

TV Migrante (Tagalog)

June 5, 2019



Translated Video Transcript:

Host: We're back at TV Migrante, the voice of a "Makabayang Migrante." For today's episode, we're going to talk about a very interesting event that was recently held in town [by] the Live Well, Take Action Program. Interesting topics were taken up in the event with a jam-packed room of 125 attendees, with student projects that covered mental health, model minority myth, Asian stereotypes, LGBTQ Asians, comfort women, disability and mental health, and discrimination against Asians. To help us discuss these topics, we are joined by three valiant students here in the studio. They're all very young, probably about my age. Of course, we have - they're all from Thornhill [Secondary] School, right? (Interviewees: Yes)

Host: So, we will be with Aliyaah Cangson. How are you, Aliyaah?

Aliyaah: I'm doing OK.

Host: Dorothy Darbin and Ramella Platitas. How are you doing, girls? OK let's talk about Live Well, Take Action. Why is it called Live, Well Take Action? What does it mean by that?

Aliyaah: Live Well, Take Action is a program that spreads awareness of Asians and talks about other cultures...

Host: Oh, the interrelationship of cultures, no? Not necessarily for just Filipinos. There are probably Koreans, Chinese (Interviewees: Yes)

Host: How do you talk to them? How do you actually connect with them?

Ramella: Every workshop, we talk about different topics, issues...

Host: Ah, so topics - there's probably a lot of those, no? of various sorts, no?

Ramella: Yes.

Host: Among the topics that were taken up during the program, what was your favourite topic taken up in those eight workshops?

Dorothy: My favourite... I think mental health.

Host: And this is a serious problem in Canada. Why is it an issue for today's youth? Especially for Asians, I think, no?

Dorothy: I think it's because people don't really talk about mental health. It's kind of taboo in Asian communities, so there's a lack of support within these communities. And, there's, like, a lack of culturally sensitive services. And so yeah, there's a huge lack of support, that's that. And then, it's a hardly discussed issue, so we really need to start a conversation about that, right?

Host: Right. But, in your families, for example, we're all Filipinos here; we also have issues on mental health but we don't talk about it, we just keep quiet. Even though we know, we feel that there's something wrong, we just keep it to ourselves. So, to you, in your families, does that happen too? Until now? We're all here in Canada now. When there's such a problem, is it not discussed in your family?

Aliyaah: Some... Because I'm a teenager. And I just came here. Sometimes I'm not comfortable with my Mom. But I do talk to my older sister.

Host: What seems to be the problem, Ramella? Why can't you talk about issues, like, you know, any problems? Can you talk about those problems with your older brother or sister or father?



Ramella: No. Because I'm afraid they would, sometimes, think that I'm just acting out.

Host: Oh, (they'd think) it's just "drama."

Ramella: Yes. In my family, we don't take mental health seriously.

Host: But, that's exactly like the typical Filipino family, no?

Dorothy: We don't talk. (Host: We don't talk, right?) They don't ask, "How do you feel?" like that, no?

Ramella: In my family, after school, they would ask how are we doing but we'd just say, "We're doing OK," and then that's it.

Host: Oh, that's it, no? But, when you went to the workshops, you joined the LWTA program, and you met other participants, how did they actually help you understand those issues, like mental health? Did you have a connection with them? How did it work?

Aliyaah: We had this activity - we would 'step in' if that's what we're experiencing, and step out... And then, we saw that there are other people who experience mental health (difficulties), too. And so, like "oh..."

Host: We're the same?

Aliyaah: Yes. They actually feel what I feel. It's like we're compacted together.

Host: When you met those youth who face similar issues, what's the impact to you?

Dorothy: Relieved, I guess... that there are others; I wasn't alone. It's like, "Oh, somebody knows that. Somebody's going through that."

Aliyaah: Like, "I'm not alone."

Dorothy: Yes.

Host: Oh, you're not alone, no? It's like Michael Jackson's [song], "You are not alone." But when the youth talk with each other, they talk differently [compared to adults]. You talk about social media, that's where you excel, no? But, I need to - I have to learn from you, no? So, Instagram - you talk about those topics there. When you first came to Canada, for example.



What's the struggle of an East Asian - an Asian individual? When you first came here, was it hard to connect with others?

Ramella: For me, it was the adjustment in the environment, especially in school. Because the education system in the Philippines is very different from the education system here.

Dorothy: I think the education system is better - way better [in Canada].

Host: Why did you say that? Why is it way better?

Dorothy: Because we have more time to do schoolwork. And then, we don't have as many courses. In the Philippines, we have eight courses a day and then an hour per courses. So, we're not as pressured [compared to Canada].

Host: Not overloaded?

Dorothy: Yes.

Host: Let's go back to the Live Well Take Action program. When we say, "live well," in my understanding, one should live well, no? And then, you know, you solve the problem; you take action; you do something about it. In the program, you probably realized so many things, like one, you said, others have mental issues. But, in terms of culture, how do you jive with others (participants)? How do you talk to each other? Do you still struggle? Are you still adjusting?

Aliyaah: Not really. Because of the program, I learned to appreciate others and respect them. Like, oh, we have similarities in this [cultural group]. Like, we pay respect to elders too but in different ways - they bow and we (Filipinos) do "mano."

Host: Oh, really? Like, for us, we do "mano." Do you have any other observations, Ramella?

Ramella: In our food...

Host: Food? Oh, I like that!

Ramella: I noticed that we, Asians, always have rice.

Host: That's like our commonality, no? They eat rice, you eat rice, we're OK! How about you? When you have discussions, are there differences in terms of the way you look at things?



Dorothy: There are definitely differences, but I think in the way we see things, it's pretty common. Because I feel like today's youth, in my own opinion, think alike.

Host: You know, this Live Well, Take Action program is actually part of the Asian Heritage month. Isn't it? It's part of it, no? And that means all individuals in Asia have similar cultures and history, right? Did that help you in your adjustment here in Canada? Because Canada has a multicultural society - is it helpful for you?

Aliyaah: Yes I think diversity is Canada's strength; it's like the wonderful part of Canadian society because today's youth is exposed to different people around the world. Because of that, like me, I appreciate them.

Host: So, you probably made new friends because of the program, no? So now, you guys are called certified program ambassadors. Are you ready?

Aliyaah: Yes

Host: Are you really ready? OK, that's great. So does that mean, you know, you can go to communities and help young people who have issues? Is that part of the expectations after the program? Because I understand that the program's over now, right?

Dorothy: That's not part of the program - to go out there and help - but they definitely encourage us to take action even after the program. We actually presented our community projects in different events and schools so we got to talk about these issues. So yeah, I think that's part of taking action.

Host: So let's talk about that project, but before we talk about those projects, TV Migrante will be back after these commercials and don't leave because our conversation is very interesting. We're going to talk about that with these Filipino youth, we'll be back quickly!

(Commercial)

Host: Before we took the commercial break, you said that you created some projects for the LWTA program, right? And you two said that you're in the same group, can you explain what's your project on?

Aliyaah: For our project, we made an Instagram [account]. Our account was about Asian stereotypes. In our posts, we share some common stereotypes and explain that those do not define us. We say that these are stereotypes but it's not us. We are different from these stereotypes. For example, for Filipinos, some usually think that we're not Asians. Because they



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always think that Asians are always Japanese, Korean and Chinese because they have [small] eyes, they have white skin, they're skinny... But we're also a part of the Asian [group].

Host: Right I didn't realize that. When they say Asian, we're always not included. Do you have anything to add, Ramella?

Ramella: The goal of our project is to raise awareness so during the Student Celebration, there's a lot of people who said, "Oh, we follow your Instagram account and your feed is nice." They said they can relate.

Host: What about you, Dorothy? What was the project that your group made?

Dorothy: My group created a website. It's called #IAMNOTJUSTSAD. So my group interviewed some Asian students from Thornhill Secondary School about their mental health struggles, their journey with their family - did they tell parents or not? And then, we wrote those individual interviews in a short story form so that's what our website's like. It shares stories of Asian individuals who have gone through mental health difficulties. With that website, we wanted to tackle the mental health issue. We wanted to ask these hard questions and show them these hard facts about mental health within Asian communities. We wanted to show them that we suffer from mental health too.

Host: At the beginning of the show, we said that we don't talk about mental health issues that much or even LGBTQ or even problems at home. Now, you guys did a project using Instagram and a website. Do you think that these platforms are effective in communicating the issues of the youth? Is it effective?

Aliyaah: Yes, because there's a lot of social media users now.

Host: How about people in my age group? I'm a dad and a grandfather now. How can I access Instagram? Is youth your...

Aliyaah: Our target audience is the youth.

Host: Like me, a youth? For a former youth, do you think it's an effective tool? (Interviewees: Yes) Because it's what the youth use nowadays, no? I think you use it for 24 hours, no? You're on Facebook or on Instagram. Maybe that's why you don't talk to your family, no? "Ramella, you should stop now!" While your mom is cooking, you're on your computer. What's the effect of after the program? What's the effect of the program? What were your realizations?



Aliyaah: For me, I am more aware now on issues because in my home, we don't talk about LGBTQ rights. We don't talk about it because we're religious. My family said that other genders are not qualified. They think that there are only two genders.

Host: There are only a man and a woman. If it's a different one, it's not included.

Aliyaah: But because of the program, I am more aware of their hardships and experiences now. That's why...

Host: That they're humans?

Aliyaah: We're all the same.

Host: They just have a different choice in life, but they're humans too. What about you, Ramella?

Ramella: For me, the program influenced me to educate myself more on current issues that happen in our society. I realized that I should be active not only at school but also in our community.

Host: What about you, Dorothy?

Dorothy: What did I realize?

Host: I mean, for you, your realizations after the program.

Dorothy: There's not that much realization but there's a lot of learnings. I improved my communication skills. I've become more confident in sharing my thoughts and feelings with others. And then, I learned more about myself, about my identity, and I've become prouder that I belong in this community - that I'm a Filipina. And yeah, I learned a lot about myself, about the community I belong in, and the society I live in. And then, those issues we addressed influenced me to become an ally. So, as I try to be an ally for others, I continue to learn more about myself - about my weaknesses and strengths. And I think that self-awareness contributes to my growth as individual. I think the program really played a huge factor in my growth as an individual.

Host: My question now is, from this day forward, let's say ten years from now, you're probably very, very active in the society and you've learned a lot recently. Where do you see yourselves? Applying what you learned from the program? But before you answer that, TV Migrante will be back. Don't miss out because our discussion is very interesting.



(Commercial)

Host: Migrante is back and we're still with Dorothy, Ramella and Aliyaah. Previously, we were just talking about their learnings and realizations after they joined the LWTA program. So you've realized that you have to live well, but you have to take action. We asked a while ago that after ten years of being a part of the Canadian society, where do you see yourself? How will you face [upcoming] struggles?

Aliyaah: For me, ten years from now, I will work for different people. Since Canada has a diverse culture, I can apply what I've learned from the program – how to interact with my clients and to feel what they feel and their hardships.

Ramella: I'll probably be studying at a medical school or working. I will apply what I've learned from the program by helping others out. I will encourage them to voice out their opinions and just simply help them.

Dorothy: Because of the program, I discovered my passion for mental health so I guess I'll be taking a path on mental health. I'll probably become a mental health counsellor or something. I'm really grateful for the program because I saw my passion because of it. So I guess, ten years from now, I'm working as a mental health counsellor for Asian individuals. As I previously mentioned, there's a lack of culturally sensitive services, right? So, I feel like we need people like me in that field.

Host: OK. Because we're about to end, you can give a message, [as] there'll be a lot of youth that will watch this show. What can you share to them... that you've learned from the program? Or can you share some encouragement for the youth - for the Asian youth or even the non-Asian ones? Because you live with them, you have to deal with what you have here, right? What's your message for them?

Dorothy: Educate yourselves. Knowledge is power. Take action, even the littlest action can make a difference. That's what I learned from the program.

Ramella: We are people of colour and we shouldn't be ashamed of who we are because that's a huge part of what and who we are now. We should be more involved in our community, in our society and especially with what's happening in our country, even in the Philippines now. Because even a small act of being concerned or showing an interest on issues can make a big change on those issues we're facing right now.

Aliyaah: We are Filipino no matter where we go. We bring joy to other people with our smiles. There are times that you'd wish to be a part of a different race to feel included, to fit in but just tell yourself, "I am Filipino," because by remembering those words, you'll remember the



lessons you learned from the Philippines. And by that, that's how we are and those [lessons] shape us.

Host: Thank you very, very much! From your Instagram and your website. I learned a lot.

Translation Credit: Dorothy (2019 student participant from Thornhill SS)

