

X-MEN¹: Building Community of Filipino Indigenous Youth in the Space of Everyday Citizenship Education

By: Efren V. Lubuguin²

Edited by: Deanna B. Ayson

SYNOPSIS³

"Why is it that in the urban streets of Manila, I see many bridges without flowing waters below? Why is it that in the mountains, there are many rivers yet no bridges through which the water buffalo may cross to carry and bring us our food? –A Manobo child⁴

This query of indigenous children of Manobo posits a question of where the young generations of common Filipinos are located in the current space of development.

The research is a phenomenological account of indigenous Filipino youth leaders serving their own communities for empowerment and development. Data were gathered using tools such as participant observation in the educational practices and processes, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and collection of life stories from various indigenous youth leaders of TUKLAS KATUTUBO⁵.

The study conceptualizes the changing identity of Filipino indigenous youth particularly in the areas of citizenship, leadership, gender relations, culture, empowerment and development. It describes the educational practices and learning processes of youth development work and hopes to contribute to the discourse of youth pedagogy of the commons and establish emerging strategies of organizing and mobilizing youth for social action.

¹ Big screen adaptation [2000] of the classic comic book about a band of unique power-possessing mutants who live in a world where their kind is hated and persecuted by humans. Under the guidance of their leader, Professor Charles Xavier, the X-men strive for a world where humans and mutants can peacefully co-exist. The superheroes must also combat those radical mutants with intentions of exterminating human the race. By Zach Wilson [zcowilson@naz.edu]

² The author is a graduate of Master of Community Development at the University of the Philippines-Diliman where he lifted this paper from his unpublished thesis. He shares credit to the youth leaders of TUKLAS KATUTUBO and members of the thesis panel led by his adviser Dr. Ma Theresa V. Tungpalan and critic Prof. Elmer M. Ferrer. Efren is currently connected with Community-Based Coastal Resources Management Resource Center.

³ Same as abstract but prefers to use synopsis to maintain the over-all writing style of the paper.

⁴ "Manobo" or "Manuvu" means "person" or "people"; it may also have been originally "Mansuba" from man "person" or "people" and suba "river", hence meaning "river people." A third derivation is from "Banobo," the name of a creek that presently flows to Pulangi River about 2 km below Cotabato City. A fourth is from "man" meaning "first, aboriginal" and "tuvu" meaning "grow, growth." Manobo " is the hispanized form. The Manobo belong to the original stock of proto-Philippine or proto-Austronesian people who came from South China thousands of years ago. [Lydia Mary de Leon]

⁵ TUKLAS KATUTUBO or Tuklasan at Ugnayan ng Kultura, Lahi, at Sining ng mga Katutubo is a national indigenous youth organization in the Philippines. Their goal is to organize Philippine's different indigenous communities for empowerment and development through youth participation. They were cited as Ten Accomplished Youth Organization last July 2004 by the country's National Youth Commission.

It is hoped that the results of this research will add to the changing and growing interest in the theory and practice of community development particularly in the area of community building and development processes. It will also serve as an impetus for policy review of Philippine youth laws, in particular, the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act and Youth in Nation Building Act and, for recommending policies and strategies that will help locate and recognize the cultures, identities and survival practices of the commons in the midst of dominant economic and political system of our time.

Scene 1. BEGINNING: Changing Identity of Filipino Indigenous Youth

"People usually see what is seen in their eyes. They cannot look beyond."

This was a line from Storm, one of the lead characters in the movie X-Men2. This character's particular sentiment was very much the same reaction as the one I have heard from Christian and Miguel⁶ (both Manobo youth), "X-Men are like indigenous people for like them we are marginalized".

"When we transferred to Manila, the first thing I sought for were the trees. We have one in front of our house, and I would often climb and play on its braches. That is why our neighbors in the city used to call me monkey without a tail." (Miguel)

These words and stories haunted me and made me curious of how we in the center (Manila) perceived and understood the indigenous peoples' histories, lives and contexts. Thus, I decided to watch X-Men2, to live with youth leaders of TUKLAS KATUTUBO, and to explore the possibilities of a study on indigenous groups.

Who are these indigenous peoples? Who are the youth leaders of TUKLAS KATUTUBO? Why are they collectively mobilizing to change their situation?

There are two streams of issues and challenges among the indigenous Filipino youth: youth life in the tribal communities and youth life in the center (Manila or any key city).

- Displacement due to Armed Conflict

"I remember when I was just a kid, we were caught in a crossfire while we were having lunch. We immediately picked up our boiled sweet potatoes and then my family and I kept on running..." (Neil)

A study conducted by the country's Citizens Disaster Response Center (CDRC) reveals that children and youth estimated at 50,632, who are displaced by armed conflict, belong to the poorest communities in the Philippines. The conflict aggravates the problem of poverty,

⁶ All names in this paper were changed to protect research cooperators.

famine, diseases and lack of educational services facing these groups. Also, there has been a significant increase in the number of children and youth suffering from health problems and psychological trauma.

IP Population & Selected Regional Poverty Incidence⁷

Region	IP Population (in %)	Regional Poverty Incidence
Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)	21.7	59.8
REGION XI	14.0	33.1
REGION XII	13.5	46.8
Cordillera Administrative Region	11.9	37.6
REGION II	10.5	30.4

Based on the report of the country's National Youth Commission, an increasing number of children and youth from Regions 2, 6, 9, 10 and the Cordillera Administrative Region have stopped attending school due to armed conflict. The report also reveals that security problems caused parents to discontinue from work and children and youth to skip recreation.

"There's anxiety everyday, every time you woke up in the morning, you will think that they (armed men) might pass by. At night, you can't easily get sleep..." (Christian)

- Claims of Ancestral Domain

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) implemented several mechanisms to delineate ancestral lands and domains resulting to the issuance of evidences of claims called "Certificates of Ancestral Land Claims (CALC)" and "Certificates of Ancestral Domain Claims (CADC)". About two million hectares (2,000,000 ha.) of a total of about thirty million hectares (30,000) of total land area within the Philippine archipelago were covered by these claims by 1997.⁸

"Eric's land was exchanged for "araro" (plow)..." (Mike)

There has been a long history of indigenous peoples' struggle on claiming their rights for ancestral land and domain, even before the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) was enacted. But, the problem still remains.

⁷ Capones, Erlinda M. (2005), "Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines: Development Issues and Challenges. NEDA, Manila, Philippines.

⁸ Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center Inc - Kasama sa Kalikasan." Synopsis of Policy Developments on Indigenous Peoples Rights Recognition in the Philippines".

By early 2001, however, neither Certificates of Ancestral Land nor Domain Titles were issued. Apparently dominated by interests of large commercial extractive enterprises such as mining and logging, the administration of President Joseph Ejercito Estrada put various bureaucratic obstacles to prevent the full implementation of the IPRA. For instance, the drafting of regulations for the procurement of “free and prior informed consent” of indigenous peoples of commercial activities within their ancestral domains was carried out by a task force participated in by representatives of the Chamber of Mines. There were no indigenous peoples organizations represented in that particular task force.⁹

For TUKLAS KATUTUBO’s youth leaders, the root cause of tribal communities’ problem on poverty and disempowerment can be traced to their problems on ancestral land/domain and armed conflict.

“Land means life to indigenous people. If you deprived them of land, it is like taking away their family. So, there will always be unrest.” (Christian)

The outburst of various social justice & human rights issues concerning indigenous children and youth disenfranchised them in the midst of their family’s helplessness and the government’s irresponsibility. It effaces the concept of family care and condemns the young generation to a life of struggle for daily subsistence.

How do we rethink Filipino indigenous youth?

The Filipino youth is on the edge of late capitalism wherein they are trained and enticed to urbanism and global cosmopolitanism. This was brought by globalization where capital/money, products, information and people can freely move from one country to another because of the changing mode of communication and transportation¹⁰. It has power to alter the youth’s socialization to people, society, cultures and on the structural system of their time.

For Rolando Tolentino¹¹, we are on the tip of popular culture. *“Ito ang ating kinakain, iniinom, pinapanood, inaamoy, pinapakinggan at isinusuot; ito ang ating kinikilusan, iniisip at dinaramdam.”* (This is what we eat, drink, watch, smell, listen and wear; this is our realm, our thoughts and feelings.) The state and commerce wanted youth to possess this life through communication, media and arts.

In a telecommunication advertisement, a tag line *“B I OF US?”* that connotes youth language was popularized through media and technology. The use of cellular phone among Filipino youth was sold as essential to their lifestyle. This has consequential value and

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ David, Randolph S. (2002). *Nation, Self, Citizenship (An Invitation to Philippine Sociology)*. CSSP-University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

¹¹ Tolentino, Rolando B. (2001). *Sa loob at labas ng mall kong sawi/kaliluha’y siyang nangyayaring hari*. University of the Philippines Press, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

exchange, value because of its emotional worth to the consumer and exchange due to payment in exchange of the emotional worth (Marx from Tolentino, 2001). The media communicates that the teenager is “in style” if they own a cellular phone while the truth is not all young Filipinos has the purchasing power to have one.

These kinds of advertisements are usually anchored to the external (physical) sameness of youth based on their age. Example, media implies youth as a symbol of new technology and new way of living where in fact they are also victims of modern society. These assumptions are coming from the developmental psychology where only physical, mental and emotional changes/development is directly related to the youth’s social identity. This particular categorization based on age and physical sameness is not giving importance to differences, processes and changes of youth.

The youth can still undergo identical experience in spite of the complex growing/aging situation in the context of industrialized and developing countries. The experience and meaning of the word youth is continuously changing while the youth themselves are structuring new identities, different groups and stratification.¹²

In the Philippines, the youth age bracket ranges from 15 to 30 as stated in Republic Act No. 8044 or Youth in Nation Building Act. This is for institutional and policy purposes.

The Filipino youth embodies the different social stratification: **class**, based on the economic power, **gender**, on the socially constructed male and female, and **ethnicity**, based on identity outside national affinity.¹³

We can briefly describe the present situation based on the said social stratification illustrating the differences in the experiences of Filipino youth:

Marginalization brought about by poverty. Social issues that have been plaguing Philippine society in the past are continually marginalizing the Filipino youth today. These are issues on land, housing, education and employment that continue to deny our youth self-actualization opportunities. The competition in the global economy is also giving birth to disempowered young people that cannot be guaranteed welfare.

Technology, Media and Commerce. These three forces of our time play a strong role in homogenizing our youth groups even though they have different capacities to consume the market. These forces are creating a single image of youth that generates general needs and responses of Filipino youth.

Migration. An individual’s quest for actualization particularly in economic life motivates him or her to move from one place to another causing attrition of families, communities and cultures. This situation is a challenge to present dwellers due to the rapid changing mode of

¹² Wyn, Johanna and White, Rob (1997). *Rethinking Youth*. Sage Publications, London.

¹³ Tolentino, Rolando B. (2001). *Sa loob at labas ng mall kong sawi/kaliluha’y siyang nangyayaring hari*. University of the Philippines Press, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

interaction among people, interrogation of values and rupture of native cultures. In particular, our youth is facing the complex choice between accommodation and resistance.

Kingsley Davis explains the sociology of parent-youth conflict as the root of social conflicts young people face. The two different generations of parents and youth create a difference in the physical, psychological and sociological aspects of realities. The conflict increases in the space of civilization and modernity due to their opposing grip on present issues. Their understanding of realities is influenced by the generation they belong to. The parents are called “old-fashioned” and the youth are called “rebels”.¹⁴

“She (mother) doesn’t want me to get involved with TUKLAS. We disagree on many things. She doesn’t like the color black for my dress, she doesn’t even like blue which is my favorite.” (Sheila)

In my view, the parent that Davis is referring to represents other forms of current conflicts confronting the youth. These are usually coming from the various units of the society: school, church, family, media, community, fellows/friends.

- In school, the teaching of history and social sciences focuses on the losses and weaknesses of Filipino people and not on how we were able to survive and fight for our sovereignty and development. We are asked to accommodate identities of oppression under the guise of respecting authorities and elders. The school becomes an oppressive tool that restrains the youth’s search for identity and autonomy.
- In the church, Jesus was introduced as a man of peace; a God who bore the sufferings of the world. Thus, it is wrong for Christians to question the contradictions in life not only because it will not do any good to disturb the peace but also because it is part of their burden as followers of God. A youth that freely expresses his or her ideas within the church is considered rebellious and will need to go through sessions in value reformation. In my view, acceptance of this notion is inconsistent with the real meaning of Christ’s examples. He would want us to be open and accept differences because this will bear love and acceptance among our fellows.
- In the family, the child is immediately introduced to a structure of power based on hierarchy and gender relations. For instance, the voices of elders and males remain dominant within the family unit because they are usually assigned the role of decision-makers. This situation marginalizes the voices of the youth, more so the females, even within the private spaces of their homes.
- The media seems to be the most effective tool of capitalism to homogenize the youth and create consumers among them. It creates a single identity of youth (disregarding different subject positions) that produces tensions in individual and collective

¹⁴ Davis, Kingsley (1940). “The Sociology of Parent Youth Conflict”. American Sociological Review (Vol.5, No. 4, August 1940).

experiences. Although there are some attempts to show youth participation in media (TV programs etc.), these are rare and mostly influenced by commercialism.

- The state's, policy agenda for the youth still revolves around the development principle of Youth in Nation Building Act or Republic Act 8044 of 1995¹⁵ which provides for the protection of the youth from vulnerabilities, inculcation of desired values among them, their encouragement to participate in national programs, and mobilization of resources to redirect them to achieve social change. For me, this principle maintains the belief that Filipino youth are incomplete citizens that needed to be changed and "fixed," thus marginalizing their inherent capacities and power.

The concepts given by Davis are probably not enough to explain the present situation and conflicts being encountered by the youth but we can still relate the data gathered to some of his concepts:

Conflicts in standard/principle. The rapid changes created by the two different social realities of parents and youth produce conflicts in standards or principles. They lose the mutual identification that causes uncertainty to both generations.

For example, the youth who has the deepest commitment can decide regardless of his sexual preference. The youth probably adopted these standards from influences of other country and cultures or from their own reflections of the standard of their own homes, the church or communities.

Conflict of power. The youth continue to accumulate new knowledge from education, new technology or interaction to other cultures or communities. This is one of the reasons for the widening of the intellectual gap between parent and youth. This situation creates tension between the youth and institutions.

The increasing and deepening understanding of youth about religion or relationship with God will compel them to contest how a particular belief was introduced to them. The church, family, community and school will have a hard time introducing a faith for the youth to embrace.

Struggle for social status and economic power. A higher social status and economic power is attained both by parent and youth. It is not right to say that the children inherit social status at birth for it changes while they mature. For example, the choice of profession or occupation is both experienced by parent and youth but it also creates conflicts due to the difference in standards and power.

Conflicts in gender- Issues of gender and sexuality among parents are usually tackled based on a "moral" point of view. They wanted to protect their integrity in the community they belong to. Usually, the conflict arises from how it is confronted and managed and not the sexual preference per se.

¹⁵ UNICEF & Council for the Welfare of Children (2000). *Laws and Issuances on Children*. Manila, Philippines.

All these things are important factors in explaining the realities of Filipino indigenous youth. In using these concepts, we are not limiting the articulation of youth multiple realities on the basis of age or particular stage in human development. For instance, the experience of young laborers calls for different explanations; in biology or physical effects of hard labor, in psychology or the emotional and cognitive changes brought about by this particular experience and the socio-political in which relationships among different subject positions on class, gender, ethnicity and generation are articulated.

Scene 2. MIDDLE: Everyday Citizenship Education

Community development normally implies economic and infrastructure development for particular groups of people in a community. For William Biddle¹⁶, community development work is more than material growth; it is transforming people through education. The essence of this work is to achieve the deepest cultural pattern and use this to examine the ideals of their faith. The outcomes of these educational processes can be seen through their way of life, values and changes in capabilities.

Development Education Principles

A study of non-governmental organization's development education by Maria Luisa Doronila¹⁷, defines development work as helping people see and analyze their realities, decide and implement alternatives in a right manner.

Development education has the power to engage people to critically think and understand their situation. This is from an alternative view of education towards critical thinking of realities, developing people's potential and as a technology in achieving social justice, nationalism and power¹⁸. This type of education is inharmonious with the common educational perspective of merely transferring knowledge, skills and values to maintain the status quo. The goal of our country's educational system is based on this common perspective, that is, on the traditional pedagogy of John Locke which considers the students' brains as blank tablets (*tabula rasa*) to be filled with preconceived ideas and orientations.

The other principle places people at the center of liberating education. In this practice, persons are treated as subjects for and not as objects of change, with their own experiences as sources of learning. The people are able to control and decide what needs to be taken up in a liberating education and the relationship is cooperation and participatory rather than manipulation and collaboration.

¹⁶ Biddle, William W. (1965). *The Community Development Process (The Rediscovery of Local Initiative)*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. USA.

¹⁷ Doronila, Maria Luisa C. (1995). "Isang Panunuri sa Edukasyong Pang-unlad at Pagsasanay Sa Mga Organisasyong Di-Pampamahalaan sa Pilipinas. *Edukasyon (UP-ERP Monograph Series)*, CIDDS- University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

¹⁸ REDO-CSWCD (1993). "Popular Education: An Alternative Educational Approach". University of the Philippines. Diliman, Quezon City.

Development Education Practices

In attempting to determine the different influences and roots of alternative education, one can also identify the different practices of development education such as popular education, community education, political education, conscientization, non-formal, literacy programs, adult education, catechism, development training and training for transformation.¹⁹

The informal education identified by Jeffs & Smith²⁰ and the nonformal education of Walker & Dunham²¹ are part of development education discipline or practice. Informal education in Scotland is called community education or community learning, social pedagogy in Germany and animation in France. The social pedagogy in Germany is linked with social causes and it is problem-focused. This is to prevent social problems through teaching people on how to manage their lives and how to change their situation. In France and Italy, people with special learning needs were given the opportunity to use theater arts and were called creative-expression animation. The aim of socio-cultural animation is to strengthen people's participation in managing their communities. They also have leisure time animation that gives opportunities for children and youth to be exposed to activities such as adventure playgrounds, toy libraries, outdoor activity centers and organized sports activities.

Development Education for Youth

Ordinarily, education is taken as synonymous to school (*formal school*) wherein children and youth are expected to learn literacy, numeracy, other academics, behavior, self concept, citizenship, employment, other educational & community goals²².

The study of citizenship education or the attainment of knowledge, attitudes and skills to interact with their society is integrated in social science or social education. There are three traditions in teaching social studies: 1) Citizenship transmission or inculcating particular values like nationalism and concern for others; 2) Social science or teaching basic concepts, theories and methods of social science; and 3) Reflective inquiry or giving solutions to social problems encountered by humanity.²³

In the United States, the focus of social science education was in history during the period 1921-1960. Between the years 1960-1970, it was on the discipline of social science while social reforms and human rights were given emphasis during the period 1970-1980. Recently, multiculturalism was integrated to this discipline. Citizenship education is now called multicultural education with a component on equity pedagogy. This model of teaching contextualizes lessons and activities to different orientations on class, ethnicity, race and

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Smith, Mark K. (1994). *Local Education community, coversation, praxis*. Open University Press, Buckingham.

²¹ Walker, Joyce and Dunham, Trudy (1998). "Understanding Youth Development Work". University of Minnesota, USA.

²² Townsend, Tony (1994). *Effective Schooling for the Community*. Routledge, London.

²³ Banks, James A. (1997). *Educating Citizens in a Multicultural Society*. Teachers College Press, New York, USA.

gender. The essence of this practice is to help the students reflect and be active citizens of a free society. To gain knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to deepen their understanding, concern and actions in a pluralist society. Teaching components are deepening of knowledge, practical skills and reflective self-analysis (attitude).

Equity pedagogy outcomes are cultural identities like class, ethnicity and gender towards national identity or national cultural affinity and a state towards global identities or global communities' affinities.

Educational Practices of TUKLAS KATUTUBO

"We just carry on everywhere, in Luneta or Circle (public parks) and Jayson's or any of our member's houses. We have meetings and other activities and it's like training to us. I could never have learned this from school. Teachings from actual experiences are far different from those in school." (Zhander)

There are three types of educational programs in TUKLAS KATUTUBO: Tribal Saturday, Summit and Outreach. All of these are anchored on the organization's basic perspectives that are also the bases of their learning outcomes and actions:

- **Development** – Indigenous people's deeper understanding of their situation, needs, rights, governance and society.
- **Empowerment**- To be self-reliant, self-confident, independent, sensitive, giving importance to own culture and participating in communities outside their indigenous roots.
- **Youth Participation**- Recognition of youth's active role as advocates of indigenous community change. Increasing their participation in providing solutions to problems encountered by the community.
- **Culture**- Serves as space for expression of situations, aspiration and social actions of indigenous communities.

The principles of educational programs are the following:

- **Organizing Youth** – Convening indigenous youth; organize them to participate in community development work processes and advocate for their welfare.
"It's a good feeling to help your brethren in the indigenous communities even if I am not rich. It's good to share your knowledge to them so that they will not lose direction and hope." (Martin)
- **Building Communities/communities of youth** – learns to interact, be open to differences and discover sameness for empowerment.

"TUKLAS members are from different tribes but we are united because we are open to different cultures. TUKLAS members are very flexible."(Christian)

- **Deepening Commitment-** learning to accept new challenges and develop commitment to others.

"I'm inspired to see indigenous children in the communities. I wanted to be somebody (doctor) so I can help them. I wanted to help in developing position papers and project proposals so that we can report their needs to government agencies."(Grace)

- **Peers/Friendships** – friendship binds the members of the organization.

"I like our camaraderie in TUKLAS. You gain friends like your own families. If I have problems, I seek them." (Amphie)

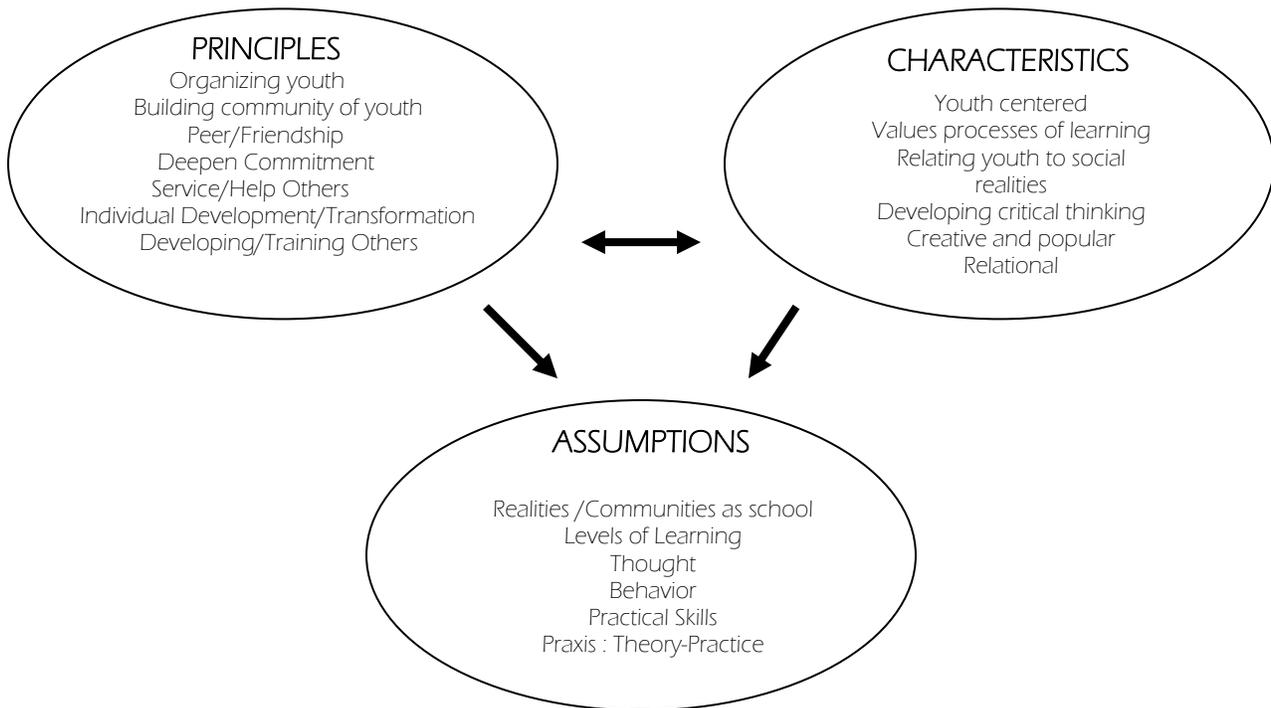
- **Service to others-** helping others becomes a source of personhood.

"I'm so happy while I'm teaching here. They also believe in my abilities." (Dennise)

The following are the different forms of educational practices:

- **Interaction or exchange of thoughts-** free discussion on thoughts, experiences and feelings. This is an opportunity to help one another in learning from reflections and experiences of others that is usually integrated in guided discussion.
- **Cultural Exchange-** ideas of cultures from actions, behavior, religion, relationships and livelihood are freely shared with their peers. This is an opportunity to reflect on the differences and sameness of each cultural orientation.
- **Guided Workshops-** formal trainings and group learning processes to strengthen organizational skills or to evoke indigenous youth and community concerns.
- **Organizational Management-** youth's practical learning processes in organizational management like planning, teaching, stewardship and networking with government agencies.
- **Community Immersion** – living with community people is an integral part of the learning processes of young leaders. The deepening of understanding as well as the first hand experience of the cultures and concerns of indigenous communities become the bases of organizational collective action.

Outlining Educational Practices of TUKLAS



The summary of educational practices of the two youth organizations was based on the previous explanations in Popular Education²⁴.

The following are assumptions in development education among youth based on the teaching principles and characteristics shown by the organization:

- **Realities/Communities as school.** These are effective learning “environments” to deepen the youth’s understanding of social realities that they are confronted with. Social situations became points for reflections leading to finding solutions to social problems.
“You will realize the real world in the indigenous communities. This world is not just experiencing fun but you will see people who need your help though you’re poor.” (Amphie)
- **Levels of learning in thought, behavior and practical skills.** One can learn contexts of youth organization in three levels: changes in thoughts, behavior and skills. These three levels of learning play an important role in an individual’s development.
“There’s a feeling that this is not part of your personal domain. We discussed deep issues on ancestral land, education, etc. I don’t have enough knowledge and

²⁴ REDO-CSWCD (1993). “Popular Education: An Alternative Educational Approach”. University of the Philippines. Diliman, Quezon City

skills. But I am amazed at how I was able to cope with the demands of the group.” (Amphie)

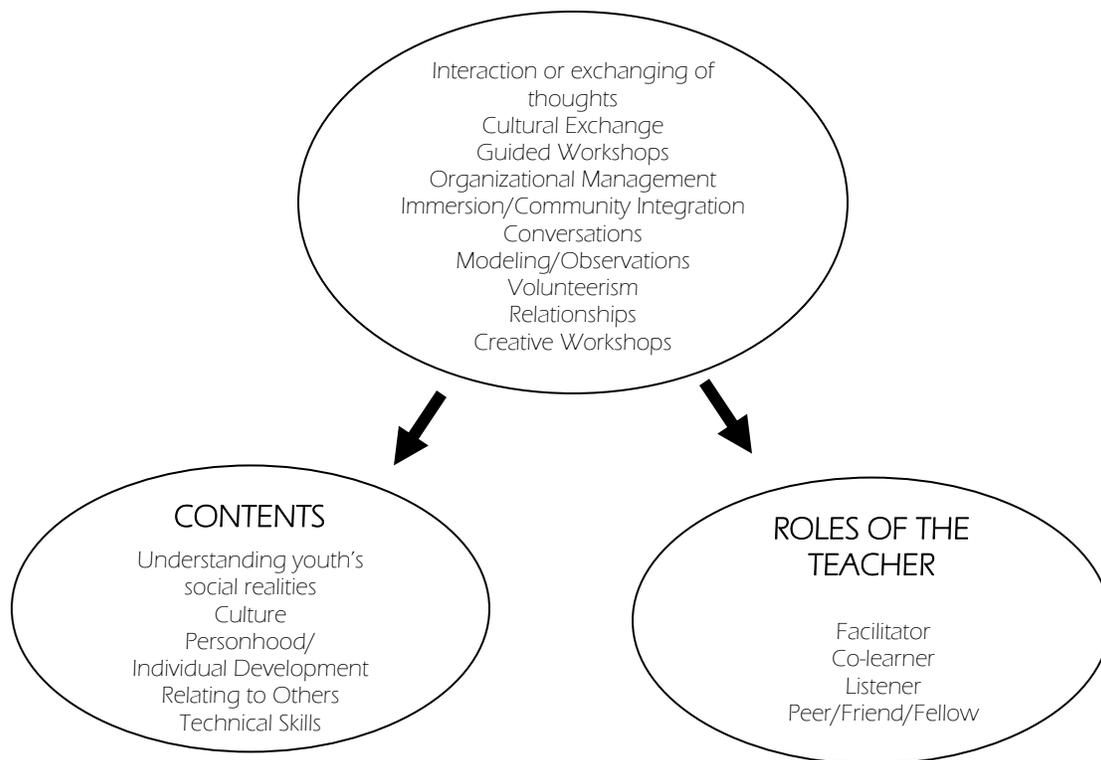
- **Praxis.** This is an important factor in the educational practices. In this process, the youth situates actions for social change as a response to reflections of self and others.

“I discover the realities of life. I used to complain, but I can’t complain now because I have seen the real problems and know how it is difficult to find solutions. But at least I can now identify the causes of the problems.” (Zhander)

- **Learning with peers and friends.** This is the best time to learn social realities with peers and friends and it also adds to their interests and motivation for learning.

“Imagine, we are coming from different cultures but we managed to be united, we become more flexible and accommodating.” (Christian)

What can we infer from these educational practices? Each process is comprised of two elements, the contents and the roles of the teacher.



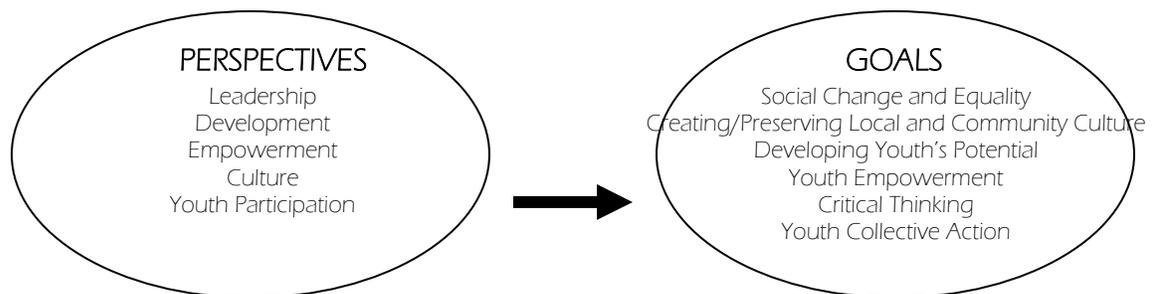
The content, which is the core of educational processes, has five (5) components:

- **Understanding youth's social realities.** This process involves recognizing and understanding individual and collective struggle in the space of different subject positions (class, gender, ethnicity and generation). Programs and actions of the organization are subject to different tools of analysis to explain youth situation.
- **Culture.** This refers to cultural exchange and orientation to different cultures from the different subject positions the youth belong to. This creates exchange of thoughts that move them to be open and accepting of others.
- **Personhood/Individual Development.** Educational program outcomes are changes in the perspective and behavior of individual youth.
- **Relating to others.** Youth's widening experience in the area of helping others.
- **Technical Skills.** The youth gained skills in community organization and mobilization for social change.

The following are the roles of the teacher:

- **Facilitator-** facilitates educational processes because the youth is the main actor in the space of learning.
- **Co-learner-** teacher should not feel more knowledgeable than the students because everybody is a subject in a participatory learning process. Every individual is a source of learning.
- **Listener** - learning from the experiences of each participant begins in the attentive listening and recognition of each voice and context.
- **Peer/Friend/Fellow** – learning is productive because of the relationships among the group. No one is afraid to commit mistakes because of the familiarity with others.

What are the goals of development education for TUKLAS KATUTUBO?



We can establish six (6) goals in achieving social transformation from the basic perspective as shown by TUKLAS KATUTUBO:

- **Social Change and Equality** – these are changes in livelihood, equal rights and elimination of discrimination.
"My dream is for present indigenous youth to initiate solutions to problems; that they will be empowered so that if they become the elders of the communities in the future, the next generation will not experience the same problems. They will say thank you for making their lives better." (Zhander)
- **Creating/Preserving Local and Community Culture** – development of individual and community capacities are building alternative power structures against prevailing system.
"They will learn to design their own community programs through their own initiatives. In the community, they must decide because they know and they feel their situation. We can only facilitate." (Miguel)
- **Developing Youth's Potential**- it is important to recognize the inherent capacities of youth in any development work and we cannot afford to marginalize their voices and actions.
"I can leave the comforts of life even if it means recreating my personhood." (Bobby)
- **Youth Empowerment** – provide independence to initiate changes in the self, others and community.
"We are all youth volunteers here but we are determined to do the impossible for the sake of the people." (Jules)
- **Critical Thinking** – increasing social consciousness is an important goal of any educational development work. This is where the social transformation starts.
"I am inspired by the stories of the children in the community and I am asking myself on what I can do to improve their situation" (Grace)
- **Youth's Collective Action** – the goal of participatory learning is collective action to confront the challenges of both individual and collective struggle.
"I realized that what we are doing is not a joke. We need to make concrete steps. Example, we can't just write resolutions on the issue of ancestral domain for this requires concrete action as youth leaders." (Christian)

Towards Youth Pedagogy

The educational processes in youth development work promote three (3) responses:

- Critical learning and articulation of historical and everyday experiences
- Expressing collective standpoint/perspectives
- Collective action

How do TUKLAS youth exhibit critical learning and articulation of historical and everyday experiences?

Youth narratives usually start from their personal experiences and feelings. Stories of evacuation and fear during arm conflicts, of a grandmother whose land was taken away from her, of a farmer and husband abandoned by his wife, of a homosexual who stowed away to the city for fear of backlash from the tribal community, and of an illegitimate child being discriminated upon, are examples of youth narratives related to bigger issues of social marginalization and oppression. This can be seen through class, gender, ethnicity and the generation that the youth belong to. This means that both internal and external forces outside youth's space bring marginalization and oppression. For example, media and commerce are external forces that marginalize youth in terms of limiting their access due to their low purchasing power. Parents, family and community cultural practices are internal forces that impose the gender role or challenge the sexual preferences of a particular youth. In this way, personal narratives become rich sources of social situation articulation that identify "*different subject positions*"²⁵ such as class, gender, ethnicity and generation.

How do the youth achieve a collective standpoint or perspective? We can translate large social issues into everyday experiences:

- **Marginalization** – disenfranchising people with less power and wealth.
"Ivy was born without ancestral land title. My grandmother exchanged her land for a wristwatch. Eric's land was exchanged for plowing equipment." (Miguel)
- **Globalization** – simultaneous flow of capital, product and labor under the global order of free market²⁶.
"I applied for a job in a fast food chain with Rodel, a Mamanwa²⁷. He was not admitted because of his

²⁵ Alejo, Myrna J. (2002). "Citizenship and Pedagogy". Popular Education for People's Empowerment. Quezon City, Philippines.

²⁶ Gealogo, Francis A. (1998). "Globalisasyon, Nasyonalismo at Kasaysayan". CSSP-University of the Philippines. Diliman, Quezon City.

²⁷ Mamanwas are lesser in number and more scattered and nomadic than the Manobos. They are a different breed of people in their looks and physical features compared to the lowlanders and the upland living Manobos. They did not adopt the lowlanders' way of living even if they were already Christianized.

complexion. Imagine, he was treated like an animal because of his skin color." (Miguel)

- **Homogenization** – harmonizing different elements to create a standard.
"I am not privileged to study just like other youth. My earnings from a fast food chain will be for household expenses to augment family income." (Jessica)

All these articulations were based on personal stories and translated to collective narratives. The experience of one is not far from the realities of the other. For W.C. Mills, people must be viewed as related and not separate from one another. The articulation of everyday experiences is the basis of the youth's deepening understanding on development, empowerment, culture, participation, and leadership. These are the bedrock of their collective action to improve their situation.

What are the different forms of TUKLAS KATUTUBO's collective actions? Here are the components of their actions:

- Aspiration to build community of youth
- Deepen basic perspective and principles through participatory learning
- Sharpen skills through training
- Response to youth and community social issues

How do the youth learn? There are four categories in youth learning processes:

- **Narration** is the process of going back to previous situations, listening to own feelings and sharing of personal narratives. The process involves understanding of one's own realities that leads to transformation from a submissive position to one aiming for change and mindlessness to active participation.
- **Relating to contexts/realities** is the process of comparing one's own situation with others and realizing "I'm not alone in this situation, I may be right and they just don't understand me".
- **Conceptualizing Ideas and Preparation for Social Action** is the process of posing questions and designing social action to change the situation.
- **Infer alternative or change** is the process of building community of youth with same struggle and tries to form sub-culture to subvert the system.

Citizenship Education Among Youth

For Renato Constantino²⁸, the current educational system in the Philippines is inappropriate and oppresses the aspirations of its people. Education must bring economic freedom, political independence and enliven the culture of people and nation.

²⁸ Constantino, Renato (1982). "The Miseducation of the Filipino". Foundation for Nationalist Studies. Quezon City, Philippines.

In Philippine history, education is a tool of subjugation by the powerful. Spain used this to indoctrinate "indios"²⁹ and made them followers of church and state. The friars' teachings were based on their self-serving morality that created passive citizens who silently witnessed and accepted foreign imperialism. The Americans used education as a tool in imposing their democracy, culture and civilization on us. They forced us to embrace their way of life while killing off Philippine cultural sensibilities. They assumed that "little brown men" could not, on their own, be prepared for citizenship and the civilized world without the help of "white men"³⁰.

The long struggle of oppression left deep-seated wounds on the Filipino sensibilities. These wounds have made us hesitant against opening our eyes to existing social conflicts, to understanding and identifying solutions to address social ills. This timidity is possessed by the majority of Filipino youth especially a generation that is swamped mainly by popular culture. They seem inured to, at worst unconcerned about, the problems of other people, community, country and other nations.

The other wound of oppression is the emphasis on patron-client over communal mode due to the demands of feudal economy³¹. The present capitalist system accommodates individualism and erases collectivism. It breaks up the political, economic and cultural power of the people. In the youth sector, homogenization ushered by the global economy, politics and culture numbs their consciousness on the issues of marginalization and equality.

The said wounds are repressed consciousness that manifests passive behaviors on participation of people and youth in the space of society, culture and politics.

The structure of people's identity is fast changing due to globalization and homogenization that marginalizes the majority. We cannot separate the youth's experiences of marginalization and oppression and so we must acknowledge their potential and welcome their participation in the changing situation.

²⁹ Spaniards regarded the Filipinos, at best, as younger brothers, more often as an "irresponsible child", most of the time, however, as a kind of animal which comes close Darwin's missing link between human beings and monkeys. An Indio such as this one, a hoodlum, an insect, a monkey dares to question the institution in his own country, to reproach the friars and officials and to question their professional and moral conduct. [<http://www.univie.ac.at/Voelkerkunde/apsis/aufi/rizal/har-pro.htm>]

³⁰ Cendana, Percival V. (2002). *Starting 'em Young (A Practical Handbook for Student Leaders)*. Student Council Alliance of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

³¹ Doronila, Maria Luisa C. (1995). "Isang Panunuri sa Edukasyong Pang-unlad at Pagsasanay Sa Mga Organisasyong Di-Pampamahalaan sa Pilipinas. *Edukasyon (UP-ERP Monograph Series)*, CIDDS- University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

In one convention of Franciscan Missionaries³², the signs of the time of a globalizing world were presented:

- **Market economy/competition**, wherein power and wealth are controlled by few while the majority is living under the poverty line.
- **Power of violence**, such as the destruction of natural resources, conflicts among tribes and ethnic groups, confrontation of different religions, and violence against women and children.
- **Fundamentalism** gives importance to advocating a particular ideology rather than to being open to differences of the people's needs and aspirations.
- **Culture of the Image** encourages not to reflect and to immediately decide based on superficial images; it highlights temporal and instant culture.

These four tensions are rooted on the greed of people and lust for wealth and power that drives the deprived and disempowered people deeper into the pit of despair.

How can we raise Filipino social consciousness in the midst of this situation? How can TUKLAS KATUTUBO create a subculture to subvert these tensions?

Let us infer from the characteristics of citizenship as practiced by TUKLAS KATUTUBO:

- **From I to US** – showing openness to others through the recognition and understanding of different situations, culture, contexts, and aspirations.
- **External Image or Internal Values**– indicates interest in developing core values such as concern for others and participation to community change. This attests that not all young people are after image-building.
- **Receiver or Giver** - shows capacities to understand and accept ideas, standards, and guidelines of others and in the process create collective ideas and standards. This is different from how others perceived the youth as passive receiver of social norms.
- **Surfacing or Deepening** – shows capacities to discuss issues related to Development, Empowerment, and Participation, Gender, Marginalization and others. In this process, the youth continually relates personal circumstances to social situation contradicting the perception that the youth cannot think beyond their personal concerns.
- **Temporal or Sustainable** - shows importance to things that will last like valuing self and others, empowerment, community development and building capacities of everyone.

³² Franciscan Missionaries (2003). "A greeting together with new signs of heaven and earth". Capitulum Generale 2003.

- **Now or Future** - shows importance and advocating social transformation like human development, peace, and aspiration for equality.

Even though these practices were shown by only a few young people of a particular group, we can still use their characteristics of citizenship as points for reflection, such as,

- How can we say that the youth are not complete citizens?
- Where do wrong notions about youth citizenship come from?
- Are there differences in youth and adult citizenships?

SCENE 3. END: Locating Filipino Indigenous Youth in the Struggle for Survival, Identity & Culture

The spaces in youth development work as shown by TUKLAS KATUTUBO community of youth are located in three spheres: vision or aspiration for change, development, and empowerment; recognition and deeper understanding of situation; actualization or achieving the potential and transformation of individual and collective.

Here are some recommendations in the practice of youth development work:

- The youth decides on the direction of the organization based on their personal and collective understanding and aspiration of social change. This is different from adult-led youth development work wherein young people are treated as passive receivers of direction imposed by people who think they know what's best for the young.
- They deepen their understanding of the changing and complicated situation of youth in our times to subvert old notions about them. Most youth organizations still work on the framework of previous youth identities.
- TUKLAS experience shows that youth development is not linear in nature but that it can develop in different times and contexts. The youth experience of self-actualization is no different from the actualization of adult. This reflects the wrong view that youth is incomplete and needed change and preparation for citizenship.

There are two streams of experiences by the youth in the context of development work:

One is the individual change or experience that is anchored on psycho-analytical dimensions: change in mindset or understanding of social realities, change in relating to others, and change in practical skills.

Second, social/collective process or experience of a particular group of youth reflecting the change in understanding of subject position they belong to and change in action to transform the situation of the collective.

How do we organize and mobilize youth towards community development?

One, the teacher/facilitator must recognize that both student and teacher are subjects who accept differences and acknowledges potentials in changing the collective sphere. Human realities can no longer be explained in one subject position; the recognition of class, gender, ethnicity and generation as subject positions will encourage deeper understanding of historical and everyday experiences. Sensitivity is needed because personal narratives are expressed through informal and nonformal processes. The articulation of everyday experiences is an important factor in forming perspectives and actions of the community of youth.

Second, by being open to the multiple voices of youth and the continually subverting the old notions about youth will encourage the use of different tools of analysis. This is the first step to the actualization and cohesion of everyday life. Achieving a collective perspective requires keen listening to individual voices, freely discussing appropriate tools of analysis and facilitating the cohesion of youth voices. We cannot dictate to the youth because they have their own voices and spaces.

Third, collective action serves as political rehearsal. Cultural transformation of the individual brought about power to advocate perspectives and collective agenda. This can be in a form of organizing, education and service to others.

These practices of organizing youth will increase youth's critical thinking and critical collective action for social transformation and change.

The educational processes and learning outcomes of youth development work were in line with the discipline of community development particularly in the area of community education:

- Discover and develop community values that leads to helping others
- Conscientization or deeper understanding of self situation and others
- Develop capacities for collective action and facilitates practical learning like organizing, teaching and resource management

Learning outcomes are from the mode of reflection-in-action or similar to experiential learning, i.e., the community of youth learns from the entire individual experience and interaction with the group.

This study identified four levels of social stratification or subject positions of the youth: class, gender, ethnicity and generation. This stratification brought to light various conflicts between youth and institutions they engage with and also articulated various explanations of individual and collective situation of the youth.

It is important in organizing youth to recognize that stakeholders are all subjects who recognize their differences, potentials and participation in collective change. They must also accept that each individual is coming from a subject position and therefore needs to be open to different and appropriate tools of analysis. Sensitivity and debunking old notions of youth will facilitate cultural transformation.

There are four levels of youth learning:

- Narration
- Relating to Contexts/Realities
- Conceptualizing Ideas and Preparation for Action
- Infer alternative or change

I call this everyday citizenship education because the youth's experiences are not far from adult experiences in the community. The characteristics shown by the youth of TUKLAS KATUTUBO are valuing core values, recognizing exchange of thoughts and ideas, deepened understanding of realities, visioning of sustainable development, and aspiring for social change in the future.

After describing and analyzing the experiences of the indigenous Filipino youth organizations, the following questions can be used for reflection and bases for continuing research agenda, policy and program review for advocates of Filipino indigenous youth's welfare and development:

- How can we say that the youth are not complete adults?
- Where do wrong notions about youth come from?
- Are their differences in youth and adult citizenship?

To me, the situation and aspiration of youth is one with the entire direction of human development.