ADULT PERSPECTIVES ON THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN INVOLVED IN ARMED CONFLICT IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

The research examines the methods and lessons learned in integrating children's participation in the implementation of the Philippine Government's Comprehensive Program Framework for Children Involved in Armed Conflict (CPF-CIAC), which guides plans and programs in addressing the recruitment and use of child soldiers in the country. Guided by relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the research looked into the different methods used to ensure the participation of children in the implementation of the CPF-CIAC. The research also discussed the challenges in the conduct of partnerships or collaborative efforts with children. Lastly, the research proposed a framework to ensure and sustain children's participation.

The research found that children were involved in advocacy work and community mobilization, in the conduct of consultation processes for program development, in legal actions against perpetrators of human rights violations and in the process of reintegration former child soldiers. These efforts took place in various venues at public and private spheres. However, there were challenges faced such as the need to balance participation and protection due to the security threats children face and the need to improve existing government mechanisms such as children and youth councils in conflict affected communities. Furthermore, the research suggests the need to develop processes accessible to all children in conflict areas, whether they are former child soldiers or those affected by armed conflict, where they can provide recommendations on programs, and develop their capacity to ensure their personal and community protection and development.

KEY WORDS: CHILD PARTICIPATION/ CHILD RIGHTS/ CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT/ CHILD SOLDIERS

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