

# MAKATI CITY YOUTH ORCHESTRA (MCO)



### AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING  
4 QUALITY EDUCATION  
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES  
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES  
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

### CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

- 2. HERITAGE, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY
- 6. CULTURE, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

**COMMUNITY, EMPOWERMENT, EDUCATION,  
LIFE-LONG LEARNING, SKILL, PROMOTION,  
HERITAGE, CREATIVITY, YOUTH, COMMON GOOD**



## 1. Makati and culture

Makati, located in the heart of Metropolitan Manila, pulses with a vibrant cultural scene: with an eclectic array of art galleries, theaters, and museums, and with music reverberating through Makati's streets, with live performances and city's festivals and events. At the heart of Makati's cultural vibrancy is its youth, ensuring that the city remains a beacon of creativity, diversity, and opportunity for generations to come.

Before the approval of the Makati Cultural Development Plan in 2021, the city lacked an inclusive cultural framework integrated into its sustainable development strategies. There were also gaps in policies and programming, including long-term artistic training for the youth. The MCYO contributes to specific arts goals of cultivating a vibrant, productive community of artists, partnering with artists and recognizing their contributions to city-building, and nurturing the appreciation of Makatizens for the arts and heritage.

## 2. Project goals and implementation

### 2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The aim is to provide comprehensive and sustainable development for local youth through orchestral music practice. The study and practice of orchestral instruments can develop leadership skills, discipline, teamwork, concentration and sensitivity, and these will hopefully assist in the holistic growth of the public-school students. It is not the program's main goal to lead its members to a career in the performing arts, but it may also undeniably serve as an avenue towards this path and is a most welcome outcome of this initiative. The project aims for children to grow into well-rounded, creative, productive, artistically-literate, inspired and inspiring members of society, to lead and enhancing future local, national and even international lives.

Specific goals include:

- » Develop talents, skills, and values in the grassroots level.
- » Promote and enrich arts and culture, not just among members but also for immediate communities (Makatizens, Filipinos and expatriates).
- » Promote social cohesion among youth population.
- » Serve as a source of pride, identity and inspiration.
- » Preserve and promote Filipino cultural heritage by incorporating Filipino folk music into its repertoire.



**THE AIM IS TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR LOCAL YOUTH THROUGH ORCHESTRAL MUSIC PRACTICE.**

## **2.2. Development of the project**

MCYO is a dynamic musical ensemble composed of talented young musicians from Makati City's public schools that provides them with orchestra music education and performance opportunities and exposure. With a unique focus on Filipino folk music and contemporary pieces, MCYO not only fosters artistic excellence but also promotes cultural heritage through the reintroduction of Original Filipino Music (OPM) and community engagement to the youth. The primary beneficiaries are young musicians from public schools in Makati City, particularly those from low to middle-income families.

Main actions and strategies include:

- » Coordination with the Department of Education Makati Schools Division Office as implementing partner of the program.
- » Identification of a partner artistic institution whose expertise will guide the city government in the formation of the youth orchestra.
- » Consultations culminated with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the main parties.
- » Formation of a joint working group to plan the operationalization of the agreement.
- » Development of the training curriculum, learning module and schedules.
- » Procurement of musical instruments, with technical assistance from the partner artistic institution.
- » Auditions for interested public elementary school students.
- » Selection of the members and start of the music training, rehearsals and, eventually, performances.

The main private sector partner of the program is the Manila Symphony Orchestra Foundation, Inc. (MSO). The other partner in the implementation of this program is the Department of Education Makati Schools Division Office (DepEd Makati), the national government agency in-charge of the basic educational programs of the Philippines. The city government and DepEd Makati have been working closely to provide quality education to young Makatizens for many decades now, and MCYO takes education in Makati to another level. Because the main participants of the program are students, DepEd Makati designed the implementation of the MCYO within the framework of increased community involvement in the musicians' experience. They also manage the orchestra and its resources and ensure that the program adheres to laws and regulations pertaining to child protection. Also, the City Government of Makati provides the funding through the Special Education Fund (SEF) that was created by law to support local educational programs and augment national government funds. The city's Museum and Cultural Affairs Office provides opportunities for the orchestra to perform in the various events that they produce or co-manage.



**MCYO IS COMPOSED OF TALENTED YOUNG MUSICIANS FROM MAKATI CITY'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND PROVIDES THEM WITH ORCHESTRA MUSIC EDUCATION AND PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPOSURE.**

## 3. Impacts

### 3.1. Direct impacts

The MCYO program's impact extends beyond the musical excellence and personal development of its direct stakeholders. It has become a source of pride, fascination and inspiration for the city's public-school system and Makatizens because of the possibilities that it has opened up for children in the arts, regardless of gender and socio-economic status. In fact, more arts programs have been initiated, including the University of Makati Artist Residency Program for dance (with a focus on ballet) with National Artist Alice Reyes and her dance company. Music training scholarships with the Philippine Opera Company will also be provided for Makati's pool of young classical singers who are products of the annual Kundiman sa Makati singing competition. This focus on classical performing arts education aims to diversify and elevate the artistic skills of young Makatizens and to make these art forms accessible to the general public, demonstrating that the arts and cultural pursuits can be and should be enjoyed by everyone - not just the affluent. The MCYO program has encouraged Makatizens to discover, share, and enjoy a wide range of musical genres, including classical and Filipino folk music.

### 3.2. Evaluation

The evaluation tools utilized to monitor and measure the progress of students in their musical and other skills include Music Aptitude Tests, actual performances and recitals, and Comparative General Scholastic Performance that weighs the scholastic performance of students who are part of the orchestra development program vis-a-vis their peers who are not in the program.



In addition to employing technical evaluation tools for its members, MCYO, through the MSO and DepEd, also provides quarterly and annual outcome accomplishment reports which serve as standard monitoring tools of the City Government of Makati. In particular, MCYO addresses the following performance indicators: number of arts and cultural organizations and resident artists, number of arts activities supported by schools and curriculum-integration projects that mainstream culture in all levels of education, enhanced cultural activities of the LGU, and private sector support and engagement in LGU-sponsored cultural activities

This comprehensive reporting approach ensures, not only the documentation of achievements, but also our compliance with safety protocols for minors involved in performances. Through diligent monitoring and evaluation using these indicators, MCYO aims to not only measure progress but also stimulate continuous improvement and increased investment in cultural development initiatives.

### 3.3. Key factors

The success of MCYO can be attributed to several key factors, including:

- » Effective leadership and governance provided by the local government of Makati City.
- » Dedicated instructors and mentors who provide high-quality instruction and guidance.
- » Support from various stakeholders including the local community, schools, NGOs, cultural organizations, and private companies.
- » Access to resources and infrastructure such as musical instruments, rehearsal space, and performance venues.
- » Commitment to youth engagement and empowerment.
- » Focus on diversity and inclusivity within the orchestra.



### 3.4. Continuity

To enhance sustainability and replication efforts, partnerships with established orchestras or universities with orchestra programs may be explored. These collaborations offer opportunities for knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and mentorship. Through these partnerships, the orchestra can enrich capabilities, expand its network, strengthen its foundation, enhance program quality, and facilitate the replication of its model in other communities. The ongoing partnership between MCYO and MSO may also create pathways for members to explore potential career paths in music, receive continuing training, and pursue higher education in music after graduating from high school.

Peer mentoring is also a key strategy to sustainability. The first batch of student-members teaches the newer batches, fostering a sense of leadership, continuity, and support within the organization. This mentorship provides guidance, encouragement, and inspiration to younger participants.

Furthermore, positioning MCYO as a model for other local government units (LGUs) can inspire similar initiatives across the region. By sharing lessons and best practices, it may serve as a blueprint for other communities seeking to establish youth orchestra programs. Graduates of the MCYO project may be encouraged to pursue teaching positions in other LGUs, further expanding the reach and impact of the program, while contributing to music education initiatives nationwide.

**MCYO HAS BECOME A SOURCE OF PRIDE, FASCINATION AND INSPIRATION AND HAS OPENED UP POSSIBILITIES FOR CHILDREN IN THE ARTS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR GENDER AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS.**

## 4. More information

Makati was a candidate for the sixth UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (November 2023 – March 2024). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June 2024, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

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