

Assessing the Role of University-Civil Society Engagement in Advancing Sustainable Youth-led Policies and Practices in Asia
(Menilai Peranan Penglibatan Universiti-Masyarakat Awam dalam Memajukan Dasar dan Amalan Diterajui Belia Mampan di Asia)

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ABSTRACT

In the evolving landscape of sustainable development, youth engagement in policy-making is critical. This paper examines university-CSO partnerships in advancing sustainable youth-led policies and practices in Asia, focusing on Singapore. The research emphasizes authentic decision-making, mentorship, and community connectedness within youth-adult partnerships. Industry experiences and third-sector involvement provide critical support for youth leadership development. Using the Youth Engagement and Leadership Scale (YELS) and Partnership Effectiveness Scale (PES), the study measures youth involvement, leadership opportunities, and SDG alignment. Key findings reveal that structured programs, such as workshops and intergenerational initiatives by CSOs, enhance youth leadership and bridge digital divides. These efforts contribute to digital inclusion and foster community resilience. The study's finding suggests that university-CSO partnerships, leveraging blended finance models and supportive public policies, can sustain and scale impactful youth-led initiatives, ensuring meaningful contributions to sustainable development goals across diverse contexts in Asia.

Keywords: Institutes of Higher Education, sustainability, teaching-learning, industry-institution partnerships, public policy

ABSTRAK

Dalam landskap pembangunan mampan yang semakin berkembang, penglibatan belia dalam penggubalan dasar adalah kritikal. Kajian ini meneliti perkongsian antara universiti dan organisasi masyarakat sivil (CSO) dalam memajukan dasar dan amalan yang diterajui belia mampan di Asia, dengan fokus kepada Singapura. Penyelidikan ini menekankan penglibatan tulen, bimbingan, dan keterkaitan komuniti dalam kerangka perkongsian belia-dewasa. Pengalaman industri dan penglibatan sektor ketiga menyediakan sokongan penting untuk pembangunan kepimpinan belia. Dengan menggunakan Skala Penglibatan dan Kepimpinan Belia (YELS) dan Skala Keberkesanan Perkongsian (PES), kajian ini mengukur penglibatan belia, peluang kepimpinan, dan penajajaran kepada Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan (SDG). Penemuan utama menunjukkan bahawa program berstruktur seperti bengkel dan inisiatif antara generasi TinkerThings meningkatkan kepimpinan belia dan merapatkan jurang digital. Usaha ini menyumbang kepada keterangkuman digital dan daya tahan komuniti. Kajian ini merumuskan bahawa perkongsian universiti-CSO dapat mengekalkan dan meningkatkan inisiatif belia mampan, memastikan sumbangan bermakna kepada matlamat pembangunan mampan di pelbagai konteks di Asia.

Kata kunci: Organisasi masyarakat sivil, kemampanan, pimpinan belia, perkongsian, dasar awam

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving landscape of sustainable development, the engagement of youth in policy-making and practice is increasingly recognized as essential. Universities and civil society organizations (CSOs) play a pivotal role in fostering this engagement, creating synergies that advance sustainable, youth-led initiatives. This paper examines the role of university-CSO partnerships in promoting sustainable youth-led policies and practices in Asia, with a specific focus on Singapore.

Youth-adult partnerships are fundamental to this research, as they provide a framework for mutual learning and shared decision-making. According to Wong et al. (2010), effective youth-adult partnerships are characterized by authentic decision-making, natural mentorship, and community connectedness. These elements are crucial for ensuring that youth voices are not only heard but also influential in shaping sustainable policies and practices. Moreover, Liu et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of social network theory in understanding the dynamics of these partnerships, highlighting concepts such as centrality, cohesion, and structural equivalence as key to their success.

Industry experiences also play a significant role in preparing youth for leadership in sustainability. The integration of real-world industry attachments, often lasting between three to six months, allows young people to gain practical skills and insights that are critical for their future careers (Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, 2020). These experiences provide valuable opportunities for youth to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings, enhancing their readiness for the green jobs of the future.

The "Third sector," comprising non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society entities, serves as an avenue for skills building and professional development. NGOs, in particular, in providing training, resources, and mentorship to young social entrepreneurs, especially in regions where access to formal entrepreneurial education is limited (Smith et al., 2019). By bridging gaps in knowledge and skills, the third sector supports the development of a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem that is inclusive and innovative.

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach to investigate the mechanisms, impacts, and challenges of university-CSO partnerships in advancing sustainable youth-led initiatives. Through qualitative and quantitative data, this study aims to provide an understanding of how these collaborations

can be structured and scaled effectively to support broader sustainability goals. The findings will offer actionable recommendations for enhancing the impact of such partnerships across Asia, aligning with key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as Target 17.16, which focuses on enhancing global partnerships for sustainable development, and Target 11.7, which aims to provide universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green and public spaces.

By exploring the intersection of youth-adult partnerships, industry experiences, and third-sector involvement, this paper contributes to the growing body of knowledge on sustainable development and offers insights into the potential for scalability of successful models across diverse Asian contexts. The ultimate goal is to empower young people to lead and innovate in the realm of sustainability, ensuring that their contributions are recognized and amplified in the policy-making processes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of youth in sustainable development has garnered significant attention in recent years, with numerous studies highlighting the importance of youth engagement in policy-making and practice. This literature review explores key papers and insights relevant to the themes of youth-adult partnerships, industry experiences, and the third sector as an avenue for skills building. These insights inform the hypotheses that guide this innovative research on university-CSO partnerships in advancing sustainable youth-led policies and practices.

Youth-adult partnerships are essential for fostering meaningful youth engagement in sustainable development. Wong et al. (2010) provide a typology of youth participation and empowerment, emphasizing the importance of authentic decision-making, natural mentorship, and community connectedness. Their work highlights that when youth are actively involved in decision-making processes, they are more likely to develop leadership skills and a sense of ownership over the outcomes. Similarly, Zeldin, Christens, and Powers (2013) argue that youth-adult partnerships create environments where young people can exercise agency and influence. They suggest that these partnerships enhance youth development by providing opportunities for real-world problem-solving and leadership. This body of work shows the potential of youth-adult partnerships to empower young people and contribute to sustainable development.

The integration of industry experiences into youth development programs is another critical area of research. According to the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (2020), industry attachments and internships provide young people with practical skills and exposure to real-world challenges. These experiences are crucial for preparing youth for careers in sustainability and for fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in implementing sustainable practices. Furthermore, Gualandris and Kalchschmidt (2014) emphasize that industry experiences enhance the employability of young people by equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in green jobs. Their research shows that such experiences not only benefit the individuals involved but also contribute to the broader goals of sustainable development by fostering a workforce capable of driving environmental and social change.

The third sector, encompassing NGOs and other civil society organizations, plays a vital role in skills building for young people. Smith, Bell, and Watts (2019) highlight the importance of NGOs in providing training, resources, and mentorship to young social entrepreneurs. Their study indicates that NGOs fill

critical gaps in formal education systems, particularly in regions where access to entrepreneurial education is limited. Similarly, Haugh and Talwar (2016) discuss how NGOs facilitate the development of a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem by supporting young people in acquiring the skills needed to launch and sustain social enterprises. This support includes not only technical skills but also soft skills such as leadership, communication, and teamwork.

METHODOLOGY

Drawing on the insights from these key papers, this research proposes the following hypotheses to explore within the context of university-CSO partnerships in Singapore, around the designed research outline over 6 months of study (Figure 1),

H1: Authentic youth-adult partnerships enhance the effectiveness of youth-led sustainable development initiatives.

- Based on the work of Wong et al. (2010) and

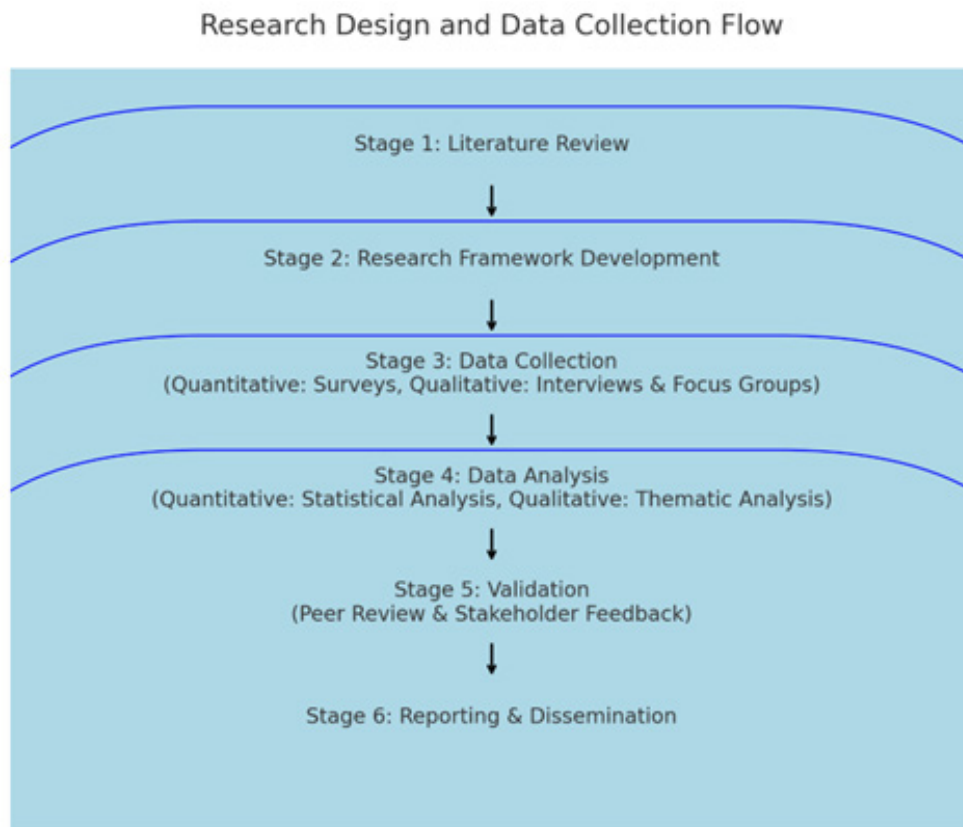


FIGURE 1. Research design and outline

Zeldin et al. (2013), this hypothesis posits that genuine involvement of youth in decision-making processes leads to more impactful and sustainable outcomes.

H2: Industry experiences improve the skills and employability of youth engaged in sustainability initiatives.

- This hypothesis builds on the findings of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (2020) and Gualandris and Kalchschmidt (2014), suggesting that practical industry experiences are crucial for preparing youth for green careers.

H3: Engagement with the third sector provides essential skills and support for youth-led sustainable development projects.

- Informed by Smith et al. (2019) and Haugh and Talwar (2016), this hypothesis explores the role of NGOs and other CSOs in equipping young people with the skills necessary for successful social entrepreneurship and sustainability projects.

By testing these hypotheses, this research aims to contribute to the understanding of how university-CSO partnerships can be leveraged to advance sustainable youth-led policies and practices in Asia. The mixed-methods approach combines the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) emphasize that mixed-methods research allows for a more nuanced understanding of complex issues by integrating multiple data sources. This approach is particularly suitable for studying the multifaceted nature of university-CSO partnerships and their impact on sustainable development.

Data for this research were collected through a combination of pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. The questionnaires were designed to capture changes in attitudes, skills, and perceptions among the youth participants, with specific focus areas such as decision-making involvement, leadership opportunities, and contributions to outcomes. Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and insights. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to measure the effectiveness of the workshops,

volunteer activities, and funded projects.

The qualitative component of this research involves semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including university faculty, CSO representatives, and participating youth. This method allows for an in-depth exploration of the experiences, perspectives, and challenges faced by these stakeholders. The interviews are designed to uncover the underlying mechanisms of the partnerships and to identify best practices and areas for improvement. Photovoice, a participatory research method, is also employed to capture the experiences and perceptions of the youth involved in these initiatives. This method, as described by Wang and Burris (1997), enables participants to document their experiences through photography, which is then discussed in group settings to elicit rich, contextual insights.

The quantitative component involves the administration of pre- and post-intervention questionnaires to measure changes in attitudes, skills, and perceptions among the youth participants. The questionnaires are designed to capture data on several key constructs, including youth engagement, leadership, and the effectiveness of the partnerships.

This study adhered to the highest ethical standards in the collection, storage, and analysis of data. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board prior to the commencement of the research. 150 participants were selected based on their direct engagement with the partnerships studied, ensuring relevance to the research objectives. Participation was voluntary. For youth, the criteria included active participation in leadership programs or volunteering initiatives. Stakeholders were chosen based on organizational roles in program design and delivery.

All participants, including youth, CSO representatives, university staff, and eldercare institution members, provided informed consent. For youth participants under 18, parental or guardian consent was also obtained. Participation was voluntary, with no coercion, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained, with personal identifiers removed from all datasets. Data were securely stored in password-protected systems and accessible only to the research team.

Qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, adhered to respectful and non-intrusive inquiry principles. Sensitive data, particularly those involving eldercare

TABLE 1. The questionnaires

Scale	Subscale	Questions	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Youth Engagement and Leadership Scale (YELS)	Decision-Making Involvement	1. How often are you involved in decision-making processes? 2. Do you feel your opinions are considered in decision-making? 3. Rate the extent of your participation in strategic decisions.	0.88	Measures the extent to which youth are involved in decision-making processes.
	Leadership Opportunities	1. How often do you get leadership opportunities? 2. Do you have access to leadership training? 3. Rate the quality of leadership opportunities provided.	0.85	Assesses the availability and quality of leadership opportunities for youth.
	Contribution to Outcomes	1. How significant is your contribution to project outcomes? 2. Do you feel your work impacts project success? 3. Rate the impact of your contributions on project goals.	0.87	Evaluates the perceived impact of youth contributions on project outcomes.
Partnership Effectiveness Scale (PES)	Alignment with SDGs	1. How well do the partnership's goals align with the SDGs? 2. Are the SDGs integrated into partnership activities? 3. Rate the partnership's commitment to the SDGs.	0.9	Measures the degree of alignment between partnership objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals.
	Integration of SDGs	1. How are the SDGs incorporated into daily operations? 2. Do the projects reflect SDG priorities? 3. Rate the effectiveness of SDG integration.	0.88	Assesses how well the SDGs are integrated into partnership activities.
	Resource Sharing	1. How effectively are resources shared among partners? 2. Do you have access to the necessary resources? 3. Rate the resource sharing efficiency.	0.86	Evaluates the effectiveness of resource sharing among partners.
SDGs Alignment Scale	Target 17.16	1. How effective are the global partnerships in sharing knowledge and resources? 2. Are multi-stakeholder partnerships mobilized for SDGs? 3. Rate the contribution of partnerships to SDG 17.16.	0.89	Measures the effectiveness of global partnerships in mobilizing and sharing knowledge and resources.
	Target 11.7	1. How accessible are public spaces for vulnerable populations? 2. Do initiatives promote inclusive public spaces? 3. Rate the impact on public space accessibility.	0.87	Assesses the impact of initiatives on providing access to inclusive public spaces.

institutions, were handled with additional care to avoid stigmatization or discomfort for participants. Findings were presented in aggregate form to ensure privacy and reduce risks of identification. The study also ensured cultural sensitivity by engaging CSOs in the design and implementation phases, fostering trust and relevance in the research process. Ethical challenges encountered, such as potential power imbalances in youth-adult partnerships, were mitigated through neutral facilitation and open communication channels. This ethical approach ensured the study's alignment with principles of integrity, respect, and social responsibility.

The process began with a series of workshops designed to introduce the youth to the concepts of social impact and digital trust building. These workshops were essential in laying the foundation for their subsequent involvement in sustainability projects and partnerships with CSOs. The volunteer workshops organized by CSOs focused on educating the youth about the importance of social impact and the role of digital trust in contemporary society. These were done in partnership with eldercare centres around Singapore. The aim was to equip the senior participants, with a thorough understanding of digital literacy and confidence to explore digital tools. The aim was to contribute to broader societal goals and foster trust within digital communities. One participant shared, "The workshops provided me with a clear understanding of how my work could create a positive social impact. The sessions on digital trust were particularly enlightening, helping me realize the importance of trust in all our digital interactions and projects. It takes time and patience to engage them in such skills building."

Following the workshops, the youth were engaged in volunteer activities that allowed them to apply their newly acquired knowledge in real-world settings. These volunteer activities were coordinated with various eldercare institutions, such as active ageing centers and the Silver Generation Office. The participants helped the elderly learn digital skills, such as using smartphones, accessing online services, and understanding basic cybersecurity practices. These volunteer activities were designed to be mutually beneficial. The elderly participants gained valuable digital skills, which helped bridge the digital divide and enhance their independence. At the same time, the youth volunteers gained practical experience in teaching, empathy, and patience. One youth volunteer noted, "Volunteering at the active ageing center was a transformative experience. It helped me apply what I learned in the workshops and see the immediate impact of my efforts."

CSOs also provided funding for youth to initiate and implement their projects aimed at creating a social impact. This funding was crucial in enabling the youth to move from theoretical understanding to practical implementation. The funds covered various aspects, including materials, resources, and any necessary training or certifications. The provision of funding empowered the youth to take ownership of their projects and see them through from conception to completion. It also fostered a sense of responsibility and accountability, as the participants were required to manage the funds and report on their project's progress and outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

The research revealed several significant insights into the role of university-CSO partnerships in advancing sustainable youth-led policies and practices. A pivotal aspect of this study was the involvement of CSOs, an organization dedicated to fostering youth engagement and skill-building through practical experiences and industry attachments. CSOs played a crucial role in the research by facilitating these attachment programs, which were instrumental in the development and assessment of the skills and leadership capabilities of the participating youth.

CSOs supported the attachment programs that provided youth with practical industry experiences. These attachments allowed participants to apply their theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, enhancing their skills and preparing them for future careers in sustainability. The organization provided a structured framework for these experiences, ensuring that participants received training and mentorship. One of the notable aspects of the CSO's involvement was their collaboration with eldercare institutions, such as active ageing centers. These centers provided a unique environment for youth to learn digital skills and understand policies related to active ageing and many helping hands. Through these engagements, youth were able to interact with the elderly, helping them to navigate digital platforms and tools. This experience not only enhanced the digital literacy of the elderly but also provided the youth with a deeper understanding of the challenges and policies associated with active ageing.

The findings from the Youth Engagement and Leadership Scale (YELS) indicated high levels of youth involvement in decision-making processes, leadership opportunities, and contributions to

project outcomes. Participants reported frequent and meaningful involvement in strategic decisions, reflecting a strong integration of youth perspectives in the partnership activities. One participant noted, "Being part of the decision-making process made me feel valued and motivated to contribute more." The subscale on decision-making involvement showed a high Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, suggesting reliable internal consistency. Youth participants felt that their opinions were not only considered but were integral to the decision-making processes, enhancing their sense of ownership and responsibility.

Leadership opportunities provided through CSOs were also highly rated as opportunities that improved decision making and reasoning of decisions. The subscale on leadership opportunities had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, indicating good reliability. Youth participants reported ample opportunities to take on leadership roles, access to leadership training, and high-quality mentorship from both university faculty and CSO representatives. These opportunities were crucial in developing their leadership skills and preparing them for future roles in sustainability initiatives. Another participant shared, "The leadership training I received through my community partner was invaluable. It gave me the confidence to lead projects and mentor my peers." In terms of contributions to outcomes, the subscale achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87. Participants felt that their contributions impacted project success and that their work was valued and recognized by their peers and mentors. This positive feedback highlights the importance of youth involvement in achieving successful outcomes in sustainability projects. As one participant mentioned, "Knowing that my work had a tangible impact on the project's success was incredibly fulfilling."

The Partnership Effectiveness Scale (PES) revealed strong alignment and integration of SDGs within the partnership activities. The alignment with SDGs subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90, indicating excellent reliability. Participants reported that the goals of the partnerships were well-aligned with the SDGs, and that there was a strong commitment to integrating these goals into the daily activities and long-term objectives of the projects. The integration of SDGs subscale, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, further supported these findings. Participants noted that SDGs were consistently incorporated into the planning and execution of partnership activities. This integration was evident in the projects undertaken, which were designed to address specific SDG targets and priorities. Another participant highlighted, "The integration of

SDGs into our projects ensured that we were always working towards meaningful and impactful goals." However, this calls for a longitudinal study to validate the effectiveness at large and long term. Resource sharing among partners was another key aspect of the partnership effectiveness. The resource sharing subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86, reflecting good reliability. Participants felt that resources, including knowledge, expertise, and financial support, were effectively shared among the partners, facilitating the successful implementation of the projects. One participant stated, "The collaborative environment and resource sharing were essential for our project's success."

The SDGs Alignment Scale highlighted the impact of the partnerships on specific SDG targets. The Target 17.16 subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89, indicating strong reliability. Participants reported that the global partnerships effectively mobilized and shared knowledge and resources, contributing to the achievement of SDG 17.16, which focuses on enhancing global partnerships for sustainable development. A participant remarked, "The global partnerships provided us with valuable resources and insights that greatly enhanced our projects." Similarly, the Target 11.7 subscale, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, showed that the initiatives promoted inclusive and accessible public spaces. Projects undertaken as part of the partnership aimed to provide safe and inclusive environments, particularly for vulnerable populations. This focus on inclusivity and accessibility was a significant outcome of the youth-led initiatives. One participant observed, "Our projects made a real difference in creating inclusive public spaces that are accessible to everyone."

In observations of youth and seniors interacting, these interactions between youth volunteers and elderly participants in these digital literacy programs create shared meanings and build trust. These interactions are not merely transactional; they involve the exchange of knowledge, values, and empathy. Youth volunteers, by engaging with the elderly in a respectful and patient manner, help to bridge generational gaps and foster mutual understanding. This approach enhances the effectiveness of the training sessions and helps to build a more inclusive digital community. One senior participant shared, "The workshops provided me with a clear understanding of how my work could create a positive social impact. The sessions on that guided me through the tools in a way where I explored how to use these tools to create fun videos, helping me realize the importance of privacy of photos on the web. We

need to be careful in all our digital interactions and projects. It takes time and patience to engage them in such skills building." The youth participants engaged with active ageing centers to teach digital skills to the elderly, which helped bridge the digital divide and fostered intergenerational learning. A participant noted, "Working with the elderly at the active ageing centers was a humbling experience. It taught me patience and the importance of digital inclusion." These interactions were facilitated through a partnership with the Silver Generation Office, which aims to support the elderly in staying active and engaged in the community.

The attachment programs offered by CSOs were effective in developing the skills and leadership capabilities of the youth. Participants reported significant improvements in their decision-making, leadership, and project management skills. The hands-on experiences provided through these programs were crucial in translating theoretical concepts into practical applications, thereby bridging the gap between academic knowledge and real-world practice. As one participant put it, "The practical experiences and mentorship I received through TinkerThings were insightful in preparing me for a career in sustainability." The engagement models served as an exemplary case of how these recommendations can be implemented. CSOs organized workshops that introduced youth to social impact and digital trust building. Following these workshops, youth volunteers engaged in practical activities, teaching digital skills to the elderly at active ageing centers. One participant noted, "The workshops provided me with a clear understanding of how my work could create a positive social impact. The sessions on digital trust were particularly enlightening, helping me realize the importance of trust in all our digital interactions and projects." The volunteer activities were mutually beneficial, with elderly participants gaining valuable digital skills and youth volunteers developing empathy, patience, and teaching skills. Another participant shared, "Volunteering at the active ageing center was a transformative experience. It helped me apply what I learned in the workshops and see the immediate impact of my efforts."

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

The findings of this research highlight the transformative potential of university-CSO partnerships in advancing sustainable youth-led policies and practices through digital literacy initiatives and volunteerism. These partnerships create "classrooms for trust and skills

building," where intergenerational learning and community engagement foster both digital inclusion and social cohesion. The key pillars of these classrooms include authentic youth-adult partnerships, face-to-face interactions in community spaces, the application of symbolic interactionism, and the integration of a blended finance model.

Authentic Youth-Adult Partnerships

These partnerships foster mutual learning and leadership development, building community connectedness and intergenerational trust.

Face-to-Face Interactions in Community Spaces

Providing personalized instruction and immediate feedback, these interactions enhance engagement through familiar and trusted environments.

Symbolic Interactionism

This theoretical framework facilitates the co-construction of meanings through interactions, reinforcing social bonds and building a more inclusive community.

Blended Finance Model

Leveraging public, private, and philanthropic funding ensures the sustainability and scalability of digital literacy programs.

Authentic youth-adult partnerships are crucial for fostering mutual learning and leadership development, building community connectedness, and intergenerational trust. Organizations like TinkerThings should continue to provide funding and resources for youth-led initiatives, empowering participants to move from theoretical understanding to practical implementation. This approach fosters a sense of responsibility and accountability among the youth. Future work should focus on enhancing these collaborations and exploring new ways to support and expand youth-led projects through sustained funding and resource allocation.

Face-to-face interactions in community spaces provide the ideal environment for personalized instruction and immediate feedback, which are crucial for effective learning, especially for the elderly. Programs that involve direct engagement, such as those conducted in collaboration with the Silver Generation Office and other eldercare institutions, allow for

meaningful exchanges that bridge generational gaps and foster digital inclusion. Future initiatives should continue to prioritize in-person interactions and explore innovative methods to enhance these engagements, such as integrating technology to complement face-to-face learning. Symbolic interactionism facilitates the co-construction of meanings through interactions between youth volunteers and elderly participants, reinforcing social bonds and building a more inclusive community. These interactions are not merely transactional but involve the exchange of knowledge, values, and empathy. Future research should delve deeper into the dynamics of these interactions and develop frameworks to optimize the trust-building processes. A blended finance model that leverages public, private, and philanthropic funding is essential for sustaining and scaling digital literacy programs. Public funding can provide foundational support, while private sector contributions, often through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, offer additional resources and expertise. Philanthropic organizations can fill in the gaps, providing grants and donations that ensure the continuity and scalability of these programs. Future policies should incentivize CSR activities and promote stronger collaborations between MNCs and community organizations.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research discusses, with case studies, the transformative potential of university-CSO partnerships in advancing sustainable youth-led policies and practices through digital literacy initiatives and volunteerism. These partnerships, facilitated by CSOs create effective "classrooms for trust and skills building" where intergenerational bonding, multidisciplinary learning and community engagement thrive.

The study primarily evaluates immediate or short-term impacts of initiatives, such as skill acquisition and program engagement, as a baseline. This follows a longitudinal perspective on long-term sustainability or the retention of skills. There is opportunity for long-term studies could measure how these partnerships contribute to enduring community resilience, sustained digital inclusion, and leadership development aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This enables deeper exploration of indirect impacts on other goals like SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

Key elements include authentic youth-adult

partnerships, face-to-face interactions in community spaces, and the integration of symbolic interactionism, all supported by a blended finance model. The study notes the importance of youth involvement in decision-making, leadership opportunities, and impactful contributions to project outcomes. By providing an avenue for these collaborative frameworks and supportive public policies, such partnerships can create sustainable and impactful digital literacy programs and build community resilience. The success of these initiatives highlights their potential for scalability and replication, ensuring that youth-led efforts contribute significantly to sustainable development goals across diverse contexts in Asia. This paves the opportunity for collaboration on such impact. Time-based studies will be conducted as a monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives.

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