

Reflecting on Multicultural

by Listia Natadjaja

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3 STIA NATADJAJA
Petra Christian University

Reflecting on multicultural relations in the community outreach programme

ABSTRACT

The community outreach programme (COP) is one of the service-learning programmes in Petra Christian University involving many students from the university and abroad. The programme sends these students to live and conduct community developments in small villages in Indonesia. When I became a field supervisor of the COP in 2010 and 2016, I became aware of the multicultural relations among the students and the community. Although the COP mostly focuses on improving community welfare in terms of education, income, sanitation, etc., there are always multiple processes of cultural learning. This article is based on my experiences and personal reflections, supported by data through reflection review, field observation, informal interviews and interactions with the students and the community. For students, a multicultural environment not only provides different experiences but also life lessons in interacting with especially rural communities. Living within the community made the students more empathetic. In turn, the community mostly felt positive about the impact of the programme, which is real and substantial, and the unforgettable moments of interactions with international students. These multicultural relations reveal values of respecting other cultures, developing attitudes, and broadening beliefs between the students and the community.

KEYWORDS

service-learning
community
development
reflection
multicultural relations
field observation
community outreach
programme
cultural identity
soft skills

INTRODUCTION

The community outreach programme (COP) is an interdisciplinary educational activity that attempts to solve community development problems by providing actual hands-on responses within the community's daily social life in rural areas. To help the community directly and promote students' learning, students must gain a learning experience by living in the rural community. This programme has been a part of the learning curricula for the bachelor's degree in Petra Christian University and has also become the supporting medium to foster community development (Institute of Research and Community Outreach 2017). The COP is one of the service-learning programmes in Petra Christian University involving many students from Petra and abroad. In 2016 Petra Christian University celebrated the twentieth-year anniversary of the COP. The number of COP participants from abroad is increasing. For the first time, in March 1978, as a member of *Perguruan Tinggi Swasta* (Private Higher Education), Region VII *Kopertis*, Petra Christian University held its first *Kuliah Kerja Nyata* (KKN) in Sumber Rejo, Wlingi Blitar. In 1995/96, KKN was renamed the COP and managed by the Institute of Research and Community Outreach. KKN was renamed the COP because in that year, Dongseo University (Busan, South Korea), as a foreign institution partner, joined the programme, and so it then became an international programme. The cooperation between the two institutions took place as a result of cooperation between the sister cities of Surabaya and Busan. In 2009, the participants came from seven countries and five other universities. In 2016 eight countries and fifteen universities joined the COP: Dongseo University (DSU), South Korea; INHOLLAND University, Netherland; Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), Hong Kong; Chung Chi College – The Chinese University of Hong Kong; International Christian University (ICU) and St. Andrew's University, Japan; Lady Doak College, India; SIM University, Singapore; and Indonesia (Institute of Research and Community Outreach 2017). This indicates that more students are interested in joining the COP.

In 2010, I became a supervisor for Sumber Dawung village in Kediri district, and in 2016 I was assigned to Gumeng village in Mojokerto district. Becoming a field supervisor in the COP in 2010 and 2016 gave me a new perspective on how social interactions between students and the community can have an impact. The interesting aspect about the COP is how the community and students from different countries live together for about three to four weeks in one village. Students are mostly of the same age and have similar levels of education, but are from very different economic, social and cultural backgrounds. It is a multicultural event. According to Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) multiculturalism is usually related to at least one of the following issues: race, social-economic class, gender, language, culture, sexual preferences or disability (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997).

The COP participants often face conditions that they may consider strange. It could derive from little things that can sometimes lead to misunderstandings. The cultural background of each participant and the community affects the ways in which individuals interact with one another. Moreover, among the students and the community, social class is also a form of identity that is still significant in many social contexts; it shapes the preconceived meanings given to particular ways of acting, speaking, dressing, learning, persuading, organizing, etc. (Weedon 2004).

Previous research on multicultural relations mostly discusses situations in school education for children and youth, communication and language, society

in a certain ethnic group and immigration observed over a long-term period and analysed from a social psychological perspective (Johnson and Johnson 2002; Banks 2007; Fortier 2008; Lott 2010). This article aims to discuss multicultural relations, ranging from less discussed matters to how cultural identity, as part of the mindfulness of students as good citizens, is presented when they interact in a rural community over a short period of time.

METHOD

This is a qualitative research based on my experience and personal reflection. This article is written based on data through reflection reviews, field observation, informal interviews and interactions with students and communities. Shank defines qualitative research as 'a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning' (2002). The research should be planned whilst following the rules of the community where the qualitative research is conducted. Empirically, this type of enquiry is grounded in the world of experience. Researchers attempt to understand how other people make sense of their experience (Shank 2002). Qualitative research involves an interpretative and naturalistic approach. Researchers study occurrences in the everyday settings and then attempt to interpret a phenomenon that lends meaning to them (Dezin and Lincoln 2000).

In this qualitative approach, the research captures a holistic picture from the unique situations that are significant (Ospina 2004). The steps of the research include field observation by joining the COP as a supervisor, a comparison study of the COP in 2010 and 2016, reflection review to get an idea of how students live in the village, making of reports about the COP, interviews with students who join the COP and data analysis. The advantages of doing qualitative research include the ability to study symbolic dimensions and social meaning, to critically explore the phenomena in location (Conger 1998; Bryman et al. 1988; Alvesson 1996).

ACTIVITIES DURING THE COP

In every COP, there are always two project categories, namely physical and non-physical projects. Physical programmes include construction activities such as building toilets, designing gates, repairing damaged bridges, paving the roads, constructing pipelines to provide water to homes, painting the walls or murals, etc. Meanwhile non-physical programmes include cooking classes, campaigns on public health, English language classes and art and craft classes in playgroups, kindergarten and elementary schools.

The large number of activities leads to challenges for the COP. Many obstacles arise in the interactions amongst students and between students and the rural communities in which they live in. The most obvious obstacle is in communication. This is certainly influenced by the different cultural and language backgrounds. Socio-economic class also signifies differences that imply inequalities that can be variously understood, is necessary, inevitable and undesirable. Either way, the socio-economic class remains a highly politicized concept. Moreover, class as a form of identity is still significant in many social contexts; it shapes, for example, the meanings given to particular ways of speaking and dressing, to exclusive forms of education, cultural pursuits and the membership of particular organizations and clubs. It also affects the ways in which individuals interact with one another (Weedon 2004).

COP	2010	2016
Field counsellor	10 days	9 days
Length of stay	3 visits (4 days, 3 days, 3 days)	3 visits (3 days, 3 days, 3 days)
Location	Sumber Dawung village in Kediri district	Gumeng village in Mojokerto district
Students' length of stay	4 weeks	3 weeks
Number of Indonesian students	9 students	9 students
Total students	18 students	34 students
Countries	Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, the Netherlands	Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, China, England, Singapore
Role of field counsellor	- Supervised students - Evaluated Indonesian students' performance	- Project presentation - Facilitated discussion among students and the community - Supervised students - Evaluated performance of all students
Physical project	- The bridge railing construction - Road construction - Bank river construction	- Pipe installation for water distribution - Mural/painting the water tubes, kindergarten class and public bath - Installation ceramic floor in Kindergarten's classroom - Repair the water tank - Add trash separator between the river and the farm field
Non-physical project	- Teaching elementary school students - Cooking class	- Teaching elementary school students - Teaching kindergarten students - Socialization of cleanliness for kids - Socialization of budgeting for housewives
Spontaneous activity	- Bridge opening ceremony - Pinang climbing competition - Farewell dinner - Taking pictures	- Puppet show - Farewell dinner - Taking family pictures - Making video

Table 1: Comparison of the COPs in 2010 and 2016.

To get an idea about the multicultural situation interactions between two COP activities, I compare the COP in 2010 and 2016. I attempt to categorize and simplify the data to decide either to analyse just one or both COP activities. Then I decided to focus only on the COP in 2016 because I had access to the data from the reflection books of all the students I evaluated then. Below is the comparison of the COPs in 2010 and 2016.

REFLECTING ON MULTICULTURAL RELATIONS

At the end of each COP, a field supervisor must collect and grade or evaluate the students' performances, and a large proportion of the assessment is based on their reflections. Besides giving marks, I also make reports about the overall

Period	Questionnaire
Pre-programme	<p>A. General a. What do you expect to learn or achieve by participating in a COP?</p> <p>B. The village a. How do you picture the village where you are going to stay?</p>
Mid-phase	<p>A. General a. How have you felt up to this mid-phase (half-way through the programme)?</p> <p>B. The village a. What do you think of village life and the villagers?</p> <p>C. Culture a. Have you had any difficulties communicating with the villagers? How do you communicate with the villagers? Please explain. b. Have you had any difficulties communicating your ideas to or working together with other participants? Please explain. Please provide a score (1–10) about your feelings and motivation up to this mid-phase.</p>
The end of the programme	<p>A. General a. Have your expectations from before the programme been achieved? Why? b. Did you accomplish your project's goals? Please explain. c. How does the COP relate to your preparation from university (before project implementation at the village), or your major? d. What were the highlights of your learning and experiences during the programme? e. What areas of your personal life have improved after joining the COP (e.g. sensitivity to people's needs, appreciation of differences of cultures or nationalities, mind-set, character, concern about the environment, religion, etc.)?</p> <p>B. The village a. What do you think about village life and the villagers? Are there any differences from the previous phase (mid-phase)? b. How long did you need to adapt to the condition of the village (house, bathroom, toilet, etc.)? How were you able to overcome this situation?</p> <p>C. Culture a. What did you learn about the community's local knowledge or local wisdom? - Simple knowledge or technology - Culture/tradition - Mind-set b. What did you learn about other countries' cultures and mind-sets?</p> <p>D. Communication and team work a. Do you still have any difficulties in communicating with the villagers and other participants? How did you solve any communication problems?</p> <p>E. Please provide a score (1–10) about your feelings and motivation up to the end of the programme</p>

Table 2: Questionnaire for COP students in 2016.

COP event. To support the data on the multicultural interactions amongst the students and between the students and the community, I conduct interviews with the participating students and also one community member who is willing to share her experiences living with foreign students. After the completion of data collection I carry out an analysis.

The reflection questions shown in Table 2 are formulated by the Institute of Research and Community Outreach of Petra Christian University, and are taken through different phases of the programme.

Based on the findings from the reflection data, I have found that in a multicultural interaction there are several important factors that must be observed, including the use of language, differing habits and the influence of religion and beliefs that affect the comfort level of the relationship. It can have both positive and negative consequences, given that multiculturalism is closely associated with 'identity politics', 'the politics of difference' and 'the politics of recognition' (Song 2010).

Language barrier

Language represents the main problem in communication. The different languages are the main factor that makes communication difficult. Post-structuralist theory states that the most productive way to understand a culture and community is to learn its language. In language we can see meaning, value and subjectivity of individuals and their identity. They are all signifying practices that have particular interests. The presence of a story in everyday communication is important in an inter-individual relationship, considering that in a narrative we engage in an experience that provides meaning, connecting meaning with our experience as a subject (Weedon 2004).

In daily conversations, students in a large group tend to speak their own language amongst themselves. This often happens among Indonesian students and Korean students, each with their own group, which results in their exclusion and separation from other groups. Some other foreign students enjoy hearing the conversations without knowing the meaning, and some of them feel curious enough to ask for the meanings of some of the words uttered. However, some students feel intimidated.

Some participants simply do not have the motivation or willingness to talk to people from other places. They enjoy themselves talking in their mother tongue, even when people from other countries are right next to them. This is a problem with their attitude and I do not think it can be changed over such a short period of time.

(Reflection 2016)

For Indonesian students, difficulties in communicating arose not only because they could not speak fluent English but also because they could not speak Javanese. Indonesian is the official national language, but in reality, people in Java, especially in rural areas, still speak Javanese in their daily lives. Villagers often find it difficult to use the formal Indonesian language.

Yes, sometimes even though I'm from Indonesia, it's difficult for me to communicate with the villagers because they don't know how to speak Indonesian well. For example, in the house that I live in, Abbah and Umi

only speak Javanese and sometimes talk very fast. So, I asked them to repeat what they say a couple of times.

(Reflection 2016)

Foreign students whose mother tongues are not English such as those from China, Korea or Japan often cannot speak English, and so they rarely use verbal communication to interact with others. They usually pass on the conversation through a colleague who is fluent in English. This complicates their communication.

Sometimes I have difficulties shar[ing] my ideas [with] other participants. It is because some of them do not speak English. Thus, it is so hard to explain my ideas to them. So, I have to use broken English in order to be able to explain to them.

(Reflection 2016)

For the villagers, the difficulty in communicating increases because they do not speak English, nor are fluent in Indonesian. Sometimes two foreign students may be living in one house, making it very difficult for the homeowners to communicate. The way their communication is handled with body language or gestures and facial expressions, which usually only concerns eating and sleeping.

In my place there are two foreign students, from Korea and Hong Kong. The Hong Kong student can speak English, but I cannot at all, while the Korean students speak neither English nor Indonesian. We talk with body language, most often telling them to eat with gestures such as putting a spoon into the mouth. The student understands if told to eat.

(Suparni 2016)

Body language or non-verbal communication becomes the solution in most communications, especially between students and their host parents.

[The] Korean students in my place love to eat meatballs. One of them eats with lots of chilli sauce so that once it [gave] him a stomach ache. By pointing to his stomach and making facial expressions of pain, I understand that Hyun [the student] [has] a stomach ache because he has eaten a lot of chilli sauce.

(Suparni 2016)

Outfits or attires can also become means of communication in the village, and at the same time they incite students' solidarity. Uniforms can signify groups and national identity. Through the attire we can see a group identity, even a national identity that distinguishes one group from another. This is usually related to where they are from and often associated with language, history and culture (Weedon 2004). In this programme, I can see that Korean students are the best prepared in a lot of technical aspects. In certain days, they wear uniforms, mosquito repellent hats and gloves that they bring from Korea.

There can be many solutions to the communication problem, for example by using non-verbal language, like the way the students and the villagers do, including facial expressions, gestures and postures. Students generally ask their friends from Indonesia to help them translate from English into Bahasa

Indonesia. Sometimes the son or the daughter of the host family could speak English, and so they would ask them for help whenever they wished to communicate with their host parents. Some students also drew pictures to communicate their ideas, some also brought a dictionary along and most also used Google Translate.

Differences in habits

Students from different countries have different habits that lead to different experiences. Habitus is the product of social conditioning that is associated with the existing condition. It produces a systematic set of goods and properties, united by similarities of styles that can show their socio-economic status and class (Bourdieu 1996). The most distinct behaviours between the students and people from the rural community are mostly related to daily routines such as eating, sleeping, toileting and bathing habits. Students had to adapt to the environment and habits of other participants and the community. Habitus includes structured structures, generative principles of distinct and distinctive practices. What the students eat, the way they eat, the daily practices, personal opinions and expressions are different. Moreover, students' vision, principles and tastes are dissimilar from those of the community. Habitus leads to diversity; the same behaviour, or even the same virtue, can appear nice to one person and showy to another (Bourdieu 1996).

Asian students are not much different in that they are accustomed to eating rice, although eating rice with crackers like we often do in Indonesia may be unusual to them. Students from the Netherlands or England are accustomed to eating bread, which may not be readily available in the village. Therefore, they often just eat the side dishes instead of mixing them with rice, as Indonesians would do. If they have a chance to find a vehicle and a driver for a round-trip commute out of the village to a bigger town, they will certainly take the chance to buy bread at a store. *Sambal* ('chilli sauce'), which is available every day in homes, is often not consumed by them as they are not used to spicy food. Many foods are unfamiliar to them, such as *mlinjo* (nut-like seeds of *gnetum* trees), *singkong* ('cassava'), *ketela* ('sweet potato'), etc. In the village, the usual menu includes rice, soup, eggs, fish, or chicken, chili sauce and crackers. For Indonesian students, of course, this side dish is more than enough.

Usually foreign students take a bath before going to bed, for which they use hot water. In the village, they have to bathe during the daytime when the water is warm since at night the water turns cold and there is no warm water available for baths. In terms of laundry, some of the Indonesian and foreign students are not used to washing their clothes by hand. In the village, there are no washing machines, and so they had to wash their clothes by hand and dry them under the sunlight, which may not dry quickly sometimes because of cloudy or rainy weather. Based on observations, I recorded different habits of the Indonesian students or the villagers compared to non-Indonesian students in general.

The habits of Asian students are similar to those of Indonesian students. Among the different habits mentioned above, the most disturbing problem is related to unpunctuality and dawdling. Most of the foreign students say that there is plenty of spare time, so mostly they feel like they are wasting time and that everything runs slowly. However, almost all the students appreciated the

Habit	Indonesian	Non-Indonesian
Eating	Rice, vegetables, meat (chicken, eggs), crackers, spicy food	<i>Asia:</i> Rice, spicy food <i>Non-Asia:</i> Bread, non-spicy food
Sleeping	Sleep early / Get up early	Sleep late / Get up late
Bathing	Cold water; In the morning and before evening	Warm water; In the morning and at night before they go to bed
Toileting	Squat toilet with water	<i>Asia:</i> Squat toilet with water and tissue <i>Non-Asia:</i> Sitting in a closet, use of tissue
Cleaning	Wash clothes by hand	Wash clothes in a washing machine
Timing	More leisurely or relaxed / Laid-back (unpunctual) / Slower	Serious / Punctual / Faster
Mindset	We	<i>Asia:</i> We <i>Non-Asia:</i> I
Personality trait	Awkward	<i>Asia:</i> Awkward <i>Non-Asia:</i> Outspoken

Table 3: Different habits of Indonesian students and the villagers compared to non-Indonesian students.

work of the group leader, who worked hard to organize activities and prepare a schedule.

There is a different mindset that can cause misunderstandings amongst the students and between the students and the community.

Western students mostly like to say I. They are more serious, especially in group meetings, and outspoken. Meanwhile, the Eastern students seem to say we. They are more relaxed even though in meetings. They like to make jokes and are more self-conscious (Benmetan 2017; Chandra 2017).

Some of the students aimed to improve the welfare of the villagers by changing their habits and mindset. One student had been in the Gumeng village before. She joined the COP with the purpose of changing the community's mindset towards their welfare. She feels disappointed when she goes to the village and finds that they still live the same way as before.

16 I think the villagers' lives are still the same. They are warm people, but I don't think that their mind-set has changed yet. I know changes need time. But still, after two years of COP and coming to this village, and no change in how they see the world? I feel like we have failed to help them.

(Reflection 2016)

I found different perspectives among students towards the community and vice versa. The preconceived notion and measure of being wealthy here still refers to the city people's standard, like having a big wonderful house with

ceramic floors, cars, higher education and sophisticated gadgets. The people of the rural community that have spacious homes, yards, and gardens or farmlands, and sometimes a car, is not necessarily considered to be having a high socio-economic status. Even people from urban areas often live in poverty. Regardless of whether the villagers are poor or not, the stigma of low socio-economic strata has been embedded in the minds of the students coming from the city. The community's way of life followed the Javanese philosophy of *nrima ing pandum*, which means to accept and feel content regardless of their condition. That philosophy makes the villagers feel that they no longer need to work harder than they need to. The students find this point of view difficult to understand. Similarly, the rural people often assume that students who come to their village are always well off. Students think that there are many things that the community can do to raise their economic status, but the community feels that it is enough for them to do their job to the best of their ability.

Religious diversity

Petra Christian University, as a Christian university has mostly Christian students, whereas everyone in the rural community is Muslim. But no conflict arose due to this. They respected each other's beliefs including the non-believers. There were not many comments related to religion. This might have been a sensitive topic for some students. None of them mentioned ethnicity and race. Being in the Muslim community makes the students learn about the habitus of the way the Muslims pray. They learn that most of the villagers/Indonesian people are Muslim and that there are many mosques around, where they can often hear the call to prayers.

Even though religious difference was not a major problem, the students felt more comfortable living with roommates of the same religion. Religion united the cultural differences between them.

Living with a Dutch roommate, I experience so many differences, the habit, food, culture, and values. Luckily, we have the same religion and we pray together. I learn to be more open to different cultures and I think through this experience, I have learned to accept more cultures.

(Reflection 2016)

These multicultural relations had a positive impact on the students during and after the programme. In terms of multicultural relations, I found that the students still carry themselves as citizens of their country, not only as students of a particular university. It is important to promote civic identity among students by commitment to the community, respect for its religious and cultural symbols, and active participation (Knight Abowitz and Harnish 2006). These multicultural relations stimulate and allow us to reflect on our respect for different cultures, attitudes, and beliefs.

POSITIVE FEELING OF BEING EMPATHETIC

For students, being in a multicultural environment not only led to different experiences but also new perspectives in interacting with the rural community and their simple way of life.

There are lots of things that we usually see in the city that are not available in the village. They live a simple life. No smartphone all day. However, they are always happy. They know that even though they don't have the things that we have, they are always thankful.

(Reflection 2016)

The community mostly felt the impact of the physical development of the programme's agenda and the unforgettable experiences interacting with foreign students that may have been previously unthinkable. These memories have been framed in a group photo that they proudly display in their living rooms. The community feel very proud when narrating their experiences with previous students to newcomers. The students gave photos of themselves with their host families as gifts before they leave the village as a token of appreciation. Almost all the homes in which the COP students stayed hung up these photos.

The students expressed a lot of positive feelings towards the community. They admire the way that villagers live so peacefully, relaxed, live in simple ways but are hardworking. They are so caring, easy going, and helpful towards students. Most of the students say that the community is friendly, low profile, humble, sincere, polite, hospitable, kind, open and nice. They spread love, respect, and support each other and also support whatever the students try to do with the physical and non-physical development programme. Basically, students see that the community is having happy lives, and they learn that the community is willing to share with each other and also with students.

Students feel that the moments they shared with the community are memorable and unforgettable. They feel satisfied that being in the village for three weeks can give a new perspective on their lives. During their stay in the village, they felt a sense of security and happiness. Students feel glad that they have joined the COP.

The COP has had a lot of positive impact, but most importantly, the students and the community learn to nurture their empathy. The success of the physical development programme according to the students is mostly related to the tasks that they have accomplished, like all the pipe installation for water distribution, mural paintings or painting on the water tubes, construction of the kindergarten class and public bath, installation of ceramic floors in the kindergarten's classroom, repair of the water tank and construction of a trash separator between the river and the farm field. There are tangible and intangible things that have a positive impact on the community.

Equality

The students realized that they must learn from their friends and community. It is important for the students to have a comfortable feeling of equality and acceptance in the community. In a multicultural setting, race can become a sensitive issue. One of the students was afraid that she may not be accepted by the community because of her skin colour, but this did not happen. The relationships that occur in the society are an interpersonal process that is governed through effects – a process in which subjects require active participation to align themselves to the community and vice versa, without questioning the power structure in it (Zembylas 2014).

Tolerance

The students learn how to be tolerant with the different daily living condition of the village and the cultures of the students and the community.

Yes, I [became well-] acquainted with my South Korean roommate and some local friends. Though I sometimes can't tolerate the smell of kimchi from my Korean friends, I think it doesn't matter, because I know I should respect their habit. Kimchi is Korean people's life.

(Reflection 2016)

Adaptation

All Indonesian students said that they could adapt to the village life immediately. Meanwhile, the foreign students required two to five days to adapt to a good daily routine in the village. Geographic conditions and cultural similarity of the student's origins determine the swiftness of their adaptation.

Appreciation

Students say that they become in love with the village and the villagers more than they expect. The multicultural condition has not only opened their mind-set, but has also made them more accepting towards the cultures of their friends and especially the community. It turns out that students not only appreciate their relations with fellow students and community, but they are also spiritually grateful.

My life improves [with] my relationship with God because throughout the whole COP I strive for Him and I think He shows us the way. The times I get lucky I would say that it's His work. I know how to appreciate people more, as the people here all have different characters, and I can see clearly how they are unique in Gumeng.

(Reflection 2016)

Learning

During the COP, students learn about hard skills and soft skills. Students use their hard skills for the physical development projects. While, for the soft skills, they learn from their experiences living together with other students and staying with rural families in the community.

What was most surprising for the COP participants was how people in the rural community live very simple lives. Most of the students said that they learned to live simple lives without technology, cell phones, Internet and entertainment.

The condition that most of the people in the rural community cannot speak English forces the students to learn Indonesian, even though their level of interest varies. They only learned the basics for daily needs, but some students were more enthusiastic to learn Indonesian so that they could teach in kindergarten. Besides learning the Indonesian language, students also learned about the culture and habits.

Before [coming] to Gumeng, I [had] no idea about the Bahasa language. But after a month living here, it's a surprise to be able to speak simple

sentences for daily activities [and] conversations. Also, when I am in the kindergarten to teach, I could also understand the teachers.

(Reflection 2016)

Indonesian students learned that students from many other countries have different personality characteristics.

I [learned] about time management and how to be a [punctual] person from the Dutch students. I learn[ed] about orderl[y] life-management from the Japanese students. I learn[ed] about [...] creative ideas from the Korean students. I also learn[ed] about how to make friends from the Chinese students.

(Reflection 2016)

Commitment

After joining the COP, students have commitment for their future lives. They are mostly determined to work harder. Most of them wished to learn different languages.

My expectation for this trip is not fully achieved. I will be more able to communicate with foreigners later on. That is a very invaluable skill for me. I am also going to have a more considerate mind-set [regarding] other cultures.

(Reflection 2016)

In multicultural relations, ethnocentrism, which assigns stereotypes to individuals or societies, is very likely to happen (Weedon 2004). However, thankfully this did not happen during the programme.

Sustainability

After the COP was completed, some of the COP student alumni registered as volunteers for next year's programme.

After [the] COP, we [went] back to the village [and met] our house parents a couple of times, just to say hello or give them and their children or grandchildren some presents. We have also registered ourselves to be volunteers for the next COP.

(Emma 2017; Tan 2017)

Some of the students volunteered a couple of times. For some students, this programme not only nurtures their sense of empathy but also creates a strong bond between the students and also with the rural family they have lived with.

[This was] the third time I [have been] a COP volunteer. I [found] a lot of joy, [...] new friends, different experiences and unforgettable moments. I [would] like to share my experiences and learn how to be tolerant and respectful towards other cultures. How to understand the mind-set of others also becomes a challenge.

(Benmetan 2017)

Through social media I notice that until this article is written, students still visit Gumeng village and their host families several times. Fellow participating students from various countries also visit each other.

CONCLUSION

In terms of multicultural relations, there are differences such as languages, customs and religious beliefs. Positive multicultural relations can have a positive effect on equality, attitude, tolerance, appreciation, relative ease of adaptation, respect, a willingness to learn and a strong commitment to change for the better. Furthermore, the sustainability of the implementation of positive things still continues, as there is a desire to learn and share the positive values on the next COP. The setting of multicultural relations in the COP can lead to changes in the students and the community, which include the following:

- a balance between equality and difference;
- adaptability;
- an attitude of tolerance and inclusiveness;
- a pluralistic human rights culture by learning from each other and mutual trust;
- respect for the culture, beliefs and attitudes of others.

By considering the importance of multicultural relations in the COP, the recommendation for future programmes is to allow students to have more time to interact with their host parents where they live in and also with the community. The amount of work on the physical development projects should not reduce the amount of interactions between the students and the community. Likewise, the increased multicultural interactions should not reduce the number of physical development projects being done as well.

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CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Listia Natadjaja is an associate professor in the Visual Communication Design Department, Faculty of Art and Design at Petra Christian University, Indonesia. She received her doctoral degree in media and cultural studies from Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia in 2015. She has studied a wide range of multidisciplinary fields including architecture, management and design. Her current research interests include design, service-learning, media and cultural studies. She joined the community outreach programme in 2010 and 2016 and has consistently implemented service-learning since 2006. Since 2018, Listia has worked as head of the Visual Communication Design Department.

Contact: Department of Visual Communication Design, Faculty of Art and Design, Petra Christian University, Jl. Siwalankerto 121-131, Surabaya 60236, Indonesia.

E-mail: listia@petra.ac.id

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2133-0039>

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