

Young women in coastal villages embark on journey as researchers

21-24 August 2016, Catarman, Northern Samar, Philippines



ASPBAE, E-Net Philippines, and SPPI organised a youth action research in Samar, Philippines.

ASPBAE, along with E-Net Philippines and the Centre for Local Economy Development (SPPI), a local NGO, organised a youth action research workshop in Samar. The action research aims to generate ideas, recommendations, and innovations to improve education programmes that will empower young women and help them build their skills for work and life.

Twelve young women came together and shared ideas on how they could use their life experiences to build knowledge on education, work, and skills for young women. They were candid, even emotive, as they spoke about their lives in Northern Samar. Many of them never went to high school, some had a few years in college. Several quit school due to early pregnancy; others due to poverty. Two of them were still in high school and looking for ways and means to complete their education. But their concern for the community, for their education, and for the future of their family motivated them to aspire to become community researchers.

Their first experience as a team was in the workshop on youth-led action-oriented research held in Catarman. During the workshop, the young women drew maps to highlight the education learning opportunities in their villages. They also wrote their biographies and narrated their strengths and weaknesses. They also committed to doing action research – one that will put forward recommendations for education and learning opportunities that will benefit themselves and their communities. They brainstormed the instruments for the research (interviews and surveys) around three questions –



Young women shared ideas on how they could use their life experiences to build knowledge on education, work, and skills.

- 1) How do young women view and engage with learning opportunities in their rural/urban context?
- 2) What alternative strategies might enable learners to engage in lifelong learning in ways that improve their lives?
- 3) What support strategies and mechanisms might enable learners to access quality education and lifelong learning opportunities?



Participants of the workshop committed to doing action research – one that will put forward recommendations for education and learning opportunities that will benefit themselves and their communities.

At the end of the workshop, the young women agreed to be learners once again as they embarked on the research together. Interestingly, they found it challenging to look at themselves as 'learners', as they were mothers and had families and had for their own reasons stopped aspiring to continue learning. This research was a way for them to continue to learn and grow and at the same time contribute to the improving the lives of their families and communities.

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