sup>37</sup> [www.thefuntheory.com](http://www.thefuntheory.com)

<sup>38</sup> See section 1.5.A.6

<sup>39</sup> One of the premiere rock bands in the country famous for socially-conscious songs

<sup>40</sup> Image from: <http://img217.imageshack.us/i/bamboo3copypc2.jpg/>

do participate just to see artists, but Noel also says that the process will eventually weed out those who are mere joiners from those who are truly committed (N. Cabangon 2009, interview). Entertainment and celebrity sightings would not be sufficient to sustain the drive for socio-civic voluntary work. If it is, then one can hope that the individual may have already internalized the advocacy.

With the discourse on youth apathy taken out of intergenerational comparisons and contextualized within their current social location, the challenge for an increased youth involvement becomes more achievable. The current generation of youth lives in a context wherein popular culture is everywhere. By engaging the youth through relatable approaches, there are better chances of motivating them to know the issues, think critically and hopefully to actively participate. While the organizations are there to provide young people with more structured avenues for participation, the wonders of new media allow young people to create their independent spaces for participation as well. These groups put forward the issues and advocate for a certain cause, but in the end, the young individual makes his own choice what to do with this information.

## Chapter 4

# People Power 2.0<sup>41</sup>: From Information to Action

This chapter discusses how popular culture can encourage the youth to participate. It will look at three stories of young people who chose to get involved with the case study organizations and to explore what encouraged them to take part. The chapter will explore how new media have contributed to mobilizing action on a national scale.

### 4.1 Youth Speaks: Three Stories

#### *Hya: From TV to reality*

Hyacinth Obsequio<sup>42</sup> is a 20 year old freshman law student at University of Cebu. Through Hya's initiative, RockEd Iloilo was born. At that time, she was an 18 year old sophomore Political Science student at the Western Visayas University (WVU).

In 2005, Hya was flipping channels when she came across an ANC<sup>43</sup> news program with Dicta License vocalist, Pochoy Labog as guest. She admitted she stopped and watched because she was a big fan. Hya also found it unusual that a rock artist would guest in a news channel so she listened to the interview. She explained Pochoy was a lawyer for one of the top law firms of the country, and yet still pursued his love for music.

She recalled Pochoy talked about RockEd and about how he wanted to contribute something to society as a musician. Through his music, he wished to inspire the youth to do something good for society. It sounds cliché for an artist to talk about enthusing the youth to contribute more to humanity. Yet Pochoy, through the music of Dicta License, did inspire Hya's RockEd story.

She was moved by the interview that she decided to email Gang her appreciation of RockEd. She did not expect a reply but was elated to receive one from Gang, who encouraged her to keep abreast of the issues. It was March 2006 came when Hya met Gang through a chance encounter in the mall. She was hesitant to approach but when she heard Gang speak she finally got the courage to introduce herself as the girl who sent her an email. To her surprise, Gang remembered.

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<sup>41</sup> Inspired by [Web 2.0](#), a term to embodies the concept of user-generated content, including "collaborative information sharing" (from: <http://www.twinity.com/en/glossary>)

<sup>42</sup> Interview held on 5 August 2009

<sup>43</sup> ANC is a Philippine 24-hour cable news channel

As they conversed, Gang invited her to a RockEd gig so they could talk more. When they met again, Hya lauded the great idea that RockEd was and felt it unfortunate there were not enough projects in her city given the distance barrier<sup>44</sup>. Gang must have sensed how passionate Hya was about the idea so she asked her if she wanted to start a RockEd Iloilo. There was hesitation at first, but Hya eventually agreed. She thought to herself:

*I'm only 18 years old, I didn't really know a lot of people who may be able to help... I just agreed because it was a good opportunity. I was kind of nervous because I didn't know if I can do it. I didn't want to make them hope.*

Despite Hya's initial fears, through her passion and leadership, she was able to gather support from people and organizations. They were able to conduct several book drives and art workshops for street children. It is no wonder Gang holds RockEd Iloilo in high esteem especially since they had to start from scratch. They lacked the advantage of famous personalities that RockEd Philippines had, yet they were able to organize many activities with minimal resources and no star billing.

Hya was that kind of youth who had the desire to help but was unable to find an avenue that suited her interests. There are youth out there who would like to do something for society but just do not know where to go or how to go about it. It was serendipity that Hya saw her favourite vocalist talk about RockEd on TV, which eventually gave birth to RockEd Iloilo under her leadership. Through her interest in music and her encounter with RockEd, Hya was able to translate her social awareness into action.

### ***Ayah: Amplifying Proactivity***

Dakila was inviting school organizations to participate in one of their projects. They went to the Ateneo de Manila University to invite the political science organization, *The Assembly*, of which Ayah was a member. However, it was her other organization, the Loyola Film Circle (LFC), which actualized the partnership with Dakila. The LFC was an organization which used "*film not just for entertainment, but also for social awareness and creating social involvement?*" (Loyola Film Circle, 2009). This echoed with Dakila's own vision.

Ayah then became an active student-member of Dakila after that. As a Political Science major, she was aware of the socio-political situation of the Philippines. Amidst the backdrop of an administration hounded by controversy and whose legitimacy is in question, Ayah believes there is a need for change – change in the government and change in the people.

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<sup>44</sup> Iloilo City is an hour plane ride from Manila.



Her summer internship in Congress made her realize that she would not like a desk job. From her perspective, Dakila is doing the same thing with the same motivation but just in a different manner, in a medium that she is attracted to and finds herself more actively involved in. She shares how volunteering with Dakila keeps her excited even when it is work they are doing. Aya says:

*I'm happy with what I am doing and I know what I am doing is not just for self-fulfilment but the bigger picture of helping people... This is what I am comfortable with, this is what I am going to do... Dakila helped me expose myself. It is not just about learning with books but learning through what you experience. The social awareness increases. (There is a) clear view of what you can do, how you can help.*

There are youth like Ayah who are fully aware of the socio-political situation of the country and are taking steps in doing something about it. Prior to Dakila, she has been active in her university organizations which both had discursive discussions on social issues. The main difference is the broader audience base of Dakila, as well as the variety of issues it sought to confront. Dakila was able to provide area a bigger venue of expressing her social consciousness through a channel she enjoys.

### ***Irish: Awakening Consciousness***

Irish is a 23 year old Junior Fine Arts student at the Far Eastern University. Her school organization, *Anak-Sining*<sup>45</sup>, worked in partnership with Dakila for a project. Since then, she has been quite active. She came off as a little shy and reserved. It took some coaxing at the beginning of the interview, but she eventually warmed up after a while.

While Hya and Ayah were looking for a chance to participate in civic activities, Irish referred to her pre-Dakila days as “*papetiks-petiks lang.*” *Petiks* is a colloquial term for being laidback or lazy. Her life was mostly about school and home, though she is a member of two university organizations – Environmental Society (EvSoc) and Anak-Sining. Her initial encounter with Dakila was actually participating in a Sunday Silence activity, a silent gathering initiated by a partnership among Dakila, RockEd and Lomo Manila<sup>46</sup>. Dakila invited Anak-Sining to participate. Out of curiosity, Irish tagged along with other Anak-Sining members. People would gather along at Manila Bay at dusk to watch the sun to set. Before and after the Sunday Silence, there would be discussions on issues. The particular Sunday Silence Irish joined was on the Sumilao Farmers. After the silence, a Sumilao farmer discussed the story of their land rights struggle.

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<sup>45</sup> Child of the Arts

<sup>46</sup> An organization of Lomography photographers and active partner of RockEd with their projects.

That was the beginning of Irish's participation with Dakila. She attributes her personal improvement to her Dakila experience. The idea of helping others through her craft, as a visual artist and photographer, inspired her to do more. She pushed herself and eventually took on officer responsibilities for EvSoc. Irish learned to trust herself more and has gained confidence relating with people. The Dakila artists, especially those in the visual arts and photography, gave her inspiration. It was also Dakila that taught her to be more socially aware. She says:

*It helped open me up more to the Philippine situation through Dakila projects. When they discuss issues, I also pick up what they are talking about... I also need to go out into the world to learn more things<sup>47</sup> (Flores 2009, interview).*

There are others like Irish who did not really give much thought to current events and limit their concerns with family and school. But Irish's case also shows that it is possible to encourage young people who are initially unaware to become more informed and to actually get involved in addressing the issues.

### ***The Arts and Social Imagination***

These three stories show youth with different backgrounds and varied levels of social awareness. Even those who may seemingly be unconcerned at the beginning can be inspired to become active citizens if given a space that allows them to be themselves. If the message is shown in imagery and language the youth appreciate, then it becomes possible to get them involved. Like what Aya said, 'it's not just showing the art itself, but educating youth with the medium' (Madamba 2009, interview). Organizations like RockEd, Dakila and PETA provide opportunities for meaningful civic engagement to counter the apathy of the "I-don't-know-what-to-do" sense. While the matters they tackle are serious, it is done in a manner that is interesting and compelling to the youth. By having the space for youth to do something for their country, be it sharing a talent for organizing or taking a meaningful photo, the youth can gain confidence that they need not be public officials or be famous to contribute to society's well-being.

This relates to what Greene (1995: 4-5) discussed about art as making community and as contributing to social imagination, wherein one can conceive of possibilities on how to make the world better, and hopefully be led to work for achieving it. In a sense, while individuals can create their own art, publish their own content and act by themselves, there is a logical sense to working in numbers. Efforts are consolidated and the possible courses of action multiply. Working together has potential of creating a larger impact and more lasting effects.

For these young people to join organizations like RockEd, Dakila or PETA, they must have the social imagination to be able to hope. Their actions

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<sup>47</sup> Translated from Filipino

and participation may not directly address issues on a structural level, but even just change within the individual and their attitudes mean something. Noel mentioned, ‘it still begins with the individual, it’s not the structure that decides... That is why it is important to immerse, to deepen’ (N. Cabangon 2009, interview). The “deepening” he refers to is the social consciousness and commitment to society and to a better future. Through the process, the individual will see the need to change structures or at least address the systems which can.

It can also be related to Freire conception of authentic liberation through *praxis*, which is ‘the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it’ (Freire, 1972: 73). There is a necessity for consciousness of reality and intentionality to work towards that liberation from oppressive structures. Action lacks meaning without critical thought, and critical thought would just remain philosophy without action. But change and transformation of the world has to start somewhere, and the only thing individuals has control over are their attitudes and understanding.

## 4.2 Look at the Bigger Picture

2009 has been a very eventful year for the Philippines. First was the death of the 1986 “Icon of Democracy”<sup>48</sup> former president Cory Aquino. She has been battling cancer for more than a year until she finally succumbed on August first. The second was the worst flooding in the history of the capital city, Metro Manila.

What made this more interesting is how cyberspace and technology played a major role in narrating events as it unfolds. The Filipinos have once again showed their talent at utilizing technology to address national concerns, like they have done in EDSA Dos. Television and radio networks have begun to utilize the internet to complement their news reporting, especially in live coverage of major events. Eyewitness accounts of those present also provide personal updates on their social networking sites, keeping followers up-to-date. These events allowed the Filipino people to witness the evolution of journalism in the age of internet technology.

### ***Mellow Yellow: Mourning in the Age of Internet***

The yellow ribbon has long been associated with Cory Aquino and the 1986 People Power revolution. When her condition from colon cancer became unstable, people started tying yellow ribbons around their gates or around their car antennas or side mirrors to show their support for the former president and her family.

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<sup>48</sup> The title caught on in the newspapers

The trend caught on in cyberspace when Barrio Siete<sup>49</sup>, a Filipino bloggers<sup>50</sup> collective, began the “Touch a blogger: Tie a Yellow Ribbon for Cory Aquino!” campaign. It was a simple invite for bloggers to just place a yellow ribbon on their online journals. On Twitter<sup>51</sup>, Ederic Eder<sup>52</sup> created a yellow twibbon which allowed users to post yellow ribbons on their profile easily (Chavez, 2009). Cory Aquino’s death on August 1<sup>st</sup> increased the tributes to her. By August 10th, there were 17,769 Cory twibbon users (QTV, 2009).



Figure 5. Collage of Facebook and twitter profile pictures Cory tributes<sup>53</sup>

There was an estimated 300,000 people physically present on August 5<sup>th</sup>, the day of Cory’s funeral, to bid her their last farewell (spot.ph, 2009a). People waited long, some as long as eight hours, despite constant rainfall that day. More people followed the live coverage of television networks, ABS-CBN2 and GMA7, from their own homes. Filipinos abroad were able to take part in another momentous occasion of Philippine history through livestreaming coverage by both channels. Saksi<sup>54</sup> reported at least 500,000 views of their livestreaming coverage and more than 4,000,000 views of their news pages. The audience were also able to interact with each other to discuss how Cory affected their lives (24 Oras, 2009). Those with twitter were able to get the inside scoop on the Aquino family during the funeral through the twitter updates by Cory’s grandson, Jiggy Cruz. Journalists also did the same, tweeting tidbits like Cory’s two-year old grandchild playing with his aunt –trivia which may never get to print, but information audiences may be interested in.

<sup>49</sup> <http://barriosiete.com>

<sup>50</sup> People who blog. Blog is short for web log, or online journal.

<sup>51</sup> A microblogging site (<http://twitter.com>) limited to 140 characters per update

<sup>52</sup> The same person who wrote “Generation Txt”

<sup>53</sup> Image from: <http://www.spot.ph/files/2009/08/newest-main1.jpg>

<sup>54</sup> Translates to “witness.” Saksi is the prime time news show of GMA7.

It was a day when Filipinos all over the world felt united again, thanks to the internet. And it was the same woman in 1986 that got people together again.

### ***Ondoy<sup>55</sup> and Bayanihan<sup>56</sup> Online***

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, Manila was declared under a state of calamity as Typhoon Ondoy dropped a month's worth of rainfall in six hours on the city (Calonzo, 2009). The Philippine Red Cross declared around 80% of Metro Manila was submerged in water (Evangelista, 2009). Government approximated \$112 million in damages (gmanews.tv, 2009). As of September 29, there was an estimated 240 dead (Montero, 2009), but numbers were expected to increase with more rescue operations going.

As the deluge was happening, people berated the television networks for failing to provide up-to-date news. Regular programming went on with only hourly news flashes to update the people regarding what was happening. Civilians hungry for information took the matters in their own hands through social networking, especially Facebook and twitter. Status updates were flooded with posts and reposts of people. Those flooded would assure friends and family they were okay via mobile twitter updates. Some asked for information on the situation of friends and relatives. There were information regarding rescue efforts or need for one, plus calls for volunteers and donations. Somebody created a google map of flooded areas. Another created google spreadsheets of organizations providing relief and help lines for people to call. Journalists provided updated information on rescue efforts or offered contacts who can help. Celebrities also used their twitters to provide these to their follower base. Individuals worked together to collate all information, from who needs help to those who can help (Quezon, 2009). When traditional media failed, citizens took over and claimed social networks to be their own news bureau. There was no government or organization that told people they should do what they did, yet people were able to self-mobilize. Their Filipino netizens of cyberworld produced results in the real world.

While AM radio has always been the go-to media during calamities, RockEd Philippines and Dakila worked together with Jam 88.FM to broadcast information gathered from facebook updates, tweets<sup>57</sup> and latest news to the public. Since most of the metro did not have electricity, people just had their cell phones for information which only had FM radio. Gang of RockEd and Steph Tan of Dakila worked with the Jam DJs, broadcasting 14 to 18 hours for four days since the floods began. There was a day when bands came to perform every so often to provide inspiration to those who were volunteering for rescue operations or still currently suffering from the calamity (Tan, 2009). Some band members even came from volunteering to pack relief goods. Gang

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<sup>55</sup> International name Typhoon Ketsana

<sup>56</sup> *Bayanihan* is a Filipino tradition of community spirit and solidarity in which neighbors help each other out especially in time of need.

<sup>57</sup> Twitter updates

posted a tweet on September 29 saying “what an honor to be given the chance to give out crucial info at a crucial time” (spot.ph, 2009b). After working the four-day news bureau stint, RockEd joined in the relief operations.

They even provided support to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to organize volunteers to pack goods donated to the government. There was an issue with the DSWD when a blog entry<sup>58</sup> from “Blog ni Ella” circulated talking about the international donations for the victims of Ondoy were just being left untouched in the DSWD warehouses. Allegedly, when the DSWD Secretary was interviewed to comment, all she said was “there were no volunteers.” This response sparked the ire of the people considering the large volunteer force mobilized during the height of the relief efforts during typhoon Ondoy. When RockEd found out about this, Gang informed a congresswoman friend that if volunteers were what they needed, then Sec. Cabral can call on RockEd (Badoy, 2009). To which Cabral did. Thus RockEd helped the DSWD in packing and deploying relief goods.

Even after the typhoon left the Philippine shores, Ondoy-related posts continued, this time addressing relief issues. Calls for donations, volunteers, transportations were frequently posted. With classes suspended for a week, at the forefront of volunteer efforts were the students. In an interview, a student named Jake said:

*When I went home dead tired to rest for a few hours, I was lying in bed. But I just couldn't rest thinking, 'I can't just sit comfortable here while a lot of people still need help'. I immediately left the house and reported to the Red Cross to be deployed again (Ongkingco, 2009).*



Figure 6. Photo of youth-powered relief operations<sup>59</sup>

It would not be surprising if other people echoed Jake’s sentiments. The breadth and gravity of Ondoy’s devastation hit everyone one way or another. There was hardly anyone who didn’t know someone affected by the calamity.

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.ellaganda.com/?p=1759>

<sup>59</sup> Image from: <http://arnoldpadilla.files.wordpress.com/2009/10/serve-the-people-brigade-st-ondoy3.jpg>

But rather than complain or be helpless, citizens chose to take action without having to wait for the government to take charge. In fact, more people chose to volunteer for civil society efforts because the government was perceived to be inept with their disaster response (Bulatlat, 2009). The youth were among those who took time to pack donated goods and send them to evacuation centers.

### 4.3 From Social Tools to Collective Action

These two major historical events in the Philippines illustrated how media, especially the internet, is being used to get people together for a particular cause. People did not need to be mobilized because they could mobilize themselves through social tools. There is a natural impulse to share information, but prior to internet, it took too much time and effort. Now, the cost of spreading information has been reduced to a few seconds and several clicks. It allowed those people who were a little concerned to participate a little but with effects. It must be made clear, however, that ‘social tools don’t create collective action, they merely remove obstacles to it’ (Shirky, 2008: 159). In the case of Aquino, people would not have posted those yellow ribbons if they did not give it meaning. Social networks allowed the spread of information, but it is the individual which gives value to that information. In both cases, popular media facilitated the way for people to be pro-active in their citizenship. What makes the internet more interesting is, for most countries it can actually be considered the ultimate place for freedom of expression. One can say anything one wants in cyberspace without thinking of censorship or consequence. With this liberty, it carries with it a potential to be highly political (ibid: 187).

Those who chose to post yellow twibbons or make their facebook profile picture yellow set a statement to anyone who would see their page, “I support Cory Aquino. I support the democracy that she stood for.” At the same time, technology allowed the Filipino diaspora to be part of the occasion. Some tweets even dubbed it as the “Global Filipino EDSA” (24 Oras, 2009).

What happened during Ondoy made people realize and utilize the capabilities of social tools in information-dissemination. Posting and reposting calls for help were passed on with the hope that somebody is bound to know someone who can help. It also kept the rest of the world informed, especially Filipinos abroad, who mobilized themselves to ask for donations. Social tools have improved communication channels to make it more efficient. At the same time, transaction costs of sharing information have lowered. Shirky (2008:171) was able to explain it concisely, ‘whenever you improve a group’s ability to communicate internally, you change the things it is capable of.’

The arts, through song, film, painting or other art forms, tell the narratives of society, while the internet documents, spreads and archives the information. Any one at any time can access it. Popular culture can help facilitate

awareness-building among the youth because it already has the advantage of their attention. This is in part because more young people access the internet more frequently. At the same time, the internet can facilitate self-directed learning outside the sphere of any one's control. This is not to say that the internet is all positive. It is surrounded by controversies on privacy options, cyberbullying, sexual predators and defamation, among others. But all the more it becomes more important to understand how valuable it has become to young people, so its ills can be reduced and its benefits multiplied.

At the same time, groups like RockEd, Dakila or PETA work towards increasing the level of civic awareness among their young audiences. They have artists as advocates, the arts as discursive weapons and the internet as democratic vehicles. They provide an alternative space for youth to participate in a collective effort to tackle issues. This teaches young people to be confident in their abilities and see themselves as important individuals and valuable members of society (Todd and Taylor, 2006:23).

Cowan (1997:196-197) has a contrary view of youth political participation through civic organizations. He states that while volunteerism is increasing, the acts hardly count as political involvement. There is some truth to what he says. Book drives could hardly address the huge problems the education sector face or singing about corruption will definitely not solve it. Todd and Taylor (2004), however offers a more hopeful view, seeing these increased volunteer activities as an expression of active citizenship (p.23). While their acts may not be outright political, the increase of volunteer opportunities actually challenges the state, as if saying to them 'so what have you done?' One wonders why most Ondoy volunteers chose to help civic groups rather than government relief operations. It had to take an organization like RockEd to amass volunteers to support the DSWD. When Gang asked for volunteers to help the DSWD in packing and deploying goods, her facebook status indicated, 'How often do we get to say to a govt institution "this is how it's done."' In other words, volunteerism can be a political statement against the government, as if saying 'we are doing your job because you can't/won't. Now learn from us!'

The understanding of democracy has gone beyond electoral politics (Todd and Taylor, 2004: 8, Lund and Carr, 2008: 1), though voting remain essential to it and this can be seen in the energy, effort and money spent encouraging people to register and vote, both by civil society and government. But the times have changed and the system is being dared to expand the spaces for political participation to accommodate changing youth practices. Organizations using popular culture are only a few of the avenues that encourage the youth to be more active in their citizenship. But the three stories and the events in Philippine history have shown that people have somehow accepted these new ways of democratic participation.



## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

Pop politics is popularizing democratic and political principles through dynamic youth practices and pop culture. The arts and media have become intertwined with the lives of this current generation of youth. A large chunk of information they know come from television, radio, print and internet. While the older population are playing catch-up in mastering these technologies, the youth require no effort because it is something that now comes as naturally as walking (Shirky, 2008: 321).

The social context of the present generation then becomes crucial in understanding how they act and react to issues. They have been labelled “apathetic,” referring particularly to their lack of participation in street politics. However, this is a judgment based on a socio-historical context long past. The previous generations of youth were vigilant in demonstrating their anger on the streets mainly because it was the only way to be heard during a time of repression and military rule. The times have change since then. Thus absence in protest rallies is not as relevant a measuring stick of youth participation as it once was. At the same time, formal bureaucratic institutions hardly appeal to them because of the controversies that often surround it.

Contextualizing apathy is also vital in order to address it. Often it is associated with not caring and indifference which is also an undeniable reality. However, if there is the desire to deal with apathy, the understanding of it must be deepened more. Changing the perspective of apathy as “not-knowing-what-to-do” rather than “not caring” makes the success for countering it more reachable.

Organizations have realized the value of popular culture among the youth. Thus they utilize its ability to catch the youth’s attention to present to them current social issues. It can then become more relevant to young people because it is in a language they understand. No matter how important the cause or the message it becomes meaningless if it remains unheard. Popular arts and media make active citizenship fun and enjoyable. As the Volkswagen campaign is trying to spread, “fun can obviously change behaviour for the better.” While fun can indeed draw more people, the challenge is to make sure the entertainment does not drown the message.

As Greene expressed, the arts allow people to see beyond what is and to imagine what can be. This frame of mind is essential when working for active citizenship, for is not the point of an active citizenry to work towards a society that is better than the present? Civic engagement is all about believing there is something better and doing something to achieve it. The arts allow people to see what is and to imagine what can be, and it contributes to community-

making (Greene, 1995: 4-5). This desire communicates a sense of hope and establishes relationships to develop trust, which is vital to community-building.

The case studies of RockEd, Dakila and PETA, as well as the stories of the youth interviewees have shown that the relation between popular culture and action goes beyond the philosophical or rhetorical. The popular arts and media can broaden the existing spaces for youth participation. Because both have become pervasive in the life of a youth, it is able to spread the message of social consciousness to a wider audience. What used to be a complicated process of sharing information has been reduced to few clicks. The transaction costs to participate have become less. People who care little for an issue become encouraged to take part because obstacles have been reduced and minimal involvement only require a small effort. It may seem non-committal, and it could really be, but these small efforts of many individuals contribute to the action of the few who are more passionate and more committed in doing something about the issues.

Outside participation in organized groups, the internet allows the youth to create their own space for political participation. The internet facilitates symmetrical participation, in which youth are not only receivers of messages but are senders of it as well. They can create blogs, videos, music and share it through the internet. Young people can give their take on social issues, without having to worry about being censured by older people. The internet also has its dark side, with stories of cyberbullying, lurking social predators and internet hoaxes. The youth too has its dark side, with some involved in deviant acts. But this makes it even all the more crucial to understand the value of popular culture in the life of today's youth so it can become a healthier environment and safe space for young people.

Some critique that volunteerism does not really contribute to structural change. This may be true but examples have also shown that volunteer participation can be a political statement. It shows that people are concerned with issues, whatever it may be. The youth can choose their battles, one which they are most passionate about and most willing to work for. It is a declaration to the state that people choose these alternative spaces of participation over the government-established ones because they lack trust in these formal channels.

It must be emphasized that using the popular arts and media as alternative democratic spaces do not intend to replace existing political systems. In fact, campaigns for registration and voting show these civic organizations recognize formal political structures. Broadening avenues of participation then serves a two-pronged function. First, it serves as a support system in facilitating more active citizenship and involvement among the youth – something which formal systems are least successful in doing. Second, civic groups serve as a platform for check and balance to the state in how it exercises its power and conducts itself. In a way, it is the citizen's watchdog. The state can also learn a thing or

two from them in how things can be done, as in the case of RockEd mobilizing for DSWD.

Democracy is something that most people are not always consciously aware of, but as citizens it is important that we understand what it asks of its people. Pop politics is about popularizing democracy through popular culture, recognizing its ability to get the youth interested and informed about social issues. It can develop a socially aware youth driven to actively participate. This leaves no excuse for apathetic behavior, because the opportunities for participation become infinite, as infinite as the number of ways a particular art form can tell a story or how the internet can share information. By getting the youth more concerned with issues and more proactive in addressing them, it showcases the capability of youth to be “citizens in the now” rather than just “citizens in the making.” The youth are not just important because they can be future leaders and future movers. They are important because they already ARE leaders and movers.

At her end spiel in the premiere episode of E-GIG (2009)<sup>60</sup>, Gang Badoy eloquently summed up what this paper is trying to say about youth and democratic participation, *“The youth are not just the hope of the nation, they ARE the nation.”*

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<sup>60</sup> Election Guide for the Interactive Generation (2009)

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

<i>Actual Text</i>	<i>English translation (by author)</i>
<p>Tinig ng Generation Txt Ni Ederic Peñaflor Eder Pinoy Times Pebrero 8, 2001</p> <p>Kami ang Generation Txt.</p> <p>Malaya, masayahin, malikot, makulit, masipag, malakas, makabayan, matapang, may direksiyon, at may paninindigan.</p> <p>Itinatatwa namin ang kanluraning konseptong Generation X pilit na ikinakabit sa amin ng pandaigdigang kulturang komersiyal. Ang GenXers ay sinasabing lito, malabo, walang direksiyon, palaasa ngunit mapaghimagsik.</p> <p>Subalit rebelde rin naman kaming mga kasapi ng bagong salinlahi. Mainit ang aming pagtanggap at niyakap namin nang buong kasiglahan ang rebolusyon ng mga bagong teknolohiya. Di nga ba't sinasabing naghahari ang Pilipino sa CyberSpace at ang Pilipinas ay napapaulat na text-messaging capital ng buong daigdig.</p> <p>Gamit ang mga bagong teknolohiyang ito, kami man ay nanguna sa isang pag-aalsa na nauwi sa pagpapatalsik ng isang umano'y sagad-sagarang gahaman at walang kakayahang pinuno ng bansa.</p> <p>Mabilis ang aming naging tugon sa kataksilan ng labing- isang tuta ni Jose Velarde (na kilala rin bilang Asyong Salonga at Joseph Estrada at mas popular bilang Erap). Ang impormasyon at panawagang nakarating sa amin sa pamamagitan ng text at ng e-mail ay tuluyang nag-ugnay sa kalat-kalat na mga organisado at di organisadong protesta. Mula sa aming mga tahanan, paaralan, dormitoryo, pagawaan, simbahan, bumuhos kami sa mga lansangan upang</p>	<p>The Voice of Generation Txt By Ederic Peñaflor Eder Pinoy Times February 8, 2001</p> <p>We are Generation Txt.</p> <p>Free, happy, fun-loving, mischievous, diligent, strong, patriotic, brave, determined and resolute.</p> <p>We reject the Western concept of Generation X which they force to us through globalization and commercialism. The GenXers are said to be confused, unclear, directionless, dependent but rebellious.</p> <p>But we, the members of the new generation, are also rebels. We warmly welcome and embrace with enthusiasm the revolution in new technology. Do they not say that the Filipinos rule cyberspace and the Philippines is the text-messaging capital of the world?</p> <p>Using this new technology, we are the ones who led the revolution that led to the ouster to a corrupt and incapable leader of the country.</p> <p>We quickly responded to the treachery of the eleven dogs of Jose Velardo (also know as Asyong Salonga and Joseph Estrada and for famously, Erap). The information and calls that reached us through text and e-mail are what brought together the organized as well as unorganized protests. From our homes, schools, dormitories, factories, church, we poured to the streets, there we continued the trial – the impeachment</p>

<p>doon ituloy ang paglilitis - ang impeachment trial na nawalan na ng kabuluhan.</p> <p>Ang lakas ng aming mga celfon at computer ay isa sa mga nagsilbing mitsa upang pumutok ang ikalawang pag-aalsa o people power revolution II na naganap hindi lamang sa EDSA kundi maging sa Mendiola at iba pang pook mula sa hilaga hanggang katimugan ng Pilipinas. (Oo nga pala, hindi EDSA Dos ang katatapos lamang na pag-aalsa-ito ay mas nararapat tawaging people power II.)</p> <p>Inilarawan ng people power II ang ilan sa mga katangian ng aming salinlahi: Masaya, makulit at malikot. Kami'y nagsipagsayawan at nagkantahan. Hindi namin kailanman isusuko ang aming kalayaan sa isang sugarol, babaero at lasenggong pinuno. Hindi ininda ng karamihan sa amin ang limang oras na martsa patungong Malacañang upang sugurin si Joseph Estrada; Masipag, pagkat aming nilinis ang mga basurang iniwan ng pag-aalsa;</p> <p>May direksyon, dahil ang hangarin namin ay isang tapat na pamahalaan, at isang hakbang patungo ryan ang pagkawala ni Erap. Makabayan, matapang at may paninindigan dahil ang aming pakikiisa ay hindi lamang dahil sa kasiyahang maka-gimik kasama ang barkada, kundi upang makaambag sa isang tunay na malaya at malinis na lipunan na hatid ng aming pagmamahal sa bansang Pilipinas.</p> <p>Ayon kay Ninoy Aquino, "The Filipino is worth dying for." Tunay nga, pagkat noong umaga ng pinagpalang araw ng Enero 20, marami sa amin ang nagdesisyong tumungo sa Mendiola at sagupain ang nagbabantang sakuna. Di pansin ang banta ng kamatayan, buong tapang na sumulong ang marami sa amin upang maipaglaban ang aming paninindigan.</p> <p>Samantala, noon pa man ay may ilan na sa aming henerasyon na pumiling gumawa ng mas higit pa at sundin ang halimbawa</p>	<p>trial that lost its meaning.</p> <p>The power of our cell phones and computer is one of the wicks that exploded the second revolution or People Power Revolution II that did not just happen in EDSA but also Mendiola and other places from north to south of the Philippines. (Oh yes, the protest that just finished was not EDSA Dos. It is more apt to call it People Power II.)</p> <p>The People Power II showed the character of our generation: happy, fun-loving and mischievous. We danced and sung. We will never surrender our freedom to a gambler, a philanderer and an alcoholic leader. We did not mind the five hour march towards Malacañang to confront Joseph Estrada; Diligent, because we cleaned up the trash we left from the protest.</p> <p>Resolute, because our hope is a trustworthy government, and one step towards that is the ouster of Erap. Patriotic, brave and principled, because our unity is not only for gimmicks with friends, but also to contribute to a truly free and clean society brought by our love for the Philippines.</p> <p>According to Ninoy Aquino, "The Filipino is worth dying for." True, because the morning of the blessed day of January 20, many of us decided to go Mendiola and to face the impending tragedy. Threats of death go unnoticed, with bravery many of us marched to fight for our principles.</p> <p>Meanwhile, there are some from our generation who chose to do more and</p>
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<p>ni Gat Andres Bonifacio. Ang ilan sa aming henerasyon-matagal nang panahon bago pa man ang ikalawang pag-aalsa-- ay pumiling makibaka sa kabundukan at humawak ng armas upang tahakin ang marahas na landas tungo sa tunay na pagbabago.</p> <p>Ang karamihan sa amin, bago at matapos ang pag- aalsa, ay matatagpuan sa aming mga paaralan, tanggapan o pagawaan, patuloy sa pang-araw-araw na takbo ng buhay, Nangangarap, nagsusumikap, para sa kinabukasan. Nagti-text, nag-i-Internet, naglilibang sa kasalukuyan.</p> <p>Subalit sa tawag ng panahon, handa kaming tumugon. Muli at muli naming gagamitin ang aming lakas at kabataan, pati na rin ang aming mga gadyet upang masiguro ang kalayaan ng Inang Bayan at handa kaming bantayan ang patuloy nating paghahanap ng katarungan. Nasa panig namin ang kasaysayan, pagkat ayon kay Jose Rizal, kami, ang kabataan, ang "pag-asa ng bayan."</p> <p>Matapos ang ikalawang pag-aalsa, nangangako kaming militanteng babantayan ang administrayon ng Pangulong Gloria Macapagal Arroyo habang buong kasiyahang itutulak sa pintuan ng kulungan si Asiong Salonga.</p> <p>Kami ang Generation Txt.</p>	<p>follow the example of Andres Bonifacio. A few in our generation – long before People Power II – chose to join the resistance in the mountains and carry arms to travel the violent path for genuine change.</p> <p>Many of us, before and at the end of the revolution, can be found in the school, the office or factory, going on with our daily lives. Dreaming, working hard for the future. Texting, surfing the internet, enjoying the present.</p> <p>We are ready to respond to the call of the times. Again and again, we will use our strength and our youth, and our gadgets to ensure the freedom of our Motherland and we are ready to guard our quest for justice. We are on the side of history, because according to Jose Rizal, we are the youth, the “hope of the nation...”</p> <p>After People Power II, we militants promise to watch over the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo while happily pushing Asiong Salonga towards his jail cell.</p> <p>We are Generation Txt.</p>
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## Appendix B

**ABOUT PETA** (taken from <http://www.petatheater.com/aboutus.html>)

Founded in 1967, the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) is an organization of creative and critical artist-teacher-cultural workers committed to artistic excellence and a people's culture that casts shackles and fosters both personal fulfillment and social transformations. It roots its foundation in the use of theater that is distinctly Filipino as a tool for social change and development. The company has lived by this principle as it evolves with the changes that occurred within and around it. It continuously pushes first-rate quality theater while never taking for granted that the art it produces and teaches always serves a greater purpose.

As if driven by the vision of a distinct Filipino theater, PETA initially took residence in Dulaang Rajah Sulayman, a T-stage theater resting deep in the ruins of Fort Santiago in Intramuros, Manila. It was within these historical walls that PETA developed its own history. It was also in this beautiful open-air performance space that PETA's dream began to flourish. The well-defined stage of Rajah Sulayman influenced the diversity of performances that the company produced, prompting the artists to explore possibilities that the unique architecture the theater had to offer. In this cultural landmark, PETA began to nurture and cradle the hundreds of artists who, up to this day, continuously share their talents and expertise in theater, television, radio, print media and education.

Through the years, PETA continuously develops its breed of cultural leaders as it steps up in the forefront of Philippine culture. PETA has written, translated, adapted, published, and performed more than 300 plays and has facilitated thousands of workshops both locally and internationally, shaping not only its own history but greatly influencing the history of Philippine theater as well. Theater forms and techniques continue to be enriched as local, national and universal themes find their medium of expression in the company's engagement as a theater group that performs and educates.

Today, PETA's repertory theater program, embodied in the KALINANGAN ENSEMBLE is complemented by a closely-knit battery of programs and services. THE SCHOOL OF PEOPLE'S THEATER, PETA's main training arm for amateurs, professionals, and communities alike, offers a wide range of courses on theater arts and related subjects. The METROPOLITAN TEEN THEATER LEAGUE PROGRAM and the CHILDREN'S THEATER PROGRAM combine performances with training modules for young people, their caregivers and educators. The former services PETA's wide range of high school students and teachers. The latter gives special attention to the issue of children's rights, just as the WOMEN'S THEATER PROGRAM addresses female problems like reproductive rights and domestic violence. Gender and sexual health issues, including AIDS, are also pet topics of the PETA-MEKONG PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM, a

special project aimed at building capabilities and fostering collaboration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. Continuous link-up with national and international artistic, educational, cultural, and development organizations has allowed PETA to share its expertise in theater and education. PETA is all about outreach and networking.

In 2005, PETA moved to its new home -- The PETA Theater Center, a landmark in Philippine Arts and Culture where PETA continues to pursue its vision for our people and society: that lives, transcending race, class and gender may be enriched and empowered with each gesture, word, image, sound, expression and creative learning experience.



## Appendix C

(taken from

[http://www.dakila.org.ph/pages/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=25&Itemid=28](http://www.dakila.org.ph/pages/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=25&Itemid=28)

### **WHAT IS DAKILA? )**

**DAKILA (nobility) - Philippine Collective for Modern Heroism** is a group of artists, students and individuals committed to advocating social consciousness formation among both their industry peers and their immediate audiences. DAKILA recognizes that Philippine society is in the midst of a significant upheaval and that, as disciples of the creative act, we are not exempted from the responsibility of helping contribute to positive change.

DAKILA envisions a **nation of heroes**. Its mission is to build a **movement that inspires heroism and nobility** of thought and action to effect social transformation by collectively providing creative avenues to awaken the individual, dismantle apathy and unleash their inner hero.

The three goals of DAKILA are awareness, education, and involvement - to make the public **aware** of crucial concerns affecting society, to **educate** both the audience and, more importantly, themselves about pressing social concerns, which should effectively inform the methods of creative expression and to be consistently and dynamically **involved** in activities geared toward achieving the common good.

DAKILA was born out of the need to address the need to **confront the evil of apathy** engulfing the nation and to inspire the Filipino people to get involved through awareness and education. This group of artists bonded to utilize their “powers” to influence the public through their craft in order to work for the common good.

DAKILA believes that **nobility begins in the mind and ends in action**. Despite appearances and public perceptions, the name aspires to nobility— the potential to evoke what is truly great and heroic in each and every citizen.

DAKILA recognizes the value of every art form in enriching the Filipino spirit. While art may not change the world, it can change the way we view the world for true revolution begins in the imagination.

DAKILA uses the **superhero mythology** as a way to capture the interests of the masses. It extols the virtue of joy and humor to uplift the nation’s spirit and at the same time encourage the people to believe in their own potentials and strength to find hope in these trying times. And at this time, where the country is faced with a multitude of challenge, every little act of courage and selflessness counts.

## ***ARTIST'S CREDO***

***We, in DAKILA, believe that . . .***

Nobility begins in the mind and ends in action.

Nobility knows no social and economic status— all human beings possess an innate sense of honor and dignity.

True nobility is not defined by pedigree or wealth but by one's actions.

Art is one of the noblest human endeavors— the only way of expressing the inexpressible.

Art does not exist in a vacuum. After his own self, the artist has a responsibility towards the reality that surrounds him.

Art may not change the world, but it can change the way we view the world. For true revolution begins in the imagination.

We recognize all those who have sacrificed their lives in the past so that our freedom and the nobility of the race may live on— we recognize our heroes, our martyrs, the disciples of the arts who have dedicated themselves to the truest, noblest cause. We honor them by treading the same path.

*The Philippine society is in the midst of a significant upheaval and that as disciples of the creative act, we are not exempted from the responsibility of helping contribute to positive change. Now, more than ever, is the time to be DAKILA.*

## Appendix D

### *What is RockEd?*

(taken from [http://rockedphilippines.org/main\\_what.html](http://rockedphilippines.org/main_what.html))

Rock Ed is

- a volunteer group working to provide venues and events for alternative education.
- a ten-year series of alternative education projects.
- via music, the arts, poetry, sports, photography, fashion, graphic design, literature, new approaches to science, film, cultural studies, theatre, dance, and any other way except being in a classroom--the convenors of Rock Ed decided to Rock Society through Education and educate the youth through rock culture.
- an alternative class where the substitute teachers are celebrities, musicians, poets, artists, entrepreneurs, writers, et al
- hosts alternative social studies classes through actual school visits or holding the 'classes' in the events venue itself like bars, restaurants, soccer fields, art galleries, etc
- a group of private citizens that coordinate joint projects with other NGOs that are addressing any of the 8 Millennium Development Goals
- a group of private citizens that believe that poverty should end now
- a group of private citizens that value education in its traditional form but creates alternative solutions for teacher training and student activities to enhance classroom learning--NOT replace it.

### *Lit: A RockEd Volunteer Manifesto*

(taken from [http://rockedphilippines.org/essays\\_lit.html](http://rockedphilippines.org/essays_lit.html))

LIT

I will never settle for a few  
when most are within reach.  
I have no interest in 'okay.'  
I will never confuse a fad  
for commitment.  
I will frustrate the cynics.  
I have been stubborn when necessary.  
I have been easy when offered collaboration.  
I have lit fires.  
I am a RockEd Volunteer.

## Appendix E

### *Interview Questions for Youth Respondents*

1. Basic details (name, age, school)
2. What was your first exposure with the (organization)?
3. How did you get to know about (organization)?
4. What attracted you to the (organization)? How would you describe it?
5. What do you think sets the organization apart from other advocacy groups?
6. What do you think are the objectives of (organization)?
7. Do you think other youth appreciate the methods of (organization) in advocacy? Why?
8. Why do you think it is necessary to have the youth socially involved?
9. Could you narrate some experiences working with (organization)?
10. Which activity did you most enjoy? Why?

### *Interview questions with Staff of the Organizations*

1. What were the objectives in the formation of (organization)?
2. How do you think the arts has been able to educate youth about social consciousness?
3. Why did you choose youth as your particular target audience?
4. What projects have you had? What were the particular objectives of these projects?
5. Have you received feedback from your youth audience? What did they say?
6. Why do you think it is important to have the youth aware of social issues?
7. How can the arts contribute to social advocacy?

### *Interview questions with Noel Cabangon*

1. How were you affiliated with the three organizations?
2. What led you to volunteer for them?
3. What activities have you done with these groups?
4. Why do you think the youth need to be socially aware?
5. How do you think your craft contribute to social awareness building among young people?

## Appendix F

**“Where Is The Love?” lyrics** (taken from <http://www.elyrics.net/read/b/black-eyed-peas-lyrics/where-is-the-love-lyrics.html>)

**Songwriters:** Timberlake, Justin; Adams, William; Gomez, Jaime Luis; Fratantuno, Michael; Pineda, Allan; Board, Printz; Pajon, George Jr;

What's wrong with the world, mama?  
People livin' like they ain't got no mamas  
I think the whole world's addicted to the drama  
Only attracted to things that'll bring the trauma

Overseas, yeah, we try to stop terrorism  
But we still got terrorists here livin'  
In the U.S.A., the big C.I.A.  
The bloods and the crips and the K.K.K.

But, if you only have love for your own race  
Then you only leave space to discriminate  
And to discriminate only generates hate  
And when you hate then you're bound to get irate, yeah

Badness is what you demonstrate  
And that's exactly how anger works and operates  
Man you gotta have love just to set it straight  
Take control of your mind and meditate  
Let your soul gravitate to the love, y'all, y'all

People killin', people dyin'  
Children hurt and hear them cryin'?  
Can you practice what you preach?  
And would you turn the other cheek

Father, Father, Father help us  
Send us some guidance from above  
'Cause people got me, got me questionin'  
Where is the love?  
(Love)

Where is the love?  
(The love)  
Where is the love?  
(The love)  
Where is the love?  
The love, the love

It just ain't the same, always unchanged  
New days are strange, is the world insane  
If love and peace are so strong  
Why are there pieces of love that don't belong?  
Nations droppin' bombs

Chemical gasses fillin' lungs of little ones  
With the ongoin' sufferin' as the youth die young  
So, ask yourself is the lovin' really gone?  
So, I could ask myself really what is goin' wrong

In this world that we livin' in people keep on givin'  
Makin' wrong decisions, only visions of them dividends  
Not respectin' each other, deny thy brother  
A war is goin' on but the reason's undercover  
The truth is kept secret, it's swept under the rug  
If you never know truth then you never know love

Where's the love, y'all, come on  
(I don't know)  
Where's the truth, y'all, come on  
(I don't know)  
Where's the love, y'all

People killin', people dyin'  
Children hurt and hear them cryin'  
Can you practice what you preach?  
And would you turn the other cheek

Father, Father, Father help us  
Send us some guidance from above  
'Cause people got me, got me questionin'  
Where is the love?  
(Love)

Where is the love?  
(The love)  
Where is the love?  
(The love)  
Where is the love?  
(The love)  
Where is the love?  
(Love)

Where is the love?  
(The love)  
Where is the love?  
(The love)  
Where is the love?  
The love, the love

I feel the weight of the world on my shoulder  
As I'm gettin' older, y'all, people gets colder  
Most of us only care about money makin'  
Selfishness got us followin' the wrong direction

Wrong information always shown by the media  
Negative images is the main criteria

Infecting the young minds faster than bacteria  
Kids wanna act like what they see in the cinema

Yo', whatever happened to the values of humanity  
Whatever happened to the fairness and equality  
Instead of spreading love we're spreading animosity  
Lack of understanding, leading lives away from unity

That's the reason why sometimes I'm feelin' under  
That's the reason why sometimes I'm feelin' down  
There's no wonder why sometimes I'm feelin' under  
Gotta keep my faith alive till love is found  
And ask yourself

Where is the love?  
Where is the love?  
Where is the love?  
Where is the love?

Father, Father, Father help us  
Send us some guidance from above  
'Cause people got me, got me questionin'  
Where is the love?

Sing wit my ya'll  
(One world, one world)  
We only got  
(One world, one world)  
That's all we got  
(One world, one world)

And somethin's wrong wit it  
(Yeah)  
Somethin's wrong wit it  
(Yeah)  
Somethin's wrong wit world world world yeah  
We only got  
(One world, one world)  
That's all we got  
(One world, one world)

## Appendix G

*“Alay sa mga Nagkamalay Noong Dekada Nobenta” lyrics* (taken from <http://www.lyricskid.com/lyrics/dicta-license-lyrics/alay-sa-mga-nagkamalay-noong-dekada-nobenta-lyrics.html>)

<i>Lyrics</i>	<i>English Translation (by author)</i>
Hinahamon muli ang bawat boses Na tumutugon as tawag ng lahi Bawat boses na sinilang noong Dekada nobenta Sariling interes lang daw Ang yong nakikita. Nababahala ang nakakatanda Sabi-Sabi nila’y mahina Yaring mga bata. Laki sa layaw at hindi na handa. Anong tugon ng kabataan sa Agnitong pagkutya	I challenge each voice To answer the call of the nation Each voice boom Those born in the 90’s They say, it is only your own interest That you see. Our elders are worried They say they are weak These young people Spoiled and unprepared What is the youth’s answer To this mockery
[chorus] Ang alay mo’y Nilisan na ng panahon Kumilos ng mga ubing Hukayin ang nakalibing na Alay mo.	Your offering has been left by time Act, young one Dig for your buried offering
Sa pagdating ng unos ay lubus na Kinakailangang magtubos Aking dekadang binabatikos. Karanasan ay kapos. ‘Di raw tayo nakasama sa tunay Na pagkilos. Ngayon, kaya ako’y nagtatala Bagong kasaysayan aking Ilalathala. Nang balang-araw mababalikan Ko rin Sa gunita ang mga kwento ay akin	When the storm comes We shall take our claim. They criticize our generation That we lack experience. That we were not part of true activism. So now, I shall chart New experiences, I shall share
[Repeat chorus]	So someday I can remember Memories that are mine
[bridge] Naiwan ka na ba? Sabihin mo sa akin ang Layunin mo Naiwan ka na ba? [Repeat chorus]	Have you been left behind? Tell me Your purpose Have you been left behind?



## Appendix H

Buhay at Bukid lyrics

By Buklod

Taken from: <http://ederic.net/buhay-at-bukid/>

<i>Lyrics</i>	<i>English Translation (by Author)</i>
<p>Ang buhay niya ay bukid Kaulayaw bawat saglit Munti niyang pangarap Dito na nailibing.</p>	<p>His life is his land Every moment intimate His small dream Is to be buried in his land</p>
<p>Kailan pa ba makikita ang lupang minana Ay maaari na ring tawaging kanya Bawat butil na pinagyaman Ay pait ng kawalan</p>	<p>When will he see his inherited land  And call it his own Each grain he grew Is the pain of loss</p>
<p>Sa gitna ng kahirapan May uring nakinabang. Kailan pa ba makikita ang lupang minana Ay maaari na ring tawaging kanya?</p>	<p>In the middle of difficulty Someone else gained When will he see his inherited land  And call it his own</p>
<p>Lalaya rin ang lupa't mga magsasaka Tutulungan sila ng mga manggagawa Babawiin ang lupang ninakaw ng iilan At ang bunga ng lupa'y bayan na ang aani.</p>	<p>The farmers will soon be free The labourers will help him They will get back their stolen land The nation shall harvest the fruits of the earth.</p>