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**Master's Thesis of Arts**

**Impact of a Youth Non-formal  
Education Program on Empowerment  
and Community Participation  
: Focusing on 'SALUTE' Program in Towerville, the  
Philippines**

임파워먼트와 지역사회 참여에 대한 청소년  
비형식 교육프로그램의 영향:  
필리핀 타워빌의 SALUTE 프로그램 중심으로

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**Impact of a Youth Non-formal  
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Philippines**

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# Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore how marginalized youth in developing countries have developed to be actors with agency in their community. To this end, this study aims to analyze their learning experiences in SALUTE, a non-formal education program. A qualitative case study was adopted as a research method. In the case of data collection, field document and in-depth interviews were used. In addition, 15 students, who have at least 3 years of participation experience in the program and are currently involved in ONE STEP activities, were selected as the main research participants, and 8 officials from CAMP and local high schools were chosen as the supplementary research participants.

As a result of the study, the experience of participation in the program was an empowerment process for the local youth. The experiences provided by the program to learners were (a) learner-friendly environment, (b) gradual transfer of program authority, (c) meaningful participation in the community, and (d) provision of opportunities for critical reflection. In particular, it was revealed that it is important to consider social-emotional learning rather than cursory knowledge. Moreover, it was also able to capture the occurrence of informal learning such as critical reflection between the intention of the program and the learner's actual experience.

In addition to the experience of participating in the program, it was found out that, through this empowerment process in terms of program outcomes, the agency and critical consciousness of the students were improved, which turned out to be participation in making meaningful changes in the community. First, the empowered agency appeared as self-determination based on recognizing commitment to the community as a core value in their lives. In the case of mature critical consciousness, based on the moral value of helping

local people alienated from the social structure due to poverty, it was confirmed as problematization on local issues that were taken for granted and willingness to solve these issues.

Through these findings, this study has the following implications. First, it was concluded that youths were not passive beings, but agentive beings that can make meaningful changes in the community. Second, the possibility of non-formal education in building a sustainable community through contextualized education to the lifeworld was confirmed. Third, it was realized that the process of empowerment through non-formal education is closely related to learners' informal learning that appears between the educational intention of the program and the actual experience of learners. Fourth, it suggested the elements which should strategically be considered in the stage of program design for local activists, NGOs, and other actors who are planning education programs to promote youth empowerment and community participation.

**Keyword:** Scholar as a Leader with Unity Through Essence (SALUTE), Non-formal Education, Youth Empowerment, Community Participation

**Student Number:** 2020-24304

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Study Background

In today's world, many people are leaving their hometowns and moving to cities in search for better opportunities in life, which in turn intensifies inequality between metropolitan areas and regions, creating a vicious cycle of more people leaving their places of origin. Rapid urbanization and extinction of local areas have become global challenges for sustainable development. In this regard, the United Nations (2021) proposed the objective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 11 which is to "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". Most of its sub-targets are focused on environmental investments, including a stable residential environment, social infrastructure, and public transportation, but at the same time, the emphasis is also placed on community involvement and capacity-building, such as establishing community development planning and operational strategies through the participatory approach of the locals, in its target 3. The goal is to reposition the locals as active participants in building sustainable communities. In other words, it can be said that the natives, who have traditionally been passive beneficiaries of local development, are recognized as key agents, which is considered a necessary condition for the sustainable community development (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). In addition, the meaning of the subjective participation of the locals is not a level in which they are simply involved in some local issues, but a practice that leads to changes in individuals and the community as a whole (Frediani, Clark, & Biggeri, 2009, p. 4).

Communities are made up of several main agents and the youth are among them. As the key players who are in the stage of starting their lives in

earnest, they are sensitive to better education and access to employment. Many local youths and young adults are leaving for the cities in pursuit of these opportunities. Moreover, due to disparity of the gateways between the regions, the younger generation living in the local community show a weak sense of belonging to their home regions (Bloksgaard et al, 2013). However, recent researches on the youth shed a light on the positive influence young people have on a community (Sherrod, Flanagan & Youniess, 2002; Zani, 2014). Community-level efforts are, thus, required for youngsters to feel a sense of belonging to actively participate in their communities. This is to change the perception that the youth “are no longer regarded as citizens of the future, but as citizens of today” (Biggeri, Arciprete, & Karkara, 2019, p. 201). In addition, even though the youth have been largely ignored as passive individuals in the communities compared to their actual potentials and capabilities (Biggeri, Arciprete, & Karkara, 2019), “stronger communities” can be formed through “an interactive and dynamic relationship between community and youth development” (Brennan, Barnett, & McGrath, 2009, p. 343).

Along with this, recent discussions in the field of education related to the youth and communities are being actively discussed based on the premise that the former must be fostered as main agents in local communities. In other words, the communities should educate their young people to recognize their existence as being part of the community as a whole and to integrate into community in order to align individual and community goals (Kahne, 1996; Ujam & El-Fiki, 2006, p. 263).

Specifically, there are related studies, including theoretical consideration on youth participation in community (Biggeri, Arciprete, & Karkara, 2019), theoretical consideration on community education (Ujam & El-Fiki, 2006), effects of youth participation (Alkire, 2002; Nussbaum, 2006; Sherrod, Flangan, & Youniess, 2002; Verba et al., 1995; Zani, 2014),

components promoting youth participation in the community (Brennan, Barnett &, McGrath, 2009); educational program models for the youth (Cargo et al., 2003; Hastings et al., 2011; Jennings et al., 2006), and program analysis and evaluation (Puxley & Chapin, 2021). These studies commonly agree that educational intervention is necessary for the positive development of the community and young population.

In addition, those related discussions are mainly centered on non-formal education instead of formal schooling. There is also, of course, a view that the school is recognized as a core educational agent in the community, such as the concept of ‘community school’, and that education at school should be closely connected to the life in the community (Hargreaves, 2003; Ujam & El-Fiki, 2006). The discussions are, however, mainly placed within the realm of non-formal education in that it can flexibly provide a more specific and closely related curriculum for the community issues in comparison to the school education (Bran et al., 2016; Mahruf et al., 2011; Young & McElhone, 1986). Particularly in the context of developing countries, this kind of education is mostly provided in the non-formal education sector, as insufficient financial conditions prevent schools from providing a wide range of quality education (Sultana & Haque, 2019).

Overall, the necessity of educational intervention for adolescents and its effects are clear. It is already being provided to local youth in the form of programs in both formal and non-formal education sectors. However, there are lack of studies that empirically reveal that young people positively grow at the individual level through learning in the process of participating in educational programs, and that, in turn. this growth extends to active participation in the community level. For example, studies conducted by Hastings et al. (2011) and Puxley and Chapin (2021) demonstrated how personal growth through education programs leads to community participation, but it is not clear how learning within the programs actually

impact individual development and community engagement since both studies focused on outcomes in individual and community level, rather than the learning process within the programs.

In this regard, research is thus required to explore and empirically verify how learning of participants is connected and how it influences individual development and active community participation as a result of participation in programs.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

One Society bringing Transformation through Effective Programs (referred to as ONE STEP) is a youth organization active in Towerville, a forcibly displaced area in the Philippines. It published a local magazine as part of an in-depth exploration of local issues and suggesting solutions, and continued community activities such as donating books and school supplies to local schools located in San Jose del Monte City. In particular, it also implemented campaigns to combat fake news in order to stabilize the chaotic community during the pandemic period, load assistance activity for local poor students who had financial difficulties in participating in online classes, and community pantry movement for the locals suffering from poverty and hunger from extreme control by the central government.

It is hard to find other youth organizations like ONE STEP in the Philippines. There has been a significant increase in internal migration since many Filipinos seek opportunities in the cities as a way of escaping local poverty (IOM, 2013). For instance, agriculture's share of total employment in the Philippines fell from 23.2% to 9 % from 1991 to 2017 (Philippines Statistics Authority, 2017; World Bank, 2018). When looking at the demographic characteristics of internal migrants, it seems to be more problematic since most of them come from the young generation. According

to Perez (2015), young people accounted for 46% of all immigrants in 2015, and 24% of them were highly educated people who had graduated from at least high school. The exodus of local youth to the cities creates a local program as the “brain drain” (Hastings et al, 2011, p. 19). The problem with this increase in internal migration is that the outflow of the young people, who will be responsible for the future of the community, is accelerating.

The Philippines has also experienced a rapid urbanization problem as many locals flock to cities. Most of the ONE STEP members are also college students, so they are living outside the Towerville. Although they are physically separated, they are working for community issues with deep sense of belonging to the community in which they lived. Then, what made the members of ONE STEP continuously have the high sense of belonging and active participation in the community? The common background they have is that they attended a local leadership program called ‘Scholar as a Leader with Unity Through Essence’ (referred to as SALUTE) operated by CAMP Asia, an NGO in Towerville. Contrary to most young people who generally leave their communities in pursuit of better education and jobs, in the series of processes leading to the SALUTE program and ONE STEP, the author could capture that the members continuously bond with the community and practice independently to create a better community. This is a change in consciousness and behavior, and the learning experiences of the SALUTE program seems to be deeply embedded in the change.

This study, therefore, suggests the needs for a research to explore what kind of individual development the youth have achieved through the SALUTE program and how this extends to community participation, and to examine how these outcomes are linked to learning experiences within the program.

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to explore how marginalized youth in developing countries have developed to be actors with agency in their community. To this end, this study will analyze their learning experiences in the non-formal education program which they participated in through the following research questions:

First, what are the fundamental features of ‘Scholars as a Leader with Unity Through Essence’? Since non-formal education programs are not standardized in their contents and structure due to their characteristics, it is necessary to systematically understand the program to comprehend the learning experiences of the program participants. Therefore, this question aims to explore the key characteristics of the program by examining the background, contents, and promotion process of the SALUTE program, and to understand what kind of learning experiences the youth participating in the program had.

Second, what changes have been generated as these youth have participated in the program? This question aims to analyze the changes in terms of agency and critical consciousness respectively, and to capture their changed participation in the community created in the midst of the intersection between the agency and the critical consciousness.

Third, what is the cause for the changes and its implications? This question attempts to analyze and conceptualize the changes of the youth at the individual and community level that emerged through the SALUTE project. In addition, it also aims to derive implications for international education development cooperation.

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in two aspects. First, the purpose of this study is not only to empirically explore the process in which youth's individual development expands to community participation, but also to reveal how these outcomes are connected to the learning experiences within the program. As mentioned above, previous studies did not clearly unveil how the learning experiences of participating in such programs play a role in the process of individual development extending to community participation. Second, this study is meaningful in that it was conducted in the context of a developing country. The phenomenon which young people easily tend to leave their local community is universal that occurs in both developed and developing countries. Rather, despite the seriousness of the problem in developing countries, the reality is that it is being largely studied in the context of developed countries. The previous studies also dealt with the cases of the United States (Hasting et al., 2011) and Australia (Puxley & Chapin, 2021) which are regarded as advanced countries.



## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Youth and Community**

This section aims to examine the problems of the marginalized youth in developing countries and the relationship between youth and local communities, and to clarify the need to relocate the young as the principal agents within the community. In addition, for this purpose, it will also review thoroughly what direction the empowerment should have and what characteristics it should take.

#### **2.1.1. Youth in a Community**

A community has traditionally been the primary place for bonding among its members. Kim (2019) regarded a community as a space in which emotional bonds are formed within a certain geographical boundary, not simply as an administrative district unit. The community is, thus, a kind of social organism that symbolizes a territorial boundary, the members who live there, and their connections (Wilkinson, 1991; Theodori, 2005). From a similar perspective, Barnett and Brennan (2006) defined communities as “dynamic field of interaction rather than a rigid system or a simple piece of geography” (p. 2). In this context, community development can be understood as a “dynamic process” created by the interaction of all local actors and resources (Barnett & Brennan, 2006, p. 2).

Despite the fact that the development of a community is the result of the interaction of all actors in the community, it is obvious to say that youth have historically been neglected and ignored within the community. That is, their “decision making, problem-solving, local action, and evaluation in the

communities” have not attracted much notice from community (Barnett & Brennan, 2006, p.1). According to Biggeri, Arciprete and Karkara (2019), this is based on the “conventional wisdom” that young people are “passive individuals to be filled with care and knowledge” within the community and rarely making “valuable choices” (p. 193).

However, in recent studies on youth and communities, youth are seen as beings who can influence the community with their own agency (Biggeri, Arciprete, & Karkara, 2019; Sherrod et al., 2002). This means that youth are not passive beings but can make independent decisions and actions in accordance with their values and beliefs. For example, Mayall (2000 as cited from Biggeri, Arciprete, & Karkara, 2019, p. 197) postulated that youth are beings with agency by revealing that young people can make decisions and act on community issues which they concern, and they are also aware of what consequences may happen by the actions they take. In this regard, Corsaro (2005) saw that youth can contribute to the socio-cultural reproduction of the community through their independent decisions and actions. The socio-cultural reproduction does not imply passive internalization of the social structure and culture existed in the community but indicate creation of a new culture and change. That is, youth in the community are “active constructors of their own culture” and contribute to creating “change within the world” (Biggeri, Arciprete, & Karkara, 2019, p. 198).

Meanwhile, participation in the community decision-making or activities is the effective way to express one's decisions and actions. Participation of young people is significantly important in that it is a means of expressing their values and beliefs, as well as learning to gain experiences for their positive development (Biggeri, Arciprete, & Karkara, 2019) [will be discussed in detail later]. The positive effects of youth participation in the community have already been demonstrated in many preceding studies. First of all, in terms of agency, Alkire (2002) insisted that youth's active

participation in the community develops not only individual level of agency, but also social agency, and sociality and communality may be improved in this process. Verba et al. (1995) argued that, in the process of youth participation in the community, youth become aware that they can exercise influence in the community decision-making, which promotes the formation of agency.

Furthermore, youth participation in the community also promotes democratic citizenship and communality. For example, Zani (2014) contended that active participation in the community affairs exceedingly influences on the future formation of democratic citizenship, and Nussbaum (2006) also argued that participation makes youth responsible and moral, and promotes critical consciousness and democratic practice. In a similar vein, Sherrod et al. (2002) described this more specifically. They insisted that participation in community or community organizations improves sense of belonging and solidarity between community and youth or organizations and youth, which increases the tendency that youth will engage in more political and democratic civic activities in adulthood.

As Brennan, Barnett, and McGrath (2009) said, "stronger communities" emerge in "an interactive and dynamic relationship between community and youth development" (p. 343). The community has to recognize youth as key agents, but at the same time, to ensure their participation in the community in order for them to sufficiently demonstrate their agency.

### 2.1.2. Problems of Youth in Vulnerable Situations

#### *Youth in the poverty context*

Adolescence is an important period in the individual's life span in which social norms are developed, socialization occurs, relationships are formed, and competence for future economic independence is prepared

(Ruland, 2005 as cited Mohajar & Earnest, 2009, p. 426). In order for youth to positively develop as democratic citizens, interaction with the local community through participation is most critical. It is, however, difficult for children who have backgrounds of the deprived family or forced migrant status to have such positive interactions. Conger et al. (2010) stated that the material demands and safety needs of youth are not met within those kinds of underprivileged families and communities. That is, their impoverished ecological environment (e.g., family, neighborhoods, community) cannot support youth to have a favorable development.

The more children raised in the environment, the more they inherit the social position of their parents and become silent on the unequal social structure that exists in the community. Individual experiences tend to differ in accordance with social identities of individuals (Black & Stone, 2005) To put it another way, those with socially advantaged identities are more likely to live in societies with better social circumstances, whereas people with disadvantaged social identities are more likely to encounter repression and injustice. In a similar context, Park (2007), who studied poor residents, contended that people in destitute areas experience social stigma and exclusion in a multidimensional manner within their living world, which reinforces negative self-images about themselves. These negative self-perceptions also act as mechanisms for reproducing and reinforcing their poverty (Kim, 2013, p. 90), the socio-political position is reproduced in the process of interaction between individual's marginalized social identity and structural inequality in the community (Rosenthal, 2016).

Considering the fact that the positive interaction between the community and the youth is important for the community development and the growth of the youth, the problem is that youth who are raised in such an impoverished community have a weak sense of community belonging. Due to the more complicated developmental demands between middle and late

adolescence, communality naturally tends to decline (Albanesi et al., 2007; Cicognani et al., 2015). However, as mentioned above, youth in poor communities experience social discrimination and oppression in multiple dimensions, resulting in a lower sense of belonging to the community than the ordinary youth. Therefore, high social isolation weakens the connection between youth and their communities (see Samuel & Uwizeyimana, 2017). Meanwhile, Bloksgaard et al. (2013 as cited from Sørensen & Pless, 2017, p. 3S) argued that, in a situation where the exploitation relationship between the core and the periphery<sup>1</sup> is clear, people have a dichotomous perception of the region, the “territorial stigma”. In this regard, the core is a place where life opportunities are abundant, while the periphery is an area where people have to leave in search of opportunities. He and his colleagues (2013 as cited from Sørensen & Pless, 2017) emphasized that in order for youth living in poverty or rural areas to have a more positive perception of the community, it is necessary to provide the constructive aspects of the locality the community has.

#### *A possibility of positive connection with the community*

Much empirical evidence about the impact of social inequality on the lives of young people already pointed out that most of marginalized youth are more likely to be less successful or to behave in riskier or deviant ways than the average, and consequently have a lower social status (Walther, 2012). However, Walther (2012) argued that such social inequality does not necessarily determine the lives of youth. It indicated that, even within an unequal social structure, they can make valuable choices, decisions, and actions for a better life based on their agency. In this regard, community-level intervention is required. The intervention at the community level means a

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<sup>1</sup> The core and periphery mean not only inequality between countries, but also unequal relationship between regions within the country (Mahutaga et al., 2011)

program related to the community, and the agents can be the locals, local organizations, or external NGOs or activist groups operating within the community. More importantly, the fulfillment of young people's basic mental and emotional demands, the formation of positive social relationships, and community participation achieved through the intervention lead to more positive development and community connectivity for youth from poverty backgrounds (Alivernini et al., 2021). In addition, opportunities for community involvement are significantly critical not only for connection with the community, but also for young people to fulfill their newly expanded social role as “agents of change” in the community (Biggeri, Arciprete, & Karkara, 2019, p. 201).

### 2.1.3. Positive Youth Development

#### *Concepts of Positive Youth Development*

The Positive Youth Development (referred as to PYD) perspective is an axis of the concept of youth development. This approach aims to foster the well-being of youth (Benson et al., 2006; Granger, 2002), which does not only mean positive growth at the individual level, but through such growth includes that youth can make meaningful changes by integrating into and contributing to the environments surrounding them (e.g., families, schools, communities) (Lerner et al., 2005). That is, PYD emphasizes the positive growth of youth and the changes in their ecological environment.

[PYD] specifies that if young people have mutually beneficial relations with the people and institutions of their social world, they will be on the way to a hopeful future marked by positive contributions to self, family, community, and civil society. Thus, young people will thrive (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 12).

Meanwhile, Lerner, Fisher, and Weinberg (2000) identified the outcomes of positive youth development as the Five Cs of PYD, consisting of competency, confidence, connection, character, and caring. The development of competency means the progress of knowledge and skills in intellectual, interpersonal, civic, and vocational spheres, and confidence is a sign of a healthy sense of self and identity (e.g., self-esteem, self-confidence). In addition, connectedness refers to the relationship with the ecological environment surrounding youth, such as peers, family, and community, and character is linked to positive values, integrity, and moral commitment. Finally, consideration means empathy and compassion for others.

The PYD approach provides a useful perspective in two aspects. First, in the PYD approach, youth is viewed as assets that need to be nurtured (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003), rather than as beings with problems or needing psychological treatment (Roth et al., 1998). In other words, it is to view youth not as a being of “deficit” but as a being of “asset” to be strengthened (Wong, 2008, p. 30). As a result of this change, the traditional risk-prevention approach centered on post-treatment of juvenile delinquents has been replaced by the PYD approach centered on preemptive intervention, which emphasize on preventing such delinquency from initial stage. Another aspect is that it suggests strategies for how communities and activists should be prepared and organized to enable youth to develop positively in a practical context. In fact, through various case studies and participatory research of the PYD approach, empirical evidence has been accumulated that supportive adult-youth partnerships, youth empowerment activities, and ensuring community participation opportunities are key elements of community-based programs for positive youth development (Cargo et al., 2003; Lerner, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

*Empowerment as a means of achieving Positive Youth Development*

In the PYD approach, empowerment is regarded as a means of assertive growth among the youth. Jennings et al. (2006) stated that the focus of research on youth shifted from traditional risk-prevention approach to the PYD approach and has recently expanded to incorporate discussions of youth empowerment. Indeed, many researchers based on the PYD approach proposed youth empowerment as a component for the positive development of youth (Benson, 1997; Roth & Brook-Gunn, 2003). They suggested empowerment as a driving factor for the positive youth development in the context of emphasizing the empowering environment, such as equal adult-youth partnership in terms of power.

Additionally, similarities between empowerment and positive youth development reinforce this discussion. As the PYD approach stresses assets rather than deficits and underlines the ecological environment to facilitate it, research on empowerment place more emphasis on capabilities, rather than categorizing deficit and emphasizes on exploring the contextual and structural factors that cause the problems, rather than blaming individuals (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000). According to Úcar et al (2017), who conducted a literature study on youth empowerment, there is a general unanimity among the studies on youth empowerment that it is related to positive youth development by acquiring the capacities and abilities to overcome specific situations. In this context, Wong (2008) argued that the components of the PYD approach and youth empowerment are overlapped in many parts.

However, this is applied without considering the social and political intention of empowerment. Empowerment eventually aims at changes of the unequal and unjust social structure. Freire & Shor (1987) contended that if there is no social change, it is not empowerment, which is simply an “individualist attitude” unless everyone can enjoy emancipatory freedom as the whole society is transformed (p. 109). As mentioned above, the PYD



approach also postulated that youth development can make positive impacts and changes in the environments surrounding them. However, while PYD focuses on the developmental aspects of the individual, empowerment puts emphasis on social change. Wong (2008) also viewed that empowerment is different from the PYD in that it emphasizes the link between a person, a micro-social system, and a macro-social system, although empowerment and the PYD are overlapped in many aspects.

From the perspective of empowerment, the positive development of the individual that the PYD emphasizes most can be seen as a part of the process of making social change, the ultimate purpose empowerment pursues. Cargo et al. (2003), who conducted a longitudinal qualitative study of health programs in southern British Columbia, argued that students were empowered by interacting within a program where empowering environments (e.g., warm and welcome environment and automation) were created, and it led to positive individual development (e.g., engagement, control, and change in communities) and constructive changes for the community. It would be, thus, more relevant to consider a bright spot for the youth as an important axis of empowerment.

## **2.2. Empowerment**

The previous section examined the importance of youth participation in the community, the problems of poor youth, and the concept of positive youth development. Then, what does it mean for young people to grow up positively and become agents of changes in the community? This section attempts to explore this in terms of empowerment. To this end, it focuses on the conceptual characteristics of empowerment, agency and critical consciousness through empowerment, and participation in empowerment.

### 2.2.1. Conceptual Features of Empowerment

In the social sciences, empowerment is primarily viewed as a process by which individuals/groups/communities gain control over their lives and affairs (Rappaport, 1984; Zimmerman, 2000). In the process, since empowerment is a study of people who exist in a specific context, it appears differently depending on the contexts (Lawrencejacobson, 2006; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman, 2000). That is, there is no single method or outcome because the context, background, and conditions of targets are different (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Consequently, various dimensions and components are proposed in empowerment studies (see Christens, 2011; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000). Nevertheless, there are several conceptual features that are universally agreed upon in empowerment-related studies.

#### *Empowerment: Multi-level and multi-dimensional nature*

First of all, empowerment has a multi-level feature, which means that empowerment at the individual, organizational, and community levels are interconnected (Jennings et al., 2006; Rissel, 1994; Zimmerman, 1995; 2000; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). Zimmerman (2000) explained it by dividing it into an empowering subject and an empowered subject, presenting empowering communities and empowered communities as examples. According to Zimmerman (2000, pp. 51-53), The empowered community embark on “efforts to improve community, responds to threats to quality of life and provides opportunities for citizens to participate”, while empowering communities provide resources accessible to all community members and take an open administrative structure. Meanwhile, Peterson (2014) argued that empowerment is multi-dimensional. In this respect, psychological changes do not appear separately from behavior in the empowerment process.

The key to the discussion of the multi-level and multi-dimensional nature of the empowerment is that only one aspect cannot occur exclusively because the levels and dimensions are organically connected to each other (Tromp, 2007). Namely, individual's psychological empowerment appears as his or her behavior and affects the ecological environments surrounding the individuals.

### *Empowerment as a way of exercising power*

Another feature discussed in the empowerment study is closely related to the way of exercising power. It is because the concept of empowerment intends the powerless to have agency of their lives and to change the disempowering social structure by gaining power. Ife (1995) broadly defines the purpose of empowerment as increasing "the power of the disadvantaged" (p.56), contending that the vulnerable should be able to exercise power over individual choices, opportunities, needs, resources, and economic activities. However, the way of exercising power, which Ife argued, has a limitation that there is no significant difference from the traditional one, the *power over* which control over a specific area or element (see Miller et al., 2006; Wong, 2008). That is, it does not reveal various types of exercising power that exist within the concept of empowerment.

On the other hand, Miller et al. (2006) presents those as *power with*, *power within*, and *power to*, respectively. First, *power with* creates cooperative strengths by discovering common interests, and individual strengths (e.g., knowledge, talent, and resources) within cooperative partnerships can have a greater impact on achieving common goals. In a similar vein, Wong (2008) also contends that "power is manifest in the joint pursuit of developing capacity through partnership and, therefore, the power potential is located among the human interconnections within communities " (p. 88). In the case of *power within*, it is related to self-confidence, self-

knowledge, or self-esteem, and is based on ethical values related to fostering awareness of human rights and responsibility, and recognizing differences between individuals while respecting others (Miller et al., 2006). Frediani et al. (2019, p. 105) insisted that *power within* makes the powerless raise questions about the issues that perpetuate inequality that individuals have taken for granted. Finally, *power to* is founded on the idea that each person possesses the potentials to shape their own life and reality, and it is supposed that such power is further maximized by the cooperation of individuals. Miller et al. (2006) argued that activities specifically related to education, training, and leadership development are based on this belief.

#### *Empowerment as process and outcome*

One of the characteristics accepted as a general fact in the empowerment studies is that empowerment is both a process and an outcome (Swift & Levin, 1987; Zimmerman, 2000). Empowerment as a process means that a certain structure, activity, action, or participation promotes empowerment, and empowerment as an outcome refers to individuals, organizations, and communities that can be empowered through the process. For example, UNESCO defined empowerment as follows:

How individuals/communities engage in learning processes in which they create, appropriate and share knowledge, tools and techniques in order to change and improve the quality of their own lives and societies. Through empowerment, individuals not only manage and adapt to change but also contribute to/generate changes in their lives and environment (UNESCO, 1998 as cited from Mohajar & Earnest, 2009, p. 425)

Based on the definition, participation of individuals and communities

in the learning process can be understood as a kind of empowerment process, and their efforts to contribute to and create changes in their lives and environments can be interpreted as an outcome.

Taken together, empowerment has multi-level and multi-dimensional characteristics, which are interconnected. Empowerment also rejects the traditional way of exercising power and aims for power with, power to, and power within. Lastly, empowerment is a process and an outcome. Certain actions or activities promote empowerment, and individuals, groups, and communities are empowered through this process.

### 2.2.2. Being Empowered as Agency and Critical Consciousness

What does it mean to be empowered? In response, Rappaport (1987, p. 121) defined it as having the right to 'self-determination' for an individual's life and democratic participation in his or her community. Zimmerman et al. (1992) added a critical consciousness of socio-political structure. In this respect, being empowered can be regarded as being an agent in one's life, being critically conscious of the socio-political environment surrounding one's life and participating democratically to create a better community.

In this context, there is agency as an axis of empowerment studies. Although the impact of social structure on thought and action of individual is apparent, the individual obviously has agency and makes choices and actions based on it (Walther, 2012). From the perspective of the Capability Approach (referred to as CA), agency is the recognition of "the fact that individuals have the values and goals they want to pursue" (Biggeri, Arcipete, & Karkara, 2019, p. 197). It can be, thus, seen as a self-determination that is formed based on the values and goals that individuals want to pursue within the influence of social structure. In this sense, the empowered agency from the CA is viewed as an expanded freedom of individual by securing the capability for

individuals to make effective choices and actions (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011). This is because it is closely related to the choice to create a life that individuals consider valuable in a harsh reality where the capabilities they have and what they can achieve through them differ depending on the individual (Fennell, 2019, Sen, 1999).

Another axis of empowerment study is critical consciousness or conscientization. Freire (2003) described becoming critically conscious as:

people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in the process, in transformation (p. 83).

That is, critically recognizing how oneself exists in the world is a process of being empowered to achieve critical consciousness, and looking at the world not as a static reality implies that the world can be transformed by practices for changes. Therefore, from a Critical Pedagogy perspective, empowerment is critical consciousness and a practice that brings social and political changes based on the critical consciousness, and aims at human emancipation (Craig & Mayo, 1995; Laverack, 2001; Mohajar & Earnest, 2009; Zhang & Perkins, 2022). The reason why critical consciousness and an accompanying practice are important is that unless the structure of social oppression surrounding individuals is resolved, it is only a superficial development of individuals. As mentioned above, Freire & Shor (1987) argued that without social change, emancipation through empowerment cannot exist and it is simply an "individualist attitude" (p. 109). In line with this argument, Wilson and Kiely (2002) concerned that fundamental problems such as maintaining the social phenomena, inequality due to systemic distortion, and colonization of the lifeworld remain unresolved, even if

individuals can change their perspective and successfully reintegrate into society. In this respect, emphasis placed more on critical consciousness and social practice in the Critical Pedagogy in terms of empowerment.

Taken together, empowerment is closely related to agency and critical consciousness. Agency is emphasized in the CA, and critical consciousness is underlined in the Critical Pedagogy perspective. Although each point of view focuses on a specific part, it does not imply that each perspective ignores other parts. For example, the CA which emphasizes individual freedom does not downplay the inequalities and injustices embedded in social structures (Frediani et al., 2019). Rather, it can be understood that the CA assumes the high individual capabilities as a requisite to transform contradictory social structures. In addition, studies centered on the Critical Pedagogy also stresses the development of individual competence as a key factor (Jennings et al., 2006; Mohajar & Earnest, 2009).

What is commonly emphasized in both perspectives is participation. In both perspectives, participation is seen as a means of achieving empowerment which they envision ideally. This will be discussed in the next section.

### 2.2.3. Participation as a Means and an Outcome of Empowerment

When applying empowerment as a process and an outcome in the aspect of participation during the discussion on the conceptual characteristics of empowerment discussed above, participation as a process is a means of promoting empowerment, and participation as an outcome can be considered as a change in participation patterns.

#### *Participation as a process of empowerment*

Participation facilitates the positive development of youth and

community development (see Alkire, 2002; Biggeri et al., 2019; Nussbaum, 2006; Wong, 2008; Mohajar & Earnest, 2009). As mentioned above, UNESCO (2008) viewed that empowerment is achieved when “individuals and communities engage in a learning process in which they create and share knowledge, tools, and skills to improve and transform their lives and societies” (as cited from Mohajar & Earnest, 2009, p. 425). In terms of youth, engagement in the learning process includes that young people acquire, hone, and apply knowledge and skills through participation in education programs, youth community organizations, and community activities, as well as explore and attempt new roles as members of the community (Jennings et al., 2006). From this perspective, participation can be considered as a form of learning in itself. For instance, Park (2010) suggested “learning as an extension of activities in social context” and viewed that all the activities in which the community activity system is reconstructed amid individuals and groups participating in and interacting with the community activity system as a new form of learning that appears in the community. That is, learning in the local community is not simply a traditional way of acquiring knowledge, but a process or an outcome in which the locals and organizations actively participate in all processes of uncovering local problems and solving it cooperatively through social practices.

Meanwhile, from the perspective of the CA, Biggeri et al. (2019) perceived that youth can obtain experiences that serve as a foundation for their agency by participating. More specifically, they argued that if youth have sufficient time and experience, they can actively participate in decision-making within the ecological environments surrounding them, which brings meaningful changes to individuals and communities. On the other hand, from the Critical Pedagogy perspective, youth develop problematization and critical consciousness as they engage actively in dialogue within community and circle activities (Mohajar & Earnest, 2009; Wallerstein et al., 2005),



which promotes critical reflection and action (Jennings et al., 2006). Wallerstein et al. (2005) stated that the purpose of youth participation is “an ongoing interaction between reflection and the actions that people take to promote individual and community change” (p. 221). Thus, in both perspectives, participation is agency in decision making, and meaningful practices for making change. Furthermore, participation that promotes empowerment is to “gain confidence and abilities to alter unjust conditions and structures” (Freire, 1997, p. xi), and to create a transition to individuals and societies (Sen, 1999).

### *Participation as an outcome of empowerment*

If participation as a process of empowerment is a means of promoting empowerment or a form of learning, participation as an outcome of empowerment can be regarded as a change in the participation pattern that appears as an agent is empowered. However, this pattern of participation is constantly changing since the empowerment is not a linear process. As a useful framework for understanding this aspect of participation, the 'ladder of child participation' suggested by Hart (1992) can be considered. Hart categorized patterns of the participation based on Arnstein (1969)'s ladder of civic participation. According to him (1992), the three rungs below in the ladder correspond to non-participation, and the five rungs above are considered to be true participation:

#### (a) Manipulation

This rung is for adults to manipulate their thoughts into the voices of children. At this stage, children participate in a specific issue, but there is no understanding of exactly what the issue is and thus no understanding of their behavior.

(b) Decoration

In the decoration stage, children participate in events on specific issues, but they have little understanding of the purpose for which such events were held and do not speak out regarding specific issues. They aim to participate in the event for refreshment and entertainment, such as watching performances.

(c) Tokenism

The tokenism stage is a rung in which formal participation occurs. At this stage, adults recognize the importance of children's participation and children seem to make their voices, but in reality, they are given little or no opportunity to make their opinions. This participation can be, thus, viewed as a "symbolic" level (Ujam & El-Fiki, 2006, p. 267).

(d) Assigned but informed

Hart (1992) proposed four conditions for this rung (p. 11): (i) "the children understand the intentions of the project"; (ii) "they know who made the decisions concerning their involvement and why"; (iii) "they have a meaningful role"; (iv) "they volunteer for the project after the project was made clear to them".

(e) Consulted and informed

This stage is similar to the rung of 'Assigned but informed'. Adults plan and operate projects themselves, but children fully understand the process and express their opinions. Their opinions are also treated carefully.

(f) Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children

Hart (1992) regarded this rung as a real participation. At this stage, projects are initiated by adults, but decisions are shared with children.

(g) Child-initiated and directed

It is the stage in which children start and implement projects. Hart (1992) considered that if supportive conditions for children are sufficient, the project can be carried out cooperatively by even very young children.

(h) Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults

This stage is a structure in which children initiate projects and make decisions with adults. However, Hart (1992) viewed this pattern of participation as decidedly rare, and gave the cause as the absence of thoughtful adults who tailor to children's interests.

Wong (2008) criticizes Hart's participation ladder as meaningful, but not sufficiently incorporating the concept of youth-adult partnership found in recent research on youth empowerment. If youth-led project is conducted without adult guidance and supervision, it can create an “unintended disempowering outcomes” (p. 45). However, considering the discussions so far, youth can play a role in the community as the agent if they have sufficient experiences and growth (Biggeri et al., 2019). In addition, Hart (1992) also suggested the highest rung of the ladder of children participation as participation in which children lead but make decisions together with adults, rather than children lead and direct.

## **2.3. Non-formal Education**

### **2.3.1. Discourse on Non-formal Education**

Non-formal education is broadly defined as "any organized, systemic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system”

(Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). It was in the late 1960s that non-formal education began to be discussed internationally. Along with the spread of awareness of problems in existing school education, the importance of non-formal education began to emerge based on the experience in educational aid and support activities in developing countries (Coombs, 1968). International organizations such as UNESCO, USAID, and World Bank agreed that there was an explosive increase in demands on education in developing countries, but only a small portion of the beneficiary groups were satisfied to their needs for education. Education, thus, failed to meet the expectation that it would serve as a means of development in poor rural areas or underdeveloped countries (UNESCO, 1985, p. 32, p. 53-54). In particular, in developing countries, the beneficiary groups of education were limited, so the underprivileged or poor could not have their demands met on education, resulting in a deepening gap between the rich and the poor and perpetuating social inequality.

Scholars who led the discussion of early non-formal education (Coombs, 1968; Ronald Dore, 1976; Simmons, 1980) presupposed a positive critical perspective that it can be solved through improvement and reform of school education (Rogers, 2004). Thus, efforts were made to find the characteristics of non-formal education that could supplement the limitations of school education. The necessity of non-formal education as an alternative to formal education has also been raised as follows:

A radical alternative to a schooled society requires not only new formal mechanisms for the formal acquisition of skills and their educational use. A deschooled society implies a new approach to incidental or informal education (Illich, 1970, p. 18).

Meanwhile, Fordham (1993) criticized that formal education

generally shows the characteristics of a top-down delivery method, and revealed the need for non-formal education with a bottom-up control method in which the initiative of education is democratically operated centered on learners.

Vanek and Bayard (1975, p. 18) proposed the contrasting functions of education. This means that all educational programs have contrasting characteristics: "formal" or "life", "socializing", or "mobilizing", "dominating", or "liberating". Formal refers to school education, and life indicates all learning outside of school. Socializing is a traditional form of education that molds individuals to fit the political and economic systems of a particular society, while mobilizing is education that enables learners to change the underlying social and economic environments they have. Finally, education can be used for certain groups to control other groups or for liberation. That is, the process of learning and education should be more flexible, open, should be developed in a constructivist way centered on experiences in life. Therefore, from the Freirean point of view, education should emphasize life of learners, mobilization, emancipation, which enable learners to develop autonomous and liberative learning.

Attention and debates on non-formal education, which had been gradually diminishing since the mid-1980s, are rising again in a new aspect in the 21st century, and the driving force behind this is the ideology of lifelong education (Rogers, 2004b, p. 4). Roger (2004a, p. 233-264) argues that there is a need for reconceptualization of this new non-formal education, the education which is an alternative meaning to the formality of the existing education and provides complementary elements such as contextuality, self-directedness, participation, and flexibility in education. Furthermore, he (2004a) contended that a new paradigm of education should be presented by being newly conceptualized based on the characteristics. The European Parliament viewed that there are active demands for practices of non-formal

education and emphasized that each country and educational entity must recognize the importance of non-formal education, while recognizing that the formal education system alone is difficult to cope with the various challenges posed in modern society (Rogers, 2004). These arguments suggest that not only mainstream education, but also informal education can be an important educational place in lifelong education, which means that non-formal education can be considered as a major means of lifelong learning that focuses on contributing to the national economic development and fostering active citizenship.

### 2.3.2. Non-formal Education for Empowerment

Freire, a Brazilian educator, has a profound influence on philosophy and practice of education. The reason why Freire is still important is that the ultimate goal of education he proposed is human liberation (Freire, 2003). Freire (2003) viewed that human liberation can be accomplished in two stages through education. The oppressed become aware of the existence of oppression in the first stage and dedicate to transformation of the world through praxis, and in the second stage, education is no longer the pedagogy of the oppressed, but the didactics of the whole people participating in the permanent liberation process. When considering this in relation to youth marginalized, youth recognize the unequal and unjust social structure surrounding them and devote themselves to changing it through social practice and participation, and in the second stage, their practice becomes a practice of the entire community.

Freire's humanization, also, allows the marginalized young people to overcome the conformity which they normally have. Due to conditions of social structure and parental influence surrounding youth marginalized, they internalize self-deprecation and ideological influences such as individualism

and consumerism. However, Freire (2003) rejected to conform to the oppression and exploitation that originate from the structure. Moreover, Freire's education transforms the learner from a passive individual to an independent participant. This can be seen in the terms used by Freire, who referred to adult schools as cultural circles, teachers as coordinators for conversation or discussion, and students as participants (Freire & Horton, 1990). The use of those terms indicates that education is not a top-down way of transmission, but a conversation in a horizontal relationship, and that students are also participants as agents, not passive ones to be educated. Freire's philosophy makes people think about what kind of education should be provided to all students beyond the poor youth.

Then, what non-formal education can develop one's critical and creative abilities? It is difficult to say that non-formal education itself simply drives learners' empowerment. For example, Coombs & Ahmed (1973, pp. 13-17), who studied non-formal education in rural areas of developing countries, approached the purpose of non-formal education with the concept of "minimum essential learning needs", which are knowledge and skills for intrapersonal, interpersonal, social domains. In contrast, Niehoff (1977, p. 8) argued that the purpose of non-formal education is to improve their productivity and quality of life by communicating with socially marginalized learners, such as adults and out-of-school youth, motivating their social participation, and obtaining essential skills.

Regarding this definition, Kindervatter (1979) assessed that it was based on the 'alternative development' approach. The alternative development is the community-level empowerment, emphasizing local self-help, self-determination, and agency, breaking away from the traditional Western logic about development. Thus, Kindervatter defined non-formal education for empowerment as education that fosters "people gaining an understanding of and control over social, economic, and/or political forces in order to improve

their standing in society" (p. 62).

Kilian (1988, p. 118) proposes eight characteristics of non-formal education for empowerment in program level. First, it consists of a small group in which participants share similar interests and ages. It motivates participant to have active involvement with strong solidarity. The second characteristic of a non-formal education program for empowerment relates to the transition of control over the program that the primary actor is changed from the organization to the participants. Third, it should promote leadership to motivate learners to be empowered. Fourth, a manager or organizer in the program is a facilitator for learners to identify problems in non-directive way. The fifth characteristic is to adopt democratic processes to foster non-hierarchical relationships with democratic behavior. Sixth, the program should be designed based on experiential learning so that it can promote reflection and action of learners relative to their lives. The seventh characteristic is to apply appropriate methods which enhance learner's activity and dialogue. Finally, the outcome should increase social standing of learners.

### 2.3.3. Non-formal Education Model for Empowerment

Efforts have been made to develop a model that promotes youth empowerment. Although there are differences in the emphasis between the models, many of these paragons put stress on a safe and supportive environment, meaningful participation, adult-youth partnership in decision-making, connection between individual and community development, setting goals for socio-political change, and critical reflection (Cargo et al, 2003; Chinman & Linney, 1998; Jennings et al, 2006; Kim et al, 2005; Wallestein et al., 2005).

Among them, Critical Youth Empowerment (CYE) is a model created



by integrating the characteristics of several youth empowerment models based on critical social theory, and pursues more positive community development and socio-political change through youth empowerment:

The aim of CYE is to support and foster youth contributions to positive community development and sociopolitical change, resulting in youth who are critical citizens, actively participating in the day-to-day building of stronger, more equitable community (Jennings & Green, 1999 as cited from Jennings et al., 2006, p. 40)

This model presents six dimensions of a program to encourage youth empowerment. The first is "A welcoming and safe environment" (Jenning et al., 2006, pp. 41-43), which is important to make youth feel safe, respected, and valued within the environment. It is a "social space" in which students are free to engage in activities, express their creativity, make their own voices in decision-making, and give new skills a trial (p. 41). The importance of this environment lies in supporting youth to learn that failure is not a bad thing - related to component of empowerment, self-esteem - and to develop their potential for creating real achievements related to component of empowerment, autonomy - by experiencing success and failure in a variety of activities and challenges (Cargo et al., 2003; Kim et al, 1998).

Another dimension is the meaningful participation. Youth participation in the community leads youth to learn leadership and participatory skills and to produce responsibility and positive identity (Cargo et al., 2003). In this context, CYE encourages youth to engage in critical reflection and action, to hone their skills, and to discover new roles in their communities through participating in youth-led activities. CYE proposes equitable power sharing between youth and adults as the third dimension. It is to enhance leadership skills and competence by participating in decision-

making process. Since adults often monopolize the power of decision-making, CYE suggests a strategy to gradually transfer the power to youth (Jennings et al., 2006). The fourth dimension is to encourage critical reflection on interpersonal relations and socio-political processes. However, although critical reflection is a key component emphasized in the empowerment model, practical methods are not specifically presented (see Cargo et al., 2003; Jennings et al., 2006). Only Wallerstein et al. (2005)'s Empowerment Education Model proposes community participation and interactive dialogue among peers as its method.

The fifth dimension of the CYE is the participation in the socio-political process for effective change. The reason of this participation separately from meaningful participation is that it is difficult to consider it as empowerment if youth does not have the capacity to solve problems surrounding social structures, processes, social values, and practices (Jennings et al., 2006). Thus, the CYE argues that empowerment which does not bring about changes in social structure cannot exist. However, the actual strategy is simply proposed as integrating efforts to create more social changes with existing community or civic activities. The last dimension presented is the integration of empowerment at the individual and community level. As mentioned above, the CYE aims to transform not only individuals but also communities as a whole.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Case Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how youth from the marginalized areas in developing countries have been developed as the principal agents in their community through the SALUTE program. The author, thus, intends to utilize the qualitative case study method for the exploratory purpose of the research topic. The reasons for selecting the case study method for this study are as follows.

First, a case study, which is a useful method for exploratory research, is an empirical research method to investigate current phenomena occurring in real life (Yin, 2003, pp. 13-14). Although Yin specified a research subject of a case study as current phenomena, it can also be applied to research subjects that have occurred or existed in the past. The SALUTE program, which the research participants of this study took, was also operated from 2015 to 2020, but has been suspended since 2021 due to the Philippine central government's strong containment policy against Covid-19. Second, a case study is effective when researchers place their research purpose on phenomenon that appears through the case rather than the case itself (Stake, 1995). As mentioned above, the case study method is appropriate in that the author wants to understand the phenomenon in which youth in Towerville has been developed as key agents in the community through questioning 'how' and 'why', not the SALUTE program itself.

In addition, case studies are divided into three categories based on their nature and number of cases: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective case study (Stake, 1995; Crosswell, 2013). An intrinsic case study focuses on one specific case, requiring an in-depth description and analysis. In this respect,

its purpose is not to generalize the phenomenon that appeared in the case as a universal social phenomenon, but to understand it in a more in-depth way. On the contrary, the purpose of an instrumental case study is to select and analyze a specific case to generalize the phenomenon. Finally, a collective case study is used to generalize by securing universality of a specific social phenomenon through analysis of multiple cases.

This case study, thus, has characteristics of an intrinsic case study in that its purpose is to understand what kind of experiences and reflections the students had in the SALUTE program and how the learning process influenced them to grow as the key figures in their community.

## **3.2. Research Site and Participants**

### **3.2.1. Research Site**

The Philippine central government has been implementing a policy of forcibly relocating the urban poor in Metro Manila to the outskirts of it. The government prepared legal basis to ensure stable housing for the urban poor through the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA) enacted in 1992, and based on this, the Philippine National Housing Authority (NHA) has been constructing new towns outside of Manila and relocating the poor<sup>2</sup>. In fact, the number of people living below the poverty line in Manila decreased from about 4 million in 2005 to 1.82 million in 2021 (UN-HABITAT, 2005; Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021). On the surface, it seems to guarantee stable living for the indigent and improve slum areas in the capital, but in reality, the purpose is to drive out the squatters who occupy government and private property for urban development projects. Collado and

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<sup>2</sup> The NHA (2015) has set a goal of prioritizing residential facilities for 50% of homeless low-income families who have lived near waterway, dangerous areas, and government property by 2019

Orozco (2020) criticized that the government did not properly keep the promises made to the forced migrants and drove them into a more impoverished situation, and thus they argued that the relevant legal basis should be reorganized.

Towerville, the research site of the study, is also an area created as part of this forced relocation policy<sup>3</sup>. Towerville, located in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan Province which is 40-kilometers away from the northeast of Metro Manila, has the administrative districts of Barangay Minuyan (Phase 1 to Phase 5) and Barangay Gaya-Gaya (Phase 6)<sup>4</sup>. Most of the migrants who entered Towerville consisted of evicted people during the north-south commuter train project in Manila and flood victims caused by typhoon "Ondoy" (Lee, 2016; Lee, 2017; 2021)<sup>5</sup>. The population of Towerville has continuously increased from 65,000 in 2016 to 70,000 in 2018 due to the influx of outsiders and illegal residents (CAMP, 2016; 2018).

At the time of forced migration, the NHA assured them land development, social infrastructure, and livelihood programs, but contrariwise, social infrastructure such as education and medical care was poor or even absent, and there was no administrative investment for those (Collado & Orozco, 2020). In addition, migrants had to search for jobs in Metro Manila again to make a living due to lack of job opportunities in the place, resulting in an additional cost of 80 pesos per day for commuting between Metro Manila and Towerville. Those who could not afford it, relinquished and sold their rights on housing guaranteed by the government, and returned to Metro Manila as squatters or separated from families for work which led to a series of problems such as divorce and family disintegration (Lee, 2017; 2021; UN-

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<sup>3</sup> Near-City Project is to relocate the urban poor by creating residential spaces on the outskirts of Metro Manila, promising not only housing but also land development, infrastructure, community facilities, and livelihood programs (Pagunsan, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Barangay is the smallest unit of administrative district in the Philippines.

<sup>5</sup> UN-HABITAT (2005) estimated that about 15,000 households in southern Manila and about 70,000 households in northern Manila would be forcibly demolished due to the train project.

HABITAT, 2005). Moreover, criminal incidents such as drug possession or robberies have continued to occur (Collado & Orozco, 2020).

CAMP Asia is a Korean NGO active in Towerville. It first visited Towerville in 2009 by the request of the Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO), an association of the poor in the Philippines, and has been involved in the Towerville community for 13 years. Starting with the '*Igting*' sewing center, a social enterprise for jobs in 2011, it has expanded its activities to the entire community, including health, education, and agriculture. It has also supported the locals, who engage in the CAMP projects, to be organized as a community organization through the *Tanglaw* (lighthouse in Tagalog) project and has transferred the authority of its projects to the organization since 2019.

### 3.2.2. Research Participants

For this study, youth in Towerville who had experiences participating in the SALUTE program were selected as the research subjects. About 100 students participated in the program from 2015 to 2020. However, since all of them were different in terms of participation period in the program or youth organization membership after the program, research participants were selected based on certain criteria. Those were presented in two ways as follows.

First, students with at least 3 years of participation experience were selected. Since the SALUTE project consists of a three-year program, students who dropped out were excluded from the procedure of selection. In addition, as some students continued to participate in the program as members of youth organizations connected to the program even after graduating from the program, the standard was suggested as a minimum of three years. Second, it was selected from the students who have had actual experiences in activities of ONE STEP. ONE STEP, which is voluntarily organized by program

graduates based on their experiences of community involvement during the program participation period, is automatically joined if the students complete the program. However, even though some members are officially registered, they are not participating in actual activities. In this case, they were excluded because it was judged that it would be difficult to capture the expansion from program participants to voluntary actors in the community. The research participants selected based on these criteria are shown in [Table 1].

Table 1. List of Main Research Participants

	Name	Age	Gender	Participation Duration
1	Andy	23	M	4 years
2	John	23	M	5 years
3	Kyle	20	M	3 years
4	Jessy	22	F	4 years
5	Emma	21	F	4 years
6	Jerry	21	M	3 years
7	Joy	20	F	3 years
8	Oliver	21	M	3 years
9	Danny	20	M	3 years
10	Jay	22	M	3 years
11	Leymond	24	M	3 years
12	Jacob	20	M	3 years
13	Clare	21	F	3 years
14	Angel	20	F	3 years
15	Jane	22	F	4 years

In addition to the main research participants, those who were involved in the program and observed changes of the students from inside and outside were selected as supplementary research participants. As actors who directly or indirectly related to students in the planning, operation, and evaluation stages of the program, they can more objectively deliver the

changes of students from the perspectives of program planners and local educators. To this end, this study first selected two teachers who participated in the learning competence program and one principal who participated in program planning from the side of local high schools. It also chose the representative, chief director, assistant officer, and program facilitator from CAMP as the supplementary research participants. The supplementary research participants are shown in [Table 2].

Table 2. List of Supplementary Research Participants

	Name	Age	Gender	Status
1	Cathy	30	F	Teacher
2	Angelica	46	F	Teacher
3	Karen	52	F	Principal
4	Liam	32	M	Facilitator
5	Lee	59	M	Representative (CAMP)
6	Yang	62	F	Chairperson (CAMP)
7	Cho	31	F	Chief Director (CAMP)
8	Cho	26	F	Assistant Officer (CAMP)

### 3.3. Data Collection

Cho (2012) states that high validity of analysis and interpretation can be ensured only when participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and field document are conducted together to enable cross-contrasting review between data. However, at the time the author visited the research site, the program was suspended due to Covid-19, so it was impossible to conduct participatory observation. In this context, data was collected only through the field document and in-depth interviews.



### 3.3.1. Field Document

The author did not limit the range of collecting data to the program, but set and collected data about CAMP, which is the core agent of operating the program, and Towerville, which is the regional background of the program. In the case of previous studies, all the studies hardly dealt with the program itself, but some studies related to CAMP and Towerville could be found. In addition, those were not related to the field of education, but related to other fields. Previous studies related to CAMP approached the sewing project 'Igting', a representative project of CAMP, from the perspective of social economy, gender, and grassroots movement, and other previous studies related to Towerville were studied in terms of welfare and human rights for forced migrants. Since there were no previous studies related to the program, the collected studies were utilized to understand CAMP and Towerville more systematically.

In addition to the previous studies, publications related to CAMP and ONE STEP were collected. Only 'Smile Towerville', published in 2017 by Lee, the representative of CAMP, could be found in publications related to CAMP. However, his publication was used as an important material for understanding Towerville and CAMP from the perspective of CAMP. This book describes in detail the background and contents of projects, and events that occurred in the promoting process, focusing on the activities and projects from 2009 to 2017. It also includes the details of relationship with other local partners. Meanwhile, a local magazine published in 2018 was collected as a publication related to ONE STEP. ONE STEP (2018) published the local magazine to inform the local community about local problems. It introduces ONE STEP and specifically deals with issues in the overall area of the Towerville community, such as local education, health, livelihood, and environment, clearly showing what members perceive as problems in the community and how to solve those. The collected previous researches and publications are

shown in [Table 3] and [Table 4], respectively.

Table 3. List of Preceding Research related to CAMP and Towerville

Subject	Author	Title	Field
CAMP	Lee, C.	The evolution of international cooperation through social economy: Focusing on the case of Towerville in the Philippines	Social Economy
	Oh, D.	A case study on the applicability of social economy in international development cooperation: Focus on community model	Social Economy
	Lee, S.	A case study on sustainability of international development cooperation focus on social economy: IGTING social enterprise of CAMP Asia in the Philippines	Social Economy
	Choi, S.	Gender Practices in Households: Women Participation in Economic Development at a Relocation Site in Bulacan, Philippines	Gender
	UPCIDS	Collective Action to Achieve a Full Life	Grassroots Movement
Towerville	UN-HABITAT	Forced Evictions: Towards Solutions?	Human Rights
	Collado & Orozco	From Displacement to Resettlement: How Current Policies Shape Eviction Narratives among Urban Poor in the Philippines	Welfare

Table 4. List of Publications related to CAMP and Towerville

Author	Title
Lee	Smile Towerville
ONE STEP	The Story of Towerville

The author was able to collect internal data related to the program

with the cooperation of CAMP. While running the program from 2015 to 2020, CAMP was accumulating plenty of data, such as reflection papers and annual result reports. In addition, data related to ONE STEP activities could be found on their Facebook page. ONE STEP has opened its own page on Facebook and continues to post its activities. The author obtained consent of ONE STEP and collected related activity data.

Internal data of the SALUTE program and ONE STEP collected through this process include proposals (2017-2020), self-evaluation reports (2016-2020), interim reports (2015-2020), result reports (2015-2020), program activity reports, program curriculum (2015-2020), Real Talk Concert source book (2017-2018), students' reflection papers, Samsung Dream Foundation's program monitoring reports and evaluation reports of scholarship foundations, and others.

### 3.3.2. In-depth Interview

This study conducted in-depth interviews with the research participants presented above. Recruiting research participants was supported by CAMP and Liam, a program facilitator. The author delivered the conditions for selecting research participants, and they recruited the participants based on the criteria. After the selection, the author conducted in-depth interviews with a total of 23 people from April 11 to August 15, 2022.

Specifically, two semi-structured interviews were conducted for one hour each with the main research participant group which had experience participating in the SALUTE program. In the early stage of data collection through in-depth interviews, as it was difficult to visit the site due to the pandemic, interviews were first conducted with six main research participants through Zoom. Afterwards, as foreigners were allowed to enter the Philippines, face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted from June 30.

In addition to semi-structured in-depth interviews, informal interviews were continuously conducted with some of the participants currently employed at CAMP. The interviews were carried out at the canteen of the CAMP Center, where some activities of the SALUTE program were implemented.

In the case of in-depth interview questions targeting the main participant group, the first in-depth interview focused on individual development through program participation, motivation for community participation, and way of practices in the community. It was to understand what kind of individual development and understanding of community each of the main participants have had through the program. Based on the first interview, the second in-depth interview aimed to understand what learning experiences each participant had in the program and how these experiences were connected to their changes.

Aside from the main participant group, the author carried out interviews with the supplementary research participant group. Among them, CAMP officials and program facilitators were requested to have in-depth interviews directly by the author, and interviews with the principal and teachers were made through the support of the facilitator. Interviews with the supplementary research participant group were carried out once from 1 hour to a maximum of 2 hours.

In the case of in-depth interview questions targeting the supplementary group, the questions were prepared separately for CAMP officials and school officials. For CAMP officials, in-depth interviews were conducted with questions that program insiders could answer, such as the background and intention of program planning, specific program contents, and difficulties in the process of operating the program. However, the facilitator was asked questions focusing on the relationship with the students and the process of the program in the classroom to supplement the participatory observation that could not be conducted in this study.

Meanwhile, school officials were asked about the local high school's perspective on the program, including partnerships with CAMP, changes of students at schools, local educational issues and others.

All in-depth interviews were written in transcripts and coded, and opinions were exchanged through e-mail and Facebook Messenger if there were any supplementary contents or additional questions during the analysis process. The list of research participants for in-depth interviews is shown in [Table 5].

Table 5. List of Interview with Research Participants

	Name	Date	Method
1	Andy	11 <sup>st</sup> April / 11 <sup>st</sup> July / 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Zoom / Face to Face
2	John	11 <sup>st</sup> April / 11 <sup>st</sup> July / 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Zoom / Face to Face
3	Kyle	11 <sup>st</sup> April / 12 <sup>nd</sup> July	Zoom / Face to Face
4	Emma	13 <sup>rd</sup> April / 12 <sup>nd</sup> July	Zoom / Face to Face
5	Jessy	7 <sup>th</sup> July / 12 <sup>nd</sup> July	Face to Face
6	Jerry	13 <sup>rd</sup> April / 14 <sup>th</sup> July	Zoom / Face to Face
7	Joy	13 <sup>rd</sup> April / 14 <sup>th</sup> July	Zoom / Face to Face
8	Oliver	30 <sup>th</sup> June / 14 <sup>th</sup> July	Face to Face
9	Danny	7 <sup>th</sup> July / 14 <sup>th</sup> July	Face to Face
10	Jay	5 <sup>th</sup> July / 19 <sup>th</sup> July	Face to Face
11	Leymond	9 <sup>th</sup> July / 16 <sup>th</sup> July	Face to Face
12	Jacob	30 <sup>th</sup> June / 19 <sup>th</sup> July	Face to Face
13	Clare	8 <sup>th</sup> July / 20 <sup>th</sup> July	Face to Face
14	Angel	5 <sup>th</sup> July / 20 <sup>th</sup> July	Face to Face
15	Jane	21 <sup>st</sup> July	Face to Face
16	Cathy	14 <sup>th</sup> July	Face to Face
17	Angelica	21 <sup>st</sup> July	Face to Face
18	Karen	15 <sup>th</sup> August	Zoom
19	Liam	16 <sup>th</sup> July	Zoom
20	Lee	15 <sup>th</sup> July	Zoom
23	Cho	21 <sup>st</sup> July	Face to Face

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

In the research process, analysis is the process of reinforcing and specifying the meaning of data (Merriam, 1998), and in a narrow sense, it is “the work of organizing data collected from the field in accordance with a certain system” (Jo, 1999, p 53). The author conducted an analysis based on field document, preceding research, and transcripts of in-depth interviews collected during the research process.

The primary analysis process identified basic information on the regional background, educational conditions, intention of program planning, implementation process, and structure and contents of the program through reviewing the field document (e.g., prior studies, program internal data). Based on this, questions of the in-depth interview were formed with two major themes: the experience of participating in activities and the changes in life through participating in the program.

In the second analysis process, coding was carried out based on the transcript of the in-depth interviews. As mentioned above, the coding was divided into the experiences of participating in the program and the changes through it. First, the experiences of participating in the program include dimensions of the non-formal education empowerment model: an encouraging and safe environment, meaningful participation in community activities, and power relationships between adults and youth (Cargo et al, 2003; Chinman & Linney, 1998; Jennings et al, 2003; Jennings et al. al, 2006; Kim et al, 1998; Wallerstein et al, 2005) and providing opportunities for critical reflection (Jennings et al, 2006; Wallerstein et al, 2005). Those were classified as central axes, and the parts in which each activity experience was linked to the characteristics of the axes were captured and categorized.

In the case of the changes through the experiences, agency and critical consciousness were considered as two axes, and changes of students

similar to the characteristics of each concept were grouped and classified. Agency was categorized into value pursuit and choice, and critical consciousness was classified by dividing it into problematization and willingness to take action.

## **IV. CAMP SALUTE: Empowering Program**

This chapter will discuss the experiences of students participating in the SALUTE program. To this end, the regional and educational background of Towerville and the promoting process, structure, and contents of the program will be examined first, and based on those, the participation experiences of the students will be analyzed by dividing them into 'family-like environment', 'power transition from adults to youth', 'meaningful participation for changes in individual and community level', and finally 'chance to critical reflection'.

### **4.1. Context of the Program**

#### 4.1.1. Towerville

*A town people want to leave, a village without smile*

Towerville has been a "place people want to leave" and "a village without smile" (Lee, July 15, 2022). Even now, more than a decade after Towerville was created, although there is a difference to that extent compared to the early days, the locals are still experiencing struggles due to poverty, conflicts between neighbors, and unstable social safety net. Moreover, the reason for the decrease in degree is not because the living conditions of Towerville notably improved, but because they 'adapted' the life. The adaptation of the local people can be found in an interview transcript of Collado and Orozco (2020).

“I recall, we had a neighbor who cried and cried almost every day when they resettled here. It took them, I think, almost five years to adjust and recover” (F, 44 as cited from Collado & Orozco, 2020, p. 55)



As time goes by, the people have found ways to get accustomed to their lives. However, problems they faced were the exacerbation of poverty due to the absence of jobs, the psychological fear of new local members, and the dissolution of the traditional safety net caused by separation from their families, relatives, and neighbors. Even though they have discovered and adapted to a new way of life, these issues are still evident in Towerville.

*a) Acceleration of poverty and disintegration of families*

The life in Towerville the displaced locals faced was far from what the Philippine National Housing Authority described. For example, distinct from its promise to provide new safe houses, nearby schools and health facilities, stable water supply and power generation facilities, they experienced unpaved roads thick with trees and bushes, houses still under construction beside the roads, and insufficient infrastructure in the early days of forced migration. The most serious problem among those was the shortage of jobs. In the context of involuntary migration, the failure to provide sustainable and stable jobs causes two negative phenomena. The first is that forced migrants are unable to adapt to the new environment and return to the place where they originally lived (Berner, 1996). In fact, most of the early migrants sold their housing rights in Towerville and returned to the poverty-stricken areas of Metro Manila where they had previously lived (UN-HABITAT, 2005).

Our field was the site where people, who had lived in Towerville, returned to Manila and lived in tents because they couldn't live here. To put it bluntly, they thought that living in a tent next to the Manila Bridge where they can't even straighten their back is better than here (Lee, July 15, 2022).

Here in Towerville, there is lack of opportunity to work. So many people just sold their houses here and then they went back, even though there was a squatter area (John, July 11, 2022).

Another negative phenomenon is that those who remain are pushed into a more severe marginalized state (Meher, 2009). The housing provided by the NHA to the forcibly relocated families was not given or leased free of charge, but the families had to pay 500 pesos per month for rent fee. In a situation where they had no income, they had to pay for housing and living expenses entirely from their own expense. It led them placed in a deeper structure of poverty.

If they go there [Manila], they can work at least once every two days, if not every day. There are also quite a few support programs from religious organizations, NGOs, and international organizations. They have houses here in Towerville, but those are not free. They have to pay monthly rent fees. They also have to pay the electricity and water bills. They cannot use those because they don't have [income]. They couldn't stand it because they were placed in the structure where they had to pay the monthly rent, while they had no income (Lee, July 15, 2022).

Families who chose to remain in Towerville instead of returning to Manila had to raise money for housing and living expenses amid a lack of job offers in the community. In the process, the head of the household had to leave for Manila for a job, and as the high transportation cost compared to wages made commuting difficult, the breadwinner lived away from her or his family for a long period of time. As such a life continued, a situation occurred in

which the head of the household, who lived alone in another area, started a new family in that area, which led to separation and family dismantlement.

*b) New heterogeneous member: Fear*

As migrants from various backgrounds flowed into Towerville, a sense of heterogeneity among members increased. Looking at the migration background of the locals in Towerville, there are evicted residents due to the North-South commuter train project, flood victims due to Typhoon Ondoy, and victims due to conflagration in squatter areas on government-owned land. For those who lost their livelihoods in an instant due to forced demolition and disasters and were forcibly relocated to Towerville, other residents in Towerville were “strangers.” Moreover, poverty of the community and the resulting crimes have turned the sense of heterogeneity toward others into mutual distrust or fear. Andy, the main participant, recalled when he first moved to Towerville as follows:

“All of sudden, we were here and when I was in elementary school, I was just shocked by the environment here because there was no job opportunity and some of the people were going to each other’s houses to get something. Yeah, that was robbery and I experienced that too. At that time, we were very scared because of our security. I was scared of what if they kill us. And our father had to go to Manila to work, so in our house, it’s just me, my brother and sister and then our mother” (Andy, July 11, 2022).

In particular, there is prejudice or stigma against a certain area, which is embedded in the background of prevailing distrust and fear among neighbors within the Towerville community. For example, the Tondo region is notorious for its poverty and crime rate within the Philippines. According

to Andy and John (July 22, 2022), Filipinos are more likely to act in accordance with the stigma when dealing with the people of the Tondo area or when visiting the area.

The squatter area is very different to other areas because it is not just only poor, but also has a high crime rate. It is a common connotation here like if I hear the squatter areas like Tondo, I say to myself “Okay, be careful”. So, if you are going to the areas, please be careful (John, July 11, 2022).

Namely, a sense of heterogeneity due to different backgrounds and prejudice against a specific region caused fear among the locals and became an obstacle to the integration of the community. Moreover, the fear has influenced members of the community as a whole and appears to be the most urgent problem for the community to address. In fact, Lee said that he was surprised when he asked the students what the community urgently needed.

*c) Disconnection of traditional social networks*

Another problem in Towerville is the dismantling of the traditional social safety nets. Involuntary migration causes the dismantling of the traditional social stability networks that migrants had in their existing communities. Audefroy (1994) argues that involuntary migration is not intended, but represents the disintegration of family and community networks on the surface. In the case of the Philippines, traditionally, a family and their relatives' networks are strong, which serves as a kind of social safety net. In the context of Towerville, the network loses its function. Involuntary migration disconnects the network as it separates relatives and neighbors who previously lived together, and families who move to Towerville are isolated within the community. The phenomenon of relinquishing the right to live in

Towerville and returning to the place where they used to live can be connected to the problem of the absence of a traditional collective stability network. In other words, a life in the destitute areas of Manila seems more unstable and vulnerable on the surface, but in reality, living there may bring up psychological stability by restoring the social stability network to them.

There's a culture in the Philippines. I'm in Tarlac right now and I thought people living in this place would be more desperate. More than our Towerville... If you look at the income, it [Towerville] is better. However, people in Tarlac are not that desperate. Because even if they can't work, they have relatives around them. That's why they don't starve. For example, someone said, "they ran out of rice because they couldn't work", then the other said, "Hey, then come to my house and have a meal". Since they're relatives, most of them are like that. But Towerville is out of touch. People in Towerville don't have any relatives around them. If they don't work, there are no more people who can share at least a bowl of rice as compared to where they used to live (Lee, July 15, 2022).

As such, migrants in Towerville are forced to face economic difficulties by themselves as they are disconnected from traditional relationships such as next of kin. Forced migration falls into complex difficulties such as psychological isolation, economic difficulties, and family dissolution due to detached relationships.

### *The educational environment of Towerville*

Poverty in the Towerville area is a fundamental cause of poor educational conditions. Its impact on educational conditions within the community is manifested at all levels, including a household, a school, and a

community. In particular, the environment of Towerville does not provide sufficient learning opportunities to local youth in terms of both quality and quantity.

First of all, the problem at the family level is that parents do not give enough care and guidance to their children. As mentioned above, Towerville has a chronic local problem as insufficient jobs. As a result, one or both of the parents in the family had to move to another area for work, but the high transportation cost compared to wages created a situation where they stayed for a long time in another area. As they were separated from their families, they eventually started a new family there or get separated.

Most Towerville youth come from such a family background. As opportunities to face and have relationship with parents dwindled, the care and guidance that inevitably occurred in interactions with parents also decreased. Local teachers said that the problem of this situation forces children to do everything themselves (Angelica, July 21, 2022; Cathy, July 14, 2022). In other words, it has formed a problematic structure in which children, who have not grown enough to take responsibility for their lives, are forced to choose among the important choices that determine the direction of their lives and to take the result entirely on their own responsibility. Lack of parental guidance and care are linked to several youth problems in Towerville, such as teen pregnancy, abortion, and drugs.

They don't have enough time in talking with their children mostly here in Towerville since most of the parents are working and the students are being left in their homes alone. So, the students, most of the time, decide for themselves. If they don't have any guidance at all from their parents, they will end up finding or building their own family at a very young age. Also, they will end up being part of drug addiction and others (Angelica, July 21, 2022).

Another site where the poor educational conditions of Towerville are apparently revealed is the school. In particular, it seems that schools are not sufficiently providing a quality educational environment to students in both qualitative and quantitative aspects. First of all, the poor educational scene that is evident from the quantitative aspect is the two-shift system. With 50 students in a classroom, it is common for students to have double shift classes in Towerville. It is divided into morning and afternoon classes, and the morning class is open from 6:00 am to 12:30 pm, and the afternoon class runs from 12:00 pm to 6:30 pm. Angelica, who participated in the study as a local teacher, said she has been adopting the double shift teaching method for at least 12 years since she began teaching in Towerville in 2010. However, in order to provide school education to students throughout the community with insufficient school facilities and a small number of teachers, the two-shift system was an unavoidable choice for schools (Angela, July 14, 2022).

To make matters worse, the government's 'K to 12' education policy, which has been implemented since 2016, has placed a greater burden and confusion on the poor schools. This policy was carried out to expand the 12th grade system to meet the international standard of the existing 10th grade system. Local high schools were not fully prepared to operate the 11th and 12th grade curricula, which resulted in some students having to transfer to high schools located outside the area. CAMP (2017) reported that the local high school students at the time felt financial burdens for tuition and transportation to attend private schools outside the region, and many students thought about giving up or actually gave up. The problem is that if students do not complete the upper secondary education, their final academic achievement remains as an elementary school graduate. Although a certificate of completion for completing the 10th grade was granted, it can be said that local students were not guaranteed their educational rights due to insufficient

support from the central government and inadequate preparation of local high schools.

The problem in terms of quality is that the quality of students' learning and the teaching methods of teachers are limited due to insufficient teaching materials and facilities. For example, local high school students do not have their own textbooks due to lack of textbooks, and teachers distribute those before class and take them back after class, which is a common scenario (CAMP, 2018). Hence, schools are not providing enough opportunities for students to deeply understand and learn the contents of classes while preparing and reviewing outside the classroom. In addition, as mentioned above, the lack of school facilities other than textbooks has caused many restrictions for teachers to perform various activities related to educational contents in the classroom. Due to the lack of ICT-related devices or teaching materials, the teaching method in the classroom was a uniform instructional way in which teachers delivered lectures centered on textbooks.

I didn't use PowerPoint presentations in classes before the pandemic. Because we didn't have proper monitors in the classroom. We just had our own laptops, which were too small to use as instructional materials (Cathy, July 14, 2022).

Lastly, the community also does not provide support to create a sufficient educational environment for local youth and children. First of all, looking at educational facilities, there are no educational facilities created by the government or community other than schools. There is one library in Minuyan Barangay and another in Gaya-Gaya Barangay, which was constructed by CAMP, not by the government and local community for the local educational welfare. Even so, the library in Minuyan has been closed to date due to the suspension of operation during the pandemic.



In addition, when considering education programs for young people in Towerville, most of them have the purpose of providing scholarship or allowance. Typically, these programs only provide a scholarship of 500 to 1,000 PHP per month with a lecture in the form of a seminar once a quarter, and there is no non-formal education program that youth in Towerville can participate in continuously.

There's nothing close to what the CAMP SALUTE offered here in the community. ... Actually, there is a program. There is a scholarship program outside of the Towerville community which is known to be an ABF or foundations that give a scholar training and seminars. But here specifically inside the Towerville wherein the students will not be required to go outside of community, there's nothing like this (Jane, July 21, 2022).

#### 4.1.2. Education Projects of CAMP Asia: Expansion to the Community

In Towerville, CAMP Asia has expanded its scope of activities in the region to the social economy, health, agriculture and education sectors, starting with a sewing social enterprise in 2011<sup>6</sup>. As is the case with most projects of CAMP, especially those related to health and education, undertakings began when CAMP found needs or accepted requests from local actors such as residents and schools in the course of carrying out existing projects. Education has always been a precedent activity and instrumental character in carrying out the projects of CAMP. For instance, it preceded vocational education and training for the efficient performance of sewing and bakery social enterprises. The kindergarten project, which was the first educational project implemented by the camp, seems to have the purpose of

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<sup>6</sup> See Lee (2017) and Lee (2019)

educating local children, but in reality, it was aimed to the function of caring for the better performance of other projects (Lee, 2017). Thus, the initial educational activities and projects of CAMP remained at the level of supporting other projects.

The problem of childcare also appeared in our vocational training and social enterprise operation. In the case of a social enterprise, productivity must be stable in order to generate profits. In other words, the quality of labor must be well-balanced and work must be done efficiently, but it is not so easy for a "*Nanay*" with young children (meaning mother in Tagalog). ... As a result of the interview on the issues of attendance rate, there were various circumstances, but the problem with childcare was the biggest. There is no place to leave the children like a daycare center in Korea, so they have to ask their neighbors or relatives. However, there are many times when it is not possible, and since the school has a double shift system where children of different age go to and from school at different times, a *nanay* has no choice but to take care of the children. ... If it is not a situation that can be solved in the community, it is time for CAMP to step in. We built kindergartens in Minyuan and Gayagaya to support the stable economic activities of *Nanays* and opened the first semester in the second half of 2015 (Lee, 2017, pp. 135-166).

The time when the educational activities and projects of CAMP have changed from the subsidiary nature of other projects to the nature of educational welfare in the community has begun with the library project. As mentioned above, the situation in Towerville, which lacks infrastructure, also applies to the education sector. Insufficient number of schools and the lack of educational facilities do not provide enough support for children in

Towerville to develop. In 2013, CAMP opened the *Kampo Libro* library with the support of the Samsung Dream Scholarship Foundation so that children could study and read books after school. In addition, rather than just staying at the level of building the library, it carried out education programs related to the library such as reading studies or writing contests so that children could use the library more actively. Furthermore, educational support projects for local children were continued through education programs such as a scholarship support project and after-school classroom projects for out-of-school youth. These programs, thus, aimed at supporting children to focus on individual learning or to experience the efficacy of learning even in the poor educational environment of Towerville.

## **4.2. Promoting Process, Structure, and Contents of the SALUTE Program**

### **4.2.1. Promoting Process**

CAMP's youth leadership program, first launched in 2015 under the name Samsung Leadership Scholarship Program (SLSP), was renamed SALUTE in 2016. It had been operated every Saturday for 5 years until the program was suspended due to the pandemic in 2020. During the period, leadership-related programs and learning enhancement-related programs were provided to about 100 local high school students. The Salute program has the nature of education for local development from the endogenous approach that is differentiated from the educational welfare approach. Contrary to the existing education programs, it was designed based on a critical mind that education programs must bring changes in the entire community beyond the level of supporting individual development. It is a concern that if education focuses only on individual development, youth and

young adults in forcibly relocated areas such as Towerville would accelerate the outflow of talent leaving the area for a better life, and thus it suggests the need for constructing structures where individual development can be returned to the local development. Based on the background, the program presents its overriding mission as to "make youth fostered as leaders in the community as well as individual development. Its community-centered consciousness that the local education program must contribute to the development of the local community is deeply reflected.

This consciousness contains the critical reflection of CAMP on the previous education programs before proceeding with the SALUTE program. For example, CAMP ran after-school programs for out-of-school youth and local poor children in 2013 and 2014, respectively. Through this, it was evaluated that the children had interest in study, expressed their intention to go to school, and improved their academic performance (CAMP, 2017). In addition, CAMP reported that parents who had little interest in education of their children became interested in education programs. However, at the same time, CAMP evaluated that the programs had limitations in solving fundamental educational issues within the community. This was the regret of CAMP over the result of the educational achievements at the individual level not being spread to the community. Lee reminisces about the time as follows

Although these programs were well received by the community, it was questionable whether the effect of the program had an impact on the change in the community, although it positively contributed to individual changes. ... What is the nature of education that we are trying to achieve? Giving children a chance to live a better life? Then, wouldn't it be that the chronic outflow of talent is repeated again? After the first goal, we added one more thing. It was about giving them the opportunity to live a better life, but at the same time

increasing their potential to transform the world into a sustainable community and livable place. That is, the vision of our education program was to enable individual development to contribute to positive social changes (Lee, 2017, pp. 139).

It can be confirmed that the emphasis placed on the expandability of the program effect in that the impact of the program should not simply remain at the individual level, but should be extended to the entire community. This is deeply embedded in the vision and goals of the program. CAMP presents the following four long-term visions of the program (CAMP, 2019): First, it is to foster youth to understand oneself, to grow within the community, to have perspectives on the world, to design one's own life, and to have leadership that embrace the community; Second, it is to create a virtuous cycle structure in which young people can be fostered as leaders with deep affection for the community so that they can engage in the community even after graduating from college; Third, it is to encourage continuous activity of the program by activating exchanges of human network between youths who have graduated and are currently attending the program through operation by grade level; Fourth, it is to expand the network of youth leadership organizations through the establishment of the program curriculum and regional diversification. Even if they are not physically part of the Towerville community because of college or work, cultivating local youth and young people to continue to participate in the community and engage in activities indicates a structure of virtuous cycle which continuously brings positive impacts on the community.

The goal of the program makes this more straightforward. CAMP (2017) presents the goals as youth mobilization, community development, and national building. Namely, it clearly revealed that the positive impact of the program should be extended to individuals, communities, and even

countries. Such phased expansion can be found in its sub-goals. the sub-goals and detailed plans for each year are shown in [Table 6].

Table 6. The Detailed Goals and Plans of the SALUTE Program by Year

Year	Detailed Goals	Detailed Plan
2015-2016	Strengthening Capabilities of Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership competency enhancement class using Ted-talk</li> <li>• Leadership activity class experiencing a variety of external activities</li> <li>• Learning enhancement class for improving academic achievement</li> </ul>
2017	Supporting SMILE Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting for SMILE project, a student-led community activity circle</li> <li>• Forming a youth network where graduates and enrolled students organize and work together</li> </ul>
2018	Producing Youth Leadership Education Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing a manual for the spread of youth leadership education</li> <li>• Promoting quality improvement of the education program through cooperation with professionals</li> </ul>
2019	Reinforcing Activities of Youth Organization and Establishing a Virtuous Cycle System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding community activities by strengthening activities of the youth organization</li> <li>• Establishing a virtuous cycle system for fostering youth leaders with mentor/mentee relationship</li> </ul>

(CAMP, 2019)

#### 4.2.2. Structure of the Program

In SALUTE, there is largely a network structure among the main body of the program and an internal structure of the program itself. The internal structure is related to the sub-curriculum and educational contents in the program, and the network structure between the agents is closely linked to the method of operating the program.

##### *The partnership structure*

The network structure of program operation functions based on a partnership between main bodies of operation. The bodies surrounding the program consists of students, parents, CAMP, local high schools, and the University of the Philippines' College of Social Work and Community Development (UP CSWCD). Among them, CAMP, local high schools, and UP CSWCD are the principal agents that are actually involved in program operation and create a network structure in the form of a partnership. The network structure of the participating agents configured in this way is shown in [Figure 1].

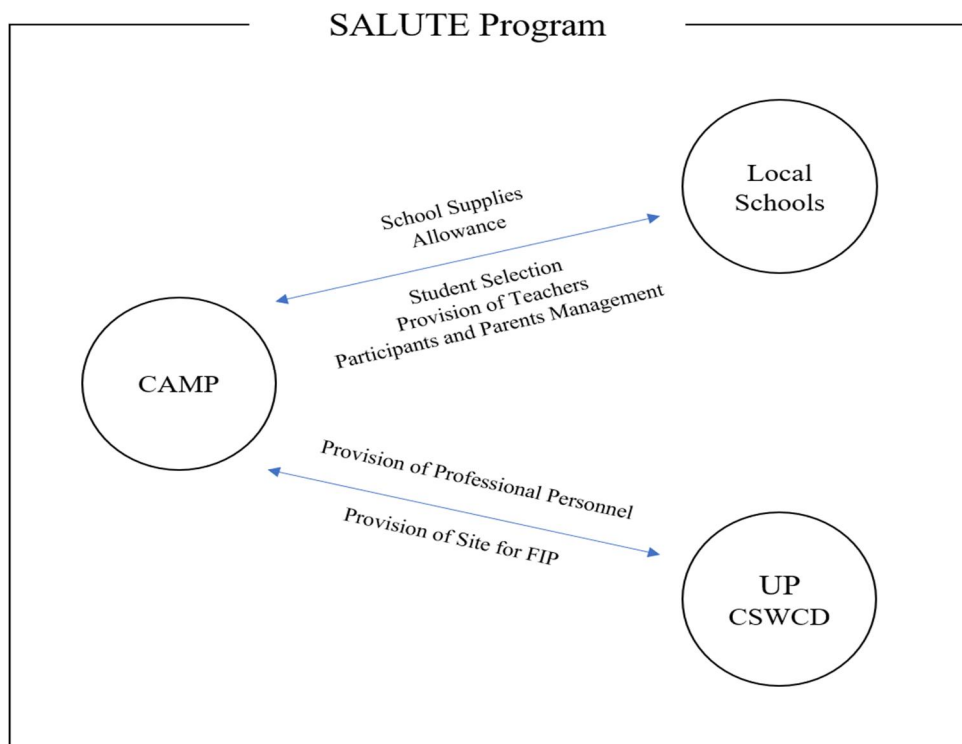


Figure 1. Partnership-based Network Structure of the SALUTE Program

In this partnership network structure, each agent supplements the shortcomings of CAMP, which is the key player of operation, by supporting strengths of each stakeholder for program operation. Specifically, the

partnership between CAMP and local high schools is as follows. The local high schools support the effective running of the program by taking responsibility in selecting students, providing teachers for the learning enhancement class, and supporting student and parent management. The recruitment was entirely left to the schools, and for this, CAMP did not present any qualification to the local high schools during the selection process. In addition, while designing the learning enhancement class, in collaboration with the high schools, CAMP actively reflected opinions of the school on the class, and the schools provided teachers who were professionals for this.

In terms of student and parent management, the facilitator, who is in charge of the program, carried out related tasks such as home visits, but the principal and teachers also supported management tasks through the Parent Steering Committee set up at the schools. Meanwhile, CAMP provided scholarships for students participating in the program, free school uniform support for local high school students, and assistance for school events to local schools.

The partnership with local high schools was an essential element. In the Philippines, there are many school events or academic-related programs on Saturdays, so cooperation from the schools was a necessary condition for a smooth program operation. The Samsung Dream Scholarship Foundation, which provided budget for the program, also placed emphasis on the signing of MoU with CAMP and the local schools in supporting the project. This partnership with local high schools has been expanded to the entire high schools in the region. The local high schools that were involved in the partnership in 2015, when the SALUTE program was first launched, were Minuyan High School and Towerville High School in Minuyan, and Marangal High School in Gaya-Gaya, but along with the existing three schools, Graceville High School in Gaya-Gaya was included in 2016 (CAMP, 2015).



We [CAMP] are cooperating the leadership programs with local schools in the sector of education. The schools communicate with us from selecting students to monitoring their changes to complement and develop the program. Teachers are also actively participating and caring because our goal is to make sure that students learn not only on Saturdays but also have ripple effects at home, school, and local areas. . . . It is no longer unfamiliar for the principals of the four local high schools to gather together. In the past, they were awkward because they recognized each other as competitors in the community, but now they are tied up as a Towerville community and constant chatter continues whenever we meet (Lee, 2017, p. 258).

Meanwhile, in addition to stability of the program operation through the partnership with the local high schools, CAMP established a partnership with UP CSWCD to ensure expertise of the program. Since the expertise of CAMP at that time was in social economy and projects for jobs, it was required to secure expertise in the sector of education in order to carry out full-scale education projects. To this end, efforts were made to secure it on its own, such as consulting with Korean experts in the field of education, but they also retained the expertise in the overall parts of the program through UP CSWCD, a group of local development experts.

In fact, the partnership with UP CSWCD is not limited to the SALUTE program. Both have continued to exchange know-hows based on a joint agreement signed in 2011 (Lee, 2017). For instance, college students at UP CSWCD are required to complete the Field Instruction Program (FIP) for one year in their senior year, and CAMP has become a place where they can conduct field practice. A mutually beneficial partnership has been, thus, formed in which CAMP can retain professional manpower for local development projects and UP CSWCD can provide a field where students can

actually conduct field practice at the university level.

In the context of the SALUTE program, the camp provided CSWCD students majoring in education with a project to conduct education-related field training, and college students provided advice on leadership program curriculum, materials necessary for educational activities, participation in program as instructors, establishment of a mentor/mention relationship with the enrolled students to support program operation (CAMP, 2016).

### *The internal structure*

The SALUTE program has its own internal structure in terms of composition and learning stages. First, in terms of program composition, the SALUTE program is a kind of umbrella program. In other words, it encompasses a leadership-related program, an academic-related program, and an employment-related program. The background of the program design was influenced by the Social Change Model of Leadership Development published by the U.S. Higher Education Research Institute in 1996 (CAMP, 2017). This model, which focuses on social change through leadership development, is in line with the SALUTE program's primary goal of "spreading individual development into the community."

When looked into specifically, the U.S. Higher Education Research Institute presents five key assumptions about leadership (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 10). First, cooperation is the foundation of leadership. Effective leadership consists of cooperative "action, shared power, and a passionate commitment to social justice" (Wagner, 2006, p. 8). Second, leadership is a process experienced by a group while cooperating toward a goal. Thus, the process has a collective nature, rather than the action of authoritative person. Third, values form the basis of leadership. Clear values and constant actions in accordance with the values must take place in having the trust, which is necessary for individuals to act collectively. Fourth, all

individuals can demonstrate leadership because of its universality. In other words, leadership is not for students with specific positions, but for all students who engage in action with others to make a difference. As a last point, leadership is about transformation. Ability to effect positive change for others is a necessary component of effective leadership.

As it is based on the Social Change Model of Leadership Development, the educational contents of the SALUTE reflect this in many parts. The educational contents and actual activities are organized to expand to individuals, groups, and communities, and it is also designed so that participating students can internalize core values at each stage.

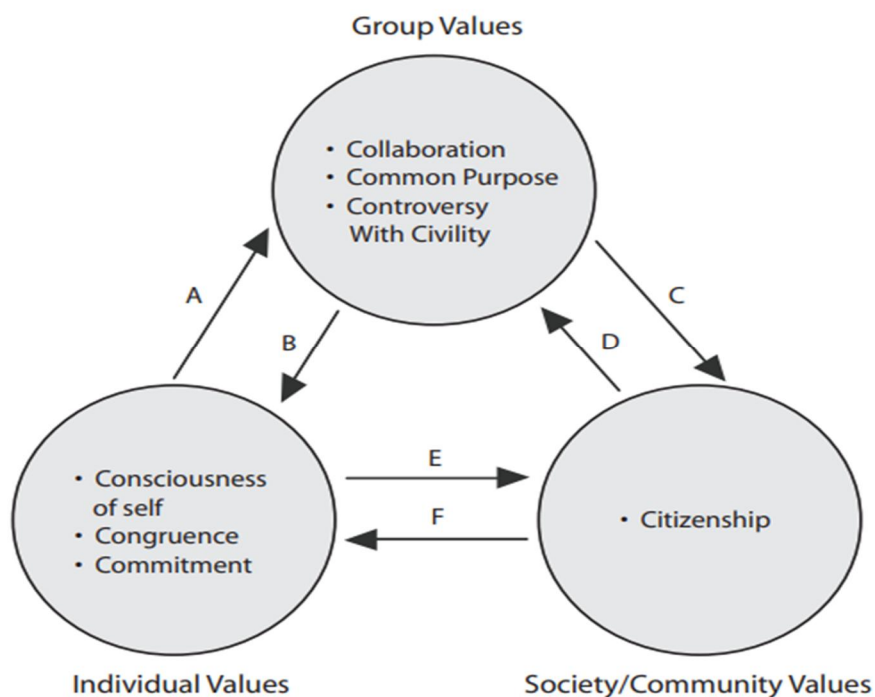


Figure2. Diagram of the Social Change Model

(Wagner, 2006, p. 8)

The sub-programs of the SALUTE have been codified over time.

From 2015 to 2016, at the beginning of the program, the leadership-related programs as one of the sub-programs consisted of a leadership competency class and a leadership activity class, and the academic-related program consisted of the academic class. However, as the 3rd batch was newly selected from 2017, CAMP was concerned that there would be differences in understanding and adaptability about the program in comparison with the existing 1st and 2nd batches, so the need to subdivide the courses within each program and establish a new class for students in advanced course was requested (CAMP, 2016).

Accordingly, in 2017, the leadership competency class and the leadership activity class remained the same, but basic and advanced courses were newly opened to be subdivided by batches, and in the case of the academic-related program, a college entrance preparation class (UPCAT) was established to provide learning opportunities for students in the first and second batches, who are planning to go to college. In addition, an employment-related program was initiated to provide internship opportunities within the projects of CAMP to students who did not intend to go to college (CAMP, 2017).

Although there was no significant change in 2018, internship and career consulting courses were provided for the 2nd batch, and college entrance preparation class for the 3rd batch was provided in common (CAMP, 2018). In 2019, there was a major change in the leadership-related program, and the existing basic and advanced courses were further subdivided into basic, advanced, application, and common courses. Thus, a leadership competency class was provided for the 5th batch as a basic course, a local development class for the 4th one as an advanced course, an advanced local development and practice class for 3rd one as application course, and a common leadership activity class was created for all batches including 1st and 2nd ones (CAMP, 2019).

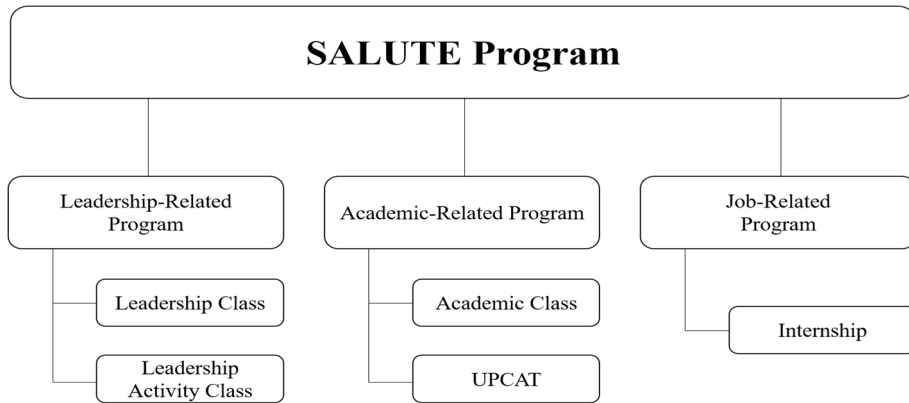


Figure 3. Sub-programs of the SALUTE

(CAMP, 2015; 2016; 2017)

#### 4.2.3. Contents of the Program

##### *Phased composition of educational contents*

As with most education programs, the SALUTE program intensifies its educational contents on an annual basis. As noted above, the leadership competency class provided students with an intensified curriculum for each year. Specifically, the leadership competency class consists of a total of three-year courses, and the goal of the first year is "Laying the Foundation", which focuses on acquiring basic knowledge related to leadership and establishing a right sense of values. The second year is about "Practicum", and in this stage, students develop basic skills while carrying out activities to apply the contents learned in the first year and local issues they have been concerned about to their lives and the community. At this time, the educational content focuses on learning cooperation and democratic decision-making methods among students by acquiring leadership and local development-related skills and planning actual projects based on them. The last phase of the third year is "Planning Leadership Engagement", which applies projects planned in the second year to the community. Therefore, the educational content of the third-

year stage put emphasis on developing more democratic civic competencies for students through community participation and practice.

That is, for each year, the aspect of acquiring basic knowledge and developing competency at the individual level is highlighted in the first year, while performing actual activities are underlined in the case of the second and third years, although there is a difference in the scope of activities. In line with this, the monthly training method is also applied differently. The leadership program selects a specific topic every month and organizes it as a four-week curriculum. In the case of the first year, a lecture-type class is conducted from the first week to the third week, and topic-related activities are provided in the fourth week. Contrary to this, in the second and third year, the education contents of each week are conducted in a way that lectures by topic are taken in the first week, and topic-related activities are planned, prepared, implemented, and evaluated from the second to fourth weeks.

Table 7. Annual-based Phased Structure of the SALUTE Program

	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year
Level	Basic	Advanced	Application & Practice
Phased Goal	Laying the Foundation	Practicum	Planning Leadership Engagement
Related Educational Activity	Watching Ted Talk, Discussion, Field Trip	Lecture Related to Community Development Planning Own Project	Practice and evaluate what students have planned
Output	Values Formation	Orientation Development	Skills Development

(CAMP, 2015; 2017; 2019)

Table 8. Weekly-based Ways of Teaching Method

	1 <sup>st</sup> Week	2 <sup>nd</sup> Week	3 <sup>rd</sup> Week	4 <sup>th</sup> Week
1st Year	Topic-specific lecture	Topic-specific lecture	Topic-specific lecture	Topic-related Activities
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Topic-specific lecture	Planning	Preparation	Implementation & Evaluation

(CAMP, 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019)

### *Leadership Competency Class*

As mentioned above, the leadership program takes a phased structure that leads to basic learning, advanced learning, and applied learning. Based on the structure, the class consists of its contents from understanding 'I' to practicing actual projects in the community.

In the basic learning stage, the educational contents focus on cultivating values and an overall understanding of various issues in the community. Specifically, for the first three months, students have opportunities to understand themselves centered on the topic 'I'. During this period, they explore their vision, self-reflection, understanding of the environment surrounding them, and their role as a leader. Vision exploration, self-reflection, and understanding of the environment surrounding oneself are linked to the establishment of the right self-consciousness, and one's role as a leader is connected to the congruence and commitment. The importance of such education lies in giving students from the forced migration background time to understand themselves. This is not just about understanding the environment surrounding the student (e.g., poverty, forced migration), but because self-confidence and self-esteem can be restored by reflecting on their lives and discovering their potential in the environment.

If the contents are centered on 'I' for the first three months, the contents related to the local community are developed more for the following five months. During this period, students learn about community issues and

how these affect youth in the community, and explore community issues in specific fields such as human rights, health, environment, and education. In this process, they discover what the problems of the local community are and understand how global issues in each field and structural problems in the Philippines affect their lives and Towerville. For the last two months, the contents which prepare for the advanced course were given to students. For example, they acquire general basic knowledge of future local development-related activities and what kinds of activities can be actually done for community change.

In the basic learning stage, if basic knowledge about the community is acquired and values are established based on the educational content centered on 'I', in the advanced learning stage, it is conducted with the goal of 'youth in the community'. During the first two months, students explore the role of youth as a member of the community. In particular, in the process of recognizing youth as a member of the community, the boundaries of the range of understanding community are expanded. In other words, by delivering the contents connected to the boundaries of community, such as family community consisting of family and relatives, the neighboring community composed of close neighbors, and the local community, the scope of the community that students have can be expanded.

In addition, students in the advanced course learn understanding of leadership and related skills. In this process, they gain capabilities by acquiring specific leadership- and local development-related skills such as the value of service, community organizing skills, communication skills, and local resource exploration and mobilization. For the next five months, the contents of the advanced course are developed in a way that the students make an actual plan for a community activity based on the basic knowledge and skill they have learned. Moreover, the students are grouped, and each group prepares for the course of the application by establishing project purposes,



contents, detailed goals, and action plans.

The applied course contains educational contents that actually carries out projects prepared in the advanced course. In this process, students apply projects planned for 11 months to the community in stages such as review, revision, execution, interim evaluation, re-execution, and evaluation. specifically, in the review and revision phases, they present the project in the form of proposals to other students. Based on the advice received from the facilitator and other peers, the project is modified, supplemented, and prepared for actual implementation. Afterwards, while carrying out the project directly for three months, they write an execution report and self-monitoring report, and share the interim evaluation results with other peer groups. Based on the feedback of the interim evaluation results, the project is supplemented for one month and implemented again for 3 months. During the last month of the program, students write a final report based on the evaluation of projects carried out for six months and shared it again with groups of students who have carried out other projects.

### *Leadership Activity Class*

Leadership activity classes are primarily aimed at expanding the scope of experience by providing students with opportunities to experience various activities. Therefore, there are a number of pursuits that promote meaningful experiences, including team building, visits to other local communities or other institutions, volunteer activities, community exchange events and programs, and community campaigns.

Team building is an activity that forms and develops a sense of cooperation and solidarity among students, and its main contents are recreation and presentation of self-vision. Visits to other regions are aimed at expanding regional understanding, which is limited to Towerville, by experiencing other local communities. In fact, the students had time to reflect

on their lives in Towerville through talking to other local people and actually experiencing their lives by visiting the *Maisan* and *Payatas* communities.

The activity of visiting other institutions is connected to the educational contents that discuss various issues of the community in the leadership competency class. Students have time to deeply understand and experience a certain issue by visiting institutions closely related to specific issues. For example, students visited Tibby's farm and Gawad Kalinga, where organic farming is conducted to create a sustainable agricultural structure, for awareness of environmental issues, and they also went to Canaan Farmer School to experience leadership and efforts of rural activists to solve rural community issues through interacting with them.

Volunteer activities are carried out by students for their local schools and communities. Volunteer activities they actually performed included *Brigada Eskwela*, a program which includes cleaning classrooms in preparation for the new semester, and they also had volunteer work in projects that were of interest among the projects of CAMP, including social enterprise, education, health, and organic farming. For example, operation of local libraries and learning guidance for children using the library was performed as the education-related volunteer activities, and for health-related volunteer activities, patient guidance and cleaning were conducted at local clinics. In the case of planning and implementing campaign, campaigns such as 'Back to School' for out-of-school students were carried out as an activity to increase the level of awareness of local issues recognized by students.

### *Academic class*

Academic-related programs are divided into academic class and UPCAT by year. First-year students participate in the academic class, and for sophomores, if they intend to go on to college, the UPCAT class based on the entrance examination of the University of the Philippines is given. The

academic class provides English, Math, and Science, which are essential subjects for entering colleges, and two subjects are conducted for 1 hour and 30 minutes per subject every Saturday. Teachers for each subject have been sent alternately from nearby local high schools, Towerville High School and Minuyan High School.

In particular, the curriculum of the academic class was designed based on 11th grade curriculum of the Department of Education. At that time, the school system in the Philippines was changed from the existing 10th grade system to the 12th grade system as the central government implemented the K-12 policy. Against this background, CAMP and principals planned the 11th grade curriculum as the contents of the academic class, and divided it into a basic course and an advanced course by reflecting the opinions of parents and local high school teachers (CAMP, 2016).

The lecture method is not the cramming education which is usually conducted by the teachers at school, but it is performed using various teaching methods using puzzles, quizzes, and situational plays. In addition, video materials and videos related to learning topics were watched using beam projectors and laptops that could not be used in the poor classroom environment of a local high school in Towerville.

### *Real Talk Concert*

The Real Talk Concert, an activity aimed at exchanging ideas with the local community, has the character of summarizing what students have learned through the SALUTE program. It is a place to show audiences what the students have learned and felt while carrying out the leadership program for a year. In the Real Talk Concert, students recite traditional Filipino poetry and songs, put on a play on community issues, and make a speech on issues embedded in the Towerville community, such as poverty, education, teenage pregnancy and abortion, drugs, and out-of-school youth. For this purpose,

they not only collect and analyze data related to the topic and make presentation materials, but also practice presentation postures such as breathing and gazing, and conduct rehearsal in front of the facilitator and other colleagues.

The Real Talk Concert is important in that the students prepare the presentation topic and event contents on their own. Although there was a piece of advice from facilitators and seniors in the process of selecting topics and collecting data, they were able to develop the capabilities necessary to plan and implement the project by preparing themselves for the composition, content, and execution of the event.

### **4.3. Experience of Learners in the Program Participation Process**

The previous two sections examined the background, promoting process, structure, and contents of the SALUTE program. This section aims to analyze what experiences the students have had while interacting within the program.

#### **4.3.1. Encouraging Environment**

One of the students' experiences of participating in the program was a “family”-like environment. The students said that they were “treated fairly”<sup>7</sup> regardless of their "grade, school, age, gender, or state of poverty". In a more emotional context, Andy explained the experience of the program as being "accepted" regardless of his background, having his opinions "listened" to by others, and forming new relationships.

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<sup>7</sup> John (July 22, 2022)

CAMP SALUTE is my home because they accepted me, they listened to me and then I found new friends. Imagine we came from competing schools- Towerville and Minuyan. ... Anyway, I feel this program is like home because even though we are different people and came from different backgrounds, in CAMP SALUTE, we shared the same agenda and the same spirit (Andy, July 22, 2022).

It seems that the intentional efforts of CAMP and the role of the facilitator were critical in creating an intimate and family-like environment in the program. First of all, when looking into the efforts of CAMP, it endeavored to create a student-friendly environment for students, who mostly have negative self-image due to forced migration and poverty experiences, and to encourage more active participation in the program. To this end, CAMP asked the students to submit a reflection paper for each activity to know what they have learned and felt in the classes. The paper not only played a role in monitoring the results of educational activities, but also served as a kind of window for students to express the need to improve in the activities or to express personal opinions. In addition, the standpoints of the students expressed in this way became an agenda for all members of the program to consider together. Not all opinions were grandiose but rather contained problems that must be addressed. Among them were urgent concerns such as "difficulties in understanding English"<sup>8</sup> while watching Ted Talks, and minor issues such as the need for activities i.e., "ice breakers" to ease "boredom"<sup>9</sup>. The important point was how CAMP and the coordinator took it seriously when students expressed their points of view. They felt that they were "supported"<sup>10</sup> as their opinions were considered and reflected on within the program.

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<sup>8</sup> Cho (July 21, 2022)

<sup>9</sup> Andy (July 22, 2022)

<sup>10</sup> Leymond (July 9, 2022)

I think our opinions were validated in the CAMP SALUTE, since any ideas and suggestions that we have [in reflection paper] were shared with one another and were being deliberated as a whole (Andy, July 22, 2022).

Apart from the reflection paper, CAMP attempted to build an encouraging atmosphere between CAMP and student / student and student. At the beginning of the program, most of the students had difficulties in relating to or communicating with others due to low self-esteem, having been “pressured” and “compared with others” at home.

I had this low self-esteem that I cannot go in front of other people. ... In speaking, I was just pressured that others will judge me in what I say and in how I speak (Jacob, June 30, 2022).

Whenever my parents saw a person who is successful, they said “Oh he became a really good man, you should follow his step”. I was so pressured, and I thought that I was not doing enough (John, July 11, 2022).

In order for the student to recover from their low self-esteem, CAMP carried out a team building activity at the beginning of each semester. On the other hand, it also established a mentor/mentee relationship between seniors and juniors so that they could adapt to the program more easily and lead them to a close relationship. For instance, like what the CAMP staffs and the facilitator did for the first batch, the senior batches played a role in advising the juniors to plan projects on their own and supporting them in preparation for the presentation of the Real Talk Concert. Intimacy between students

increased in these activities, and students felt “comfort in relationships”<sup>11</sup>. In particular, this kind of encouraging atmosphere was essential for students to have the perception that “it is fine to make mistakes”<sup>12</sup>.

Camp SALUTE taught me that “It’s okay. You can make mistakes. So just continue and speak and teach people what you want them to learn” (Clare, July 8, 2022).

In addition to the reflection paper and the mentor/mentee relationship between seniors and juniors, it seems that the role of the facilitator was important in creating a family-like environment (Cho, 2022). For instance, Liam, a CAMP facilitator, was a sort of a “big brother” to the students. He thought that it is necessary to build a relationship with students both inside and outside the program, and for this, he played “video games”<sup>13</sup> with male students and had conversations with schoolgirls while eating “fish balls”.

Such a close relationship not only made the students feel more connected to the program, but also made them think of the facilitator as an important life advisor. Most of the research participants answered that the role of the facilitator was important in correcting their behavior or restoring their self-esteem. In other words, the intimate relationship became a background for students to have positive self-esteem and participate more actively in the program by making students open up their concerns and personal problems to the facilitator while the latter carefully observed each student every time and gave a piece of advice based on the observation. This eventually led to create a “family of learners”<sup>14</sup> atmosphere at the program level.

As examples, reflection papers, team building activities,

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<sup>11</sup> Jessy (July 7, 2022)

<sup>12</sup> Jacob (June 30, 2022)

<sup>13</sup> Liam (July 16, 2022)

<sup>14</sup> Liam (July 16, 2022)

mentor/mentee relationships, and the role of facilitators were presented, but an intrinsically important condition is the attitude towards students in actual practice. The students experienced that they were valued, respected, and supported not from the reflection paper or the mentor/mentor relationship itself, but from the attitude and caring they felt within it, which played an important role in forming students' positive self-esteem and a bond with the program. In addition, as Andy said, the rise in bonds and solidarity ultimately became an important starting point for students to accept and share the purpose of the SALUTE program as the “same agenda” and “same spirit”.

The way of delivering and giving services to our students is common. But, definitely, how they practice the manner and the treatment is totally different. Basically, that's a unique thing because different organizations can offer learning opportunities for our students, but how they are going to handle and how are they are going to support the students are definitely different and that is somewhat a unique characteristic of the CAMP SALUTE (Angelica, July 21, 2022).

#### 4.3.2. Power Relationship between Adults and Youths

CAMP basically aims and practices to gradually transfer the authority of projects to the locals. For example, the sewing center, a social enterprise in Towerville that was initially led by CAMP is currently being operated by *nanays*. The former now plays a role in supporting the latter as partners. This context also applies to the SALUTE program. The purpose of establishing a mentor/mentee relationship between seniors and juniors was to create an atmosphere of closeness and mutual encouragement, but ultimately, it was aimed at securing the necessary capacities of the seniors to implement their own programs in the future, while accumulating experiences in participating



in overall program operation (CAMP, 2017; 2018). In this process, students experienced a gradual transfer of authority in decision-making and operation of program activities to them.

In terms of the program, the gradual devolution of authority indicates that the students started to take the lead and responsibility for the small tasks. For example, the preparation works for leadership and academic classes were subdivided so that each student could prepare for himself or herself. Liam explained that the purpose of assigning these small tasks one by one was to give students a sense of “ownership” and “responsibility”<sup>15</sup> for the program. Aside from assigning small tasks, CAMP allowed students to directly decide and operate the themes and methods of campaigns conducted in the leadership activity program for their own community activities. Moreover, it made the senior students and the graduates directly participate in leadership programs or activities as instructors or facilitators, or prepare for the events of the Real Talk concert on their own.

The progressive transfer of power over decision-making and program operation was meaningful to students in three aspects. First, competencies related to communication and program management increased by participating in decision-making and operation throughout the program. That is, participation in these was linked to competencies in various areas, such as the application of communication skills, democratic participation methods in the process of making decisions, understanding of the overall process of the program, and the ability to carry out a project. In fact, in the case of the Real Talk Concert held in 2019, students and alumni were able to carry out the overall administrative tasks of the event, such as sending emails inviting important officials, advertising it to the locals, reserving a venue, and others (CAMP, 2019).

Second, the devolution allowed students to experience a considerable

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<sup>15</sup> Liam (July 16, 2022)

level of autonomy. It became the background for the students to determine the theme and method of their own community activities and campaigns based on contexts of their living world and implement those in more creative ways. It also made students participate in the program activities more proactively.

We were given the chance to create our own activity design whenever we wanted to propose a project (Jane, July 21, 2022).

Lastly, the transfer of authority engendered students a sense of belonging and ownership of the program. In a sense, the examples presented above can be seen as CAMP has already set the overall framework and direction and assigned them to students. However, by allowing students to make decisions and perform these within the scope of autonomy, they recognized themselves as the principal agents in the program. In fact, most research participants said that the activities of the SALUTE program were not “given” by CAMP or facilitators, but those were “planned,” “prepared,” and “implemented” by themselves. They revealed the "responsible" attitude for activities to become a success.

Interestingly, even though CAMP formed a student council to allow students to participate in decision-making and actively express their opinions, most of the research participants barely recognized the role of the council, or did not even know whether it existed. This point implies that it is critical for the learners to be able to feel it in practice rather than in form, and that all members should be recognized and spurred to participate in the process.

#### 4.3.3. Meaningful Participation in the Community

Meaningful participation in the community has two connotations for students. The first was a change in the perception of the community and local people, and the second was the perception of the value of community service.

### *Understanding Towerville as People live together*

As mentioned above, Towerville was a place where students in the program and their families moved away from the community that had emotionally bonded with and began to live with strangers. The poor livelihood from lack of jobs and frequent moves within Towerville due to high monthly rents influenced people to have superficial relationships with other local neighbors inevitably. Moreover, concerns about migrants coming from typical areas such as *Tondo*<sup>16</sup> where there is a strong geographical stigma related to poverty and crime exacerbated these apparent connections.

In this local context, Towerville was an object of indifference to the students. Towerville was simply a place where they and their families were located, and their understanding of the community was limited to the “houses” located near their home. In addition, the perception of the locals was not a subject of “interest until they could get something”<sup>17</sup>. In other words, if there was no influence on them, even a neighbor living in a close location was simply a separate existence living in the same area.

Towerville is just like the house on our left and right sides. That is the thing that I only had. So, the perspective of Towerville was very limited to the house that is behind us (Jane, July 21, 2022).

Along with the indifference, students had “fear”<sup>18</sup> of Towerville and the locals. At the time, students had a strong perception that Towerville was a place where problems such as “drugs” and “teen pregnancy” were prevalent, and that it was “a scary place to go alone”<sup>19</sup>. Andy said that he was wary of

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<sup>16</sup> According to Andy (July 11, 2022), *Tondo* has geographical connotation as “The poorest of the poor with high crime rate”.

<sup>17</sup> Clare (July 20, 2022)

<sup>18</sup> Andy (July 11, 2022)

<sup>19</sup> Clare (July 8, 2022)

local neighbors before participating in the program due to his prejudice against the locals from certain regions and his experience of actual crimes such as robberies.

I don't know about the people and even I don't want to know about them. ... [experience of robbery] It's kind of traumatic to me and to my family. So, we wanted to go back to Manila (Andy, July 22, 2022).

These perceptions changed while participating in community-related educational activities of the program. As the program basically aims to train youths as community leaders, it has continuously carried out educational activities to create a link between youth and the community. One of these educational activities was to encourage the students to participate in community development projects of CAMP that were closely related to their fields of interest. Depending on their interests, students participated in projects with the locals who actually work in the library, sewing center, health clinic, and poultry farms. This experience of participation was a chance for students to visually recognize optimistic changes in people and the community. In other words, the students saw the process of expansion toward positive local development with their own eyes as participants just like a "*Nanay*" and her families changed positively due to having sustainable jobs at the sewing center and the health safety net by local "clinics"<sup>20</sup> brought the changes in the lives of the residents. This was also to recognize that the community could become healthier and developed through the constructive way of transformation in the lives of local people.

Through the projects of CAMP, it helped people how to make livelihood. The *nanay*! The *Iting*! Those kinds of livelihood. So

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<sup>20</sup> Leymond (July 16, 2022)

slowly by slowly, the Towerville has developed and has built livelihood. I could see how they positively changed and now I feel safe (Clare, July 8, 2022).

Another educational activity is a local survey. As mentioned above, CAMP presents a students' own community initiative as one of the educational activities of the leadership program. The survey was conducted to identify the actual needs of the locals before the students planned, prepared, and implemented their own projects. In the process of visiting and meeting local people, the survey offered opportunity for the students not only to simply identify the needs of the people, but also to listen to the “stories” of the residents living together in the community and understand their lives. For example, the lives of the neighbors from *Tondo* who the students met were not different from the lives experienced by the students and their families. In response to this experience, Andy recalled:

But when the SALUTE program came, we experienced going around the Towerville community and interviewing each family. It was my first time to know their stories. . . . When they told their stories on how they came to Towerville and how they lived their lives here, I realized that it is similar to what we experienced (Andy, July 22, 2022)

The reason why it is important to change the perception of the community through these activities is that those have become opportunities to make the participation of students in the community more meaningful in the future. Clare (July 8, 2022) described her perception of the community as having changed through encounters with the locals: “It's not about a place anymore, but it's about people in the place we live together”. It means that Towerville has become a living space for people who are living together,

rather than a spatial concept area. The locals, who the students feared or ignored, became beings who could share the pain of life with students, including forced migration by the central government, poor livelihood, and family disintegration, and may create a better community together. Moreover, the students have begun recognizing the people as the subjects of "caring", "concern", "empathy and "open- mindedness"<sup>21</sup>. In other words, the locals are no longer separate beings in the same space, but have become beings "close to their hearts"<sup>22</sup>.

It [SALUTE program] enabled the students or the scholars as a person to have empathy, to have care, and to have concern to their community (Andy, July 11, 2022).

In this respect, meaningful participation in the community was a change in understanding the community superficially and negatively. As they witnessed and listened to the changes of the locals and their stories of life, Towerville is no longer recognized as a "space" but lives of "people", and it made them look at the community members from a different perspective.

They have set themselves as being part of the community. ... They look at people differently and I have seen how they care for other people (Angelica, July 21, 2022).

### *Three Youth-determined initiatives for the community*

As mentioned earlier, the students in the leadership competency class gathered at each school to plan, operate, and evaluate three of their own projects on community issues that they had been most interested in or thought

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<sup>21</sup> Angel (July 5, 2022); Kyle (April 11, 2022)

<sup>22</sup> Andy (July 11, 2022)

to be problematic.

The first project is *Hanap Kaalaman*<sup>23</sup>, which was jointly conducted by students from Graceville High School and Marangal High School in Phase 6, Towerville. It was a kind of literacy education activity for street children and children who could not attend kindergarten or elementary school due to the poor family circumstance. After obtaining consent from the parents of the children to participate in the activities, the students taught basic English and Filipino in the library and also did activities such as storytelling<sup>24</sup>. The second one is Ted Pro, which was operated by students from Towerville High School. By forming their own health organization within the school, the students provided first aid training or simple treatment to other students based on the critical mind on lack of health awareness and health professionals in the school. Lastly, Minuyan High School students planned and conducted an in-school competency building project called the Minuyan at Skills Proficiency Activity (MSPA). This activity was operated in the direction of the students forming mentor-mentee relationships with the 7th grade juniors and teaching them how to tackle subjects such as Mathematics, English, Science, and Literature.

As Jennings et al. (2006) emphasized, this experience became an opportunity for the students to apply and polish the local development skills they had acquired as knowledge from the lectures while performing community activities, and to recognize that they have secured sufficient capacities to plan and operate community activities on their own.

So right there [initiatives], I learned how to suggest a project proposal and what elements are needed. So, the technical aspects of being part of the leadership training program enhanced me to create a proper

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<sup>23</sup> *Hanap* means ‘find’ and *Kaalaman* means ‘knowledge’

<sup>24</sup> Emma (July 12, 2022)

program, a project proposal, and its elements (Jane, July 21, 2022).

However, the more important experience is that community work is not an activity that requires special skills or resources. In other words, they realized that the essence of serving or contributing to the community is to use their skills, knowledge, time, and efforts for those who are marginalized in the community.

[Through the Hanap Kaalaman experience] we believe that we don't need to become rich or to become really good at everything in helping people. But, at some point, you can help other people by sharing all these skills and knowledge that you have (Emma, July 12, 2022).

Taken together, the meaningful experience of participation in the community is significant in that the students have discovered their competency and a sense of belonging to the community, as well as the values of commitment and service. In addition to the cases presented above, they participated in other community-related activities, and this series of experiences served as the foundation to have social roles or social identities such as "community workers"<sup>25</sup> and "community activists"<sup>26</sup>.

#### 4.3.4. Chance for Critical Reflection

The leadership program was a forum in which students think about what issues are in their community and what problems are in other areas through considering and sharing those with other peers to understand more comprehensively. Students could get to know more about the problems placed

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<sup>25</sup> Emma (July 12, 2022); Jane (July 21, 2022)

<sup>26</sup> Leymond (July 18, 2022)



in Towerville by conducting lectures, discussions, and other educational activities (e.g., creating tables for local issues, making presentations for local problems where each student belongs) related to monthly topics (e.g., education, health, environment). However, it was difficult to say that they became more critical in recognizing and taking actions against those problems just because they were aware of local issues as a whole. Thus, there was a need of a trigger to critically reflect on the issues of the community in order for the consciousness of the students to be critically transformed and this is to be expressed in their attitudes and behaviors.

I didn't much know about local issues. I just knew that there were many fights in front of the streets. But when I participated in the program and when I talked with other friends, I found out that there were some other problems like drugs or teenage pregnancies in other districts and even in my district too (Jacob, July 5, 2022).

CAMP thought that it was important to "learn a reality with a wider perspective in the field"<sup>27</sup>, rather than in the classroom, resulting in a trigger for the creation of a leadership activity class. CAMP selected *Payatas*, which is famous for its garbage village, as the first place for the activity called exposure in the leadership activity class to "reassure students who are in a sense of defeat due to relative poverty"<sup>28</sup>. There, the students dispersed and spent time with members of the local voluntary self-governing organization called *Samakabai* and their families, and then gathered again to share their experiences on the lives of people in *Payatas* community with other children. The lives of the locals in *Payatas* that the students experienced was having a bathroom-sized house, having a meal consisting only of rice, soy sauce, and

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<sup>27</sup> See CAMP (2016)

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*

*asin* (salt), and children being unable to go to school<sup>29</sup>.

They are having that [soy sauce and asin] for a meal, and I can't imagine how the kids will grow up in that kind of family because they have limited resources. ... And somehow the knowing and the passion strike within me that this is the type of the family that most Filipinos encounter every day (Jane, July 21, 2022).

This experience was the learning to realize the "reality"<sup>30</sup> that actually exists beyond the knowledge learned through reading books or classes. It is a fact that students already know as knowledge that the *Payatas* area is full of trash and that children there cannot go to school. However, entering and experiencing the lives of people there has become an opportunity to realize the existence of uncomfortable truths such as the fact that education is not a right for everyone and the appearance of five families living in a bathroom-sized house, and to reflect on those more critically. Most of the research participants said that they have begun to think about "what the role of the government is"<sup>31</sup> and "why children cannot go to school"<sup>32</sup> through this experience. In fact, Clare confessed that the background of setting targets as out-of-school children in the *Hanap Kaalaman* is based on the reality that children in *Payatas* do not enjoy the right to education.

I believe knowledge is just reading a book, but experience is something that you've encountered. For example, I've become so much aware about poverty when I was in *Payatas*. There are lots of garbage, lots of children who are not going to school but are working

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<sup>29</sup> Jane (July 21, 2022)

<sup>30</sup> Leymond (July 9, 2022)

<sup>31</sup> Jane (July 21, 2022)

<sup>32</sup> Clare (July 8, 2022)

and who don't have shelter. Like their life is in danger every day. And that moment, I didn't feel like it's just knowledge. I really felt that experience. It really made me think like "What is the government doing?", "Why are these kids not going to school?". So that's why, at that moment, we planned to create a program, the Hanap Kaalaman because of Payatas (Clare, July 20, 2022).

In fact, CAMP provided interactive discussions among students and various external experiences so that students could have meaningful self-reflection and awareness of local issues in various activities. However, it is difficult to say that CAMP prepared and implemented these activities based on the Critical Pedagogy perspective. As mentioned earlier, these activities were prepared to restore negative self-image or to have a broader perspective. Interestingly, however, the students began to critically reflect on their own lives and social structures, although CAMP seemed not to intend it. This point suggests that regardless of the intention of the program, youths can perceive society more critically through activities that allow them to experience socio-political reality.

In this section, the experiences of the students in the program were presented as a) family-like environment, b) power transition from adults to youth, c) meaningful participation in the community, and d) chance for critical reflection. Putting these experiences together, it can be considered that it is a learning experience which is hard to obtain in school education. All the experiences of being respected within the organization, of getting involved in overall decision-making and management, of participating in community activities, and of having critical reflection are far from schools which are represented by a vertical teacher-student relationship, academic and performance-oriented management, and disconnection from the community.

To be honest, we're going to school. Our school was just focusing on academic things. What I've learnt from the CAMP SALUTE like community volunteerism is the thing that I didn't learn from school because there is no subject like this here in the Philippines. They did not teach us how to be a good leader, how to be a servant leader, or how to be an analytical thinker. ... When I joined the program, I realized that "Oh, it is the real situation of our community" (Andy, July 22, 2022).

## **V. Becoming Empowered Youth**

In the previous chapter, the experiences of the students in the program were examined. This chapter will explore what changes have occurred through these encounters. To this end, it will examine changes in the agency and critical consciousness of the pupils, and also explore the manifestation of the individual-level empowerment in the community.

### **5.1. Empowered Self-Determination and Critical Consciousness: Personal Dimension**

#### **5.1.1. Formation of Community-based Agency**

Being empowered in terms of agency means that individuals are able to make choices and take actions necessary to achieve the life they value. This ultimately leads to self-determination (Biggeri et al., 2019; Walther, 2012). Changes in students' agency aspect as shown through their learning experiences in the SALUTE program include: first, prioritizing the community based on their personal values, i.e. knowing the life they value, and second, making crucial decisions in determining the direction of their life stages based on their personal value standards, i.e. making necessary choices and taking actions. This change resulted in the formation and manifestation of self-determination based on a community-based agency.

*Discovering what I love and what I value as being part of the community*

Most participants in the study confessed that they were self-centered and even selfish before participating in the program. On the other hand, they said that they did not know what they wanted to do or what their purpose in

life was. From these confessions, it can be inferred that students perceived the community and the locals as separate entities, instead of understanding and recognizing their existence within the connection to the community and the people. Furthermore, it can be seen that they lacked self-understanding of the values and goals they pursue.

I didn't know what my purpose is in my life before I entered this program. But because of this program, I've learned a lot of things about myself and I realized that I love serving and helping other people (Emma, July 12, 2022).

However, as Emma mentioned, the positive understanding of self and community, sense of belonging, and community service experiences formed during the program participation process influenced students to discover the value of their lives and appreciate the value of the community. This is evident from the fact that even if they need to spend their "time" and "resources" without the involvement and support of CAMP after graduating from the program, they have become "passionate" about community service in their lives, meaning that they are willing to commit to the community.

We've found our passion to serve the community which is a very fulfilling thing to do, even though we are busy with our academic subjects and other responsibilities at home and with other things. So, I think that the passion or the calling itself will cover all the reasons why we are doing these kinds of things, even though we are not paid. We are not already receiving any allowances, but we are shouldering the costs to go to this place as volunteers. (Jane, July 21, 2022)

Actually, my life is now just kind of volunteering. I appreciate those

people and I make myself available for others because this is what I really want to happen in my life (Leymond, July 16, 2022).

Of course, it does not mean that volunteering for the community becomes the top priority for everything. However, the confession that their passion has become a dedication and service to the community indicated that it has become an important value in their lives. In other words, this change in the students means that they internalize the goal of positively perceiving Towerville, which many people perceive as poor and dangerous and want to leave, as members of the community and of transforming it into a better community.

Therefore, as Biggeri, Arciprete and Karkara (2019) pointed out, if individuals have a clear understanding of the values and goals they pursue, students participating in the SALTUTE program that aims to bring positive change to the community through volunteering and service can be regarded as having formed community-based agency.

#### *Choices and actions based on formed community-based agency*

Pursuing the value of life as community service was proved to be unique choices and actions in the course of their lives. It was manifested in the choice of continuously participating in the program through negotiations with parents and the choice of college and career paths based on the value of community volunteering.

##### *a) Negotiating with the family to keep attending the SALUTE program*

For most students who participated in the program, the problem of continuing to take part in the program was the beginning of the first subjective choice they had to make. As mentioned above, the program was conducted every Saturday. In the Philippines, various school programs are operated on

Saturdays, so CAMP and the schools made an agreement so that the program would not be interrupted. However, from the parents' point of view, attending the program on Saturdays meant that children, who used to help with household chores such as running stores and taking care of younger siblings while their parents were working, would no longer assist them. Contrary to other youth programs outside Towerville that offered monthly scholarships and seminar-style training about once a quarter, the SALUTE program offered leadership and learning competency programs every Saturday, and extracurricular activities on Sundays. Therefore, some parents were impelled to ask their children to quit the program as they participated in the program until Sunday. In fact, these assumptions played a role in making most students stop getting involved in the program.

Except for some who had strong parental support for participating in the program, all research participants responded with “family” and “parents” as the greatest difficulties they had in taking part in the program. Students who wanted to continue the program had to persuade their parents in the context of Filipino family culture, where it is taken for granted to support parents with household chores and care for younger siblings on Saturdays.

My family wanted me to stop because of my grandfather. I and my grandfather are the only ones being left in the house. So, who will take care of my grandfather? However, I was able to persuade them. I explained to them the situation and my growth here. Consequently, they acquiesced and fortunately, I was able to graduate. (Jane, July 21, 2022).

This persuasion is an example of negotiating with parents. Students had to demonstrate their need to continue participating in the program through actions, not just words. The action is to take responsibility for their decisions.



[To keep attending SALUTE] I showed my mother I gained something from it. If I have a vacant time, I always clean the house or sit in the shop, so she could think “Uhm, maybe CAMP SALUTE is really good” (Clare, July 8, 2022).

Then, what was the background for these students to make such choices and actions? It can be revealed that underlying this choice was the fact that students regarded the program as an important value in their lives. For them, the program was not simply a scholarship program that provided leadership and learning competency programs, rather it was a program that allowed them to make meaningful "growth" in their commitment and service to the community, which was the core value of their lives, by providing an opportunity to connect with the community more effectively. In other words, from the perspective of the Capability Approach, it was an agentive choice to secure the capabilities to perform community activities more systematically.

Like what I have said, we didn't consider it as a financial scholarship. We perceived it as a leadership scholarship. So, we continued it. If we just aimed for financial assistance, we wouldn't continue the program. We would just leave. But we seriously engaged because we wanted to thrive (Leymond, July 8, 2022).

*b) Changed purposes in choosing college life and career*

Although not necessarily so, the matter of which major to take or what job to have is one of the most important choices that determine the direction of life for adolescents. From this point of view, if it is assumed that the values of individual youths have a great influence on the direction of choosing a specific major or job, the choice of the students can be evidence

to confirm what values they prioritize.

At the beginning of the program, most students showed a marked tendency to choose a major where they could earn more money as their desired career path (CAMP, 2018). This choice of value for money was closely related to the poor family context. As an example, John presents the reason why he wanted to become an engineer was to “succeed financially” due to poverty.

My family wanted me to be an engineer and I also want to be an engineer because we are poor. If you become an engineer, you can make money. That’s why I wanted to be a great engineer (John, July 11, 2022).

Interestingly, his goal of economic success changed after participating in the program. Although he had to abandon his dream of becoming an engineer due to financial difficulties in his family, he still wants to become an accountant, create a company, and achieve economic success through it. However, the purpose of why he wants to be economically successful includes not only his own success and support for his family, but the idea of creating a better community through generating employment and financial support within Towerville.

This was not a change in life choices that is not only true for John. Most students chose specific majors and jobs based on the value of serving for the community as "teachers" or "local development activists". That is, it can be seen that career choices of the students after the program have changed to be more for the community, and at the same time, this can be considered as the formation of community-based agency during the program, which manifested as a form of self-determination in an important stage of their life journey.

The SALUTE program and the exposures helped me to discern what kind of program I will be taking for college. That is why I decided to take Social Work as my first option and Community Development as my second option. I believe that this project really had a huge impact when it comes to my decision making for my tertiary education. (Jane, July 21, 2022).

### 5.1.2. Formation of Critical Consciousness: Problematization and Willingness to Take Actions

#### *Problematization*

As examined in the previous chapter, critical reflection through the experience of participating in the program was cognizant of “reality” for the students. Then, what does it mean for them to realize the reality? What changes have occurred in children through it? The changes as a result of the program that were manifested in the students include becoming more conscious, which was presented as a critical mind on local issues. This was a problematization that embodied in their lifeworld. They critically recognized the problems of the social structure from a macroscopic perspective, such as government corruption<sup>33</sup> and materialism<sup>34</sup>, but basically focused on problems that were a part of their daily lives, including “garbage”<sup>35</sup>, “out-of-school youth and teenage pregnancy”<sup>36</sup> with voicing the need to address the issue.

In Towerville, as an example, it was a common behavior to throw away garbage whenever it rained, and the residents’ discharged garbage piled

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<sup>33</sup> Clare (July 8, 2022); Jane (July 21, 2022)

<sup>34</sup> John (July 22, 2022)

<sup>35</sup> Andy (July 22, 2022)

<sup>36</sup> Clare (July 8, 2022)

up in their houses through drainage channels. Even if such waste disposal accumulates near houses of the locals in the lower area and near the riverside, no local people cared about it or recognized it as a problem to be solved. It was a part of their lives that became common. Andy and his family have repeated the same behavior for three years. Recognizing this as a problem which is to be solved, however, Andy suggested to his family to collect trash and discharge it in the proper way, and it made many neighbors around him begin to follow it.

When it's raining, all of our neighbors dump their garbage in the drainage. Because the house that my family rented was near the drain passage way for water, we also did the same thing for three years ... [After CAMP SALUTE] I suggested to my family members, "Okay, let's put our garbage in a sack and then let's try to wait for the garbage collector to collect it and place it in a proper place" (Andy, July 22, 2022)

As examined in the case, the local problems scattered in Towerville were, in a sense, their daily life. That is, problems such as children unable to attend school due to poverty, garbage on the street, and pregnancies among adolescents were common scenes in their lives that students and the locals saw. As such, the Towerville community has been blunt about these local issues. If these local issues did not affect their lives, those were issues outside their attention.

We didn't care about the community. We didn't have concerns for other people, and we actually knew what was really happening in the community, but we didn't have regard for others at all. We just thought that it was normal. We felt it as normal because it didn't harm

us. We were not bothered about it. That was our point of view (Andy, July 22, 2022).

However, as critical consciousness matures in their empowerment process, they were transformed that it was not right to leave pending issues in the community. This change, as Wilson and Kiely (2002) stated, is a fundamental challenge to the existing social phenomenon. In other words, the current state of the community is no longer a problem to be taken for granted, but a challenge to be addressed and resolved.

#### *Willingness to take an action for changes*

The development of critical consciousness is manifested not only in problematization, but also in the willingness or attitude to solve, as briefly mentioned above. Andy said, "it is not right if you ignore it when you see the real situation that is already happening in the community" as the change in his attitude through the program. This was an attitude of willingness to take action to solve the problem, and underlying this was the learning about knowing "what is happening in the community and how to express it"<sup>37</sup> while participating in the program. That is, their "conscience" raised in front of the choice of being indifferent and silent as they have been living or acting on it made them engage in the community participation and social practice.

Simply I was able to see that truth. I was able to see what's really happening in my community. It raised my consciousness and conscience. So, my conscience made me feel whether to take action or not. ·· Will I just be silent or take action for it? ···This realization made me want to become a volunteer (Andy, July 11, 2022).

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<sup>37</sup> John (July 11, 2022)

In addition to problematization, the willingness to practice for community change is based on affection and compassion for the locals. This was the recognition that they could not be liberated from the pain unless the problems and structures that caused the loss were resolved. It spurred them to sympathize with the pain and loss that the locals experienced, while living as a member of the community.

I've learned a lot of positive things here in the community We have seen it. But we have also seen the loss of the community and that itself couldn't be liberated and should be solved (Jane, July 21, 2022).

## **5.2. Spread of Empowerment: Group and Community Dimensions**

Being more conscious and independent, students have become agents of change in the community. This section aims to explore how their changes has influenced on the community.

### **5.2.1. Real Talk Concert: From our Concert to Community One**

The scene in which the development of consciousness and agentic behavior of the students is most clearly revealed in the course of the program, the Real Talk Concert. As briefly explained in Chapter 4, it was an event to present their learnings for the year to the people involved in the program. Students made speeches and performances on topics such as local issues or elements of leadership. In the early days of the program, the Real Talk Concert had a strong internal event nature. The event, was held from 2016 to 2017, at the SM Mall Theater located in San Jose del Monte City and CAMP officials, city officials, school principals, teachers, parents, and some friends

of the students were invited. All contents of the event were conducted in English.

In terms of the individual development, the concert was important in itself. In conducting the concert, preparations were made by researching, making presentations, and practicing speeches to fully convey their thoughts, values, and critical mind on local issues to the public, and to present prepared speeches to over 300 people on a stage with vivid lights and sound facilities. It was a valuable experience not only for the students but also for the invitees. In fact, most research participants cited public speaking as one of the competencies developed in the program, and presented the concert as the background.

For example, when we did this in the theater, the principal also said, "Thank you for giving our children this kind of experience" while shedding tears. ... We rented out the entire theater for the whole morning, negotiated with the technicians, made PPT shoots on the entire screen, and brought all the video and audio equipment to create a high-level event together. Fortunately, we made the concert with supporters, which even a large school cannot normally do. So, it is the first time for the family, the local government officials, and people to see in their lives (Lee, July 15, 2022).

However, since all the events were held in English at the time, there was a problem in this part. This is because the students' parents and friends did not speak English enough to fully understand the contents of the event, so they emotionally felt but could not understand what students conveyed.

My friend went to the Real Talk Concert, and I asked him "What was the best topic that you understood?". But he answered "None". He

said that he didn't understand well because it was English (John, July 22, 2022).

As a result of this, two critical minds related to the Real Talk Concert were raised among students. One was criticism that the speeches and performances prepared by the students must be shared with all members of the community since those are related to the issues of the community. The students considered that the community would become more critically conscious by listening, discussing, and actively engaging in the concert filled with their voices for the positive development of the community. This criticism was in line with the main purpose of the event, which is to raise community awareness by informing about the problems of the community.

They can be aware of it. That's what the Real Talk is all about. ... Maybe they just wanted to participate only. But we wanted them to participate more actively. And we also wanted to give them the information about what we stand for and what we need to do. I believed that we could help them to improve with the information because we were not speaking for us, but for them (Andy, July 22, 2022).

Another was the criticism that the activities should have been presented in their native language so that the locals could easily understand it. This was the consideration of the students in the context of having a good grasp of the local people.

It's better to use the language that they can understand easily ... Most of the community members are not college or high school graduates and cannot understand English. Of course, our elders here in the



community didn't finish their studies. They just finished elementary or even below. So, what about them? We had to consider them. That's why we decided to do this in Filipino (Andy, Personal communication, July 22, 2022).

As the suggestions of the students based on these problems raised were accepted by CAMP, the 2018 Real Talk Concert was decided to be held a total of three times. Thus, as before, the event inviting program officials was conducted in English at the University of the Philippines, while the events targeting local residents and students were presented in Tagalog at Marangal High School and Minuyan High School. After this decision, the Real Talk Concert became a "forum" in which the students participating in the program discussed local issues together with the locals.

What is even better is that the students said, "I learned these, and I did these things, and I felt like this way though participating in the program. Thank you", when the concert was in English, but when we conducted this in Tagalog at the schools, the children became facilitators in saying, "I have these thoughts about teenage pregnancy. What do you think of it? Please raise your hand if anyone wants to present". Also, when the students in the audience raised their hands and presented their thoughts, our students responded to it. They developed good communication with each other. So, suddenly the Real Talk Concert became a forum for discussion. ... But there were parts where their ideas clashed. Since our children learned and established ideas from SALUTE, they said, "This is a problem. This is our community problem to be solved", but when it comes to other local students, they said "Why is that a problem?" (Cho, July 21, 2022).

To sum up, the change of the Real Talk Concert from an internal event to a community event was the result of students' active participation with critical approach in decision-making in planning and operation of the event, as well as an action to raise awareness in the community. Furthermore, it implies that the empowerment of individuals who have become grouped can spread to the community level. The efforts of the student group to turn the Real Talk concert into a community event were firmly based on accurate understanding of the locals, empathy and sympathy for their situation, clear critical awareness of the contradictions inherent in the event, and practical actions to change them. Through the efforts, the Real Talk concert was able to create the function as a venue for exchange where participating students could express the voices they wanted to convey to the locals.

### 5.3.2. ONE STEP: Youth Organizing and Forming New Culture

In 2018, the first batch of the SALUTE program graduated after completing all the courses. CAMP made a proposition for them to establish their own youth organization as a way for graduates to continuously engage in community activities and interact with juniors in the program. At the time, CAMP (2019) aimed (a) to lower the degree of program intervention by external instructors and staffs through increasing cohesion of graduates into the operation of the program, (b) to secure the scalability of the youth organization through conducting voluntary community programs, and (c) to establish and operate a social enterprise (copy center) of the organization to build a sustainable foundation. Such a proposal from CAMP seems to have indeed had the nature of a mere recommendation. That is, it was the hope of CAMP that various local volunteer activities and campaigns carried out by the students would not stop at the program stage, but continue even after graduation.

From campaigns such as 'Back to the School' to bring their friends who dropped out of school back to school to other activities, I thought those volunteer activities, which the students considered as being necessary for the community while discussing with other friends in the program, might end when they graduated. Because we are no longer having any intervention for them. However, even after that, they registered a youth organization at city hall and it has been playing the most influential role among the youth groups in the city hall. That is continuing to happen in the community (Lee, July 15, 2022).

However, when they first heard such an offer, it was regarded as a kind of “responsibility” for graduates to prove what they had learned while participating in the program. However, as they actually planned and created ONE STEP, a youth organization, a consensus was formed among them that such an organization was necessary at the community level. This means that activities for the community are constantly needed, and at the same time, it is confidence that they can create community-related activities on their own through the experience of planning and operating Hanap Kaalaman, Ted Pro, and MSDA, even though they graduated from the program.

Actually, at first, I will be honest that it was just about responsibility to build the ONE STEP like we needed to come up with something to prove that we learned something. But along the way, I realized ONE STEP is necessary. Along the program, we have had Hanap Kaalaman, Ted Pro, and Minuyan Guild. I realized we can actually build a lot of programs that can help our society (Clare, July 20, 2022).

Starting with this background, ONE STEP has continued various community activities to date. It published a local magazine as its first project, which included stories of the community such as life as a teenage mother or the story of the newly opened head of the household. Specifically, many activities have been planned and implemented through partnerships with external organizations or independently, such as donating school supplies through partnerships with One Hope, the community pantry movement to provide social safety nets to vulnerable people during the pandemic, the load assistance campaign for children who do not have proper environment to take online classes, and the voter registration to ensure the political rights of local youth. In particular, the community pantry movement was an example of allowing local residents and CAMP to participate in the community activity organized by young members. In terms of Hart's ladder, this was the child-initiated and directed community participation.

Of course, it is hard to say that there was no problem at the organizational level. Problems such as the decrease of active members due to personal matters as studying or work, insufficient resources to plan and implement projects, and conflicts among members, exist inside ONE STEP. Under this context, most of the members are participating in ONE STEP activities in the form of volunteerism. However, they have been addressing those internal problems through community development-related capabilities learned from the SALUTE program and partnerships with other external organizations. Still, about 20 members of ONE STEP are participating in community activities while consuming their "resources" and "time"<sup>38</sup>.

Currently, ONE STEP is attempting to change its direction to enable more professional and systematic community activities by setting new organizational missions and visions. It is the purpose to transform the Towerville community into the place in which all the community resources

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<sup>38</sup> Jane (July 21, 2022)

and agents provide abundant educational opportunities to children and out-of-school students, so that the "future generation" can become new community activists through learning as ONE STEP member has developed as the actors of change in the community.

Thus, the mission and the vision of ONE STEP is to create a community wherein education will be fostered enough for the students and also for the out-of-school youth who want to enter education and also leadership training programs (Jane, 21, 2022).

As discussed above, ONE STEP is a result of growth through the program and the way for these young people to participate as leaders and members of the community for the positive community development in the future. As Corsaro (2005) stated, although the initial stage of ONE STEP formation was based on the proposal of CAMP, the participants' agentic decisions and actions in the process of concretizing the organization and creating actual community activities can be considered as creating a sort of youth culture in their community. Such a unique local youth organization has been created and evolved in the intersection between the value of community volunteering and the critical mind on local issues.

### 5.2.3. Awareness of the Local Teacher Regarding the Necessity of Holistic Education

Freire views empowerment as bringing positive change at a social level (Shor & Freire, 1987). In other words, empowerment is not limited to positive change at an individual level, but rather it has a meaning when it spread to the neighborhood, community, and whole society. In addition to changing the nature of the event through collective practice or creating a new youth culture in the community, the evidence of empowerment spreading in

the community in Towerville context is that the local teachers have begun to realize the necessity of community-based non-formal education programs.

In the context of the SALUTE program, teachers perform two roles. Firstly, as a key stakeholder, they are deeply involved in program operations. As mentioned, it is not a program run by CAMP alone, but a program created in collaboration with various educational and local development organizations based on partnerships. Local schools also provide teachers as members of such partnerships to contribute to the SALUTE's learning competency enhancement program or to select students. On the other hand, teachers are in a situation where they can observe the changes of student from the closest position as observers. They could experience not only the changes of students in the program but also in the school, and directly verify the effectiveness of the program and empowerment of students. These two coexisting roles brought about a change in the perception of teachers who participated in the program.

Even though the program was operated through a collaborative partnership, there are clear differences in the priorities of each agent. For example, while CAMP aimed to develop community youth leaders and create a better community, the school strongly emphasized providing quality job training and college preparation opportunities for students through it. Karen, the former principal of Minuyan High School, admitted that she requested CAMP to focus on job training opportunities through its livelihood programs and to support for college admission preparation as necessary sub-programs of the SALUTE

Personally, I requested the proponents of CAMP SALUTE that the students need to be well prepared for work. And at the same time, if they can help those students, I asked them to pursue their college degree. So I remember that they really helped our students with

regards to those. That was all I asked (Karen, August 15, 2022).

It is natural for the principal and teachers of a local high school to make such requests. As mentioned in Chapter 4 regarding the local and educational background, the high schools in Towerville do not provide sufficient learning opportunities for the local youth both quantitatively and qualitatively. With the introduction of K-12 curriculum, confusion continues to persist in the local schools. Furthermore, in the context of being evaluated by metrics such as university enrollment rate within the system of formal education, it is understandable that teachers proposed programs focused on academics.

However, their perspective which focus on supplementing role of the program for school education has shifted during the process of experiencing program participation and transformation of students. While their emphasis on supporting students' academics remains, they have begun to pay more attention to the positive changes in students, such as improvement in leadership and responsibility, as well as their passion shown through community participation, and the holistic development of students through the program.

The students have become more inspired to be better version of themselves, especially in school like leading the other students and inspiring them to become more responsible ones. So the SALUTE program actually has a great impact not only on the students in the programs, but on the students in the schools as well (Cathy, July 14, 2022).

Probably, there was a great change. ... I've seen how these students have developed holistically, not only in their academic status, but also

in a way of how they treat people. Their social life has emerged. ... They became community servants and they served the community and they really enjoyed doing it (Angelica, July 21, 2022).

Affirming the change of students positively is, narrowly speaking, to support the effectiveness of the program narrowly, and broadly speaking, to support the direction of life that students create themselves (See Freire, Freire, & Oliveira, 2014). In other words, it means that teachers recognized and agreed that changes in values, attitudes, and behaviors of students through the leadership program, not academic competence, have more positive impacts as those spread across individuals, schools, and communities.

However, such a change in perception did not progress to solidarity. Freire, Freire, and Oliveira (2014) believe that the role and responsibility of teachers is to positively affirm the voice of students, to help with their growth and expansion of knowledge, and to expand a sense of community and solidarity beyond family, neighborhood, and the nation. In this context, affirmation of the teacher towards the change of the learner ultimately means that they support and associate with the effort of the learner for change, and also participate in the changes the learners have made. However, in the case of the teachers in Towerville, they positively perceived the effectiveness of the SALUTE program and the changes of students, but the perception could not lead them to practice in their classes and schools. Instead of applying what they have realized in their field, they just mentioned that the program should continue to be operated and opportunities should be provided to more students<sup>39</sup>. Nevertheless, the empowerment of the students has had a positive impact on other students and teachers in the schools, and it is meaningful that the teacher has begun to recognize the need of education which develop student more holistically, including leadership and a sense of community.

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<sup>39</sup> Angelica (July 21,2022); Cathy (July 14, 2022)



## **VI. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

### **6.1. Discussion**

#### **6.1.1. Characteristics of Education Program that Create Empowerment of a Learner**

Empowerment as a process refers to structures, activities, and programs that promote empowerment (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). The changes in the students through the SALUTE program include not only positive individual development, but also social practice to change the community to where they belong. In other words, it is an attempt to make meaningful changes to the community by mobilizing their resources and time as critically conscious agents. Considering it from the perspective of empowerment, this can be considered as a scene in which the multi-level and multidimensional features of empowerment. In this respect, the program was a process that facilitated empowerment of learners.

The implication of the program derived from the research analysis process is the importance of program design in empowerment of learners. In other words, the learner's experience occurring in the process of interacting with the program is important in promoting empowerment, and for this, it should be fully considered from the stage of program design. In this regard, the SALUTE program has the following four characteristics to promote empowerment.

First, it is to establish an environment in which youths can be accepted as valuable beings, respected, and encouraged. As Heath (1991) argues, this environment produces a sense of belonging through a deep bond between the youth and the program, and the heightened sense played an

important role for individual youths to align the program's goal of 'fostering leaders who contribute to the community' as shared "agenda" and "spirit" (Chavis et al., 1986). In addition, such an environment was essential in positively changing the negative self-awareness and self-esteem of youth in Towerville, which were formed while experiencing multidimensional discrimination and alienation due to destitution (Cargo et al, 2003). Certain methods may be more efficient in establishing such an environment. However, it was confirmed that what is essentially important depends not on the form, but on whether students can actually feel it. Therefore, program planners and operators must approach students more emotionally so that the latter can recognize it.

Second, it is necessary to gradually transfer the authority and power in decision-making and operation of a program to learners. Cargo et al. (2003) contents that in the process of gradually transferring authority over decision-making from adults to youths, they can acquire competencies related to program planning and actual implementation. In addition, Biggeri, Arciprete, and Karkara (2019) also insists that if adolescents are given sufficient time and experience, they are able to demonstrate sufficient bargaining power and agency in decision-making. These arguments are valid. In SALUTE, it was confirmed that students' related competencies improved in the process from preparing classes to taking charge of overall administration of the Real Talk Concert, and this was also found to be an improvement in autonomy, a component of empowerment (Palnas-Lladó & Úcar, 2022). Meanwhile, Jennings et al. (2006) argues that the ownership of youths is expanded in a welcoming and safe environment, and in this case, this was evident in the transfer of authority in decision-making and management. In order to create a sense of ownership of the program, it is necessary to provide opportunities for youths to plan and operate on their own. This is because it is important to allow students to substantially feel and participate in the decision-making and

operation of the program, just similar to the learner-friendly environment. As the case of the student council in the program - to borrow the expression of Jennings et al. (2006, p. 45) - "token participation" does not produce an effective transfer of authority, thus a cursory structure for sharing an authority must be avoided.

The third characteristic, the provision of opportunities for meaningful participation in the community, was perceived to be a shift in awareness of the community at the SALUTE program level. Of course, as Cargo et al. (2003) and Jennings et al. (2006) emphasized, competency was strengthened by actually applying local development-related skills (e.g., mobilizing resource skill, communication skill) learned in the leadership program in the process of performing community activities. In addition, as Jennings et al. (2006) contended, in the process of participating in the community activities, students found their role in the community as a "community activist" or "community social worker". However, the intrinsic importance of meaningful participation in the community at the program level was to realize the nature of knowing community and of volunteering for community by making a link for the young to keep in touch with the locals. In light of this, education programs, which aim at promoting youth participation in the community, should consider two aspects in the design process. First of all, it is necessary to provide opportunities for youth to have direct meetings with local people. This means an opportunity for a meeting with respect to understand and bond with others. Second, it is required to induce individual youth to accomplish this by forming small groups so that sufficient interaction is guaranteed in exchanges with the locals or community activities. In the case of CAMP, the number of students participating in the program was intentionally maintained on a small scale in terms of the effectiveness of learning and activities<sup>40</sup>.

Lastly, the fourth characteristic is the provision of opportunities for

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<sup>40</sup> Lee (July 15, 2022)

critical reflection, which is an element that is emphasized in many empowerment education models but has not been presented with specific methods (Cargo et al., 2003; Jennings et al., 2006). Wallenstein et al. (2005) suggests peer-to-peer dialogue and community participation as methods based on the perspective of the Freirean Critical Pedagogy. In terms of the SALUTE program, CAMP intentionally provided students with an opportunity for reflection through external activities called an exposure. The students had an opportunity to realize the “reality” through life experiences from social and political issues which they knew only as knowledge from books. It made their critical consciousness mature. It can be, thus, considered that informal learning such as critical reflection appeared between the educational intention of the non-formal education program and the learner's actual experience. In this respect, deliberately exposing youth to scenes of social and political contradictions can be considered as a way to promote critical reflection.

#### 6.1.2. The Potential of Non-formal Education based on an Endogenous Perspective

In the process of participating in the program, the students formed a sense of belonging with the community, acquired positive selfhood and competence, and fostered as leaders of the community. In this context, it is necessary to reexamine the role of non-formal education in the community. The reality is that in the context of developing countries, non-formal education is universally used as a supplement to formal education (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974; Hoppers, 2006). The context in the Philippines is similar. The Philippines formalizes the non-formal education sector as the Alternative Learning System (ALS) and manages it within the public system. It provides basic and literacy education to out-of-school youths and adults who have not

received formal education (DepEd, 2022).

School education is critical in that it teaches universal knowledge necessary for individuals to live in the current social structure. In particular, this complementary role is inevitably emphasized in the context of developing countries in which formal education cannot provide sufficient educational opportunities to all learners. However, in the context of rapid urbanization and resulting local extinction, which is not just a problem of one country but a global issue, it is questionable whether formal education which reinforces conformist culture and disconnects with communities, and non-formal education, which has strong feature to supplement the formal education, are able to provide solutions to the problem (see Bowles & Gintis 1975; Freire, 2003; Illich, 1970).

Non-formal education, however, promotes alternative development of a community from an endogenous perspective (Kindervatter, 1979). As discussed above, the purpose of the SALUTE program is to foster youth as leaders by accumulating all the resources of the community. It can be said to be based on the endogenous approach, and can be considered as self-help, which is part of alternative development as described by Kindervatter (1979). That is, the program aims to spread its effect not just limited to individual development, but also to the community, and ultimately instill the understanding among the locals that they have power to solve problems themselves. Many empowerment studies agree that individual-organizational-community empowerment are interconnected (Jennings et al., 2006; Rissel, 1994; Zimmerman, 1995; 2000; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). However, the question remains as to whether individual empowerment is necessarily connected to and promotes organizational and community empowerment.

As Freire and Shore (1987) argues, empowerment inevitably aims and brings about a social change, otherwise it is not empowerment but simply

personal development. As mentioned above, while carrying out various educational projects, CAMP had a critical mind that changes at the individual level had it not spread to the entire community, and this became a trigger to start the SALUTE program. In this respect, the program can be regarded as producing a structure in which development at the individual level can be returned to the community as a whole by serving as a bridge between youth and the community.

In addition, non-formal education can provide learners with knowledge and experiences appropriate to their lifeworld by providing contextualized education. Goodman (1971) criticizes schools for teaching knowledge disconnected from the lifeworld of students. This implies disconnection between the "origin" and "application" of knowledge (Rogers, 2004a, p. 257). That is, the disconnection between knowledge and practice makes students' learning empty. However, as can be found in this study, community-based non-formal education programs are more effective than formal education in that it provides experiences necessary for developing knowledge and competencies that fit into the context of their lifeworld and integrating into the local community. Through these experiences, learners form a community-based agency while interacting with the local community, and as a result, they create a self-determination as devotion and practice towards the community. In other words, non-formal education that promotes alternative development as described by Kindervatter (1979) can be seen as education that creates self-help, agency, and self-determination among communities and the locals through a series of learning processes.

Moreover, contextualized education promotes informal learning (Rogers, 2004a, pp. 261-262). Although Roger (2004a) classifies such contextualized education as informal education, but as can be found from experiences of learners in the SALUTE program, non-formal education programs also facilitate learners' informal learning. For example, interactive

discussions on community issues gathered among students outside of the regular program promoted students' critical awareness of community issues<sup>41</sup>, and in the process of participating in the regular program, students experienced reflective learning in which their perception of the locals changed<sup>42</sup> or they perceived reality<sup>43</sup>. This reflection and awareness can be judged to be a kind of informal learning in the program and community participation process.

Taken together, the experience and knowledge in non-formal education programs enhance youth's agency and a sense of belonging to the community. Furthermore, these make them critically aware of society, and ultimately induce them to practice making changes. This demonstrates the clear role and potential of non-formal education in forming sustainable communities.

### 6.1.3. Youth as an Agentive Actor: Forming a New Culture that Engages in Changes of a Community

Traditionally, youths have been regarded as subjects of protection and care as beings in asymmetrical position with adults in the community. Rawls (1997) argues that children and youths are not subject to social contracts, which can be interpreted as considering them as beings who do not make rational choices. However, as confirmed in this study, the youths who participated in the SALUTE program were agentive actors. As contended by Biggeri, Arcipete, and Karkara (2019), they were creating meaningful community activities through sufficient experiences and competence. In the Towerville context, the youths have been playing the role of adults as the agents of community changes, as can be seen by changing the nature of the

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<sup>41</sup> Jane (July 21, 2022)

<sup>42</sup> Andy (July 15, 2022)

<sup>43</sup> Andy (July 15, 2022); Clare (July 8, 2022)

Real Talk Concert to raise the overall level of awareness of the community and providing educational opportunities and economic support to children and adults underprivileged in the community through ONE STEP activities.

This phenomenon can be regarded as a new youth culture being established within the community. Corsaro (2005) points out that young people are beings who create a new culture within the community through agentive decisions and actions, which brings about changes in their lifeworld. It can be, thus, considered as a culture currently created by Towerville youths and young people to play a social role as "community activists" through making their own "voice"<sup>44</sup> and practices in accordance with it within the community through a community youth organization called ONE STEP. Furthermore, efforts to devise their own educational activities so that such a culture does not stop with the end of the SALUTE program can be seen as a process of reproducing<sup>45</sup> this youth culture in the future.

Consequentially, an important factor in forming this culture is the improvement of youth's agency and critical consciousness through empowerment. One of the changes that appeared to students through empowerment in the context of the program was the formation of agency which valued the community. Agency is to make the choices and actions necessary to achieve the values an individual has in life, which are eventually linked to self-determination (Biggeri, Arciprete & Karkara, 2019). As a result of the program, the change in value of students appeared as "passion" and "calling"<sup>46</sup> for community volunteers. It can be confirmed in their self-determination of choosing a major and career paths which enabled them to conduct community activities more systematically and professionally rather than opting for a stable and large income.

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<sup>44</sup> Jane (July 21, 2022)

<sup>45</sup> Corsaro (2005) uses the term "reproduction" in a sense of change and reconstitution of existed culture through agentive choices and actions, not the conventional reproduction of accepting social order as is

<sup>46</sup> Jane (July 21, 2022)



In addition, this improvement of agency is closely related to the rising of critical consciousness. Walter (2012) argues that individual agency creates agentive choices and behaviors while being influenced by a social structure. In the context of the student in the program, the impact of social structure refers to all community problems produced directly and indirectly by poverty. As mentioned above, their choices and behaviors were found to be self-choice preference to solve social problems that alienated the locals. At this time, the improvement of critical consciousness is the basis on which these choices and actions are made. Brun (2019) views that critical consciousness stems from a moral motivation to empower the powerless. In other words, a clear perception of the unequal social structure created by indigence, and empathy and compassion for the marginalized local people are moral grounds that give legitimacy to their choices. In this respect, the improvement of students' critical consciousness appeared as problematization and a willingness to solve the community issues.

## **6.2. Conclusion**

This study analyzed the experience of youths participating in the non-formal education program through the actual case of the SALUTE program in Towerville, and derived that this experience was an empowerment process. This empowerment process was to escape from negative selfhood and to have positive self-esteem, to understand and bond with the locals, to participate in the process of making meaningful changes in the community by developing capabilities, and finally to consider the local issues, which have been taken for granted, to be solved through critical reflection. In addition, it was confirmed that empowered youths generate dynamics within the community by creating various community activities through actively participating in the decision-making process and establishing youth organization.

At the heart of empowering the youths in Towerville and making

healthier community for positive changes was 'education'. However, education itself does not empower them, but what experience education provides is key to develop adolescents as actors of change who make meaningful changes by becoming agentive and critically conscious. In this respect, an important point in empowerment through education is what learning experiences learners have in the process of interacting with education programs. That is, the authority relationship between program operators and learners, learner-friendly environment, learner-to-community connection through community participation, and opportunities for critical reflection should be deeply considered in the program design process, and at the same time the educational contents should be contextualized with the learner's lifeworld.

In this regard, this study has the following implications. First, it was found that youths were not passive beings, but agentive beings that can make meaningful changes in the community. Second, the possibility of non-formal education in building a sustainable community through contextualized education to the lifeworld was confirmed. Third, it was revealed that the process of empowerment through non-formal education is closely related to learners' informal learning that appears between the educational intention of the program and the actual experience of learners. Fourth, it suggested the elements which should strategically be considered in the stage of program design for local activists, NGOs, and other actors who are planning education programs to promote youth empowerment and community participation.

Despite the significance, this study also has the following limitations. First, in terms of methodology, participatory observation could not be carried out due to the suspension of the program brought about by COVID-19, which made it difficult to conduct cross-validation on the collected data. Thus, analysis and interpretation were performed by relying heavily on in-depth interview data. Second, this paper attempted to shed light on the youth

empowerment process in terms of learning, but it was analyzed by simplifying it as an experience in process of participating in the program. Hence, the diversity of form of learning that differed within each activity and situation was not properly captured. Therefore, this study suggests that follow-up research is required to explore the experiences of participating in the program from a more systematic learning perspective.

Finally, although it has not yet been realized, ONE STEP is planning a 'Learning Hub' as its own education program. Through this program, they are planning to provide local youth and out-of-school children with what they have learned and experienced in the SALUTE program. As new youth participate in the 2nd SALUTE program ONE STEP may create, they will be able to generate new positive dynamics in the community. These attempts are expected to make a virtuous cycle in which individual development is extended to the community, and this is relayed to the next generation.

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## 국문 초록

본 연구는 개도국의 빈곤 청소년들이 어떻게 지역사회에서 주체적 행위자로 성장하였는지를 탐색하고자 한다. 이를 위해 그들이 참여한 비형식교육 프로그램인 살루트 프로그램에서의 학습 경험을 분석함을 목적으로 한다. 이를 위해 연구방법으로 질적사례연구 방법을 채택하였다. 자료수집의 경우, 현지 문헌과 심층면담이 사용되었다. 또한, 프로그램 참여 경험이 3년 이상이며 현재 ONE STEP 활동을 하고 있는 학생 중에서 15명을 연구 주 참여자로 선정하였으며, CAMP 관계자와 지역 고등학교 교장 및 교사를 연구 보조 참여자로 선택하였다.

연구 결과, SALUTE 프로그램으로의 참여 경험은 지역 청소년에게 있어 임파워먼트 과정이었다. 이때, 프로그램이 학습자에게 제공한 참여 경험은 (1) 학습자 친화적 환경, (2) 점진적인 프로그램 권한 이양, (3) 지역사회에 대한 의미 있는 참여, (4) 비판적 성찰 기회 제공이었다. 특히 이와 같은 참여 경험은 형식성보다는 실질적으로 학습자가 체감할 수 있도록 하는 것이 중요하게 고려해야할 점으로 나타났다. 또한, 프로그램의 의도와 학습자의 실제 경험 사이에서 비판적 성찰과 같은 무형식 학습이 발생하는 것도 포착할 수 있었다. 프로그램 참여 경험 이외에도, 프로그램 결과 측면에서 이러한 임파워먼트 과정을 통해 학생들은 주체성과 비판적 의식이 향상되었고, 이는 지역사회에 의미 있는 변화를 만드는 참여로 나타났다는 것을 발견할 수 있었다. 우선 주체성이 향상되었다는 것은 지역사회에 대한 헌신을 그들의 삶에 가치로서 인식하고 이를 위한 자기결정으로 나타났다. 성숙된 비판적 의식 경우, 빈곤으로 인한 사회구조로 소외된 지역주민을 돕겠다는 도덕적 가치에 기반하여 당연시 받아들이던 지역 현안을 문제화하고 이를 해결하겠다는 실천 의지로 확인할 수 있었다.

이러한 연구 결과를 통해 본 연구는 다음과 같은 함의를 가진다.

첫째, 청소년이 수동적 존재가 아니라 지역사회에 의미 있는 변화를 만들 수 있는 주체적 존재임을 발견했다. 둘째, 생활세계에 맥락화된 교육을 통해 지속가능한 지역사회를 구축하는데 있어 비형식교육의 가능성을 확인했다. 셋째, 비형식교육을 통한 임파워먼트의 과정은 프로그램의 교육 의도와 학습자의 실제 경험 사이에서 나타나는 학습자의 무형식 학습과 밀접하게 관련되어 있음을 밝혔다. 넷째, 청소년의 임파워먼트와 지역사회 참여를 촉진하기 위한 교육 프로그램을 기획하고 있는 지역활동가, NGO, 그 외 주체들에게 프로그램 설계 단계에서 전략적으로 고려해야 하는 요소를 제시했다.

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**주요어:** SALUTE 프로그램, 비형식교육, 청소년 임파워먼트, 지역사회 참여

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