

The Bahay Tuluyan and its junior educators program: *Strengthening the streetchildren's resilience*

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Pinag-aaralan ang mga simulain at ang patuloy na pagsulong ng Bahay Tuluyan bilang lugar na tumutulong sa mga lansangan tungo sa kanilang pagkakaroon ng matibay na karakter, kumpiyansa sa sarili at malalim na paninindigan sa anumang larangan. Ang field method-sa higit na tiyak na kaparaanang interbyu, ang ginamit upang maisatitik and dinamiko, waiang humpay at masigasig na disposisyon ng mga inabuso at kapus-palad ng mga mamamayan ng lipunang Pilipino. Sa tulong ng sampung (10) tagapagtaguyod at tagasuporta sa programan ng Bahay Tuluyan, malalimang pinag-aralan sa naturang pananaliksik ang kalikasang sosyo-kultural ng mga Pilipinong batang lansangan.

Masusi ring pinag-aralan ng tagapagsaliksik ang pilosopiya at layuning taglay ng programang Bahay Tuluyan. Sa pamamagitan ng pilosopiyang gumagabay sa kanila- “nararapat gumawa ng desisyon para sa kani-kanilang mga sarili ang mga bata” pinatutunayan ng mga kalahok sa programa na kaya nilang isulong at isakatuparan ang napakaraming pagbabago para sa kanilang kapwa batang lansangan. Malinaw na pinatutunayan ng mga pagbabagon ito ang katibayan ng loob ng mga batang lansangan at ang kakayahan nilang mamuhay na kapiling ang tulad nilang mga sensitibo, dinamiko, malikhain at mapag-arugang mga dalubhasang panlipunan ng Pilipinas.

THE STREETCHILDREN

THE CROWDED STREETS OF METRO MANILA are made more crowded with the presence of children who peddle candies, flowers and newspapers, or who wipe car windshields and jeepney passengers' shoes at red traffic lights, or who simply beg for alms. These children who live or work on the streets are popularly referred to as "streetchildren". Dizon (1988) describes streetchildren as children whose ages range from 7 -- 18 and whose sources of livelihood include vending or hawking of food items, selling sweepstakes, begging for food or money, scavenging, car watching or car cleaning, pick-pocketing snatching or engaging in prostitution. Nicanor B. Arriola, Executive Director of Bahay Tuluyan describes the streetchildren by classifying them into three categories: (1) those who stay in the streets most of the time and get to go home to their respective parents if they so wish; (2) those who live in the streets with their families; and (3) those who are totally abandoned and engage in different trades for a living (1998).

WHY THERE ARE STREETCHILDREN

As of April 1997, the number of streetchildren in Manila is estimated by the Department of Social Work and Development at 100,000 (Stairway, 1997). Arriola (1998) puts it at 1.5 million nationwide. The large number of streetchildren can be attributed to urbanization and its repercussion on the urban poor (Torres, 1996). Kothari (1994) of Habitat International Coalition articulates that "one of the main reasons why cities across the world are seeing the growing phenomenon of streetchildren is due to discriminate housing and planning policies, especially in the developing countries, that have forced people and communities from inner cities and areas to places far from livelihood opportunities. This has forced families to send their children back to the city streets to supplement the family income". Streetchildren are also pushed to the streets because of the following reasons: [1] to keep themselves busy since they cannot afford to go school; [2] to escape from family conflicts; [3] to run away from a physically abusive atmosphere at home; and [4] to join their fellow children for thrills (Dizon, 1988).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The researcher looks at the following: [1] the history, vision and goals of Bahay Tuluyan, [2] the special role of the staff, benefactors, and detractors of Bahay Tuluyan on the resilience of streetchildren-client; [3] the Junior

Educators Program of Bahay Tuluyan, and [4] insights of four Junior Educators.

The study focuses on the Bahay Tuluyan and its Junior Educators Program for the streetchildren of Malate as they strengthen the streetchildren-client's resilience.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The researcher's principal aim is to identify the Bahay Tuluyan and its Junior Educators Program as strengthening factors of the streetchildren-client's resilience.

Specific objectives are:

- [1] to describe the Bahay Tuluyan staff vis-à-vis the nature of their concern;
- [2] to identify the guiding philosophy of the Bahay Tuluyan Junior Educators Program;
- [3] to identify the key players in the program;
- [4] to identify the target recipients of the programs;
- [5] to identify the approaches and materials used in the program.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Bahay Tuluyan – A non-governmental organization initially founded to service the growing number of streetchildren in the Malate area, and serves some 150-200 children through three main programs: [1] an education program to provide basic skills for children (street, community and center-based); [2] a participatory research program in the situation on the streets conducted by “hardcore” streetchildren- or those involved in gangs and victims of abuse; [3] a theater program for and by streetchildren (Balgos, 1995); shall be referred to as BT in this text.

Junior Educators Program -- a program of Bahay Tuluyan characterized by the child-to-child approach and aimed at developing new batches of junior educators who will eventually take charge of other programs and projects of BT (Arriola, 1998); shall be referred to as JEP in the text.

Junior Educators - former streetchildren-turned-educators of Bahay Tuluyan children-client; shall be referred to as JE, in the text.

Streetchildren- children aged 7-18 years old who live or work in the streets (Dizon, 1988); children aged 1-20 years old who live or work in the streets (Arriola, 1998); shall be used in the study to refer to the streetchildren-client of Bahay Tuluyan.

Resilience- [1] condition characterized by resumption into original shape after compression; [2] state of readily recovering from a setback (The Pocket Oxford Dictionary, s.v. *re-sign*); shall be used in this study to refer to the streetchildren's ability to cope with the risks and overcome the conflicts or setbacks of street life and recover from the traumas encountered in the streets and eventually empower themselves into becoming responsible junior educators of Bahay Tuluyan.

RISKS AND CONFLICTS STREETCHILDREN FACE

Streetchildren live in a world full of risks and conflicts. Getting caught by the police because of their mere presence in the streets and being subjected to a battery of questions and accusatory statements is a risk to their psychosocial development. They begin to lose trust in people and start building a world impenetrable to others who offer genuine help. Putting upon themselves the burden of earning a living for their families pose a conflict as to their role vis-à-vis the role of their parents or older family members. Exposed to non-streetchildren who enjoy balloons and ice cream while playing in the parks or who go to school in chauffeured vehicles, they continue to search for answers as to why they do not have the same privileges as their fellow children. Their questions multiply only to remain unanswered.

STREETCHILDREN CAREGIVERS

The phenomenon of streetchildren has been recognized as a serious social concern, mobilizing a number of human rights advocates and defenders. Balgos (1995) cites two proofs of such mobilization. One, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20 November 1989; as of 1993, 117 countries had signed the said Convention by ratification, accession or succession. The other, governments and non-governmental organizations have forged ties and efforts, upon the initiative of UNICEF, to work for the welfare of children who constitute half of the world's population.

Another proof of social mobilization is the holding of the Asia Pacific NGO Human Rights Congress in New Delhi on 6-8 December 1996. In

this convention, lobbying efforts creation, promoting and strengthening child rights were ensured by the participants which included the Philippines (Asia Pacific Human Rights NGOs, 1997).

The Philippine judicial system has enacted laws protecting the rights of children. One such law which was approved on 17 June 1992 is Republic Act 7610, *an act providing for stronger deterrence and special protection against child abuse, exploitation and discrimination, providing penalties for its violation, and for other purposes* (UNICEF, n.d.).

Non-governmental organizations working for streetchildren abound. Stairway, Virlian Foundation, Kanlungan sa Ermita Ministry Inc., Maryville Community Development Center, Tanglaw ng Kabataan, Kaibigan Ermita Outreach Foundation, Child Hope Asia-Philippines, Pangarap Shelter for Streetchildren, The Silong-Tanglaw Foundation Inc., MASIGLA (Makataong Simulang Para sa Ikagagalang ng mga Kabataan) Streetchildren Foundation, Tahanan Outreach Projects and Services and the Malate Parish- and Quezon City-based Bahay Tuluyan are only some of the NGOs which help streetchildren realize their right to a decent and safe life in the city, their right to education, their creative potentials and their abilities in assuring themselves a good future.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The issue of urbanization may be linked to the growing phenomenon of streetchildren in the Philippines (Torres, 1996). How well do streetchildren go through the risk of being subjected to the many social repercussions of urbanization is worth looking into. The streetchildren's socialization into meaningful bonding with fellow streetchildren through a service-oriented learning program is a remarkable coping mechanism and empowerment device of streetchildren. It is a proof of their resilience. It is a reflection of their survival instinct needed in a complex street life. The Bahay Tuluyan Junior Educators Program proffers inspiration and strength to streetchildren who themselves aspire for the good life. The program can serve as a model for other organizations concerned with the future of streetchildren in an urbanized setting.

METHODOLOGY

To meet the specific objectives of this research the Field Research Method was employed. The researcher used the interview as her data-gathering device for a number of reasons.

First, she believes in the interactional nature inherent in this field research method which leads to maximum allowance of both verbal and nonverbal expression among the respondents. Her exposure to various Filipino communication situations as an expert in the field of Speech Communication has led her to a substantial knowledge about the different communication behaviors of Filipinos in given social situations: [1] there are those who love to be interviewed and need not be coaxed into revealing more information; [2] there are reluctant interviewees who only give information after an encouragement, or friendly and persistent yet gentle prompting from the interviewer; [3] there are laconic interviewees whose responses range from a nod of the head to "hindi ko alam"; [4] there are interviewees who only need one question and can get on talking about a single topic for thirty minutes or so; and [5] there are passionate interviewees whose verbal responses to questions are laced with nonverbal complements. These varying interview behaviors may define the degree or extent of research findings, analyses, and discoveries.

Second, observations point to the interview as a better tool than that of a questionnaire (Babbie, 1998) which respondents are likely to throw away. Respondents may be very busy attending to the daily requisites of subsistence to sit down and fill out the questionnaire. Some of them may rather be guided through the task of understanding and giving of the needed information. Some do not see the relevance of researches for social reforms and policy implications. The absence of the researcher or research assistant may defeat the purpose for which the questionnaires have been given out or administered.

Third, the interview method makes the respondents less hesitant to entertain the interviewer who is already right in front of them (Babbie, 1998).

Fourth, the present interviewer-researcher believes that there will hardly be any obstacle in conducting her study among the respondent Bahay Tuluyan staff and facilitators given the Filipino personalities of *marunong makisama*, *mapaginhay*, *makiramay*, *mapagtiwala*, *maunawain*, *gan ng loob* and *pakikipagkapwa* (Churh, 1986). She has always felt a special oneness with her fellow Filipinos who have helped since the late '70s and continue to assist her in determining sociological facts and laying down social perspectives.

The tasks of the Bahay Tuluyan staff and facilitators which consist of enhancing the personhood and cultivating the unique inherent characteristic of the marginated streetchildren as well as their major contribution to

Philippine society take on Herculean proportions. These are tasks that call for a strong sense of altruism and undivided attention. The sensitivity of these tasks challenges the researcher to go beyond the interview data and look into the intangible aspect of the respondents' active involvement and selfless service to fellow streetchildren. The multifaceted dimensions of the very existence of streetchildren pose various sociological questions to which answers may be temporarily withheld or permanently denied. Such withholding or denial of answers continues to present the perennial truth of having children in the streets of the country.

The interview method is the researcher's tool for discovering social ills that victimize a number of the Filipino children. She believes that there is a lot to be transcribed from the verb and nonverbal sharings of the respondents.

With these considerations in mind, the researcher hopes to capture the essence of the respondents' noble mission of strengthening streetchildren's resilience. The present interview questions focus mainly on what the researcher believes are issues dear to the heart and committed to the mind of the respondents: [1] the history, vision and goals of Bahay Tuluyan, [2] the special role of the staff, benefactors, and detractors of Bahay Tuluyan on the resilience of streetchildren; [3] the Junior Educators Program of Bahay Tuluyan; and [4] insights of four Junior Educators.

The Filipino language is used as the interview medium. The researcher believes that using this medium leads to the facilitation of warm interaction with respondents. The researcher also thinks that the use of Filipino language enables her to establish and maintain rapport with the respondents. Through the popular Filipino language, the researcher thinks she could capture the spontaneity and candidness of the respondents. Additionally, the researcher assumes that the respondents – given their exposure and mission--- have a high degree of fluency in the Filipino language.

Her interviewees shall consist of :

- [1] the Founder and Chair of the Board of Bahay Tuluyan
Edward Gerlock,
- [2] Board Member and Executive Director: Nicanor Arriola,
- [3] Board Member and Social Worker: Ellen Balomaga,

- [4] Board Member and Administrative Staff Ma. Victoria Astillero,
- [5] Board Member and Case Management Officer Neneth Eser,
- [6] Household Manager Mercedes 'Nanay Mercy' Enverga,
- [7] Junior Educator Liza Inamarga,
- [8] Junior Educator Mary Ann Nebriil,
- [9] Junior Educator Michael Moses,
- [10] Junior Educator Albert 'Stanton' Snyder

RELATED LITERATURE

In her book *Profiles of Disadvantaged Children: Street-children in Six Philippine Cities*, Torres (1996) presented seven case studies of urban streetchildren and showed how these "disadvantaged children" are able to cope with poverty and the demands of impoverished households. The cases vary. There is the case of two streetchildren resigned to the fact of having to help their mother earn a living. There is a streetchild who opted to live in the streets of Cubao after a scolding from his father. He turned into a child prostitute to fend for himself. There are two streetchildren staying in centers and their ultimate dream is to be reunited with their families. And there are streetchildren who dropped out of school and joined the labor force to help augment what little family income they have.

Balgos (1995) writes about the "forgotten victims" in her *The Child with a Fish for a Twin (Or How not to Write about Children)* and cite the large number of homeless streetchildren employed in the informal sector of the economy. These children are socialized into adult roles. Knowing how Philippine society puts a high premium on education, some of these streetchildren set aside money for their formal education.

Banaag's *Resiliency* (1997) documents the stories of twelve streetchildren. Each story tells of a streetchild's survival in the streets and how he is able to transform the adversities of living in the streets into triumphs of the character and the spirit. Banaag also cites studies made by individuals and organizations which suggests that [1] the children's resilience depends largely on the behavior of parents and adults; [2] there are factors associated with streetchildren's resilience (constitutional factors, sex differences, temperament, bonding, mother-child relationships, family relationships and extrafamilial factors); [3] resilience is consistently related with an inner sense of self-worth, competence

and sense of self-efficacy; and [4] adversities encountered by children actually serve to strengthen these children's resilience.

The streetchildren, whose circumstances are external to their will, are socialized into a world of coping for survival. They recognized how life's deprivation has led them to daily struggles in the streets. That the streetchildren are able to cope with the harsh realities of street life is a fact passers-by and commuters witness everyday. Strength of character is manifested in every streetchild's earnest and unflinching will to survive and to help his family.

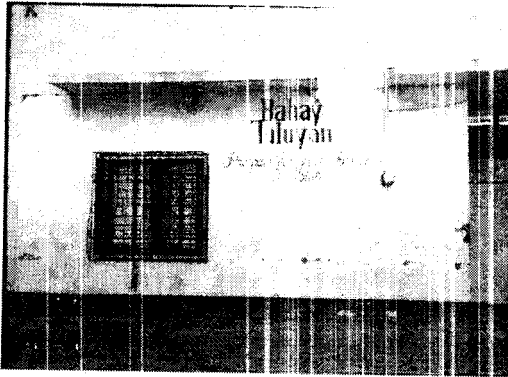
The Social Exchange Theory of Simmel may be an additional explanation about every streetchild's determinism or manifesto of survival. George Simmel in his *The Philosophy of Money* observed that while people's goals vary given their biological impulses and social need, "all action reflects the human ability to *manipulate* the environment in an attempt to realize their goals... Money is the ultimate social tool" (Turner et al., 1989). The researcher believes that "manipulation of the environment" is actually an *adaptation*.

The streetchildren's adaptation, however, may include their ability to overcome certain conflicts with themselves or with other people. Folberg and Taylor (1993) classify conflict into two categories: intrapersonal and interpersonal. The streetchildren have conflicts to grapple with. The fact that they are forced to join the labor force at an age when they should be going to school is an intrapersonal conflict. That they encounter people who detest their presence in the streets is an interpersonal conflict. How these children manage to face and overcome these conflicts comes in many ways. Resilience is one.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The interviews with the respondents were done three separate occasions and in two different venues. The first interview took place on 11 February 1998 at the Bahay Tuluyan Drop-in Center in Makati. The second was done on 18 February 1998 at BT. The third was conducted with Edward Gerlock on 22 March 1998 at his residence on Manhattan Street in Cubao, Quezon City.

Interview questions were formulated based on the four issues the researcher looked into: [1] the history, vision and goals of Bahay Tuluyan; [2] the special role of the staff, benefactors, and detractors of Bahay Tuluyan on the resilience of streetchildren-client; [3] the Junior Educators Program of Bahay Tuluyan; and [4] insights of four Junior Educators.

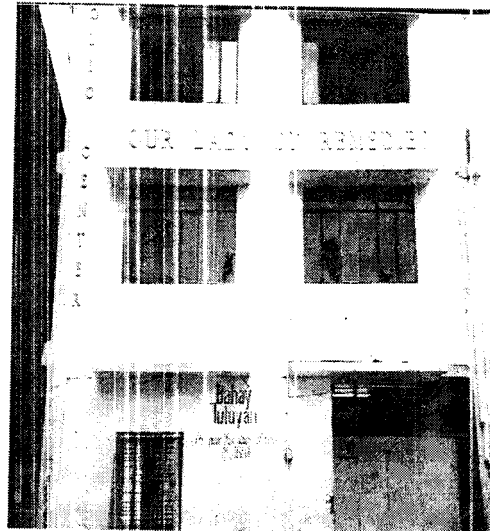


The Filipino language, the language of fluency of most interactants, was used. English was used in the interview with Gerlock. The researcher utilized the camera and the video camera to document the streetchildren's activities as well as the staffmembers and junior educators' warm reception.

BAHAY TULUYAN: ITS HISTORY, VISION AND GOALS

The idea of Bahay Tuluyan Drop-in Center for Streetchildren was collectively conceptualized in 1988 by Italian Luigi Cocquio, American Edward Gerlock, Irish priest John Gallagher and a Filipina by the name of Celeste. Cocquio, a former priest now based in Italy and married to a Filipina, invited Edward Gerlock— who just came back from a ten-year deportation in Hawaii— to work for streetchildren. Gerlock, a former activist priest who was detained by President Marcos from October 1973 to January 1975 and who left the priesthood and married an Ilocana in 1980, accepted the invitation. Fr. John Gallagher, who was then working at the Malate Parish Church, offered the space on the ground floor of the Our Lady of Remedies Building of the Malate Parish on San Andres corner Madre Ignacia Streets in Malate, Manila. The offer for a ten-year stay in the premises was sealed on a piece of paper.

Bahay Tuluyan envisions a society capable of providing



an environment conducive to the total growth and healthy development of children, of upholding their rights and of protecting them from all forms of abuse and exploitation. It aims to meaningfully integrate the children into the mainstream of Philippine society. It also aims to make the children discover an atmosphere of caring, giving, and loving. BT does this by adopting programs meant to enhance the learning and creativity potentials of its residents.

In 1995, BT branched out to Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City. This year, the staff are targeting a space in Tianong, Quezon where they can house more streetchildren.

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE STAFF, BENEFACTORS, AND DETRACTORS OF BAHAY TULUYAN ON THE RESILIENCE OF STREETCHILDREN

That the streetchildren's resilience depends largely on the behavior of the adults around them (Banaag, 1997) is a fact worth exploring at the Bahay Tuluyan whose operations are largely street-based. What is the special role of Bahay Tuluyan on the formation of junior educators-streetchildren?

In an interview with Nicanor Arriola (1998), the researcher found out that Arriola was one of the student-seminarians that Gerlock contacted in starting the Bahay Tuluyan Project. Arriola immersed himself with the streetchildren of Roxas Boulevard. He had a flute and like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, attracted a number of children who were amused to play his name-that-tune game. Sometimes, Arriola recalls, he also had to sniff rugby so as to befriend the streetchildren. After he had earned their trust, Arriola would convince them to join him. Despite Arriola's background as a streetchild, he discovered that the task of aiding streetchildren in discovering and empowering themselves was, and remains to this day, difficult. Initial invitations seemed successful but the children would eventually go back to the streets and their supposed anti-social behavior of pickpocketing, sniffing solvent, or engaging in the flesh trade either as pimp or prostitute.

But Arriola is not one to give up on his mission of helping streetchildren realize their true value in society and the value of education in their lives. He remains indefatigable in his advocacy work. Arriola himself continues to study and learn from fellow NGO workers and from constant association with the streetchildren themselves. The harsh realities of

streetlife offer substantive lessons in interactive and negotiation skills. A concrete situation in 1991 highlights the need to learn skills in dealing with the police. Arriola was detained and his camera confiscated when he took pictures of the police handling a streetchild. He chose to keep silent. What else can be done in that situation where an angry policeman had grabbed his camera and threatened to hurt the child even more? He was not able to retrieve the film roll. A big question, though, lurks in his mind. How else do we expect streetchildren to trust people who are supposedly protectors of their rights but are the first to inflict harm on them? Arriola even warned the researcher about the indifferent behavior of streetchildren towards camera-carrying people. They usually snatch the camera and would not want their pictures taken.

Through these learnings and constant association with streetchildren, Arriola has found out the effectiveness of using the child-to-child approach in dealing with streetchildren. For this former seminarian, the task of reaching out to the streetchildren continues.

Ellen Balomaga (1998) has been working for the Bahay Tuluyan streetchildren for nine years now. Just like Arriola, she used to prowl the streets for children whose lives are wasted on solvents and in membership in organizations like Bahala Na Gang or in peddling their bodies to foreigners. She is like a mother to the streetchildren, going to the extent of bathing and cutting their nails when they get into Bahay Tuluyan. When asked if she encounters any difficulty in doing this, Balomaga cites the case of parents who disapproved of their children's liaison with Bahay Tuluyan. These parents, believing that their kids just waste time doing nothing instead of helping them earn a living, actually end up scolding their kids or stopping them from going to Bahay Tuluyan. Worse, the parents would angrily rush to Bahay Tuluyan and berate the staff. There was even an occasion when the parents staged a rally against Bahay Tuluyan's intrusion into their lives. Why is this so? "Kasi, dito sa Malate, and pananaw ng mga magulang at ibang tao ay prostitution is a way of life at hindi sila dapat pakialaman sa gusto nilang mangyari sa anak nila," Balomaga sadly responds.

Some children also resist the idea of getting into the Bahay Tuluyan program. "Mahirap sabihing tumigil sila dahil sasagutin ka ng 'Bakit? Kaya mo bang ibigay and gusto namin?' Parang sex mania, hinahanap-hanap nila ang buhay sa kalye." They have a case of a child prostitute who had to be

brought to Marilac Hills of the Department of Social Work and Development for rehabilitation. The child detested what appeared to her as a deceptive action of Bahay Tuluyan. She felt very much deceived. What appeared to the child as a betrayal of trust is actually an issue the BT staff find hard to confront. They have understood how the child feels. How do they tell her that they are only after her welfare?

The number of streetchildren the Bahay Tuluyan accommodates varies according to the socio-political climate. Balomaga observes that the children are free to roam the streets these days of the political season. "Maluwag ngayon. Hindi katulad nang may international convention o importanteng bisita, kailangan daw walang mga streetchildren. Ang ginagawa ng mga pulis, kinukulong ang mga bata o kaya dinadala dito. But these days, hinahayaan lang ng gobyerno gumala ang mga bata. Konti lang ang nandito ngayon." Balomaga estimates the number of BT residents this year at 70, now reduced to 40.

Ma. Victoria Astillero joined advocacy work at BT two years ago. She sees the need for children to have more access to social services and prays for more funds for DSWD and other social welfare agencies (1998).

Neneth Eser (1998) started working with BT two years ago. She cites the cases of streetchildren who complain about their "imprisonment" at Marilac Hills. Eser follows up on legal cases involving their wards. Her presence in court is not just legal assistance but moral support for wards involved in incest, pedophilia, and criminal cases. To date, she is busy overseeing twelve court cases, eleven of which pertain to sexual abuse of children. Eser mentions the one-on-one counseling program some of these children go through. This is done at the UP-PGH with which BT has forged a partnership for the handling of traumatic cases.

Mercedita 'Nanay Mercy' Enverga has been working as household manager-cum-cook for four years now and gets a monthly pay of P5,000. She says that the meal preparations vary from camote, rice, and bread to a variety of viands for breakfast, lunch and supper (Enverga, 1998). She is given a daily market allowance of P600-800. Nanay Mercy cooks three to four "salop" of rice per meal. She describes the BT residents as ordinary children who sometimes engage in fistcuffs or verbal quarrels and shouts. The cause of their quarrels? "Pag ginalaw ng isa yung gamit ng isa, nag-uumpisa na ang away," Nanay Mercy states. During birthday

celebrations of any of the residents, she prepares pancit, juice and bread. Occasionally, the children enjoy cake given by BT friends. The children go to sleep at 9 P.M. and wake up at 5:30 A.M. to get ready for formal education in school. Bahay Tuluyan sends them on a scholarship to nearby schools.

Bahay Tuluyan receives assistance from friends and benefactors. One benefactor worth-noting is British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook. His visit to BT in August 1997 marked the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Combating Child Abuse by PNP Director General Recaredo Sarmiento II and British Ambassador Adrian Thorpe (BT file, 1997). The memorandum announced the major training program boosting PNP's capability for dealing with child abuse. The program covers the following subjects: intelligence exchange, operational cooperation, training, support and information sharing. It was also during this visit that Cook gifted BT a video camera for recording evidence of child abuse.

Arriola happily shares that Bahay Tuluyan also receives generous grants and donations from countries like Sweden, Germany, Japan and organizations like UNESCO and the Church. Friends of Edward Gerlock also help in paying their monthly water and electric bills.

Bahay Tuluyan has its share of problems. In addition to the incidence of indifferent and disapproving parents as well as cases of children eventually losing trust in the staff, BT faces eviction from the Malate Parish Council. The Council opted not to renew the ten-year contract of Bahay Tuluyan. Gerlock (1998) cites four reasons for the Council's eviction move: [1] the Parish wants to preserve the historical significance of the 400-year-old Church; [2] the Parish wishes to recapture the glorious days of Malate which used to be the Forbes Park of Manila; [3] the Parish shines as the spiritual gasoline in the area in stark contrast with the streetchildren's activities of sniffing solvent and engaging in sexual intercourse right inside the church; and [4] the Parish does not have any organic connection with Bahay Tuluyan

Gerlock remembers one incident during the Holy Week which added tension to the already tense atmosphere. The Chair of the Parish Council parked her brand new white Honda Civic car on the lot fronting the Bahay Tuluyan Drop-in-Center. A streetchild, who just learned how to write his name, wrote his name on the car-- not with a pencil nor ballpen-- but with

a nail. The lady lost her cool and shouted invectives at the child. "She was cursing and was saying all the bad words to the child – words that she regretted saying," recalls Gerlock. BT ended up spending more than P20,000 for the re-painting of the car.

Balmaga shares how the Parish Council, which is composed of elite members, resorted to harassment tactics to express its resentment against the continuing stay of streetchildren in the premises. These tactics include changing of telephone lines with which BT shares a PLDT connection making it difficult for BT callers to contact the office, giving the false information to even international callers that BT is no longer there, confronting the staff about supposed misbehaviors of the streetchildren, shouting at the streetchildren and making them feel unwanted in the area. The Council really wants BT out of the premises. The present parish priest of Malate Church, Fr. Michael Martin, even offered the BT staff downpayment for rental of another space in a different area-- a clear sign of the Parish's adamant desire to rid the area of streetchildren.

The harassment tactics created quite a strain in the relationship of the Parish Council and the BT staff. The media picked up the eviction issue. The issue got the attention of Pres. Fidel V. Ramos in 1995. He ordered DSWD Sec. Lina Laygo to intervene for the continued stay of BT in the premises.

For their part, the BT staff tried to work at harmonizing their relationship with the Parish Council. Their efforts in the form of [1] attending meetings set by the Council; [2] addressing problems raised by the Council; and [3] compromising with the requests of the Council prove useless.

Bahay Tuluyan's impending exodus, however, has yielded fruits. Gerlock was told of the Council's plan to put up its own program for streetchildren. The latest news is that BT is preparing to leave the Malate premises for a space in Sta. Ana, Manila.

The atmosphere where the streetchildren are accommodated is apparently filled with altruism, understanding, compassion, warmth, care, protection, affection, bonding and experiential oneness in contrast with the atmosphere of indifference and harshness in the streets, all important ingredients of their resilience.

THE BAHAY TULUYAN JUNIOR EDUCATORS PROGRAM

The JEP guiding philosophy "children have to make decisions for themselves" was inspired by a program for the elderly, Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), of which Gerlock is Executive Director. Just as the older people make decisions for themselves, so must the children. The JEP helps the streetchildren discover for themselves what they want to do in life, and strengthens them to face the realities of life. Gerlock's observation that the formal educational system in the country does not really prepare one to face the kind of life in the Philippines gave birth to the alternative educational system for streetchildren. "We thought of this alternative system where streetchildren learn self-discovery and self-empowerment through the child-to-child approach. Children are in a better position to deal with fellow children. Adults find it difficult to level off," explains Gerlock.

Gerlock acknowledges the limitation of the JEP especially in a country where people put a high premium on formal education. "Education is like a panacea for most people. They believe it can cure all the ills," opines Gerlock. While the JEP does not give its graduates the diploma-key to white-collar jobs, the program prepares the recipients for formal education. "In this way, the training of the children is balanced. There is the yin and the yang of learning. We have the participatory research training, role-playing, and theater arts among streetchildren that they may understand, and know how to cope with, the realities of street life. We have to get to the core of street life. There are so many ways to truth than science," elaborates Gerlock.

The Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) works closely with BT in developing the streetchildren's confidence and creativity (Arriola, 1998). Some of the streetchildren also assist Arriola in running the one-hour radio program *Talakayang Pambata* over DWSS 1494 Khz AM every Sunday at 7-8 A.M.

The UNESCO (France)-funded JEP is handled by the JEs who undergo Trainers' Trainings where Arriola and other invited speakers act as resource persons. Topics taught include Child Rights, Peer Counseling, Values Formation, Spiritual Formation, Literacy, Numeracy, and the Performing Arts and Skills (Astillero, 1998). The JEP follows a module prepared and updated by the JEs themselves with the guidance of Arriola. Gerlock's



describes the module as “a dialectical curriculum” where the streetchildren discuss among themselves the design and development of the module and get to synthesize all the values learned from their street life.

The JEP of learning is classified into two: [1] Street Education and [2] Center-based Tutorials (Eser, 1998). Street education takes place every week for two hours under the shady trees of Roxas Boulevard, San Andres, or Remedios Circle. Topics covered are similar to those learned in the Trainees’ Training.

Center-based tutorials in Reading, Writing, and Numbers happen at the Day Care Center located within the BT premises. There are three hours per session and there are three sessions a week for a four-month period of learning at the Center. The Center which was instituted in 1989 caters to the streetchildren-client of BT and the children in the community aged 4-6 years old. Parents enroll their children here to prepare them for formal education. The trainees do not pay anything. BT supplies them with school items.

THE JUNIOR EDUCATORS

At the present, there are nine JEs whose ages range from 10-21 years old. Two JEs and two JE-assistants are in charge of Street Education. Three JEs and two JE-assistants handle the Day Care Center Tutorials. Each of the Street Education JEs receives a monthly allowance of P1,000 while each Day Care Center JE receives a monthly allowance of P1,500. The JEs and JE-assistants enjoy scholarships. Two of them enjoy ERDA-UNESCO scholarship for their vocational courses. One was sent on a BT scholarship for a four-year degree in Social Work but dropped out after a year at the Philippine Christian University. Two enjoy scholarships for their elementary education. The others have scholarships for their high school education.

The yin-yang learning of the streetchildren-turned-junior educators seems remarkable for the educators themselves.

Twenty-one-year-old Liza Inamarga was a streetchild-client of BT. Poverty pushed her to the streets until she got invited by a friend to BT in 1991. She has been a Day Care Center JE for three years now and assesses her JE role as catalytic, "Nabago ang attitude ko, iba kaysa pag nasa lansangan. Pinag-aral ako ng Bahay Tuhayan. Siyempre alam ko na ang mali. Hindi na ako babalik sa lansangan. Maghahanap ako ng trabaho para yung mga magiging anak ko, hindi na nila inaranasan yung pagiging batang lansangan" (Inamarga, 1998).

Albert Stanton Snyder is a product of a broken family and became a streetchild early in life. He joined BT in 1988. Snyder views the proliferation of streetchildren as a result of "pamilyang watak-watak at kahirapan ng buhay". His brother Roger, a *Babala Na Gang* member, has been convicted for robbery and is now serving his term at the National Bilibid Prison. A Day Care Center JE at 21, Snyder feels important about himself because he is able to serve streetchildren. He says that more JEs are needed because "kailangan ng maraming bata ang serbisyo". Snyder remains optimistic that the government can do something to keep the children out of the streets. His dream is simple yet he thinks it would be difficult to attain it: "Magkaroon ng sapat na kabuhayan. Kung may pamilya, mag-family planning para hindi na dumami ang streetchildren" (Snyder, 1998).

Twenty-year old Marj Ann Nebril cites the positive effect of the JEP on the streetchildren, "Nagagabayan ang mga bata. Malaki ang tulong ng programa." As for her assessment of the government's role in helping the streetchildren, she thinks that the government has yet to implement programs which would utilize the entrepreneurial potential of the streetchildren.

Sixteen-year-old Michael Moses is a *new way* from Blumentritt who got hooked into drugs. He learned about BT from a friend and decided to join BT in 1994. He now serves as a JE and feels happy that he is able to help a number of children. "Sa ngayon, magagawa narin ang maliit na bagay sa Day Care na hindi natutugunan ng magulang" (Moses, 1998).

Bonding and experiential oneness with fellow streetchildren are the streetchildren-turned-junior educators' essential devices in running the Junior Educators Program.

ANALYSES AND CONCLUSIONS

The Bahay Tuluyan, through its Junior Educators Program, plays a significant role in the lives of streetchildren. Bahay Tuluyan, since its inception in 1988, has provided temporary shelter for approximately four hundred (400) streetchildren and has touched the lives of thousands more. It has helped and continues to help strengthen resilience among streetchildren as they face the daily struggle of living in the streets.

In the process of extending assistance to the children of the streets, Bahay Tuluyan has recruited social workers and staffmembers dedicated to the cause of streetchildren. It has also established networks with other NGOs and agencies to address the different needs of streetchildren. It has maintained a pool of resource speakers and trainers sensitive to issues confronting the streetchildren.

The presence of a staff who immerse themselves in the streets for an understanding of the daily struggles of streetchildren strengthens the children's resiliency. It inspires streetchildren to discover themselves, become confident about their own decisions, appreciate their talents and maximize their potentials. It also encourages streetchildren to look beyond themselves as they reach out to fellow streetchildren. It therefore serves as a valuable tool for the streetchildren's resiliency.

While it is true that Bahay Tuluyan maintains a drop-in center where it can reach out to streetchildren, it allows the streetchildren the freedom to come and go. It respects every streetchild's option — a clear application of the guiding philosophy of the Junior Educators' Program.

The researcher, after looking into Bahay Tuluyan's Junior Educators Program, strongly believes that the program -- with its core philosophy of "children have to make decisions for themselves" -- strengthens the streetchildren's resiliency in the following manner:

- [1] The program actively involves the streetchildren. It focuses on the streetchildren's leadership qualities, creative abilities and interpersonal skills.
- [2] The bases of learning are the streetchildren's lives in the streets. This challenges the learners to discover themselves, make decisions for themselves, and define their roles in their communities- a manifestation of the

program's core philosophy. This also presents the curriculum of street life as a rich source of learning. This further establishes that education can take place in the streets.

- [3] Participatory research training allows streetchildren to look into their own lives as well as the lives of their fellow streetchildren, and to find out for themselves the essence of learning from their life experiences. This leads to a discovery of themselves and to their bonding with fellow streetchildren. This also establishes the fact that children are not passive receptacles of knowledge but are active searchers of knowledge.
- [4] The learners consist of streetchildren and streetchildren-turned-JEs. This makes the program unconventional. This also radicalizes learning as it takes place between children belonging to similar age range. The child-to-child approach intensifies the streetchildren's resilience, and strengthens their bonding as they go through the process of sharing their experiences, insights and values and getting to know their rights and roles.
- [5] The curriculum is developed by the streetchildren themselves using the dialectical approach. This leads to the fact that streetchildren are dynamic movers and perennial discoverers of change. From the conflicts that they encounter, streetchildren are able to gather insights and to synthesize values which heighten their resilience.
- [6] The philosophy of the program is anchored on the recognition of the ability of every streetchild to make decisions for himself. This underscores the fact that streetchildren build their own lives and that streetchildren can live by themselves. Everything about the program is actually built *from* the streetchildren themselves.

Based on the data gathered, the researcher makes the following conclusions:

- [1] The Bahay Tularyan streetchildren, exposed to the harsh realities of street life, are capable of participating in their milieu as active agents of change. Their active

involvement as [E]s who develop curricula for their street education classes and Day Care Center tutorial is a solid manifestation of this capability. Their detractors can actually inspire streetchildren to work towards overcoming any form of reproof and difficulties.

[2] The Bahay Tuluyan streetchildren, accorded loving attention and care, become creative forces in the development of a street- and needs-based curriculum; this creativity is dynamic and will definitely benefit a lot of their fellow streetchildren.

[3] The Bahay Tuluyan streetchildren, treated with respect and trust, symbolize dynamism and versatility of human resource. Their readiness to face life is deeply rooted in their understanding of their core values learned in the streets.

In the light of its role of strengthening streetchildren's resilience, Bahay Tuluyan is an NGO worth emulating. The pioneer of the child-to-child approach being used in the Junior Educators Program, Bahay Tuluyan has a genuine concern for streetchildren. The researcher hopes that NGOs of similar thrust would increase in number.

The researcher believes that the streetchildren are capable of contributing to the rise or fall of a nation. The substantive and precious lessons they provide constitute the wisdom of, or lack of wisdom in, governance. The government should re-define its priorities by identifying and addressing the root cause of the proliferation of streetchildren in the urban areas. Policy review and policy intervention on the plight of the streetchildren are in order.

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