

Educating Community Constituents as Partners in Peace and Order

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In many Filipino communities, peace and order are daily concerns as supported by Adonis (2021). It's common to hear about neighborhood conflicts, theft, or youth getting involved in trouble. But what often gets overlooked is the role of ordinary citizens in helping keep their communities safe. One of the main reasons why issues remain unsolved is the lack of proper education at the community level. Many residents are not aware of local laws, how to report crimes, or even how to settle disputes peacefully. Some are afraid to speak up, while others believe it's not their responsibility which is a common Filipino belief. Now, this shows that peace and order should not only rely on police presence, it also needs community education and involvement.

The barangay-level education is a way to build stronger partnerships between residents and peacekeeping bodies. Educating the people especially families, youth, and senior citizens about their role in safety efforts is a key step toward real change. Barangays can conduct regular learning sessions that are simple and practical. These may include teaching residents about common ordinances, emergency hotlines, and basic safety tips. Conflict resolution workshops can also help families and neighbors handle issues without resorting to violence (Hodges et al., 2022). Learning together, people build trust, not just in authorities but also among themselves. Balanon et al. (2007) revealed the importance of youth involvement the Schools and Sangguniang Kabataan leaders can work with the barangay to organize seminars and street campaigns about responsible citizenship. If young people understand their role early, they are less likely to become involved in crime and more likely to become peace advocates. The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and Local Government Units (LGUs) can support this by providing materials, speakers, and training programs. Civic groups and churches can also help by offering venues and volunteers.

Based on recent reports by the DILG, total crime incidents in the country dropped by 3.29% during the first half of 2024. The Philippine National Police also

reported that index crimes such as robbery, murder, and physical injury went down from 196,519 cases in 2016 to just 71,544 by April 2024. These data show that peace and order programs are working, especially in areas where communities take part in safety efforts. When people are informed and united, crime becomes easier to prevent and respond to. Because of these positive developments, the DILG has been encouraging barangays to start regular peace education programs. These sessions are meant to teach basic rights and responsibilities, ways to solve problems peacefully, and how to report crimes properly. The goal is to make peace education a common part of community life. It's not just about learning rules, it's about making people feel empowered to protect each other and work together. When a barangay promotes learning and unity, peace becomes something that grows from within the community (Jacinto et al., 2023).

Peace and order start with knowledge. Adju et al. (2021) highlighted that when people are educated about their responsibilities and rights, they are more confident to take part in keeping their barangay safe. This kind of education doesn't need to be expensive or complicated. What matters is consistency, sincerity, and the belief that everyone has a role to play. Treating every community member as a partner in peace, not just a bystander as we create a culture of shared responsibility. Educating our barangay constituents is not just about information; it's about building safer, stronger, and more united communities.

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