

## EXPLORING MEANINGFUL CHILD PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE: INSIGHTS FROM BARANGAY LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

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### ABSTRACT

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This study examines how the selected barangay local government units (BLGUs) in the Southern Philippines are implementing meaningful child participation in governance. It focuses on three key aspects: informing children of their rights, actively hearing their perspectives, and involving them in decision-making. The study found a diverse group of respondents, with a majority from Gen Z and Millennials. Many are college graduates and actively involved in organizations, showcasing their potential as future leaders. A significant effort is put into ensuring children are well-informed about their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This highlights a commitment to both inclusivity and upholding children's rights. The research also found a positive perception towards "hearing" children's voices. This suggests a cultural shift towards participatory governance, where children's perspectives are valued in decision-making. This empowers them, communicates the importance of their opinions, and leads to policies that better reflect their needs. The study concludes that meaningful child participation is not only achievable but essential for sustainable development and good governance. It's an investment in the future, fostering a generation of informed, engaged, and responsible citizens. These findings offer valuable insights for local governments in the Southern Philippines and contribute to the global discussion on empowering children as active contributors to society. Secure spaces for participation and formal structures within schools, communities, or local government, like the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), can further empower children to effectively engage in governance.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, children have often been deprived of the opportunity to assert independence in governance matters due to perceptions of their moral immaturity, lack of life experience, and inability to make reasoned judgments. Hence, it's crucial to acknowledge and safeguard children's entitlement to articulate their perspectives across diverse contexts and developmental stages. Within these varied circumstances, differing societal attitudes toward children and their societal roles exist, which can either facilitate or hinder their engagement in daily affairs and significant choices (Zombory, 2023).

The significance of child participation lies in granting children a voice in matters that impact them and ensuring that their needs and viewpoints are considered in decision-making processes. Meaningful child participation extends beyond mere acknowledgment of children's opinions; it entails actively integrating them as stakeholders in all facets of their lives (Massons-Ribas et al., 2021).

Children are frequently dismissed by adults, who may perceive them as too young or lacking in experience to contribute to decision-making processes. However, children

constitute a crucial segment of society, and their involvement in governance is essential for safeguarding their rights and welfare. Despite this importance, children's participation is frequently restricted, and their voices may go unheard. Yet, children often offer unique perspectives and insights that can enrich the decision-making abilities of adults. In the context of sustainable development and proficient governance, active participation by children is a cornerstone (Lansdown, 2011).

Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underscores the imperative of fostering peaceful and inclusive societies to achieve sustainable development, alongside ensuring universal access to justice and establishing effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. This goal directly correlates with child participation in governance by emphasizing the necessity of cultivating an environment where children can actively partake in decision-making processes. By advancing peaceful and inclusive societies, children gain a secure and supportive platform to voice their opinions and contribute to governance without the fear of discrimination or violence. Ensuring access to justice for all guarantees the protection and upholding of children's rights, thereby facilitating their

involvement in governance free from barriers or hindrances (Gottschalk & Borhan, 2023).

Thus, active involvement in governance instills in children a heightened sense of empowerment and recognition as valuable contributors to society. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of child participation in governance, there remains a lack of comprehensive research on effective implementation strategies. This study seeks to bridge this gap by promoting meaningful child participation in local governance, establishing platforms and mechanisms for children to freely express their viewpoints, and nurturing their capacities as future leaders and engaged community members. Focusing on child participation within Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) in Southern Philippines, this research aims to deepen the understanding and application of inclusive governance processes at the grassroots level.

### Objectives of the Study

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the respondents?
  - 1.1 Age
  - 1.2 Gender
  - 1.3 Educational Attainment
  - 1.4 Membership in the Organization
2. To identify the meaningful child participation in governance in the Barangay Poblacion, Valencia City in terms of:
  - 2.1 Informing
  - 2.2 Hearing
  - 2.3 Involving in the decision-making process

### Literature Review

#### *Who is Child?*

Child refers to persons below eighteen (18) years of age or those over but are unable to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition (Acts, 2011).

#### *Child Participation in Governance*

In the Philippines, child participation in local governance entails the active involvement of children in decision-making processes at the grassroots level, notably within barangays, the smallest administrative units (Bessell, 2009). Children are acknowledged as significant stakeholders whose opinions and viewpoints merit consideration in issues that impact both them and their communities. This engagement is in harmony with the principles of democracy, inclusivity, and human rights, as articulated in international treaties like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Richards-Schuster & Pritzker, 2015).

One significant element of child involvement in local governance in the Philippines is the formation of Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) or Youth Councils within barangays. These councils serve as avenues for youth, including children, to engage actively in local governance by advocating for the interests and issues affecting young people in decision-making processes at the barangay level (Balanon et al., 2007).

Through Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) councils, children are afforded the chance to suggest projects, express their views on local matters, and play a role in shaping policies that directly impact their lives (Joyce O. Cadano, 2023). Despite these efforts, obstacles persist in achieving meaningful child participation in local governance in the Philippines. Factors such as limited awareness of children's rights, insufficient resources, and cultural obstacles may impede children's effective engagement in decision-making processes (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017). Moreover, there is a pressing need for increased support and capacity-building initiatives to empower children to participate meaningfully in governance activities at the local level. In essence, creating an enabling environment that encourages the active involvement of children in local governance is crucial for fostering inclusive and democratic communities in the Philippines (Torres, n.d.).

### *Child Involvement in Governance Processes*

Child participation in governance refers to the active participation of children in decision-making and governance endeavors across different levels, extending from local to international domains. This involvement encompasses diverse activities, such as voicing their perspectives, opinions, and apprehensions on issues that impact them directly or indirectly, and actively contributing to the formulation and execution of policies (Committee, 2022). It recognizes children as stakeholders possessing valuable insights and viewpoints, underscoring their entitlement to be heard and to have their opinions taken into account in governance proceedings (Doek, 2020).

Initiatives to facilitate child engagement in governance processes find their basis in international frameworks like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This convention acknowledges children's entitlement to freely express their opinions on all matters concerning them and advocates for these views to be considered appropriately, taking into account their age and maturity level (Montà et al., 2020). Furthermore, endeavors focused on enhancing child participation in governance are progressively acknowledged as integral elements in advancing democracy, human rights, and sustainable development (Johnson & West, 2018).

Despite the increasing acknowledgment of the significance of children's participation in governance processes, several obstacles persist. These challenges include societal perceptions that view children as incapable of meaningful engagement in decision-making, along with institutional barriers that restrict their access to information and opportunities for involvement (UNICEF, 2018). Overcoming these hurdles necessitates collaborative endeavors to establish conducive environments that encourage and facilitate children's participation in governance processes. This entails furnishing them with age-appropriate information, resources, and platforms for engagement (Balanon et al., 2007).

Active participation in decision-making processes empowers children, instilling in them a sense of agency and empowerment. This engagement underscores the importance of their perspectives, promoting increased accountability and participation. Additionally, children often offer unique insights into their experiences, needs, and obstacles. Incorporating these insights into decision-making processes

ensures that policies and strategies are better tailored to address the realities of their lives, resulting in the development of more effective and relevant solutions (Trivelli & Morel, 2021).

Engaging in decision-making processes can act as an educational instrument for children, enhancing their understanding of governance, democracy, and civic duty, which in turn contributes to their overall development as well-informed and active citizens. Furthermore, early involvement in governance is vital for nurturing a sense of civic belonging among children, instilling in them the belief that they are integral members of society with both the privilege and responsibility to contribute to its advancement (Alias et al., 2023).

Finally, Blanken et al. (2023) emphasize that involving children in decision-making is an investment in the future. This approach cultivates a generation that is not only aware of their rights but also actively involved in shaping their environment, thereby fostering a beneficial cycle of civic engagement.

### *Meaningful Child Participation in Informing*

Meaningful Child Participation in Informing Governance entails children actively engaging in providing information and perspectives to inform decision-making processes within governance frameworks (African et al., 2018). This participation represents a transition from being passive recipients of decisions to becoming active contributors, with children playing a crucial role in shaping policies and practices that impact their lives. In this capacity, children are empowered to articulate their viewpoints, experiences, and requirements, ensuring that governance mechanisms are informed by a thorough understanding of the challenges faced by children (Handbook et al., n.d.).

Van Rensburg's research (2020) emphasizes the crucial role of meaningful child participation in informing governance processes, stressing its profound influence on policy outcomes and children's overall well-being. By adopting inclusive and participatory methods, children can provide invaluable insights that may not be evident from adult viewpoints alone, thereby fostering more efficient and adaptable governance structures. Furthermore, the research underscores the necessity for tailored strategies to facilitate children's participation, considering factors such as their age, maturity level, and communication preferences (Hagger, 2020).

Moreover, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) underlines children's entitlement to freely express their views on all issues concerning them and to have those views considered appropriately based on their age and maturity level (Gerison Lansdown, 2011). This global treaty highlights the significance of meaningful child participation in governance processes and serves as a guiding principle for advancing children's rights and welfare worldwide. Thus, meaningful child participation in informing governance is not only an ethical imperative but also a legal mandate under international human rights law (Doek, 2020).

As highlighted by the US Department of Education (2023), efforts have been made not only to involve children in decision-making processes but also to ensure their thorough comprehension of their rights to participate. This demonstrates a commitment to upholding children's rights

and fostering an atmosphere of inclusivity and empowerment. It establishes a firm foundation for building a society where children actively contribute to shaping their destinies. Kudos are deserved by all individuals involved in promoting and implementing meaningful child participation in governance.

### *Meaningful Child Participation in Hearing*

Meaningful Child Participation in Hearing entails children's active and meaningful engagement in processes where their voices are acknowledged and esteemed, especially in arenas like legal proceedings, policy consultations, or community dialogues. This principle highlights not just the attendance of children in these contexts but also the degree to which their viewpoints, ideas, and experiences are acknowledged and genuinely valued. It underscores the significance of fostering inclusive settings where children feel empowered to express themselves openly, and where their input is respected and acted upon (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014).

The research conducted by Percy-Smith, as referenced in Fitzmaurice (2017), underscores the importance of meaningful child participation in the hearing, asserting its crucial role in advocating for children's rights and improving the quality of decision-making processes. Utilizing case studies and illustrations, Percy-Smith illustrates how including children in listening sessions can result in more informed and efficient outcomes, as their distinctive perspectives and experiences often illuminate aspects overlooked by adults. Additionally, the study highlights the ethical obligation of ensuring that children are actively involved in decisions concerning their lives, as stipulated in international frameworks such as the United Nations (2012).

Moreover, (Gerison Lansdown, 2011) underscores the significance of establishing structured mechanisms for meaningful child participation in listening, such as creating child-friendly spaces, utilizing age-appropriate communication methods, and implementing capacity-building programs. These endeavors are essential for addressing obstacles to children's participation, including power differentials, restricted access to information, and cultural norms favoring adult perspectives over those of children. By engaging children actively in hearing sessions and furnishing them with requisite support and resources, policymakers and practitioners can guarantee that decisions are inclusive, fair, and aligned with children's rights and concerns.

Thus, there is a widespread acknowledgment of the significance of integrating children into decision-making processes. This implies that policies and decisions are more likely to be comprehensive and effective when they consider the unique perspectives and needs of the younger demographic. This favorable reception may also signal a cultural shift towards a more inclusive and participatory approach to governance, highlighting the recognition that children's involvement enriches decision-making processes by providing deeper insight and information (Voorhis et al., 2023).

### *Meaningful Child Participation in the Decision-making*

Meaningful Child Participation in Decision-making refers to children's active engagement in processes where decisions

are formulated regarding their lives, well-being, and rights. It involves authentic opportunities for children to voice their perspectives, opinions, and preferences on issues directly or indirectly impacting them. This participation goes beyond mere token gestures, ensuring that children's input is esteemed, honored, and incorporated into decision-making procedures in a manner that corresponds with their evolving abilities and interests (Lansdown, 2005).

Studies suggest that meaningful child participation in decision-making yields beneficial outcomes for children, such as heightened self-esteem, enhanced social and cognitive development, and an increased sense of accountability and ownership toward their actions and communities (Lundy, 2018). Additionally, it enhances decision-making processes by providing policymakers and practitioners with valuable insights into children's viewpoints, needs, and priorities, thereby promoting the development of more informed and responsive policies and programs (Kellett, 2017).

However, achieving meaningful child participation in decision-making requires addressing various barriers and challenges, including power imbalances, inadequate resources and support structures, and societal attitudes that undermine children's capabilities and agency (Firinci Orman, 2022). It necessitates the creation of enabling environments where children feel empowered to express their opinions, where their voices are heard and respected, and where they are actively engaged in shaping decisions that impact their lives and futures (Comeau, 2005). This involves fostering partnerships among children, adults, and institutions, enhancing children's capacities for participation, and promoting a culture of child rights and citizenship within communities and societies (Child & Childhood, n.d.).

## Tables

**Table 1.** Socio-demographic profile on Meaningful Child Participation in Governance.

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
10-20 years old	11	36.7 %
21-30 years old	5	16.7 %
31-40 years old	11	36.7 %
41-50 years old	1	3.3 %
51-60 years old	1	3.3 %
61 years old	1	3.3 %
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	19	63.3 %
Female	10	33.3 %
LGBTQIA	1	3.3 %
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
Elementary Level	1	3.3 %

High School Level	9	30 %
College Graduate	20	66.7 %
<b>Membership to an Organization</b>		
Yes	20	66.7 %
No	10	33.3 %
<b>Participation in an Organization</b>		
Civic	10	33.3 %
Religious	4	13.3 %
Both	6	20 %
None	10	33.3 %

**Table 2.** Meaningful Child Participation in Governance.

Statements	Mean	Sd	Qualitative Description	Qualifying Statements
<b>Informing</b>				
1. Is the child informed about their right to participate in any decision-making processes that affect their lives (art. 12 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child) before planning?	2.80	0.48	Good	The child has positive meaningful participation in Governance in terms of informing
2. Did the child receive information about the content of the documents (e.g., policies, programs, activities) that will affect them before a decision has been made)?	2.3	0.61	Undecided	The child has positive or negative meaningful participation in governance in terms of informing.
3. Was the child informed about the outcomes of the decision made? (e.g., whether positive or negative?).	2.47	0.57	Good	The child has positive meaningful participation in Governance in terms of informing
4. Is the information shared with the child enough?	2.17	0.75	Undecided	The child has positive or negative meaningful participation in governance in terms of informing.
<b>Hearing</b>				
5. Was the child's point of view considered in the decision-making process?	2.77	0.43	Good	The child has positive meaningful participation in Governance in terms of hearing
6. Were the child's thoughts on the discussion given value and weight before making a decision?	2.57	0.57	Good	The child has positive meaningful participation in Governance in terms of hearing

7. Were the children consulted on the matters that would affect them before the decision was made?	2.60	0.56	Good	The child has positive meaningful participation in Governance in terms of hearing
8. Is the child given equal opportunity with adults in raising clarification and giving comments on the discussions that will affect them before the decisions have been made?	2.40	0.72	Good	The child has positive meaningful participation in Governance in terms of hearing
<b>Involvement in Decision Making</b>				
9. Is the child meaningfully involved in the decision-making processes that affect their lives?	2.63	0.56	Good	The child has positive meaningful participation in Governance in terms of involvement in decision-making.
10. Is the child invited to the decision-making meetings?	1.97	0.67	Undecided	The child has positive nor negative meaningful participation in governance in terms of involvement in decision-making
11. Is the child a member of the local special bodies?	2.0	0.69	Undecided	The child has positive nor negative meaningful participation in governance in terms of involvement in decision-making
12. Was the child, or a representative of the child, present in the decision-making meetings?	2.37	0.72	Good	The child has positive meaningful participation in Governance in terms of hearing

### 3. METHODS

#### Research Design

This study employed descriptive quantitative methods, which were employed to collect information concerning current conditions or situations for description and interpretation. This research method involved not only gathering and tabulating facts but also encompassing thorough analysis, interpretation, comparisons, and identification of trends.

Moreover, the study employed a quantitative approach, which prioritizes objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, surveys, or by manipulating existing statistical data using computational techniques. Additionally, it concentrates on obtaining numerical data and extrapolating it across various groups of people or to elucidate a specific phenomenon.

To understand the perspective of the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) regarding Meaningful child participation in governance in Southern Philippines, the study utilized quantitative methods to collect comprehensive data on the obstacles to meaningful child participation in governance within Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) in Southern Philippines. For quantitative data collection, surveys were conducted among BLGU officials, SK council members, children, and parents to gather information on informing, hearing, and involvement in decision-making concerning meaningful child participation in governance.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profile of meaningful child participation, including age, gender, educational attainment, and organizational membership. According to the findings from the survey questionnaire, the majority of respondents fell within the age groups of 10 to 20 years and 31 to 40 years, comprising 36.7% of the total, belonging predominantly to the Gen Z and Millennial generations.

These generations have likely made significant contributions through their active participation on social media and other online platforms. They are more inclined to voice their opinions on societal matters, potentially impacting policy dialogues (Bozzola et al., 2022). As evidenced by movements like Fridays for Future, spearheaded by youthful activists such as Greta Thunberg, and supported by the United Nations (2012), this demonstrates how the younger generation is advocating for environmental causes. Such activism holds the potential to shape public sentiment and, consequently, influence governance decisions.

However, the majority of respondents were male, comprising 63.3% of the total. Regarding meaningful child participation in governance, it's crucial to acknowledge that a predominance of male respondents doesn't necessarily signify a lack of contribution from other genders. Each generation may offer distinct perspectives and experiences that enrich the collective understanding of child participation in governance.

Regarding educational attainment, the respondents were primarily college graduates, constituting 66.7% of the sample. As Chan (2016) suggests, a higher proportion of college graduates within a generation can have a favorable influence on meaningful child participation in governance. College education typically cultivates critical thinking, communication skills, and a deeper comprehension of societal issues. Consequently, individuals from such generations may be more inclined to participate in informed discussions, advocate for policies benefiting children, and contribute to the advancement of programs promoting their involvement.

As noted by the Office of Educational Technology (2017), college graduates often possess access to diverse networks that can be utilized to establish platforms for children to express their viewpoints. Members of these generations may advocate for educational programs aimed at empowering children with civic knowledge and skills, ensuring they are adequately equipped to engage in governance processes.

Finally, the majority of respondents reported active participation in an organization, accounting for 66.7% of the

sample. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2014) proposed that collective endeavors likely contributed to establishing a more inclusive and diverse platform for child participation in governance. Through active involvement in organizations, individuals could advocate for policies that take into account the needs and perspectives of younger generations. Networking and collaboration across different age groups may have facilitated a more comprehensive approach to governance, ensuring that children's voices are not only heard but also integrated into decision-making processes. It's inspiring to witness multiple generations collaborating toward a more inclusive and participatory future.

Table 2 illustrates meaningful child participation in governance concerning informing, hearing, and involvement in decision-making. The data in Table 2 were arranged in descending order based on the mean scores of meaningful child participation, with children, parents, and public officials presented sequentially from highest to lowest.

### *Informing*

According to the survey questionnaire data, the findings indicate that a majority of respondents demonstrated positive meaningful child participation in governance, particularly regarding informing, with the highest mean score of 2.80. Specifically, children were informed about their right to participate in any decision-making processes that affect their lives, as outlined in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), before planning. This emphasis on ensuring children are informed about their right to participate aligns with Article 12 of the CRC, which underscores the significance of involving children in decisions that impact them.

This outcome indicates that endeavors have been undertaken not only to incorporate children into decision-making processes but also to guarantee that they are adequately informed about their entitlement to participate. It demonstrates a dedication to upholding children's rights and cultivating an atmosphere of inclusivity and empowerment. This lays a strong groundwork for constructing a society where children play an active role in determining their futures. Kudos to all individuals involved in advocating for and executing meaningful child participation in governance (US Department of Education, 2023).

### *Hearing*

The data further indicated that statistically, respondents demonstrated positive meaningful child participation in governance concerning hearing, with the highest mean score of 2.77, attributed to the consideration of the child's viewpoint in the decision-making process. This indicates the respondents' acknowledgment of the significance of integrating a child's perspective into decision-making, resulting in a favorable perception of meaningful child participation in governance. The elevated mean score of 2.77 implies a significant consensus among participants regarding the recognition and appreciation of children's viewpoints.

This statistical evidence, as noted by Voorhis et al. (2023), suggests a shared recognition of the importance of involving children in decision-making. It suggests that policies and decisions are more likely to be comprehensive and effective when they take into account the distinctive perspectives and

requirements of the younger generation. This favorable response may also indicate a cultural transition towards a more inclusive and participatory governance approach, underlining the understanding that children's involvement enhances decision-making processes, making them more informed and effective.

### *Involvement on Decision-making*

The participation of children in decision-making processes within governance substantially contributed to a positive meaningful child participation in governance, as indicated by the survey questionnaire. This was evidenced by children being meaningfully involved in decision-making processes that affect their lives, with the highest mean score of 6.77. The findings suggested a widespread consensus among respondents regarding the significantly positive impact of child involvement in decision-making on meaningful child participation in governance.

As per the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018), the active involvement of children in decision-making processes empowers them with a sense of agency. It communicates that their opinions are valued, nurturing a heightened sense of responsibility and engagement. Furthermore, children often offer unique insights into their own experiences, needs, and challenges. Engaging them in decision-making ensures that policies and strategies are better aligned with the realities of their lives, resulting in more effective and pertinent solutions.

As noted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2023), involvement in decision-making processes can function as an educational tool. It aids children in comprehending the intricacies of governance, democracy, and civic responsibility, thereby fostering their holistic development as informed and engaged citizens.

It's crucial to actively engage children in governance and cultivate a sense of civic identity from an early age. This instills the notion that they are essential members of society, with both the right and obligation to contribute to its improvement (Mwiinga, 2023). Lastly, according to the Department of Education (2022), involving children in decision-making represents an investment in the future. It fosters a generation that is not only conscious of their rights but also actively involved in shaping the world around them, fostering a positive cycle of civic engagement.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The research on Exploring Meaningful Child Participation in Governance: Insights from Barangay Local Government Units in Southern Philippines reveals a noteworthy level of meaningful child participation in governance, particularly among the younger demographics of Gen Z and Millennials. The socio-demographic analysis underscores their active involvement in various organizations, predominantly holding college-educated statuses, and encompassing a significant age range spanning from 10 to 40 years old. The emphasis on social media and online platforms indicates a technologically adept approach to advocacy, aligning with contemporary communication methods. While male respondents dominate, this doesn't negate the potential contributions of other genders, underscoring the importance of acknowledging diverse perspectives within each generation.

This further reinforces the positive trajectory of meaningful child participation. Efforts have been directed towards informing children, ensuring not only their inclusion in decision-making but also their comprehensive understanding of their rights, which serves as a fundamental basis for empowerment. The emphasis on hearing and considering a child's perspective in decision-making signifies a cultural shift towards inclusivity and the appreciation of diverse viewpoints. The statistically significant results underscore a shared belief in the importance of involving children in decision-making, leading to more comprehensive and effective policies. These findings highlight the significance of the study's objectives to enhance understanding and implementation of inclusive governance processes at the grassroots level of Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) in Southern Philippines. By focusing on children's participation in governance, the study aims to establish platforms and mechanisms that enable children to freely express their views while nurturing their capacities to become future leaders and actively engaged members of their communities.

The standout feature of the results is the remarkably high mean score (6.77) indicating a child's involvement in decision-making. This indicates a strong consensus among respondents regarding the substantial and positive influence of such involvement on meaningful child participation in governance. The mentioned benefits encompass empowerment, insightful perspectives, educational enrichment, and the cultivation of civic identity—an investment in a future generation actively shaping the world.

Hence, the findings demonstrate a praiseworthy dedication to meaningful child participation in governance. The integration of well-informed heard, and actively engaged children in decision-making processes embodies a comprehensive approach that respects their rights, appreciates their viewpoints, and empowers them to make meaningful contributions to policy development. This promises to cultivate a more inclusive, informed, and engaged citizenry for the future. Congratulations to all those involved in advocating for this important endeavor.

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