

Filipino Youth Advocates Call for Inclusive and Sustainable Transportation Policies

PRESS RELEASE:

Following the successful conclusion of the Changekeepers Academy, Filipino youth have united to address pressing mobility and transportation challenges through the formulation of a **“Filipino Youth Declaration on Active Mobility and Public Transport.”** This declaration highlights the urgent need for policymakers to prioritize inclusivity, accessibility, connectivity, and sustainability in shaping the country’s urban landscapes and transportation systems.



Signing of the Declaration during the Changekeepers Academy Assembly last 28 January 2024 at UP Law Center, University of the Philippines College of Law.

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Signing of the Declaration during the Urulay Transpo: Policy Kapihan sa Naga last 25 February 2024 by youth in Camarines Sur.

Signed by youth from all over the Philippines, the declaration serves as a call to action, urging policymakers to adopt innovative policy solutions suggested by the Filipino youth for the benefit of society. In addition to the declaration, policy recommendations from the Academy and other in-person activities will be refined and shared with local and national policymakers and stakeholders.



Signing of the Declaration during Ateneo Lex's Leadership Camp in Ateneo de Manila University last 13 March 2024.

To support this movement and contribute to positive change in active mobility and public transportation policies, individuals are encouraged to sign the Declaration by visiting bit.ly/3ViYRqr.

Link to Photos: [Photos for Press Release](#)

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Press Release written by Gerald John C. Guillermo. GJ is the Founder of Keep the Change: Youth Policy Lab, a youth initiative to empower Filipino youth and other stakeholders to understand and participate in the Philippine policy environment and develop innovative solutions to solve complex public issues. The Lab was formed under Gerald John's Oxfam in Asia's Young Leaders Program 2023-2024. For collaborations, you may contact the Lab at ktc.ypl@gmail.com or via their social media platforms at linktr.ee/ktc.ypl.

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Filipino Youth Declaration on Active Mobility and Public Transport

1. We, at Keep The Change: Youth Policy Lab, alongside Filipino youth nationwide, passionately urge the Philippine government and key stakeholders to pledge their unwavering commitment to bolstering active mobility and public transport infrastructure.
2. We demand heightened connectivity and accessibility centered around human mobility instead of cars and other private vehicles. Streets in Manila and other major urban hubs are designed to facilitate the movement of vehicles, not for the people, especially for the youth, and its repercussions are well understood worldwide: Manila is among, if not the worst cities for travel, with individuals spending hours in traffic and the construction of more highways and roads worsen it. Our public servants must understand that modeling the city around human travel is the crux of any city's well-being; it is vital for meeting economic and social justice.
3. We implore a complete redesign of our roads in accordance with human-focused and human-centered urban planning principles. Cities in the Philippines often disregard urban planning rules, which include narrow roads, insufficient street lights, poorly designed roads causing traffic and accidents, limited spaces for public transport layovers, uneven and deteriorating roads, and more. We call for integrating innovative technologies in shaping the future of transportation, enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of active mobility and public transport infrastructures. This includes utilizing advanced modeling and simulation tools in sustainable urban planning and smart traffic management systems, providing mechanisms that are responsive to the ever-changing needs of society. The youth must be included in realizing alternate and human-friendly urban arteries in our cities to ensure active mobility and an efficient public transport system.

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4. We urge for the replanning of the presence of expressways in our cities. Expressways are exclusive by nature: they are made to facilitate the movement of private car users. They now serve as an apparent example of socioeconomic inequality for the youth as it limits their view of the skies in many parts of cities. The youth should not be deprived of their sight of nature and should not be reminded that efficient travel is only for the privileged. The right to their city is a birthright, and the government should be obliged to remind them of this through human-centric urban planning.
5. We advocate for expanding and refining the public transport system and its facilities. Policymakers should focus on diversifying transportation modes for residents to reduce car congestion in cities. Strategic route planning should ensure all areas of the cities are accessed and discourage using cars for short-distance travel. Digital signages that display real-time schedules must be embedded in transit hubs to develop smoother and smarter travel. We call for inclusive development, too, pressing to entice the public and the youth to use our public transport system. Sound policies that ensure public modes of transport are maintained well, and their cheap costs are seen to stimulate the number of commuters. Sanitation of transit hubs must also be improved and be well-maintained, and the absence of restrooms onboard vehicles must be addressed to prioritize public health. We demand our public servants to reorient their discourses on the public commuting experience to allow our cities to be less car-centric and to allow our public transport to be actualized.
6. We demand more implementation of carbon neutrality in public transport. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we at the Policy Lab insist that commuting experiences prioritize environmental sustainability and alleviate air pollution. This ensures a secure and enjoyable future for our generation and those to come. We further demand that integrating sustainable principles in public transport must not compromise the businesses of the economically disadvantaged. Policies must adapt to the families relying on running formal and informal public transport without jeopardizing their livelihoods. Regarding this, we demand a re-evaluation of the Jeepney Phaseout to take the lives of our fellow Filipinos further into account. Public servants must remember the financial capabilities of those running our trains, jeepneys, tricycles, and motors in moving towards a greener future.

7. We urge for improved footpaths in our cities. Philippine cities are among the most dangerous for youth to undergo foot travel. Our sidewalks are cramped and congested, and we assert that they must be widened and accommodated for all users, particularly for the physically challenged and those who have difficulty accessing our pedestrian lanes. Further, the dangers posed by the footpaths go beyond physical: they are significantly detrimental to the youth's mental health. Our urban sidewalks are in deplorable conditions, posing a significant challenge for the less-abled youth. Sidewalks should genuinely serve pedestrians, not just in name. Accessible sidewalks should be a fundamental human right, free from fear, ensuring safety and catering to the interests of the communities they serve.

8. We press for creating more bike lanes in our cities. In addition, public spaces serving automobiles should be lessened to construct more infrastructure for bikes and cyclists. In doing so, our cities will contribute to the goals of decarbonizing cities, making them more energy-efficient and invigorating the heart of active travel for the Filipino youth. Bike lanes will also contribute to our physical and mental health, providing alternatives to walking and cars. In designing the bike paths, it must be non-discriminatory and intentionally intersect all communities rather than serving the privileged few; our cities cannot flourish without uplifting all of our fellow Filipinos.

9. We demand green initiatives in our cities that maintain a high standard of mobility and transport. Green spaces should be incorporated appropriately into urban networks, acting as heat and carbon sinks and as places of relaxation. There must be initiatives that include the youth that maintain these spaces, such as litter-picking, to affirm their social responsibility in creating a place for themselves and fellow youth. Waterways must be ensured to be healthy for commuting and for aquatic life. For example, the Pasig River is a lifeline of Manila as it contributes in abundance to Filipino history and once hosted a plethora of biodiverse life. However, poor and misguided decisions by the government led to its demise. There should be progress in unlocking the full potential of the natural environment in Manila to spark ambition amongst youth that greenery can coincide with the built environment. This will also significantly amount to the SDGs.

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10. We implore for improved public knowledge of the importance of humanizing our roads. An inadequate understanding of why our roads must facilitate active mobility hampers any progress toward ensuring sustainability and walkability for not only the youth but all Filipinos. Manifesting change in our public transport infrastructure begins with enlightening our fellow Filipinos of a better future for them so that the youth, our current trailblazers, can contribute to a better nation that serves the people of today and the future generations.
11. We urge for boosted universal accessibility to our cities. The United Nations declares that cities are the future of living and must be enjoyed by the inhabitants within cities and beyond. Public servants must provide affordable and accessible mobility nationally for the rural, complemented with appropriate modes of travel. Our fellow youth in the provinces must be allowed to easily and safely journey to their nearest respective urban hubs, enjoy the opportunities and experiences provided, and facilitate the empowerment of those eager to improve their communities. Cities must, therefore, be inclusive to all Filipino youth of all backgrounds.
12. We urge for revisiting the policies that are the foundations of the active mobility and public transport crisis we face today. The government-led initiatives and planning that laid the urban network are of the past and serve individuals of the past and not of the youth today. There must be a revision in the urban planning policies that combine the voices and spirit of today's and tomorrow's youth to ensure that our cities are constantly updated and adjusted today and contingent for the future. Outdated planning will restrict and stifle progress in mobility and transport development.
13. We at the Keep The Change: Youth Policy Lab demand the end of the empty promises of our public servants and government. Our urban cities are among the worst in the world for foot and vehicular travel and are ultimately dangerous for the well-being of our youth. These alone should warrant immediate courses of action, and policies and changes affecting active mobility and public transport should incorporate the voices of the private sector, broader civil society, and especially the youth to exercise and fulfill the spirit of democracy that this country firmly adheres to.



14. This vital initiative is not just about transportation; it is about enhancing the quality of life for every Filipino. It is about ensuring safer streets, cleaner air, and greater accessibility for all. Let us join hands and pave the way towards a brighter, more inclusive future for everyone.

15. Together, let's keep the change!

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