



Project LAKBAY - IUSR Concept Note & Primer

Learning **A**ctively through **K**nowledge-**B**ased **A**ppreciation for **Y**outh
A Youth Cultural and Learning Immersion Camp

Rationale

The University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU), through its International University Social Responsibility (IUSR), recognizes the pertinent role universities play in advancing their local and global communities. As bastions of knowledge and innovation, universities bear the responsibility of ensuring that the expertise they cultivate escapes the university and extends into the greater society. IUSR is a commitment that draws the university out of its ivory tower into greater service to its community by employing Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)-focused, people-centered, and knowledge-driven assessments and interventions.

As issues in sustainability around the world become more apparent, all sectors of society, especially the youth, now have a greater responsibility to exercise innovation and creativity in formulating solutions. Empowering the youth through collaboration, participation, and engagement is essential to ensure the deepening, continuity, and eventual success of initiatives targeting global sustainability. Recognizing the role the youth plays in building the future and sustainable development, through Project LAKBAY (a Filipino term that means Journey), the youth are provided a platform to become more actively engaged in the promotion of IUSR across communities within the Philippines and across the globe..

In the report by Canto, Renz, and Villanueva (2024), it could be seen that the Philippines is heading towards a positive economic trajectory. Although the country is shy of meeting its goals in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, narrowing of trade deficits, and tempering inflation rates, indicators across the board are demonstrating steady improvement and resilience post-pandemic (Canto, Renz, and Villanueva, 2024). Despite the positive outlook presented in the macroeconomic sense, this data only presents a part of the whole in terms of the country's overall condition. This aggregation does not adequately represent the conditions faced by communities on the ground, where the vision of sustainable development is still far from reality. According to the Union of Local Authorities in the Philippines (ULAP, 2023), several SDGs remain a challenge to the Philippines, including “reducing poverty, promoting

gender equality, ensuring clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, and fostering partnerships for the goals.”

The contextual realities present within the Philippines can serve as a meaningful learning laboratory abundant with insights to provide the youth with a broader understanding of the opportunities and challenges in the implementation of the SDGs. As a developing country, the Philippines demonstrates the unique intersection of potential for growth, but at the same time the limitations brought by the socio-cultural, economic, political, and environmental landscape.

Project LAKBAY is a program that creates spaces for the youth to contribute to the vision of sustainable development. Through the IUSR, community interventions are being implemented to counteract various inequalities that lead to the disadvantage of local communities. Needs-based assessments within partner communities resulted in the following focus areas for IUSR intervention:

1. Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building – Equipping the community with various information, skills, and experiences that promote the necessary awareness, problem-solving, and critical thinking to help uplift their communities and improve their overall way of life.
2. Livelihood and Entrepreneurship – Capacitating the community to locate and create opportunities for sustainable sources of income so that they may be more economically empowered and resilient in meeting their basic necessities.
3. Digital Transformation – Developing the community’s technological infrastructure, innovation, capacity and cyber, digital, and technology literacy to maintain their responsiveness to and competitiveness in the rapidly evolving digital space.
4. One Health – Assisting the community in pursuing a collaborative, multisectoral, and transdisciplinary framework that balances the human, animal, and environmental aspects of health to ensure the holistic upliftment of community welfare.
5. Gender Sensitivity – Endowing the community with a gendered lens to ensure that they become more considerate of varying gender experiences. This contributes to the eventual creation of a society that is safe and inclusive for all.
6. IUSR “Bayanihan” – Widening the collaborations among universities in the fulfillment of the IUSR in order to magnify global efforts in securing a more livable world and a sustainable future for all.



(Diagram 1: Sustainability through IUSR Interventions within the Community)

As demonstrated in the diagram above, the interventions performed within the community through the IUSR serve to supplement efforts in driving it toward holistic development. At the center of these efforts lie the overarching objective of sustainability as the core and guiding principle for ensuring enduring progress and prosperity within the community.

Overall, Project LAKBAY aims to empower the youth to contribute to greater sustainability-related plans and initiatives across different fields of development. To be aware and engage in various global sustainability programs is a continuous journey that the youth needs to traverse. This youth cultural and learning immersion program seeks to explore the interconnections between multiple SDGs by means of civic engagement, understanding local challenges, fostering collaborations, and developing context-specific solutions to aid their respective communities while using English as the primary medium of conversation and instruction. This long-term involvement and its visible outcomes hope to inspire the youth toward deeper social consciousness and greater contributions to positive and sustainable change.

Objectives

Project LAKBAY seeks to involve the youth in the fulfillment of greater International University Social Responsibility to promote active learning through knowledge-based activities while evoking positive, holistic, and long-term change for local Philippine communities. The specific objective of the project are as follows:

1. Provide a venue for youth to have a better understanding of the SDGs and the challenges faced by various local communities in the Philippines.
2. Promote intercultural engagement among Taiwanese and Filipino youth;
3. Facilitate learning of other cultures through firsthand experience, including language, customs, and traditions;
4. Promote a sense of community and connection with other young people interested in making a positive difference in the world; and
5. Provide a platform for learning English as a medium of conversation, instruction, and collaboration.

Participants

The youth cultural and learning immersion camp is open to young people between the ages of 18-29 who are interested in learning about the SDGs and taking action to make a positive difference in their communities and the world.

Venue

The main venue of the youth cultural and learning immersion program is at the UPOU main campus in Los Baños, Laguna. Participants youth will be billeted at the UPOU Academic Residences for the entire duration of the said program.



The UPOU main campus in Los Baños, Laguna sits at the foot of Mt. Makiling



The UPOU Academic Residences can house over 100 individuals

Methodology

The Project LAKBAY immersion camp combines the following methodologies: online discussion, onsite lectures and hands-on activities, and active learning through community-based activities. Online input and lecture-based activities are designed to prepare the youth for community involvement. The community-based activities are contributions to the promotion of the IUSR among partner communities of UPOU.

Online Learning

The participants will undergo a 3-day online asynchronous camp orientation to be delivered via a designated UPOU learning management system (Canvas, Moodle). Here, they will be able to access LAKBAY's course materials, discussion forums, quizzes, and other interactive tools. The online orientation will inform the participants regarding the conditions present within the Philippines and the realities faced by local communities. This is to help orient them towards greater participation in International University Social Responsibility. The participants will also be given an opportunity to discuss with mentors and fellow youth on what to expect from the camp.

In-Person Youth Camp

The in-person immersive camp will include a variety of activities, including:

1. Improving English language through various activities i.e. in-person interaction with the communities, video capture of interviews, project proposal, and reflection writing.
2. Academic Learning wherein participants attend a series of interactive academic classes such as digital literacy, leadership development, and community engagement.
3. Design thinking workshops to allow opportunities for participants to learn about global issues, think critically, and develop innovative solutions.
4. Interactive walking workshops on the SDGs, covering topics such as poverty, gender equality, climate action, and more.
5. Cultural immersion to feature arts, music, food and other cultural customs and beliefs.
6. Team-building activities to foster collaboration and leadership skills.
7. Community immersion through field trips to nearby communities and local organizations.
8. Outdoor activities to promote environmental awareness and conservation.

Activities

In the current IUSR framework, the following key themes are being targeted for holistic, sustainable community development, including (1) Knowledge and Capacity Building, (2) Livelihood and Entrepreneurship, (3) Digital Transformation, (4) One Health, (5) Gender Sensitivity, and (6) IUSR Bayanihan. The issues along with the proposed activities are outlined in the table below:

Issue	Key Theme(s)	Activity	Description
<p>The community needs to be empowered in locating opportunities for sustainable livelihood opportunities to help promote economic growth and overall well-being.</p>	<p>1, 2, 6</p>	<p>Livelihood Workshop (Lecture-Based)</p>	<p>This workshop aims to empower the youth with the knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary to cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit that drives sustainable economic development within their community and foster a culture of innovation, resilience, and self-reliance. After the lecture, the youth will be engaged in a product brainstorming and design session where they will be tasked to conceptualize products to share with the community.</p>
		<p>Livelihood Workshop (Community-Based)</p>	<p>This activity is a cultural knowledge exchange between the community and the LAKBAY participants. The community will be tasked to provide the youth with hands-on experience on how to produce local products and crafts, while the LAKBAY youth will be tasked to share their conceptualized product for the community.</p>
		<p>Trolley Crafting and Beautification</p>	<p>This activity aims to involve the youth in the trolley crafting and beautification. The unique</p>

			<p>trolley experience offered by Brgy. San Antonio is one of the primary drivers of attracting tourism within the barangay. Efforts must be exerted in the upkeep and beautification of the said trolleys. Through this activity, the youth, through the help and involvement of the trolley drivers, will craft and beautify trolleys for donation to the local community.</p>
<p>There is a space for the community to benefit from greater digitalization. It is important for the youth themselves to inspire the community to harness technology by demonstrating the potential uses of digitalization.</p>	<p>3, 6</p>	<p>Video Diary</p>	<p>This project is done to enhance the appreciation and inform the community of the potentials of digital technologies. With the consent and participation of the community, the LAKBAY youth will be asked to create and submit a video diary and reflection of their immersion experience. The videos will be played during the culmination activity. The resources produced by the LAKBAY youth will also serve as relevant documentation not just for the project, but also for the overall long-term development and changes within partner communities.</p>
<p>Community nutrition is among the key issues in local communities within the Philippines. Due to several socio-economic circumstances, Filipino families often have difficulties in</p>	<p>4, 1, 6</p>	<p>Feeding Program (Lecture-Based)</p>	<p>The activity aims to inform the youth participants on the science of nutrition by discussing concepts such as: (1) Proper Nutrition, (2) Balanced Diet, (3) Effects of Malnutrition, and (4) Difficulties of Proper Nutrition in the Philippines. Providing this lecture allows for participants not just to understand the importance of nutrition, but also to realize the contextual realities within the</p>

<p>meeting basic nutritional needs. This has created various health vulnerabilities, especially among Filipino children.</p>			<p>Philippines that make proper nutrition difficult within its communities. After the lecture, the youth will be tasked to plan healthy and balanced Filipino and Taiwanese meals in preparation for the consequent community-based feeding program.</p>
		<p>Feeding Program (Community-Based)</p>	<p>The activity aims to immerse the youth in Filipino culture and way of life through a community-based feeding program. The youth participants will be tasked to (1) visit the local wet market to shop for ingredients, (2) prepare and pack healthy and balanced Filipino and Taiwanese meals, and (3) distribute prepared meals to children in partner communities.</p>
<p>The community currently faces poor sanitation and solid waste management practices which can pose issues especially in community health. Additionally, a clean and pleasant environment is a necessity in order to encourage tourism within the community.</p>	<p>4, 1, 6</p>	<p>Community Clean – Up (Lecture-Based)</p>	<p>The activity aims to promote sustainable solid waste management practices and foster community involvement among the youth by implementing comprehensive education in the following topics (1) reducing waste generation, (2) improving waste segregation, and (3) enhancing environmental cleanliness within the communities.</p>
		<p>Community Clean – Up (Community-Based)</p>	<p>The activity aims to instill upon the youth an appreciation of the environment and sanitation by involving them in the creation of cleaner, healthier, and more resilient communities. Through a clean-up activity, they can contribute to the cleanliness,</p>

			safety, and overall well-being of the local neighborhood.
<p>There is untapped potential to harness the environment for the improvement of community health and nutrition. Utilizing the environment also serves the purpose of beautification within the community.</p>	4, 1, 6	<p>Permaculture Gardening (Lecture-Based)</p>	<p>The activity aims to inform the youth on the various potentials that can come out of permaculture gardening by discussing topics such as (1) what is permaculture gardening, (2) the benefits of permaculture gardening, and (3) the basics of permaculture gardening. This lecture-based activity to be conducted in the FMDS PermaGarden will be in preparation for the community-based permaculture gardening activity.</p>
		<p>Permaculture Gardening (Community-Based)</p>	<p>The youth will be tasked to identify plants, plant cuttings, and seeds from the FMDS PermaGarden to be taken and planted in their assigned plot in the permaculture garden being established in the partner community. The Project LAKBAY plot will be monitored and expanded by future batches of participants.</p>
<p>There is a need to ensure the involvement of Project LAKBAY in the communities is sustainable and continuous. The youth need to be encouraged to continually explore the community, understand their</p>	5, 6	<p>Community Immersions and Needs Assessment</p>	<p>Before engaging within the community, the LAKBAY youth will be educated on the values and ethics that need to be upheld throughout their involvement: (1) the youth will be informed on proper community immersion practices to avoid intrusive integration within the community and (2) the youth will also be taught strategies on how to observe the community, assess their needs, and identify areas to</p>

needs, and identify ways for these needs to be addressed.			contribute. These practices will be done continuously throughout their participation in Project LAKBAY.
		Project Brainstorming	At the end of their engagement with the community, the youth will be given an opportunity for project brainstorming. As a group, they will consolidate their observations of needs within the community that Project LAKBAY can address. They will be requested to produce a short project plan, with a description of the issues identified and the possible project initiatives to be performed.
		Project Proposal	The participants, as part of their final output for their video diary, will be requested to present their project proposal to help guide future Project LAKBAY batches in their initiatives within the IUSR communities.

Duration & Itinerary

ONLINE CAMP

LAKBAY Online will be delivered through the UPOU Non Formal Course platform (<https://nfc.upou.edu.ph/>). The online orientation will inform the participants regarding the conditions present within the Philippines and the realities faced by local communities. This is to help orient them towards greater participation in International University Social Responsibility. The participants will also be given an opportunity to discuss with mentors and fellow youth on what to expect from the camp.

[Note: Update with details about our partner communities - touch base with some of them; highlight IUSR]

- **Bayog Fisherfolks**
- **San Pablo Women's Org**
- **Liliw Entrepreneurship Org**
- **Magdalo Organic Farmers Association (MOFA)**
- **Good Food Farm**
- **Rise Against Hunger PH**
- **Trolley Community**

Participants will have access to LAKBAY’s course materials, discussion forums, quizzes, and other interactive tools.

IN-PERSON YOUTH CAMP

Project LAKBAY will take place for 9 days on **06 - 14 August 2024**.

Schedule of Activities		
Day 1 - 06 August 2024 (Tuesday)		
Time	Activities	Point Person
9:20 AM	Arrival at NAIA; Immigration Process	Noreen Alazada Sydney Rovin Macahiya
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Travel from NAIA to Asian Development Bank ; Lunch; Day-tour at Asian Development Bank (ADB) to learn about inclusive growth to achieve high sustainable economic progress	
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM	Travel to Los Baños	
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM	Check-in at UPOU Academic Residences	Noreen Alazada
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Orientation, Getting to know & Dinner	Noreen Alazada aProf. LJ Saludadez
Day 2 - 07 August 2024 (Wednesday) <i>(Learning Visit)</i>		

Time	Activities	Point Person
7:00 - 8:30 AM	Breakfast	
8:30 - 9:00 AM	Transit to SEARCA	
9:00 AM - 12:00 NN	Learning Visit to Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA)	Noreen Alazada
12:00 NN - 1:00 PM	Lunch	
1:00 - 1:30 PM	Transit to ACB	
1:30 - 4:30 PM	Learning Visit to ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB)	Noreen Alazada
4:30 - 5:30 PM	Visit One Town, One Prpduc	
7:00 - 8:00 PM	Visiting your Kapitbahay: Filipino Family, Household and Values	Venue: SEARCA or Residence of Dr. Glenn Gregorio (SEARCA Director)
8:00 PM onwards	Online Activity Reflection	

Day 3 - 08 August 2024 (Thursday)
(Workshop, Learning Visit, In-house Lecture)

Time	Activities	Point Person
7:00 - 8:30 AM	Breakfast	
9:00 AM - 12:00 NN	Workshop at FMDS Permaculture GARDEN	Mary Jane Reondanga Dr. Jabez Joshua Flores
12:00 NN - 1:00 PM	Lunch	
1:00 - 3:00 PM	Learning Visit to International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)	

3:30 - 5:00 PM	In-house Lecture (related to SDG) - We can discuss here about Project Proposal Presentation; Cultural Night; Culmination activities	
6:00 - 8:00 PM	Dinner	
8:00 PM onwards	Online Activity Reflection	

Day 4 - 09 August 2024 (Friday)
(Immersion and Community Visit)

Time	Activities	Point Person
6:00 - 7:00 AM	Breakfast	
7:00 - 8:30 AM	Travel to Magdalena, Laguna	
8:30 AM - 12:00 NN	Activities with partners from Magdalena, Laguna	Noreen Alazada
12:00 NN - 1:00 PM	Lunch	
1:00 - 1:30 PM	Travel to Liliw, Laguna	
1:00 - 4:00 PM	Activities with partners from Liliw, Laguna	Noreen Alazada
4:00 - 5:30 PM	Travel to Los Banos	
6:00 - 8:00 PM	Dinner	
8:00 PM onwards	Online Activity Reflection	

Day 5 - 10 August 2024 (Saturday)

(Immersion and Community Visit)

Time	Activities	Point Person
7:00 - 8:00 AM	Breakfast	
8:00 - 8:30 AM	Travel to Brgy. Bayog, Los Banos	
8:30 - 11:30 AM	Activities with partners from Brgy. Bayog, Los Banos	Noreen Alazada
11:30 AM - 12:00 NN	Transit to UPOU	
12:00 NN - 1:00 PM	Lunch	
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Travel to San Pablo, Laguna	
2:00 - 5:00 PM	Activities with partners from San Pablo, Laguna	Noreen Alazada
5:00 - 6:00 PM	Travel to UPOU	
6:30 - 8:00 PM	Dinner	
8:00 PM onwards	Online Activity Reflection	

Day 6 - 11 August 2024 (Sunday)

(Community Service)

Time	Activities	Point Person
7:00 - 8:00 AM	Breakfast	
8:00 - 9:00 AM	Travel to Brgy. San Antonio and Ingress at site	
9:00 - 11:30 AM	Activities with partners from Brgy. San Antonio (Feeding Program)	Noreen Alazada

11:30 AM - 12:00 NN	Transit to UPOU	
12:00 NN - 1:30 PM	Lunch	
1:30 PM onwards	Free time for Church Service or other activities	
	Dinner (Outside; allowance will be given)	

Day 7 - 12 August 2024 (Monday)
(*Culmination Activities*)

Time	Activities	Point Person
7:00 - 8:00 AM	Breakfast	
8:30 AM - 12:00 NN	Project Proposal Presentation	Noreen Alazada aProf. LJ Saludadez
12:00 NN - 1:00 PM	Lunch	
1:00 - 3:00 PM	Free time to work on Cultural Night Presentation	
3:00 - 7:00 PM	Project LAKBAY Cultural Night Presentation; Awarding of pins or medals	
7:00- 9:00 PM	Farewell Dinner at MPH	

Day 8 - 13 August 2024 (Tuesday)
(*Learning Visit*)

Time	Activities	Point Person
5:00 - 6:00 AM		
6:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Travel to <i>EduConnect</i> (Mandaluyong)	
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	<i>Activities with partners from EduConnect (Mandaluyong)</i>	

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Lunch	
1:00 - 2:00 PM	Travel to <i>UP Resilience Institute</i>	
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Learning visit to <i>UP Resilience Institute</i>	
	<i>Visit to UP President</i>	
	Dinner	
	Transit to Los Baños	

Day 9 - 14 August 2024 (Wednesday)

Time	Activities	Point Person
5:00 AM	Travel to NAIA	
7:00 AM	Arrival at NAIA; Immigration Process	
10:20 AM - 12:10 NN	Transit Time (PH - KHH)	

References:

- Canto, J. Renz, F. and Villanueva, V. (2024). *The Philippines Economy in 2024: Stronger for Longer?* McKinsey & Company. Retrieved from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/ph/our-insights/the-philippines-economy-in-2024-stronger-for-longer#/>
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