

## **MANAGING ORGANIZED LEISURE ACTIVITIES AMONG YOUTH: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FROM STATE TO SCHOOL**

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### **Abstract**

Leisure time and the activities play important roles in the lives of young people in many countries. It provides opportunities for personal well-being and self-fulfilment and allows people to understand how the freedom of leisure requires people to make good choices for them and the community. However, most programs organized are not only irrelevant to the needs of the young people but failed to reach them across the country. Such current low participation level is not helpful to the desired development of more permanent meaningful leisure time use among youth because involvement in organized sports leisure and recreation activities at young age helps to shape the positive attitudes. Malaysia Young Partners (YP) for instance, was established to encourage youth involvement in a variety of physical, social, cultural, and community activities. The Young Partners program was based on the transformation of the Community Youth Development approach which emphasizes total involvement of youth and local communities. The initiative was in response to a perceived decline in motivation for healthy involvement in recreation and an increase in deviant behaviors among youth in the country. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to assess program implementation of the organized leisure activities handled by YP for youth in schools up to state level in Selangor, one of the most active Young Partners' organizations in Malaysia. First, youth leisure preferences were determined before the implementation was evaluated. Using the cluster random sampling technique for quantitative data gathering, self-completed questionnaires on leisure activities were distributed to Young Partners participants. The assessment of program implementation was gathered from interviews with Young Partners officers regarding their views on the management aspects. Results on leisure activities showed that work-related and passive activities seemed to be more frequently involved by youth (n=413) followed by active and social leisure. Their time for YP involvement is only available after school hours, during weekends and holidays. In managing the program, policy implementation at school levels are based on the original programs structured at the district but pass down to schools. The state education department and district education office are informed on the programs scheduled so they can coordinate with the education offices' own programs. Teachers who handle co curriculum activities are usually informed by District Education offices and they are aware about YP programs and can use the budget allocated in schools to handle related YP programs at school levels. However, in order to effectively implement the policy, programs must be developed accordingly and a timeframe must be set toward achieving the policy's stated goal and the formulation must involve a highly participatory process involving youth in schools. In other words, activities must be based on youth leisure preferences and Needs Assessment Analysis for young people between the ages of 15-25, regardless of their ethnic groups and backgrounds should be carried out to encourage full participation in YP. Therefore, Young Partners policy is able to achieve its objectives in both following the top-down administrative role of the cycling programming process and also bottom-up from the needs assessment of the participants.

**Keywords:** Organized Leisure Activities, Young Partner, Policy