

Community Development Program for Australian-Filipino Youths at Risk of Extremism

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Abstract

This research explores depth understanding on the multifaceted aspects of community development programs catered to the Filipino-Australian youths of West Melbourne, Victoria, Australia with specific objective to deviate them from risks and extremism, and contribute meaningfully in keeping peace and order to the community they belong. Employing qualitative design, with deductive thematic analysis as method in analyzing data, qualitative interviews to 12 Australian-Filipino youths and elders in the community were done. A semi-structured questionnaire anchored from the 8 domains of the Community Programs to Promote Youth Development (CPPYD) was used. Participants revealed that majority of the 8 domain aspects of the CPPYD, namely physical and psychological safety, clear, consistent and appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, support for efficacy and mattering, opportunities for skill building and integration of family, school and community efforts, is a good bases in developing the community development program for the Filipino-Australian youths of West Melbourne, Australia. Recommendation to strengthen community networks and engagement, enhance resource allocation, and promote a holistic community program were thereby given.

Keywords: Community Development Program; Youth Community Services; Filipino-Australian; Youths; Risk; Extremism



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INTRODUCTION

In these modern times, the rapid change in our environment had entailed a great change to peoples' behavior and attitude. Globalization, for instance, created strands of opportunities where people, money, material goods and ideas traveled in silken strands, and have done so in greater numbers and with greater speed than ever in the present age (Globalization, n.d.). Much to these favors, however, some adverse effects became inevitable. For instance, its "open policy" feature resulted to an increased presence of various external forces and elements in one country morphing varying ideologies towards this development. At a more unfavorable end, the increasing globalization created uncertainty that made people everywhere more vulnerable to hateful arguments ("Murder and extremism in the United States in 2021", 2022). When accumulated

and discussed upon, these arguments become seeds of looming contentions which may now lead to "extreme" views and opinions. Ahmad (2020) argued that the dangers of extremism and radicalization are not about the beliefs espoused by the individual alone but about the fear that these beliefs will make them more inclined to participate in acts of violence, particularly in the form of terrorism. Ahmad (2020) further articulated that the term "extremist" does not merely denote to an individual who has opinions that are considered outside of the norm, who is to the far end of one side of the political spectrum, or who is overzealous in their religious beliefs. Rather, the concern is that these beliefs in some way increase one's propensity for violence against other groups, and, just as importantly, that this behavior occurs within a culture where such violence is not tolerated or expected. Thus, the advent of "extremism" amongst radicals, leftists, and far-rights. Knowing someone of this view shall therefore not be taken as a natural norm. Elizabeth Neumann, a former Department of Homeland Security official, has articulated that "It's kind of like a weather warning. What extremist researchers are saying is, 'The conditions are ripe for violence'

because all extremism factors are at play in a volatile environment” (Fossett, 2022). Much to this volatility is the contribution of modern technologies capable of propagating the furtherance of extreme causes. In the study of Youngblood (2020) entitled “Extremist ideology as a complex contagion: the spread of far-right radicalization in the United States between 2005 and 2017,” his findings reveal that both social media usage and group membership enhanced the spread of extremist ideology, suggesting that online and physical organizing remain primary recruitment tools of the far-right movement. With this modern type of propagation, what sector of the society is then most vulnerable towards extremist influence?

Amongst the sector in the society, the youth is believed to be the most vulnerable in terms of extremist influence. This is according to Theo Dolan, Technical Advisor of Civil Society and Peacebuilding (Dolan, 2018). This belief was seconded by Jessica Trisko Darden, a Kirkpatrick Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, explicating that youths’ vulnerability to terrorist recruitment can be affected by a multitude of factors. This includes geographic proximity to a terrorist group, economic vulnerability, perceptions of social or political marginalization, exposure to permissive social networks, and exposure to extremist propaganda (Darden, 2019). In the Philippines, Bai Rohaniza Sumndad-Usman, Executive Director of Teach Peace, Build Peace movement, also agreed that when it comes to influence of crimes, gangs and even extremism, the youth is always the most vulnerable. And this is most especially true among children in some areas of Mindanao who are exposed to conflict and injustice (Quintos, 2017). Contemplating on these facts, one can only think that, among the citizenry, why do the youths the most vulnerable ones? Kendra Cherry, a Psychosocial Rehabilitation Specialist and Psychology Educator, explained that the “adulthood” stage is often identified as the “turbulent teenage years” as this stage plays an essential role in developing their sense of personal identity and this will continue to influence their behavior and development for the rest of their life (Kendra, 2022). Pondering above, how do youths develop

an extreme and radical perspective? Andreas Beelmann, a German Psychology educator and researcher for Developmental Psychopathology of Antisocial Behavior and Crime; Prevention of Prejudice and Promotion of Intergroup Relations; and, Hate crimes and prevention of radicalization, explicated that the build-up of radical mindset starts with ontogenetic social-developmental processes of which the most dynamic period for social development, from early childhood to late adolescence. These processes include the interaction of societal, social, and individual risk and protective factors. In adverse cases, this interplay encourages the establishment of proximal radicalization processes between early adolescence and middle adulthood (Beelmann, 2020). With all the points and premises presented, the youth therefore is the most sector vulnerable to extremist ideologies.

The chance to swerve the budding extremist mindset of youth is highly possible given the proper people, ample time and required resources. Henceforth, prevention at the onset of extremism is likely the best course to take. This became the result of a small discussion inquiry entitled “What’s New and What’s Next in Preventing Youth Violent Extremism” facilitated by FHI 360, a global organization that mobilizes research, resources and relationships so that people everywhere can access the opportunities they need to lead full, healthy lives. Attended by concerned participants and expert panels, the inquiry concluded that prevention is the most promising opportunity to mitigate violent extremism (Dolan, 2018). Besides experts and concerned individuals, youth, in particular, can be the best partner in preventing youth extremism. This was the content of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report entitled “Frontlines: Young people at the forefront of preventing and responding to violent extremism.” Supported by the government of Norway, the report was based on a global survey of youth, focus group discussions with young people on their aspirations and perceptions, a series of in-depth interviews with practitioners, and case studies from the field. The report culminated with a call for more investment in ensuring

systematic participation of young people in decision-making and governance, and for them to play proactive roles in communities and society at large (Khadka, 2019). Given the above call of UNDP, it is therefore worth noting the results of the small discussion of FHI 360 where it listed intervention approaches including reorienting radicalization, youth-led approaches to preventing violent extremism, the role of social media and extremist messaging, and the reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters (Dolan, 2018). With the increasing rate of radical and extremist movements across the globe, it is also worth noting that more and more advocacy groups and cause-oriented organizations were also created, while some are already existing for quite some time, to counter the proliferation of insurgency via extremist movements.

LITERATURES

The Filipino-Australian youths. Centric to the setting of the study, there are now 1,520,265 Filipinos living in the Greater Melbourne, in Victoria, Australia (Department of Economic Development, n.d.). Considered as the fifth-largest ethnic community in Australia, the above figure represents the strong nationwide population of people who are descendants of Filipinos ("Filipino-Australian pushes for change.....," 2021). Of the above figure, considerable percentage belongs to Filipino-Australian youths who have either been living with their respective families in Victoria, Australia since birth or have migrated in the past couple of years. Visualizing a typical family set-up, the marriage of Filipino and Australian cultures, however, can be the basis in defining the dynamics and interaction present in every Filipino family living in Australia. Focusing on Filipino-Australian youths' dynamics in an Australian-laden community, they seem to experience the typical teenage issues and problems innate of their age. For instance, in a youth camp conducted for Filipino-Australian youth in Brisbane in 1993, significant issues emerged including 'identity crisis', delinquency, racism, intergenerational conflict, peer pressure and the problem of handling two cultures (Pe-Pua, 1993; as cited in AIFS, n.d.).

Other problems highlighted by young people included dealing with the authoritative attitude of parents, particularly in relation to their going out with friends, curfews, career decisions and high expectations of academic performance. The concerns do not seem to differ from those raised by young people from other ethnic communities (Cahill and Ewen 1987; as cited in AIFS, n.d.), except perhaps in the greater emphasis placed by Filipino youth on the importance of family matters and work/career considerations.

Vulnerability to extremism – via social media, recruitment, friends, etc. The above issues experienced by Filipino-Australian youth may seem to be typical in terms of its nature. However, some studies have shown that youths who have experienced several teen issues have taken a toll on their well-being and were led to some mental health problems. As teens mature (Mental Health First Aid USA, 2021), they begin spending more time with their friends, gain a sense of identity and purpose, and become more independent. All of these experiences are crucial for their development, and a mental health challenge can disrupt or complicate that development. Such disruption may lead to vulnerabilities and susceptibilities and these may include influences of ideological perspectives which by category may seem to be extreme and radical. Much to this, with the proliferation of social media, the rate of influence became very high. This was justified in the study entitled "Terrorism and Social Media: Extremist Groups and College Student Recruitment" where results have indicated that college students were targeted by extremists on social media (Bell, 2021). Therefore, with the combination of a disturbed teen and the social media, opportunities for recruitment to extremist ideologies is now very rife. Copeland and Marsden (2000) had explicated that the link between mental health disorders and terrorism has long been a focus of academic research. Attention has focused most heavily on understanding the prevalence of mental disorders among those involved in terrorism. Evidence about the rates of mental health disorders among different categories of terrorists, including jihadist, right-wing and

lone actors, is growing in strength. With the above premises, efforts shall be done to counter the possible influences on young adults towards extremist ideologies and this includes the young Filipino-Australians in Victoria, Australia.

The role of community development programs in deviating extremism. The rise of extremist groups has also entailed the formation of various peace advocate organizations generally aiming to deviate the morphing extreme ideologies of people to a much meaningful and socially acceptable endeavors. One of which is community development. An instance was the research project entitled "Evaluation of a Multi-Faceted, U.S. Community-Based, Muslim-Led CVE Program." Initiated and funded by the National Institute of Justice, and the first evaluation of a program to counter violent extremism (National Institute of Justice, n.d.), the study examined an effective Muslim-led program that seeks, among other goals, to counter violent extremism. The program was organized by the World Organization for Resource Development and Education (WORDE), a community-based, Muslim-led organization that attempts to counter violent extremism by creating and maintaining the very networks of civically engaged individuals, individuals who are sensitized to issues of violent extremism, and who have proactive, cooperative relationships with local social services and law enforcement agencies.

In Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) makes a comprehensive contribution to international efforts against terrorism led by the United Nations, addressing the manifestations of terrorism, as well as the various social, economic, political and other factors, which might engender conditions in which terrorist organizations could engage in recruitment and win support. In 2012, OSCE made a report on the findings and recommendations towards an investigation on "Youth Engagement to Counter Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT)". Among others, one of the pressing findings relevant to the study was that "the rise of VERLT among youth is often fueled

by issues of discrimination, exclusion and marginalization." It was therefore recommended that "fostering feelings of belonging to society and encouraging the development of active, civic and democratic engagement is instrumental in countering terrorist radicalization" ("Youth Engagement to Counter Violent Extremism....," n.d.).

Upon exhaustive search, one study that is indirectly connected to the paper was done by Katrina Ross Tan, a Monash University PhD Candidate. Her research entitled "Understanding Filipino Youth Immigrant Lived Experience in Melbourne, Australia: A Preliminary Study" explores how Filipino youth in Melbourne view and understand their cultural values in an ongoing formation of hyphenated and complex Filipino identity abroad. Through a qualitative enquiry from focus-group discussions among 1.5 (young people who were born in the Philippines but migrated to Australia with their parent/s before the age of 9) and second generation Filipino-Australians, the study seeks to interrogate issues surrounding the identity and cultural formation of this demographic segment. It also aims to examine the problems of this particular segment of the Filipino-Australian population and to mobilize the potential of the young Filipino-Australian voice and contribution to community engagement in Australia as well as in the Philippines. As the study is ongoing, no findings have yet to be published.

Mendes and Binns (2013) have also investigated various elements applied in rural social work. Entitled "The Integration of Community Development Values, Skills and Strategies within Rural Social Work Practice in Victoria, Australia," results revealed that social workers utilized community development approaches in a diverse range of ways. Though relative in some ways, the study however is again not directly aligned with the study as there are no provision of community development programs especially engaging youths of Victoria, Australia. Deakin University, on the other hand, made a literature review on "Neighborhood Houses Victoria Social Outcomes Focused Learning and Development Project" (SOLDP).

The review was conducted as part of the two-year SOLDP conducted by Neighborhood Houses Victoria between 2017 and 2019 (Ollis, Harrison & Ryan, 2020). Amongst the objectives of the review, one particular question is aligned with the study: “How is community development enacted and practiced in neighboring houses in Australia?” As a result, Ledwith’s (2011; as cited in Ollis, Harrison & Ryan, 2020) five dimensions of community development synthesized the essence of its key concepts and practices: (1) ‘radical’ involving ‘collective action for social justice and environmental justice’; (2) ‘empowerment through critical consciousness’; (3) ‘analysis of power and discrimination in society’; (4) dominant ideas and the wider political context’ (p.2), and (5) ‘collective action’.

United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism identifies youth empowerment as a priority area. In the Plan, the UN Secretary General recommends Member States to empower youth by harnessing the idealism, creativity and energy of young people and others who feel excluded. This recommends supporting and enhancing young people’s participation in PVE activities, and engage them into decision-making processes at local and national levels.

Additionally, Sevil Alirzayeva, Chief of the Office of the United Nations Under-Secretary General for Counter-Terrorism, at the 5th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in Baku, Azerbaijan stated about terrorism. It robs young people of their lives and opportunities that comes with it and of their present and their future. Youth, therefore, has as much a stake as anyone in counter-terrorism. We need practical and innovative ways to help them raise and address their concerns and safeguard their peers and communities.”

Theoretical Underpinning. With the intent to propose a community development program for the Filipino-Australian youth of West of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, the study will therefore be anchored on the “Community Programs to Promote Youth Development” (CPPYD) developed by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine in Washington

DC, United States. Serving as theoretical foundation of the study (“Community Programs to Promote Youth Development,” 2002), the above program represents just a few of the many diverse programs operating throughout the United States. While there are volumes of community development programs created by various advocacy groups and cause-oriented organizations around the globe, the proponent believes that the above program suits the needs of the subjects due to its wide coverage on youth development domains including the inculcation of favorable behaviors and attitudes attuned to the mores and norms of the society. In addition, while many youth organizations, foundations, and citywide initiatives support youth development concepts and practices, there is little agreement on what specifically constitutes a youth development program and little systematic information on the breadth and diversity of efforts to provide these kinds of opportunities (“Community Programs to Promote Youth Development,” 2002). This dilemma is addressed by the CPPYD by identifying elements and decisions that together constitute a program setting. Some of these dimensions represent choices made, such as the program focus, curriculum, and membership; others are not choices but the consequences of structural arrangements, organizational affiliations, local community issues, geographic location, funding, and political climate (“Community Programs to Promote Youth Development,” 2002).

The theory also provides a framework for adolescent development and program design and implementation through examples of ways in which community programs for youth incorporate the features of positive developmental settings. With the exhaustive and thorough creation of the CPPYD, committee members observed a variety of community programs for youth and reviewed literature describing these programs.

They also drew heavily on the findings from studies that used various nonexperimental methods to describe the design, implementation, and management of a number of community programs for youth that appear to

work at the community level. This being said, the study will therefore posit on the community program framework of CPPYD specifically employing the 8 features of community program for youth, as listed below, as theoretical domains of the study ("Community Programs to Promote Youth Development," 2002).

1. **Physical and Psychological Safety.** Physical and psychological safety is fundamental to attract young people to programs and to keep them coming back. This requires both creating an environment that is safe, as well as handling conflicts among participants as they arise.
2. **Clear, Consistent and Appropriate Structure.** Appropriate structure in community programs for youth includes developing clear and consistent rules and expectations, setting limits, and being clear about behavioral expectations. Settings with appropriate structure have predictability and consistency. The staff develop clear boundaries that take into consideration the age and developmental maturity of the youth involved.
3. **Supportive Relationships.** Programs that focus on supportive relationships provide settings in which youth feel a strong sense of warmth, closeness, caring, support, and guidance from the adult leaders in the program.
4. **Opportunities to Belong.** Promoting a sense of belonging is fundamental to attracting and retaining the participation of young people, as well as helping them develop confidence and a personal identity. Young people need to feel included, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, personality, or physical, intellectual, or social limitations.
5. **Positive Social Norms.** Some community programs for youth are designed as drop-in activities, where young people can come and go and participate in rotating activities of their choice. Other programs require youth to make a commitment to the program and as a result have high expectations for their involvement. These programs support prosocial norms by teaching youth responsibility to uphold certain rules of behavior, to be accountable to the program and its expectations, and to agree to live up to a set of morals and values.
6. **Support for Efficacy and Mattering.** Many community programs for youth incorporate multiple opportunities to build efficacy. Programs may vary in the extent to which they allow youth to participate in the leadership of the program. However, many programs believe that youth can play a variety of roles in designing, delivering, and evaluating activities. Youth participants may help identify needs and set goals; help design the structure, activities, and supports that will be attractive and accessible to youth; help staff understand what youth need and how to relate to them; help identify community and family issues that may be barriers for youth participation; and help create an environment for youth to positively contribute to their community. Some programs develop youth councils to systematically generate youth involvement.
7. **Opportunities for Skill Building.** At the heart of many community programs for youth are opportunities for skill building. Programs can use a wide variety of activities, such as community service, adventure and outdoor activities, art, drama, music, religious instruction, sports, cultural awareness, academic improvement, and career preparation, to support positive youth development and to meet the program-specific objectives. The exact content or focus (e.g., sports, music, community service) may be designed to attract adolescents to the program, while the curriculum may focus more on developmental skills (e.g., cooperation, creativity, communication).
8. **Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts.** Community programs

for youth offer many opportunities for the integration of families, schools, and the broader community. Youth development depends not only on the independent efforts of programs, but also on these efforts in collaboration with the community as a whole.

Problem Statement. Given the focus of this research, the proponent was particularly interested in highlighting strategies through which community programs for youth integrate their activities with the broader community. Many programs in fact do target the community more broadly, seeking to reach and influence young people, their families, and other community members, organizations, and businesses. HOME, for example, is a community-based youth membership organization where young people throughout the city of Alameda, California, collaborate with each other and adults to create important projects and innovative businesses. The achievements made through these youth-initiated projects pave the way for adults to embrace youth as contributing members of the community and for youth to learn the skills they need to be effective, enterprising citizens.

Though a number of related studies were presented herein, all are likewise indirectly related. Hence, a literature gap centric in investigating community development program in Victoria, Australia, and particularly engaging Filipino-Australian youths, was identified by the proponent. The dearth of studies pertaining to the above topic has led the proponent to explore and investigate the engagement of Filipino-Australian youths in community development. Thus, this study was conceptualized to avert the proliferation of extremist ideologies among Australian-Filipino youths who are believed to be vulnerable to extremism. With the theory and framework presented herein, the proponent intends to utilize these as guides in the development of various youth programs, at least within the community level, in order to direct the attention of Filipino-Australian youths towards meaningful endeavors and eventually deviate their mindset, if any, from extreme ideologies. Having the above problem

rationale, the study will therefore seek answers to the following questions:

1. What aspects of the “Community Programs to Promote Youth Development” (CPPYD) were preferred by the people of West of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia when based on its 8 theoretical domains:
 - 1.1 Physical and Psychological Safety
 - 1.2 Clear, Consistent and Appropriate Structure
 - 1.3 Supportive Relationships
 - 1.4 Opportunities to Belong
 - 1.5 Positive Social Norms
 - 1.6 Support for Efficacy and Mattering
 - 1.7 Opportunities for Skill Building
 - 1.8 Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts

2. What community development program can be proposed?

Conceptual Paradigm. The study posits on the “Deductive Thematic Analysis Framework” of Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). While thematic analysis is a search for themes that emerge through “careful reading and re-reading of the data” (Rice & Ezzy, 1999; as cited in Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), deductive thematic analysis approach applies a top-down view of the data, starting with a pre-established theory to structure qualitative data analysis. It is particularly suited for research where the theoretical framework plays a critical role in guiding the analysis, allowing researchers to test or explore specific propositions or concepts within their data (Hecker & Kalpokas, n.d.). The process of creating the codes can be predetermined, sometimes referred to as deductive or “a priori” or emergent, or a combination of both. Predetermined coding may be based on a previous coding dictionary from another researcher or key concepts in a theoretical construct. They may derive from the interview guide or list of research questions (Stuckey, 2015). With the above concept, the deductive approach of thematic analysis will be specifically applied to answer the objectives of the study – determine aspects of the “Community Programs to Promote Youth Development” (CPPYD) as preferred by the

people of West of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Prior to its main application, the proponent divided the framework into 3 phases where each phase has several activities.

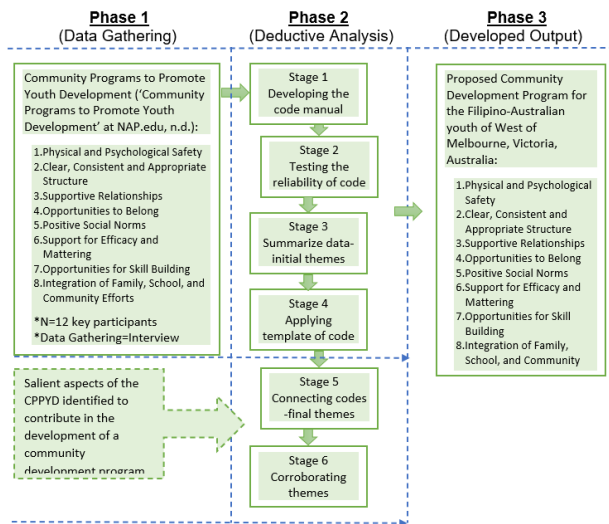


Figure 1
Research Paradigm - Deductive Thematic Analysis Framework

Phase 1 is the data gathering stage where interview will be the main mode of acquiring data. Applying the tenets of deductive thematic analysis, the study intends to yield pre-determined aspects of the “Community Programs to Promote Youth Development” (CPPYD). Phase 2 is the data treatment stage. Following a 6-stage procedure that underpins the deductive method of thematic analysis, this phase highlights the study’s framework through application of rigorous coding, patterning, and theme corroboration.

Phase 3 is the final stage of the study where the proposed Community Development Program for the Filipino-Australian youth of West of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia shall be crafted and produced. Anchoring from the emerging codes and patterns, and deduced towards the pre-determined themes (8 theoretical domains), the community development program shall illustrate the ideals and preferences of the people of West of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. The study employed a qualitative design specifically utilizing the “Deductive Thematic Analysis Framework” (DTAF). As aligned from the framework, the study jumped into an analysis based on a pre-determined set of codes from the existing theory of “Community Programs to Promote Youth Development” (CPPYD) developed by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine in Washington DC, United States. With this concept, the deductive approach of thematic analysis was specifically applied in answering the objectives of the study - determine aspects of the “Community Programs to Promote Youth Development” (CPPYD) as preferred by the people of West of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Following the tenets of DTAF, outsourcing of data was done in three phases.

Primary Source of Data. Key sources of data came from 12 residents of West of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Specifically, the participants were youths, parents, and elderlies.

Sampling Method. The selection of the participants was guided by the tenets of purposive sampling technique, specifically (Crossman, 2020) under the maximum variation/heterogeneous purposive sampling in which a participant is selected to provide a diverse range of cases relevant to a particular phenomenon or event. The aim of this purposive sampling type is to provide as much insight as possible into the preferred community development program from the key resource participants with specific anchoring of insights from the eight (8) broad code categories of the “Community Programs to Promote Youth Development” (n.d.). Henceforth, using the credence of this technique, the study therefore employed the above participants as they have direct knowledge of their community.

Participants. The major participants of the study were the youths of West of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. With the intent to develop a community development program for their sake and well-being, their importance is resonated by the fact that they are the next generation

Filipino-Australians who will be continuing the legacies established by their descendants. As such, molding them with the proper ethics, values and morals through effective community development programs will ensure the encroaching of a good-laden character – a major requisite in forming a safe and livable community. Other stakeholders of the study were the parents, elderlies, neighborhoods, and the general public.

Data Collection Tool. The study employed a “semi-structured interview questionnaire” as main data collection tool. Follow-up questions aligned with the core aspects of the study were also asked to fulfill the data requirement. To document the interview proceedings, a video recorder was used. For ethical consideration, the proponent acquired permission from the participants to document the interview. Likewise, identities of the participants were withheld for confidentiality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Preferred “Community Programs to Promote Youth Development” (CPPYD) at West of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia based on 8 theoretical domains.

1.1 Physical and Psychological Safety. All the participants of the study agree that having such community development programs in the West Melbourne will greatly benefit the youth and limit extremities. Participant 1 articulated that *“such programs can be quite effective in preventing young people from being involved in extremist activity. They can provide constructive alternatives and channels for their frustrations and energy”*. The participant also added that these programs can offer possibilities for skills development, and personal growth which can improve young people’s prospects in the society. As quoted, *“there is a higher likelihood that young individuals who possess empowerment and skills will exhibit active engagement and responsibility as citizens, so making constructive contributions to society.”*

Participants also agreed that venues or locations of these programs shall be accessible or near their residences. Community programs shall prioritize the safety of each participant and minimize risks as to the departure and arrival from their homes to the venue. Participant 2 articulated that *“accessibility should be taken into consideration. Having the venues of these programs near the residences is beneficial since it reduces transportation challenges for the youths. Alternatively, it is also cost-effective to have the programs located in areas with good transportation options. The availability of convenient transportation options enhances the practicality of young adults participating in various programs. The presence of public transit choices or the proximity of residential areas can effectively mitigate transportation-related obstacles, particularly for individuals who lack access to private vehicles.”*

1.2 Clear, Consistent and Appropriate Structure.

Majority of the participants agree that community development programs shall have clear and concrete rules and expectations. One participant (Participant 5) explicated that *“rules and expectations are essential for a civilized society. Clear and concrete rules and expectations are important. It is good to have clarity and accountability for such community development programs especially when it’s involving the youths. We aim for growth and development every day, whether it’s through social events or community projects.”* Participants also agree that having clear and concrete rules promote accountability to community leaders. Participant 4 has stated that *“youth will develop a sense of accountability as a result of rules and expectations. Individuals are more inclined to adhere to these norms when they understand what is and is not acceptable behavior. This accountability develops a sense of collective responsibility and ownership.”*

Participants also believed that community development programs shall have good rules and policies to make it effective. They

resonated the idea that accountability is facilitated by the establishment of rules and expectations and that these shall be based on the principles of inclusiveness, equality, respect, privacy, and confidentiality. Participant 6 has also articulated that *“the program shall contain designated roles of each stakeholder, outlines expected outcome of the event, most importantly the program does not discriminate any gender or race; identify the source of funding and how these funding be allocated; and, proper financial auditing needs to be implemented. Participants need also to be given an equal opportunity to provide feedback for continuous improvement.”*

More so, the behavior of everyone involved in the program is most considered to make effective of its implementation. This was articulated by majority of the participants. Participant 7 explained that *“the character and behavior of the officers implementing the rules and policies of youth development programs matter significantly because they impact trust, credibility, communication, and the overall effectiveness of the program. Leaders who embody positive character traits and behaviors are more likely to create a supportive and empowering environment that fosters the growth and well-being of the youth they serve.”* Another participant (Participant 4) stated that *“it is extremely important to consider the characters and behavior of the people that will be responsible for implementing the rules and policies in programs that deal with youths. The officers and authority figures will serve as role models for young people and their behavior and characters can influence them. The way they conduct themselves can greatly influence the youth programs performance and the overall experience of the programs for young people.”*

1.3 Supportive Relationships. The participants agree that community development programs shall provide a setting in which youth feel a strong sense of warmth, closeness, caring, support and guidance from adult leaders in the program. Hence, a

good sense of supportive relationships. In addition, majority of the participants agree that credentials matter most in terms of background. Participant 5 stated that *“credentials can bring expertise, compliance and uphold professionalism. While character and attitude include empathy, respect and effective communication. Organizers with flexible attitude are better to respond challenges.”* Another participant (Participant 9) also articulated that *“ideally, the people who run the community programs should be similar in background to the teens to foster a comfortable environment. As we are a multicultural community, the background should not matter as much as long as the organizers foster a hospitable and nurturing program.”* Participant 9 also told that *“people who are running community development programs must be qualified in community development or community services. Ideally, accredited from professional bodies relevant to qualification (e.g., ACWA or AASW) ...these qualification and accreditation gives assurance that the holder of these have gone through required study and training that is essential to run such programs.”*

1.4 Opportunities to Belong. The participants believe that youths who want to participate in community development programs at West of Melbourne, do you think there shall be an “inclusive acceptance policy” when it comes to the background or status of the teens (e.g., gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc.). Participant 10 explicated that *“there shouldn’t be discrimination on age, ethnicity, etc., therefore, classifying participants shouldn’t be done. There is a compelling argument in favor of implementing an inclusive acceptance policy for community development programs in the Western region of Melbourne, Australia, which would extend to teenagers irrespective of their background or social standing. The promotion of inclusivity fosters the establishment of equal opportunities, diversity, and social cohesiveness, thereby adhering to the values of justice and equity.”*

Participant 5 also agreed that *“when it comes to accepting youths who wish to join in community development programs in the West of Melbourne, there should be an inclusive acceptance policy. It guarantees that adolescents from a variety of backgrounds and qualities, such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, and others, are welcomed and valued inside the program. This encourages variety and inclusiveness, two important aspects of a thriving community. An inclusive policy sends a strong message to all young people that they are accepted and appreciated for who they are. This can assist to alleviate the stigma or isolation that some marginalized groups may feel, as well as develop a sense of belonging.”* Participant 12 agreed that *“we need to show the youth that we are in a multicultural society therefore an inclusive acceptance policy must be adopted. When they see that people of all kinds can work together then they will adopt this acceptability as well.”*

1.5 Positive Social Norms. To inculcate good morals and proper values toward teens, the participants unanimously agreed that social activities shall be a paramount activity to be implemented. Participant 2 expressed that *“teenagers should get involve in social activities to enhance their social skills and able to engage with group of diverse people and to build and form connections.”* The participant added that these activities can be *“educational trips/tours, Arts and crafts, camping (bonfire night), volunteering, theatre and concerts, sports, exhibits, parlor games, karaoke, gardening, shopping, potluck.”* The participant also added that *“during [my] high school, we had an annual leadership training program where students from various schools came together for team activities, both physical and intellectual. What made it memorable and inspiring was that we were led by students our age. I believe doing the same kind of activity can help inculcate these traits.”*

Another participant (Participant 3) uttered that *“organizers should take care to*

implement programs that are not too direct or boring in the matters of instilling good values as this might drive away the youth. Activities must fit into the teenage “status quo,” they will not want to participate otherwise. Furthermore, there should be activities that would encourage the teens to take an interest in science and arts.” With respect to aged people, Participant 11 articulated that *“community service to aged people like me. For them to realize ahead that they too will get old, and they need to spend life in worthwhile things. Old ones have story to tell in all aspects of life. Where should they get wisdom in their decision making? Making decisions in life is vital. It may lead you to open doors, but if not, then make your own. You know, we are still capable of nurturing youth when it comes to this.”*

1.6 Support for Efficacy and Mattering. The participants also agree that teens of West of Melbourne are capable of designing and delivering youth activities. Participant 6 expressed that *“they [teens] can help identify and cultivate leadership potential by involving them in the design and delivery of youth events. It gives them the ability to take on new duties, acquire leadership abilities, and serve as positive role models for their peers.”* Participant 8 also expressed that *“teens of West are not different or less to teens of any other area. They are full of energy, passion and with learning attitude. So yes, they should be assigned such tasks and activities to learn self- efficiency. However, the participant also added that “there will be challenges for sure when assigning tasks to the teens of West Melbourne, however this would be necessary in order to empower them. I believe they are capable in designing youth activities, they just need to be given a chance.”* This is seconded by Participant 1 articulating that *“giving [tasks to] the teenagers in West Melbourne responsibilities will undoubtedly present some difficulties, but doing so is essential to empowering them. I think they can create young activities; they simply need to be given the opportunities.”*

1.7 Opportunities for Skill Building. A number of skills-enhancement programs were unanimously recommended by the participants as opportunities for skill building. Participant 9 articulated the following skills-enhancement programs: *“arts and creative workshops, sports and athletic programs, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) initiatives, cultural and heritage preservation, Entrepreneurship and business development, mentorship and apprenticeship, life skills and personal development, volunteering programs, culinary arts and cooking classes, financial literacy and money management and art and tech competition.”* Another participant (Participant 5) mentioned that *“community development programs must include a balance of formal training, hands-on experiences, mentorship, and opportunity for youth to demonstrate their abilities and skills”* while another participant (Participant 8) expressed that *“programs like “robotics” will help to learn new and emerging skills. Art programs like drawing, sketching, performing, music etc. will help to build soft skills. Photography, cooking, vlogging, podcasting will make them creative and talented.”*

1.8 Integration of Family, School and Community efforts. Majority of the participants agree that family members, and the community as a whole, shall be involved in community development programs. This articulation is primarily supported by the idea that community programs for youth shall offer many opportunities for the integration of families, schools, and the broader community. Conforming to this agreement is the articulation of Participant 7 stating that *“the inclusion of family members and the broader community has significant importance within community programs due to its ability to cultivate support, augment program efficacy, and cultivate a collective feeling of responsibility towards the development of adolescents. Adolescents engaging in collaborative efforts with the entire community within the context of a*

community development program have the potential to acquire comprehension of one’s community and its multifaceted nature, avenues to assume leadership roles and engage in community efforts, develop sense of civic responsibility and active involvement of individuals in their communities, establishment and cultivation of relationships with individuals and groups within a community or several organizations, acquisition of practical skills, operate effectively in a team, and the capacity to solve problems, heightened levels of compassion and a more profound sense of inclusion within social groups, and the opportunity to contribute positively to their local community.” Another conforming statement was expressed by Participant 9 indicating that *“integrating family members and the larger community in community development programs aimed at youth is extremely useful and, in many cases, required since it can broaden the reach and impact of youth programs.”* Lastly, Participant 5 agreed that *“Family members must be encouraged to join. The community program should also be a platform for family bonding to improve the home environment. We should prioritize the teens then ask if we could involve their parents afterwards. This could also be an opportunity for teens to come forward if they have an abusive household.”*

However, some participants expressed non-conformance to the idea of involving the family in community programs. An instance was articulated by Participant 4 indicating disagreement to the idea. As quoted, *“no, teens might feel that much freedom and space with their family members. At that age they want to explore themselves in free environment.”* While some also expressed neutrality of the idea. Participant 8 said that involvement of family members is *“not necessary, but depends on the family member if they want to join in the community. They are very welcome.”* Participant 11 also indicated neutrality stating that *“I wouldn’t say shall, but maybe welcome to join*

especially during collaboration and event organizing.”

Participants also agree that teens will learn when they collaborate with the whole community of West of Melbourne in a community development program. One participant (Participant 10) expressed that *“Teenager’s sense of self-worth and confidence can be improved through participation in community services. They will be able to grow their life skills in an environment and allowing them to learn how to deal with problems, communicate with different people. In addition, it serves as an excellent basis for maintaining both physical and emotional well-being. Most important of all, the teens will gain a sense of belonging when they are given a chance to participate in the community. They will hopefully realize what they are capable and build upon that talent and skills to be able to aim for a good career and life. They will gain life skills and moral values. As they can also affect other lives in a good way.”* Another participant (Participant 7) explicated that *“when youth participate in a community development program with the entire West Melbourne community, they can obtain a wide range of valuable experiences, skills, and information. Moreover, they learn more about their community’s history, culture, needs, and assets, which helps them appreciate their environment and the people that live there.”* Participants 2 and 7 have also respectively uttered that teens’ collaboration would *“empower them to become active, informed, and responsible citizens who are equipped to make positive contributions to their community and society at large.”*

2. Proposed community development program for the youths of West of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
	<p><i>Overview: The Family Sports Fest is a year-long event that combines sports and family fun. It aims to promote physical fitness, family bonding and community spirit through variety of sports and recreational activities. The event will include monthly competitions, workshops and special themed days.</i></p> <p>January: Kickoff and Fitness Challenge Opening Ceremony with a Parade of Families Family Fitness Challenge: Obstacle courses, relay races and; Healthy Living Workshop: Nutrition and Fitness tips for all ages. February: Team Sports Month Family Basketball Tournament Volleyball Matches Family Team Building Games: Tug-of-war, sack races March: Aquatic Adventures Family Swimming Gala Water Polo for All Ages Aqua Aerobics Classes April: Outdoor Exploration Family Hiking Trip Nature Scavenger Hunt Camping and Bonfire Night May: Autumn Activities Family Harvest Festival Family Orienteering Challenges Seasonal Crafts Workshop June: Indoor Games Galore Family Badminton and Table Tennis Tournaments Board Game Competitions Indoor Rock Climbing July: Family Wellness Month Yoga and Meditation Sessions Healthy Cooking Classes Mental Wellness Workshops August: Extreme Sports Month Family Cycling Day Skateboarding and Rollerblading Adventure Sports Expo September: Track and Field Month Family Track Meet: Running events, long jump and Youth Marathon Speed and Agility Workshops October: Fun in the Sun Beach Games: Sandcastle building, beach volleyball Surfing Lessons Beach BBQ and Picnic November: Community Sports Day Community Soccer Match Family Fun Run Charity Sports Events December: Festive Fun Holiday-themed Sports Games End-of-year celebration and Awards Ceremony Additional Activity for Family Special events like movie nights, talent shows, and art competitions</p>
1. FAMILY SPORTS FEST	
	<p><i>Battle of the Bands: Family Jam Fest is an exciting four-month music competition that invites families and friends to showcase their musical talents. The event will feature monthly competitions, workshops and special performance.</i></p> <p>First month: Kickoff, Introduction and Elimination Opening Ceremony with Introduction of Bands Meet and Greet Session with the Judges and Participants Introduction to Competition Rules and Guidelines First elimination (Classic Rock) Guitar and Drum Workshops: Classic rock techniques Second Month: Second Round (Pop and Dance Hits) Band Performances: Popular pop and dance songs Dance and Choreography Workshop Third Month: World Music Performances Featuring World Music Genres (Latin, Reggae, etc.) Percussion and Rhythm Workshops Cultural Dance and Music Showcase Fourth Month: Grand Finale and Awards Ceremony Final Performances by Top Bands Special Guest Performances Awards Ceremony <i>Golden Moments* is a weekly program designed to foster bonding and engagement between different generations, focusing on spending quality time with elders. The program encourages meaningful interactions, sharing of stories, skills, and experiences, and creating lasting memories together.</i></p>
2. BATTLE OF THE BANDS: FAMILY JAM FEST	
	<p>Week 1: Storytelling and Oral History Week 2: Arts and Crafts Week 3: Cooking and Recipe Sharing Week 4: Music and Dance Week 5: Game Day Week 6: Gardening and Nature Walks Week 7: Poetry and Literature Week 8: Volunteering Together</p> <p>Participants will make memory journal to keep a journal to record stories, recipes and memorable moments shared during the program.</p>
2. GOLDEN MOMENTS	
	<p><i>Overview: The Community Skill Share Workshop Series is a bi-weekly event aimed at bringing together community members of all ages to learn, share, and develop new skills. Each workshop will be led by a local expert or enthusiast who volunteers to share their knowledge on a wide range of topics. The series promotes community engagement, skill-building, and networking, while encouraging lifelong learning.</i></p>
3. THE COMMUNITY SKILL SHARE WORKSHOP SERIES	
	<p>WORKSHOP 1: DIY Home Repairs WORKSHOP 2: Sustainable Living and Gardening WORKSHOP 3: Cooking and Nutrition WORKSHOP 4: Creative Arts and Crafts WORKSHOP 5: Language and Culture Exchange WORKSHOP 6: Wellness and Self-Care WORKSHOP 7: Storytelling and Public Speaking WORKSHOP 8: Emergency Preparedness</p>

Conclusion and Recommendations. Youth civic engagement in community affairs is one of the factors for them not to commit acts of violence and radicalize and mobilize followers. Thus, taking part in community development

program/s related to sports, health and wellness, arts and crafts and sharing of personal experiences with elders promote self-efficacy and enhances economic development. The government, with the help of non-government organizations, share responsibilities of honing and developing the skills of the youth by providing avenue for empowerment. Youths are innately talented, has more energy and brilliant ideas; the most productive age group. In order for them to have proper ethics, values and morals through effective community development programs ensure the encroaching of a good-laden character – a major requisite forming a safe and livable community.

Other stakeholders such as the parents, elderlies, neighborhoods, and the general public indeed play a vital role as coaches and mentors directing them to a good path. As Filipinos are known to have close family ties and values elderly people, they instilled the wisdom of culture of peace and camaraderie towards safe and secure community. The beautiful culture of Bayanihan of Filipinos, transform into a driving force to unite and help each other and indeed transcends beyond its motherland.

After, considerable salient aspects, this study proposed community development programs that enable the youth to express themselves and boost self-esteem and self-worth. It encompasses key components necessary for education and skill development, advocacies, creating supportive networks, utilizing technology, mentorship opportunities necessary for youth empowerment. This generation should be informed and engaged for them to thrive and contribute to sustainable development, thus, become the strength of each community and economy in general.

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