

Inaugural Changekeepers Academy Assembly: Filipino Youth Nationwide Collaborate on Active Mobility and Public Transport

Event Days	27–28 January 2024
Venue	Bocobo Hall, UP Law Center, University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City and via Zoom
Organized by:	Keep the Change: Youth Policy Lab

Keep the Change: Youth Policy Lab organized its first and largest youth forum, the Changekeepers Academy Assembly in the Law Centre, University of the Philippines Diliman, to facilitate youth-led change in resolving challenges in active mobility and public transport across the Philippines.

The Changekeepers Academy supported and equipped Filipino youth with the necessary skills to tackle active mobility and public transport issues in their respective areas across the two days. An esteemed speaker lineup from the development, government sector, and civil society joined to provide insights to the participants on crucial elements concerning active mobility and public transportation. Together with panel sessions to provide multidisciplinary discussions of challenges, workshops were done to deliver technical, hands-on learning experiences about instituting change through policy-making.

A stellar lineup of experts, officials, and professionals from Oxfam International, Asia Centre, officials from the Philippines national government and Local Government Units (LGUs), and the youth, academe, government, civil society, and the development sector attended to impart high-level lectures and panel discussions to the attendees.

Mr. Gerald John C. Guillermo, founder of Keep the Change: Youth Policy Lab and Oxfam Young Leader Fellow, shared the organization's and the academy's importance in accelerating youth-led change for a better nation. Assistant Dean Solomon Lumba of the University of the Philippines College of Law supported the event and gave his opening remarks to empower the delegates as future

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leaders in the country. Following him were the Oxfam Fellows from across Asia, including Wajid Zahid, Soumya Mishra, Sanjana Chettri, and Ricardo Araujo, sharing their journeys as Oxfam Young Leader Fellows. Together, they illuminate the resilience, innovation, and interconnectedness inherent in youth-led initiatives across the region. The delegates were also able to learn and were inspired as they navigated to pursue their dream in the policy sector.

The next session was Policy and Law, where the delegates were immersed in the intricacies of policy-making alongside esteemed speaker Atty. Dave Anastacio, Shubert Ciencia, and Zyza Nadine Suzara. From exploring avenues for citizen engagement to envisioning the pivotal role of youth in shaping policies, this discussion promises to enlighten and empower. Prof. Czarina Medina-Guce delivered her presentation regarding social accountability in policymaking soon afterward, underlining the importance of carrying agency and responsibility when creating societal changes to ensure democratic virtues are maintained.

The delegates further delve into the pressing issues of active mobility and public transportation in Metro Manila and their localities. Alberto H. Kimpo, William Mariano, Jayson M. Villeza, and Robert Siy shed light on policy advocacy strategies, technology's role in enhancing transportation, and collaborative approaches between government and civil society.

Day two started with engaging workshop sessions facilitated by Mr. Guillermo and Mr. Robert Sanders, who guided participants through the end-to-end process of crafting impactful policy recommendations and engagement strategies. These workshops gave attendees practical tools and insights, fostering a hands-on approach to civic engagement and policy advocacy. From problem identification to solution proposal and presentation to policymakers, participants were empowered to become effective agents of change in their respective spheres of influence.

The Assembly concluded with the founder, Mr. Guillermo, expressing gratitude to the esteemed speakers, volunteers, and participants for their contributions to the flagship event. He inspired delegates to be catalysts for change in the country and communities, emphasizing the importance of the Changekeepers Academy Assembly as a space for innovation and meaningful civic engagements. He urged attendees to turn hopes into reality and pave the way for a "brighter, fairer, and more compassionate future for everyone, especially

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the marginalized and underprivileged.”

The Assembly attracted over 70 participants, uniting individuals from diverse backgrounds nationwide, both physically and virtually. Attendees spanned various stages of life and career, ranging from university students to seasoned professionals representing multiple industries. Participants generously exchanged insights and addressed key issues surrounding the overarching themes throughout the event. Culminating the Academy was the formulation of a “Youth Declaration on Active Mobility and Public Transport,” spotlighting persistent mobility and transportation challenges and urging policymakers to prioritize inclusivity, accessibility, connectivity, and sustainability in shaping the country’s urban landscapes and transportation systems. In addition, the policy recommendations will be revised and improved, and they will be shared with the Declaration with local and national policymakers and other stakeholders to share the innovative policy solutions crafted by the Filipino youth, for the benefit of the Filipino society.

Photos: [Social Media Uploads](#)

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