THE BRITISH COUNCIL'S SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT (SAP): NURTURING YOUTH LEADERSHIP THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract: *This article discusses the nature and characteristics of the Social Action Project (SAP) and its effectiveness in promoting youth leadership through community engagement. SAP is a youth leadership program administered by the British Council. The program aims to empower young individuals to address social issues significant to them and to cultivate the necessary skills and confidence to create a positive impact within their communities. The research employed a Qualitative Interpretative Meta-Synthesis (QIMS) framework. Results showed that SAP provided various opportunities for the youths, equipping them with the essential knowledge, skills, and support required to assume leadership roles in their communities. These findings offer important guidelines for youth organizers, practitioners, and policymakers to make this program more youth-friendly and successful in developing youth leadership.*

Keywords: *youth leadership, youth training, youth empowerment, community engagement, Social Action Project, British Council*

1. Introduction

The Social Action Project (SAP) is a youth leadership program run by the British Council that aims to empower young people to take action on social issues that matter to them and develop the skills and confidence

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needed to make a positive impact in their communities (Buzinde et al., 2019). The program is designed for young people aged between 18-25, who are passionate about making changes in their lives and community and want to develop the skills and knowledge to turn their ideas into actions. The SAP program is delivered through a combination of workshops, training, mentoring, and community engagement activities (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015). The program is tailored to the needs and interests of the participants and is designed to be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the participants. The program is also designed to be inclusive, ensuring that young people from diverse backgrounds can participate and benefit from the program. Through the SAP program, young people gain a deeper understanding of the social issues they care about, learn how to develop, and implement effective action plans, and develop leadership skills that will serve them well in the future. The program also provides young people with the opportunity to connect with like-minded peers and learn from experienced mentors and community leaders.

The SAP program is part of the British Council's broader efforts to promote youth empowerment and civic engagement. It is argued that many young people are not given the chance to take on leadership roles in their communities, and as a result, they may miss out on valuable experiences and opportunities to make a positive impact. The SAP aims to address this problem by providing young people with the support and resources they need to become effective leaders and active members of their communities. The program is based on the belief that young people have the potential to be powerful agents of change and that by providing them with the right skills and support, we can help them to make a meaningful and lasting impact in their communities. This paper aims to provide an overview of the SAP program, including its design, implementation, and evaluation. It will describe the program's goals and objectives, its target population, and the key components of the program. Additionally, it will provide an assessment of the program's effectiveness in promoting youth leadership and community engagement, and highlight the key lessons learned from the program's implementation.

Developing leadership skills in young people is crucial for their personal and professional growth, as well as for the betterment of their communities. By providing opportunities for community engagement, the

SAP helps young people to develop the skills and knowledge needed to become effective leaders, which can have a positive impact on their communities and society (Hastings et al., 2011; Horstmeier & Ricketts, 2009; Wheeler & Edlebeck, 2006; Farago et al., 2018; Checkoway, 2011). Additionally, this research is significant as it can provide valuable insights on how to effectively engage young people in community service and leadership development programs. It will help to identify the key factors that contribute to the success of such programs, which can then be replicated and scaled to reach more young people. Furthermore, the outcomes of this research could inform the design of similar programs in other organizations, thus helping to promote youth leadership and community engagement on a larger scale.

2. Research context: Youth leadership and community engagement of British Council

The British Council (BC) is a UK-based organization promoting cultural relations and education globally. Their Active Citizens program is a social leadership initiative that empowers individuals and communities to create positive change. Since its inception in 2009, the program has impacted over 100,000 people through training, conferences, research, and international visits. It focuses on developing leadership skills, fostering teamwork, and encouraging critical thinking. Participants engage in community service and social enterprise projects while connecting with a global network. The program is inclusive and delivered in partnership with local organizations, tailored to each community's needs. Through the Active Citizens program, the BC aims to foster a sense of global citizenship and empower individuals to address local and global challenges effectively.

This paper conceives two main concepts such as community engagement and youth leadership. Community engagement has been defined as "the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people" (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997). Previous studies have shown that community engagement can have a positive impact on both individuals and communities. For example, community engagement can lead to

increased social capital, improved health outcomes, and increased civic participation (Hawe et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2018; McPherson et al., 2001). On the other hand, youth leadership has been defined as "the ability of young people to inspire, motivate, and direct others toward a common goal or vision" (Komives et al., 2015). Murphy and Reichard (2012) found that education and social contexts such as schools and extracurricular activities play a significant role in shaping early leadership behaviors in fostering leadership skills through opportunities for collaboration, decision-making, and taking on responsibilities. These contexts shape adolescents' values, beliefs, and attitudes towards leadership, as well as provide them with role models and opportunities for social engagement that contribute positively to their communities and society. Youth leadership development programs have been shown to increase civic engagement, self-efficacy, and academic achievement among young people (Flanagan et al., 2011; Liang et al., 2015; Skogan et al., 1999; Murphy & Reichard, 2012).

The BC Active Citizens program promotes cross-cultural, geographic, and political peer-to-peer learning through an engaging community of participants (Percy-Smith, 2015). Upon completion of the program, participants are eligible to apply for a spot on an international study visit. The program is designed for individuals aged 18 and over who possess a strong sense of local culture and identity, an established local network, an interest in learning and expanding their perspectives, good communication skills, and a value for fairness and social justice. Additionally, participants should already have some experience with social action in their community, either through professional or volunteer work. The Active Citizens Learning Journey is a fundamental aspect of the program, which focuses on exploring the ways people connect and appreciate diversity. The journey is guided by a commitment to social justice, inclusion, and empowering individuals to shape society.

The Learning Journey involves going through four learning modules shown below and in figure 1 (The British Council, 2014):

- Module 1: Understanding Me - Identity and Culture: In this module, participants gain a deeper understanding of the concepts of identity and culture, and apply this learning to comprehend the beliefs, behavior, and attitudes of themselves and others.

- Module 2: Intercultural Dialogue - Me & You: Participants learn how to use dialogue as a tool for fostering empathy, trust, and understanding within and across cultures.

- Module 3: Building Communities - We Together: Participants gain insight into the concept of 'community' and its relationship with identity and culture. They apply this learning to their community to identify a problem they want to address and the people they need to engage to achieve their goals.

- Module 4: Social Action Planning: Participants focus on planning a social action initiative in their community, taking into account different levels of detail and complexity. This includes identifying and clarifying their agenda, a specific intervention, and how they will implement it.

Figure 1: The learning Journey

Source: The British Council (2014)

The British Council offers youth leadership development training as part of its education and society program. These programs aim to empower young people to become active citizens and leaders in their communities through training, mentoring, and networking opportunities (Buzinde et al., 2019). They provide young people with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to create positive change in their communities, and to be able to address local and global challenges. These programs may include training in leadership, teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking. They may also provide opportunities for young people to engage in volunteering, community service, and social enterprise projects. These programs are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all young people, regardless of their background.

BC's Active Citizens program promotes sustainable social change globally by building a network of local leaders. It targets individuals already committed to social responsibility, such as youth workers, educators, and faith leaders, providing them with training and connecting them with like-minded individuals worldwide. The program operates in partnership with local organizations, and an animation on the homepage gives an overview of its workings. Unique in its direct delivery by BC, the program focuses on developing skills and knowledge for individuals actively working to improve their communities through positive social action. It aims to cultivate "Active Citizens" who are self-aware, understand systems, and take positive actions for their community's benefit. These individuals actively engage in trust-building, understanding, and social participation within their local and global communities. The program empowers leaders to have a significant impact, contributing to sustainable development at both local and global levels.

This active citizen leadership program has a key objective: to inspire young people in the local community to actively participate in making a difference. This involvement, known as community engagement, means working together with community members to address issues that affect them and achieve common goals (Mathur & Clark, 2014; Roman et al., 2023). It is a collaborative approach that empowers people to take an active role in identifying and resolving challenges they face, working together to bring about positive changes. Community engagement can take various forms, such as holding public meetings, conducting focus groups, gathering community feedback through surveys, and even involving community members in deciding how to allocate resources (participatory budgeting). It is often used in activities related to community development, planning, and creating policies. The overall goal of community engagement is to foster a more inclusive, fair, and sustainable community (Suboticki et al., 2023). This is achieved by giving everyone a voice and ensuring that their needs and concerns are considered and included in the decision-making processes. In essence, the program aims to empower local youths to actively participate in shaping their community's future in a way that benefits everyone.

Table 1 presents a planning overview of the "Save Water at Home" social action project, which aims to reduce household water consumption through efficient appliances and water-saving techniques. The table provides details on the project's goals, objectives, expected results,

stakeholders, challenges, required resources, activities, assessment techniques, and sustainability initiatives. For a more comprehensive understanding of the project, readers are encouraged to refer to Table 1 for detailed information.

Table 1: Planning for a social action project on climate actions

Name of social action project: **Save Water at Home**		
Goal	The goal of the project is to reduce household water consumption through the implementation of efficient appliances and water-saving techniques	
Objectives	<u>Immediate objectives</u> a) Identify the main sources of water consumption: b) Research and implement water-saving technologies c) Educate household members d) Monitor and track usage periods	<u>Long term objectives</u> a) Establish a sustainable water usage plan b) Promote water conservation in the community c) Continuously monitor and improve
Problems that will be solved through this project	High water consumption Lack of awareness Inefficient use of resources Environmental impact	
Expected results	Reduced water consumption Increased awareness and understanding of water conservation Improved water efficiency Positive environmental impact	
Stakeholders associated with this project	a) Stakeholders associated with a project to save water at home can include homeowners, landlords, utility companies, water conservation organizations, and government agencies. b) Homeowners and landlords may be responsible for implementing water-saving measures in their properties, while utility companies and government agencies may provide resources and incentives to help with conservation efforts. c) Water conservation organizations may offer education and support to help individuals and families reduce their water usage.	
Challenging agents	<u>Inside community</u> Homeowners Local businesses Political leaders or government officials Opponents or competitors of the project Misinformed or skeptical community members	<u>Outside community</u> Water rights holders or other stakeholders Other municipalities or regions State or federal government agencies that regulate water usage or allocation Environmental advocacy groups or non-governmental organizations Private water companies or other water providers

	Property developers Industry groups or lobby groups Community members Political groups with different ideologies	Industry groups or lobby groups Other interest groups with different ideologies Other communities with water scarcity problem Scientists and researchers may disagree on the best International organizations or countries		
Resources needed	<u>Materialistic</u> Water-saving fixtures such as low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators, and toilets with dual flush options. Water meter or other device for measuring water usage. Timers or automatic shut-off valves for irrigation systems. Rain barrels or other water storage containers. Tools for repair and maintenance Educational materials or signage to inform and educate household members about water conservation. Water leak detector	<u>Human</u> A project manager or team leader Plumbers or other tradespeople Educators or outreach Maintenance personnel Staff or volunteers to monitor Community leaders or representatives	<u>Natural</u> Water Land or outdoor space Sunlight or other energy sources Plants Soil Materials from nature such as natural stones, clay, sand, and other materials	<u>Social</u> Support and participation from household members Support and participation from local organizations and community groups Support from local government and utility companies Support from experts in fields Support from the media Support from financial institutions

Activities		*With whom*	*Time*
1	Select a location where the project will be implemented	Youth	7 days
2	Meeting for building awareness about the project	Youth, members of civil society, local government, standing committee, implementing organizations	8 days
3	Prepare a database about major activities, participants, and resources and fundings, prepare working strategies and challenging groups	Youth, members of civil society, local government, standing committee, implementing organizations	20 days
4	Share the list with major stakeholders	Youth and household and other stakeholders	10 days
5	Resource collection	Youth	10 days
6	Implement the activities [household visits, uthan meeting, family-based discussion)	Youth, members of civil society, local government, standing committee, implementing organizations	30 days
7	Continues monitoring and supervision	Youth	During imple-mentation period
8	Evaluation	Youth	5 days

Progress assessment techniques	Gantt Charts
	Earned Value Analysis (EVA)
	Progress Reports
	Milestone tracking
	Checklists and To-do lists
	Status Meetings
	Control Charts
	Pareto Charts
	Root Cause Analysis
Project evaluation tools	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
	Benchmarking
	Return on Investment (ROI) analysis
	Water audits
	Performance monitoring
	Surveys and interviews
	Cost-benefit analysis
	Life cycle assessment
	Triple bottom line approach
Initiatives to make this sustainable	Regular monitoring and evaluation of water usage
	Regular maintenance and repair of fixtures and systems
	Education and awareness-raising
	Implementing a rainwater harvesting system
	Incorporating green infrastructure
	Regularly reviewing and updating the project's plan and goals

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Youth leadership through community engagement refers to the process of empowering young people to take on leadership roles in their communities and actively engage in addressing local issues (Jennings et al., 2006; Russell et al., 2009; Checkoway, 2011). This approach aims to provide young people with the skills, resources, and support they need to design and implement social action projects that address specific challenges in their communities. By taking on leadership roles in their communities, young people can develop a sense of civic responsibility and gain a better understanding of the needs and concerns of the community (Zeldin et al., 2013). Youth leadership through community engagement can take many forms, such as youth-led community service projects, youth-led advocacy campaigns, and youth-led community development initiatives (London et al., 2003; Libby et al., 2006; Suleiman et al., 2006; Delgado & Staples, 2007). The goal of this approach is to empower young people to take an active role in shaping the future of their communities and to provide them with the opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge they need to become effective leaders. It also provides them with the opportunity to work with other community members and organizations and to learn from

their experiences. This type of engagement can foster community cohesion and empowerment, as young leaders work alongside community members to address local issues. It also can help to develop key skills, such as leadership, project management, communication, and problem-solving, which are valuable for personal and professional development (Lee et al., 2020; Blake et al., 2008).

3. Research Methodology

This study presents its findings through a qualitative investigation where a Qualitative Interpretative Meta-Synthesis (QIMS) was conducted to collect data on the British Council's SAP focused on how the program fostered youth leadership through the community. QIMS is a nonlinear conceptualization of a data collection tool that combines themes from a collection of related studies, resulting in a comprehensive understanding. This approach aligns with previous research conducted by Jofres et al. (2008), Ruiz and Praetorius (2016), Schuman (2016), Islam (2016, 2017), Islam and wa Mungai (2016), and Reza et al. (2019).

Data for QIMS were collected using purposive sampling, selecting studies relevant to the British Council's SAP and its importance toward youth leadership through community involvement. Qualitative studies were identified through computer databases and reference lists in the English-language literature, particularly in the social sciences, using keyword searches such as 'Active Citizens', 'Social Action Project', 'youth leadership,' and 'community engagement'. Studies were included in the sample if they met the following criteria: (1) focused on SAP for promoting youth leadership and community engagement, (2) utilized a rigorous qualitative research design, (3) published in English, and (4) published in peer-reviewed journal articles listed in Scopus. All other studies and articles were excluded. The search covered the period from January 2010 to December 2023 in Scopus databases. had read 52 publications and discarded 25 of them due to irrelevancy to the research objectives. The final selection consisted of 18 articles, 4 reports, 3 books, and 2 other sources which were deemed most relevant for this article. I also reviewed relevant published and unpublished national and international reports and documents, including reports published by the British Council, and the United Nations, as well as research reports. These

significant articles and reports are listed in the reference section. I did not simply summarize the findings of previous research, but critically analyzed the selected articles and documents to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of SAP for promoting youth leadership and community engagement. I was aware about the comprehensive under-standing of the limitations, challenges, and difficulties outlined by DeSawal and Peck (2022) in their examination of the extensive literature on youth leadership development.

Each piece of literature was carefully analyzed to extract themes. Original themes within each piece of literature were examined to preserve the integrity of the authors' work. Common factors were identified as themes and collected across studies to form a comprehensive understanding, resulting in discrete categories. Through this process, a structural and contextual understanding emerged, describing the engagement of youth in the SAP to promote their leadership skills. Throughout the theme extraction process, the author engaged in triangulation with the research mentor to ensure the validity of evaluation and accuracy in theme selection.

4. Results and Discussions

Features and characteristics of SAP

The Social Action Project (SAP) for youth leadership is a program that aims to empower young people to take action on social issues that matter to them and develop the skills and confidence needed to make a positive impact in their communities (Lash & Kroeger, 2018; Azizi, 1999). The program is designed for young people aged between 18-25, who are passionate about making changes in their lives and want to develop the skills and knowledge to turn their ideas into actions. The SAP program is a holistic program that focuses on the personal and professional development of the youth. It aims to equip the youth with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become effective leaders and agents of change. The program is designed to be inclusive and responsive to the needs and interests of the participants.

The SAP program is delivered through a combination of interactive workshops, training, mentoring, and community engagement activities. The workshops and training sessions are designed to provide young

people with a deep understanding of social issues and to teach them how to develop and implement effective action plans (Lash & Kroeger, 2018). The mentoring and community engagement activities are designed to provide young people with the opportunity to connect with like-minded peers and to learn from experienced mentors and community leaders. The program also provides young people with the opportunity to put their newly acquired knowledge and skills into practice by implementing a community project. This implemented project is designed to provide young people with the chance to create a tangible and lasting impact in their communities. SAP for youth leadership is a comprehensive program that equips young people with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become effective leaders and agents of change. The program is designed to be inclusive, responsive to the needs of the participants, and to provide young people with the opportunity to make a tangible and lasting impact in their communities.

- The project is designed to provide young people and communities with the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to identify and address local and global challenges in their communities (Lash & Kroeger, 2018). SAP is based on the belief that young people and communities are capable of creating positive change in their communities and addressing local and global challenges. It is grounded in the principles of active citizenship, social entrepreneurship, and community development, and it is designed to be inclusive and accessible to people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds. SAP has some distinct characteristics and objectives

- The project is designed to be community-led and community-driven, meaning that the project is initiated, planned, and implemented by the local community.

- The project is based on a collaborative approach, where different stakeholders (community members, organizations, and local authorities) work together to identify and address local challenges.

- The project is designed to provide young people and communities with the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to identify and address local and global challenges in their communities.

- The project encourages participants to reflect on their values, beliefs, and actions, and to develop a sense of global citizenship.

- The project provides opportunities for participants to engage in community service and social enterprise projects, and to connect with a global network of like-minded individuals and organizations.

- The project is delivered in partnership with local organizations and is tailored to the specific needs and context of each community.

SAP is a community-led initiative that empowers people to create positive social change through community service and social enterprise projects, by providing them the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to identify and address local and global challenges in their communities. SAP has some distinct characteristics:

- Planning: This phase involves identifying a problem or issue in the community, researching possible solutions, and developing a plan of action.

- Implementation: This phase involves carrying out the plan of action, which may include activities such as community mobilization, capacity-building, and service delivery.

- Monitoring and Evaluation: This phase involves tracking the progress of the SAP, measuring its impact, and making any necessary adjustments.

- Sustainability: This phase involves ensuring that the impact of the SAP is sustained over time, which may include activities such as scaling up the project, building partnerships, and developing a long-term sustainability plan.

- Communication and dissemination: This phase involves communicating the results of the SAP to key stakeholders and disseminating the learnings from the project to other organizations or actors that could benefit from them.

SAP for youth leadership through community engagement

SAPs have been implemented in various countries around the world. For example, the Youth Service America (YSA) program in the United States is a similar initiative that aims to promote youth engagement and leadership through community service projects (Elsabbagh et al., 2013).

The YSA program has been shown to have a positive impact on young people's sense of civic responsibility, leadership skills, and community engagement (Elsabbagh et al., 2013; Wray-Lake et al., 2010). Another similar initiative is the Youth Leaders in Action (YLIA) program in Hong Kong, which aims to develop leadership skills among young people through community service projects (Chan, 2014). The YLIA program has been shown to have a positive impact on young people's leadership skills, sense of social responsibility, and personal development (Chan, 2014).

It is worth noting that these components may vary depending on the specific SAP and the organization implementing it, but these are the general components that are usually considered in an SAP. SAP is important for several reasons:

- Empowerment: The SAP empowers individuals and communities to take control of their development and to create positive social change in their communities. It provides them with the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to identify and address local and global challenges.

- Community development: The SAP is designed to be community-led and community-driven, meaning that the project is initiated, planned, and implemented by the local community. This approach helps to build stronger and more resilient communities, as well as promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members.

- Global citizenship: The SAP encourages participants to reflect on their values, beliefs, and actions, and to develop a sense of global citizenship. This promotes mutual understanding and respect among people from different cultures and backgrounds and helps to build a more peaceful and just world.

- Social entrepreneurship: The SAP provides opportunities for participants to engage in community service and social enterprise projects, which helps to build a more sustainable and equitable society.

- Networking: The SAP connects participants with a global network of like-minded individuals and organizations, which provides opportunities for learning, collaboration, and the sharing of best practices.

- Global connections: The SAP provides young people with the opportunity to connect with other young leaders from around the

world. This allows them to share ideas and learn from one another, as well as gain a broader perspective on issues affecting their communities and the world at large.

- Inclusivity: The SAP is designed to be inclusive and accessible to people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds. This helps to ensure that everyone can participate and contribute to the development of their community.

- Mentoring and training: The program includes mentoring and training for participants, which helps them to develop the skills and knowledge needed to be successful leaders. This may include training on leadership, project management, and community development, as well as opportunities to gain hands-on experience through volunteer work and other activities.

The SAP aims to create long-term and sustainable impact. Through the program, young people are equipped with the necessary tools and resources to create meaningful and lasting change in their communities. Additionally, the British Council also tracks the progress of the project and evaluates the impact on the community and the young people who participated.

- Access to resources: The SAP provides participants with access to a wide range of resources that can help them to achieve their goals. This may include funding for projects, access to experts and mentors, and opportunities to connect with organizations and individuals who can provide support and resources.

- Flexibility: The program is flexible and adaptable to the needs and goals of each participant. It allows young people to identify and focus on the issues that matter most to them, and to take action in ways that are meaningful and impactful.

- Collaboration: The SAP encourages collaboration among young people, organizations, and communities. This helps to build a sense of shared ownership of the issues being addressed and to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for change.

- Long-term Support: The British Council provides long-term support to participants, even after the completion of the program. This allows

young people to continue their work and achieve their goals, as well as maintain their connection with the British Council and the global network of young leaders.

- Multi-country project: The SAP is usually a multi-country project which allows young people from different countries to work together and learn from each other's cultures, experiences, and ways of addressing social issues. This helps to broaden the perspectives of young leaders and to create a more inclusive and diverse environment for change.

SAP of the British Council highlights local context and community problems as part of its approach to empowering individuals and communities to create positive social change.

- Community-led: The SAP is designed to be community-led and community-driven, meaning that the project is initiated, planned, and implemented by the local community. This approach allows the community to identify their problems and challenges, and to develop solutions that are tailored to the specific context and needs of the community.

- Needs assessment: To identify community problems, SAP uses a needs assessment process. This process involves engaging with the community to understand their needs, aspirations, and challenges. This helps to identify issues that are most pressing for the community and ensures that the project is addressing the real needs of the community.

- Local context: The SAP takes into consideration the local context of the community, including its culture, history, and social norms. This helps to ensure that the project is culturally appropriate and relevant to the community.

- Community ownership: By highlighting local context and community problems, the SAP promotes community ownership and responsibility. This empowers the community to take control of their development and to create positive social change in their communities.

- Solution-based: By highlighting local context and community problems, the SAP can develop solutions that are tailored to the specific context and needs of the community. This helps to ensure that

the project is addressing the real needs of the community and is more likely to be successful.

- Sustainability: By addressing the specific and local problems and taking into account the local context, SAP's solution is more likely to be sustainable in the long run and have a greater impact.

SAP has had several positive impacts on youth community engagement and empowerment. Firstly, the program has been successful in increasing youth involvement in community development projects. A study by Oxfam found that SAP had increased the participation of young people in local governance and decision-making processes, leading to the development of more effective and sustainable community projects (Oxfam, 2016). This increased engagement has also helped to foster a sense of social responsibility and civic duty among the youth.

Secondly, SAP has been effective in developing the leadership skills of young people. Through the program's training and mentoring activities, young people have been equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to take on leadership roles within their communities. A study conducted by the Asian Development Bank found that SAP had led to the development of youth leaders who were able to initiate and implement community projects independently, thereby enhancing the sustainability and impact of these projects (Asian Development Bank, 2013).

Thirdly, SAP has contributed to the empowerment of young people by providing them with opportunities to address social and economic challenges facing their communities. By engaging in community development activities, young people have been able to address issues such as poverty, gender inequality, and social exclusion. A study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) found that SAP had contributed to the empowerment of young people by providing them with the skills and confidence to take on these challenges (UNDP, 2018).

Fourthly, youth leadership through community engagement is closely related to a country's social development because it helps to empower young people to take an active role in their communities and make a positive impact. When young people are allowed to lead and engage in community service, they develop important skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork. These skills are essential for personal and professional growth, but they also contribute to the

betterment of the community and society. Additionally, youth leadership through community engagement can help to promote social cohesion and inclusivity. By working together on community projects, young people from different backgrounds and perspectives can learn to appreciate and respect each other, breaking down barriers and fostering a sense of community. Furthermore, when young people are engaged in community service, they are more likely to be invested in the well-being of their community and to work towards improving social issues such as poverty, inequality, and discrimination.

Fifthly, youth leadership through community engagement is vital for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It empowers young people, fosters social cohesion, and promotes sustainable development, addressing poverty, inequality, and discrimination. The SAP: Nurturing Youth Leadership through Community Engagement aligns with SDG 4 by providing access to education and skills training. It also contributes to SDG 11 by promoting sustainable practices in communities. Youth leadership through community engagement can advance progress in other SDGs, such as SDG 1, SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 10, and SDG 17.

Finally, SAP has had a positive impact on the overall well-being of young people. Through their engagement in community development activities, young people have been able to develop strong social connections and networks, leading to improved mental health and well-being. A study by Plan International found that SAP had led to improved self-esteem and confidence among young people, and had contributed to the development of a sense of belonging and purpose within their communities (Plan International, 2017).

6. Conclusions

The Social Action Project (SAP) for youth leadership is a comprehensive program that aims to empower young people to take action on social issues and make a positive impact in their communities. The program focuses on the personal and professional development of the youth, providing them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become effective leaders and agents of change. SAP is delivered through interactive workshops, training, mentoring, and community engagement

activities. It is community-led, collaborative, and inclusive, and it encourages participants to reflect on their values and develop a sense of global citizenship. SAP has been implemented in various countries and has shown positive impacts on youth community engagement and empowerment. The key results of the study were:

o   Increased youth involvement in community development projects and local governance.

o   Development of leadership skills among young people, leading to independent initiation and implementation of community projects.

o   Empowerment of young people to address social and economic challenges in their communities.

o   Contribution to personal and professional growth of young people, fostering social cohesion and inclusivity.

o   Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by providing access to education and skills training, promoting sustainable practices, and addressing poverty, inequality, and discrimination.

o   Improved overall well-being of young people, including enhanced self-esteem, confidence, and social connections.

Overall, SAP has proven to be an effective program in empowering youth to create meaningful and lasting change in their communities, while also contributing to their personal growth and well-being.

We have found several limitations and challenges that can significantly impact SAP's success and sustainability. Firstly, limited funding poses a critical obstacle, making it difficult to sustain the project long-term and restricting its overall impact. This financial challenge can result in a reduction of the project's scope, thus limiting its effectiveness (UNESCO, 2018). Secondly, community engagement plays a vital role in the success of SAPs, necessitating active involvement and participation from the community throughout the planning and implementation stages to achieve desired outcomes. Without adequate community engagement, projects may struggle to fulfill their goals and objectives (WHO, 2020). Thirdly, resistance to change within communities, especially when projects propose modifications to long-standing traditions or practices, can impede progress and make goal attainment challenging. All of such projects

underscore the importance of comprehending the cultural and social context of the community before initiating an SAP (Plan International, 2017). Fourthly, successful SAPs often require specific skills and knowledge. Insufficient access to necessary expertise can hinder project outcomes. Proper planning and training must be in place to ensure the project team possesses the required knowledge and skills to effectively implement the SAP (UNICEF, 2021). Additionally, considering sustainability right from the planning stage is crucial. Many SAPs depend on external funding, and without adequate plans for long-term sustainability, projects may struggle to continue after funding runs out (Oxfam, 2020). Finally, evaluating the impact of SAPs on communities is crucial but challenging. Developing appropriate evaluation criteria is essential to accurately measure the project's effect on the community (UNDP, 2019). By proactively addressing these challenges through careful planning, community involvement, resource allocation, and a focus on long-term sustainability, SAPs can enhance their chances of success and achieve meaningful outcomes for the communities they serve.

To overcome the limitations and challenges of SAPs, various strategies can be utilized. One of the essential strategies is to identify potential sources of funding early on, such as grants, donations, and partnerships with organizations, and develop a diversified funding strategy to avoid dependency on a single funding source. Effective community engagement can be ensured by building strong relationships and developing a clear communication plan that involves the community in the planning and implementation of the project. Additionally, understanding the community's values and traditions can help overcome resistance to change. Partnering with organizations or individuals that have the necessary skills and knowledge and providing training and capacity-building opportunities can overcome the lack of expertise. A sustainability plan that identifies potential sources of ongoing funding and outlines strategies for maintaining the project's impact over the long term should be developed. A clear evaluation plan that includes both quantitative and qualitative measures, and involves the community in the evaluation process, is also crucial. Regularly monitoring the political and social context and being flexible to adapt the project to changes in government policies and societal attitudes is also important. Combining these strategies can lead to successful SAP implementation.

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