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Photovoice: An Evaluation of the Students' Participation in Stay at Home, *Magtanom* Outreach Program

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ABSTRACT

Conducted in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic, this study employed Photovoice as a participatory platform for Civic Welfare Training Service (CWTS) students to express their experiences and evaluate their SAHMOP training in Partido State University at the foot of Mount Isarog and near coastal areas. Photovoice was also employed to collect and document students' reflections on their experiences with home gardening, family participation, and civic engagement under the NSTP framework. It looked at and interpreted images to understand positive volunteer work, civic awareness, discipline, and proactive efforts. Among the 900 CWTS students trained under SAHMOP, 596 completed ten vegetable gardening stages. During the photovoice exhibit, students from marginalized communities expressed that the training fostered a sense of belonging and civic responsibility. One student reflected, "We didn't just do this for grades - we built friendships and learned to care for our community through gardening." This participatory experience prepared students for real-world concerns, including climate change. Some underprivileged children showed the exhibit's inter-raters their best photovoice. Their response as policymakers was to create policies that promote SAHMOP in barangay local government units (LGUs) by linking them with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on excellent education, sustainable cities and communities, and partnerships.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted individuals worldwide, particularly in the education and training of college students. Beyond the academic challenges, the pandemic demonstrates the value of fostering voluntary efforts among students to support their communities. In the Philippines, the National Service Training Program (NSTP), established by Republic Act No. 9163 series of 2011, serves as a vital

educational framework aimed at enhancing civic consciousness and defense preparedness among the youth and was one of the affected education programs for tertiary level [1]. However, this program has key components: the Civic Welfare Training Service (CWTS), Literacy Training Program (LTS), and Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) that embody training to enhance civic consciousness, principles of service, and patriotism, which should be imperative to implement in the midst of COVID for the students to have survival training in the actual disaster.

Partido State University, which is located at the foot of Mount Isarog in Camarines Sur, Bicol Region, Philippines, is distinguished by its surroundings of hilly landscape and abundant flora and possesses considerable potential for improving the health and lives of disadvantaged farming families. Mostly, the children of these families are students at the university and enrolled in NSTP. Since NSTP faced the unprecedented challenges brought by the pandemic, educational programs have been redesigned to accommodate remote learning, ensuring that essential skills and pieces of training are still taught effectively [2].

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the university redesigned its NSTP program into the "Stay at Home Magtanom (Plant) Outreach Program" (SAMHOP), a home-based online initiative that trained students to cultivate vegetables at home. This innovation directly responded to urgent student needs: in School Year 2021-2022 alone, the Department of Education recorded 404 student suicides and 2,147 suicide attempts, underscoring a mental health crisis among youth [3]. Simultaneously, studies revealed that 25.7% of university students experienced severe food insecurity, while 26.7% showed symptoms of severe mental distress during lockdowns [4]. To sustain civic welfare training and foster national consciousness during the COVID-19 pandemic, Partido State University's NSTP unit proactively launched the Stay-at-Home Magtanom Outreach Program (SAHMOP), a home-based vegetable gardening initiative. Designed and implemented by a multidisciplinary team of NSTP and agribusiness educators, the program integrated health promotion, mental wellness, and resilience-building into remote civic education." During the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) period, they collaborated and shared basic concepts in planting vegetables with the students in the second semester of the 2019–2020 school year. The structured goal was not to stop the education of students during COVID but to intensify the program resilience and adaptability values of the students when the state is in crisis, and conduct close monitoring of the students' condition at home to sustain their training on disaster, risk, and crisis preparedness. SAMHOP's flexible delivery model was later formalized under Resolution No. 90 Series, 2020, on December 17, 2022 [5] and continued its utilization during and after the ECQ period in the 2020–2021 school year.

In response to the educational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Partido State University (ParSU) redesigned its Civic Welfare Training Service (CWTS) component of the National Service Training Program (NSTP) into a home-based initiative called the Stay-at-Home Magtanom Outreach Program (SAHMOP). Launched during the Enhanced Community Quarantine in 2020, SAHMOP trained students to cultivate vegetables at home, integrating civic engagement, food security, and mental wellness into remote learning. Given the program's widespread adoption across ParSU campuses and its

alignment with NSTP's goals of fostering civic consciousness and resilience, this study aimed to evaluate the impact of SAHMOP on students, families, and schools three years after its implementation." On November 2, 2024, NSTP students resumed their in-person classes at the university.

On November 2, 2024, NSTP students resumed their in-person classes at the university. SAMHOP addressed these intersecting challenges by promoting physical health, mental well-being, and self-reliance through sustainable food production. It also mitigated learning stagnation by embedding experiential, values-based education into the home environment, fostering resilience and civic responsibility in times of crisis. To sustain civic welfare training and foster national consciousness during the COVID-19 pandemic, in this context, the aim of this investigation was to examine the Photovoice represented by the students' images in the submitted documentation related to SAHMOP's fundamental themes: civic consciousness, constructive volunteerism, proactive effort, and discipline. Photovoice was employed as a participatory visual methodology because of its unique capacity to elicit students' personal reflections, lived experiences, and evolving perceptions contextually and authentically. By allowing students to capture and narrate their engagement through photographs, this approach deepens understanding of how civic values are internalized and expressed, making it especially effective in documenting attitudinal and behavioral change within community-based programs like SAHMOP."

This research emphasized the significance of maintaining the universal development objectives while simultaneously adapting educational programs to crises. The NSTP-CWTS SAMHOP vegetable gardening was the basic skill of the students designed to develop and increase interest to appreciate not only the fundamental principles of civic welfare training but also to demonstrate students' potentials in volunteering to promote and incorporate the goals in sustainable development into educational and professional practices, thereby fostering more conscientious and resilient communities in the local and international avenues.

Photovoice acts as a narrative tool for the school garden, reinforcing students' civic consciousness within the CWTS component. Students engaged in Photovoice to document their training experiences, reflecting family health concerns, challenges, and shared themes in narratives that served to reinforce their civic consciousness in CWTS, a core NSTP component. School gardens serve as platforms for teaching civic engagement, where students learn about environmental issues and community needs [6]. Recent studies highlight how school gardens can foster youth agency and media engagement through participatory documentation and storytelling. For instance, Walker et al. (2024) examined school gardens in Kenya and Papua New Guinea as intersectional spaces for education, nutrition, and civic participation, emphasizing youth voice and bottom-up engagement through visual and narrative media [7]. Evaluation of students' participation in SAHMOP using the gardening photos captured during their daily and weekly activities over one semester provided insights into the program's impact on civic-oriented experiential learning, values formation, and disaster resilience education. These visual narratives helped assess how ParSU NSTP implementers fostered practical competencies such as

ecological stewardship, community responsiveness, and adaptive decision-making during the COVID-19 crisis.

Furthermore, the documentation revealed how SAHMOP's design contributes to students' preparedness for future disasters by instilling discipline, proactive engagement, and reflective problem-solving skills. Natural disasters across multiple countries have resulted in significant fatalities and long-term disruptions, intensifying global concerns about the need for comprehensive disaster recovery and resilience frameworks [8], [9]. In the Philippines, one of the most disaster-prone nations globally, recent assessments emphasize the importance of localized, community-based preparedness and recovery strategies, particularly in education and youth engagement [10]. Within this context, the SAHMOP program's integration of experiential gardening and Photovoice documentation offers a unique lens for understanding how civic training and ecological responsibility can contribute to long-term resilience. By fostering discipline, proactive effort, and reflective decision-making, SAHMOP aligns with national disaster risk reduction goals and helps prepare students for future crises through grounded, community-responsive education.

Therefore, the evaluation could also assess how the students' communication and the recommended policies contribute to the economic development and sustainability of families living in mountainous, hilly, valley, and coastal regions that produce vegetation for consumption. This could enhance the health of marginalized families whose livelihoods depend on farming, agribusiness, poultry, and fishing, and have LGU policies to support students' disaster preparedness in the forecasts of increased occurrence linked to global warming, climate change, and escalating population densities in coastal areas [11].

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

The qualitative research method employing photovoice was utilized to gather data for objective no. 1, which aimed to analyze the students' photographs and documentation that embody SAHMOP's core themes: constructive volunteerism, civic consciousness, discipline, and proactive effort. The photographs and narratives supplied by the participants constituted the basis for the data analysis. Wang and Burris (1997) assert that photovoice empowers participants by prompting them to engage in active reflection on their daily lives and situations [12]. The researchers solicited validation of their study of the represented 'voice' and individual perceptions of students utilizing the SAHMOP class or teacher—students' participatory level, followed by the NSTP implementers' level guided by the researchers, from which they identified the best photovoice for exhibition. When using the SAHMOP framework for evaluation, the final assessment of the effects of SAMHOP was conducted at the level of inter-raters and community policymakers.

Photovoice is a technique for recognizing, representing, and improving a community using a distinct photographic methodology. Freire [13] characterizes photovoice as a form of empowerment education, wherein a key element is the collective generation of knowledge through reflection and discourse on community concerns by participants.

2.2. Research Setting

This research encompassed all campuses of Partido State University: Caramoan, Goa, Lagonoy, Sagñay, Salogon, San Jose, and Tinambac. However, no students from the Caramoan Campus presented the photovoice. The university campuses are located in the Partido District of Camarines Sur, located in the Bicol Peninsula, which is characterized by agricultural farming and fishing as its main sources of livelihood. The region features coastal geography and fertile lands that facilitate rice cultivation, coconut farming, and artisanal fishing practices. Traditional fishing techniques are notably prevalent in coastal barangays, illustrating the community's significant reliance on marine resources for sustenance and income. The Bureau of Soils and Water Management reports that around 56% of Camarines Sur's land area is allocated for agriculture, highlighting its economic importance to the province [14].

2.3. Research Participants and Sampling

The participants were students officially registered in NSTP 2-CWTS 2 during the second semester of AY 2022-2023 at the ParSU campuses, including Goa, Tinambac, Sagñay, Lagonoy, Salogon, and San Jose. All students enrolled in NSTP2 were deemed eligible participants for this activity, receiving training on the photovoice documentation method. There were 900 students who participated and submitted their photovoice to the designated CWTS advisers, who are implementers of SAHMOP.

2.4. Research Instruments

The research instrument utilized in this study was based on the most exemplary photovoices presented by the students during the photovoice exhibit, which included their journals detailing experiences, explanations, and interactions with the community and family in the execution of SAHMOP. The transmission modes encompass storytelling, self-reflection, dialogue, written expression, and printed photovoice.

2.5. Data Collection

Before evaluating the students' participation in the Stay at Home, Magtanom Outreach Program (SAHMOP), an analysis of the photovoice, which included the students' images and documentation, was conducted to clarify their reflections on the NSTP-CWTS values: constructive volunteerism, civic consciousness, discipline, and proactive effort. Following the analysis, the researchers, in conjunction with the CWTS implementers, identified the most effective photovoice methodologies utilized by students for data collection, resulting in the development of a policy for both the LGU and DEPED.

The study adopted the four-phase Photovoice implementation and analysis framework developed by Rosario and Wa-Mbaleka [12], which was tailored to evaluate CWTS students’ participation in SAHMOP. Each phase was supplemented with structured coding, thematic synthesis, and literature-based validation to ensure methodological rigor:

Phase 1: Orientation and Ethical Framing

CWTS2 students received formal training on the Photovoice methodology, including ethical photography practices, thematic framing (constructive volunteerism, civic consciousness, discipline, proactive effort), and documentation protocols. This phase aligns with Wang & Burris [15], who emphasize participant empowerment through guided reflection and ethical engagement.

Phase 2: Participatory Analysis and Manual Coding

Students selected three photographs per theme and engaged in classroom-based discussions with peers and CWTS advisers. The researchers and CWTS implementers manually coded the narratives and visual elements using thematic indicators such as setting, time of day, composition, and saturation. Coding was guided by grounded theory principles [16], allowing emergent patterns to surface from student reflections. No software was used; instead, manual coding ensured contextual sensitivity and cultural nuance.

Phase 3: Thematic Synthesis and Validation

The coded data were synthesized into four overarching themes aligned with SAHMOP values. Researchers triangulated findings through:

a. Student journals and oral narratives
b. Adviser-led cluster meetings
c. Inter-rater validation by policymakers and subject experts

This phase drew on Freire's empowerment education model, emphasizing collective meaning-making and community relevance [17]. The synthesis process involved clustering coded reflections into thematic matrices, which were then reviewed by a multidisciplinary panel to ensure consistency and depth.

Phase 4: Public Exhibit and Policy Dialogue

Selected photovoice entries were presented in a public exhibit attended by LGU officials, educators, policy makers (inter-raters), and community stakeholders. Discussions were recorded and transcribed, serving as a final layer of validation. This participatory dissemination aligns with Törnbom et al. [18], who advocate for photovoice as a tool for civic dialogue and policy influence.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers employed photovoice as both a pedagogical and evaluative tool to assess the effectiveness of the Stay-at-Home Magtanom (Planting) Outreach Program (SAHMOP), emphasizing its impact on students' development in constructive volunteerism, civic consciousness, discipline, and proactive effort. Drawing from Rosario's et al. [19], the participatory action research framework, the training of over 900 CWTS students was designed not merely to teach photography, but to cultivate reflective agency through image-based storytelling. Rosario's study demonstrated that photovoice

enables marginalized youth to articulate lived experiences and social realities, a principle mirrored in SAHMOP's implementation, where students captured and interpreted their gardening tasks as expressions of civic engagement and personal growth.

The training process incorporated sample images and guided sessions that aligned with Özbay and Esen's [20] emphasis on emotional resonance and critical dialogue in photovoice methodology. Their work underscores the importance of embedding participants' voices at every stage—from image capture to thematic analysis—which was operationalized in SAHMOP through journaling and structured reflection. Students were not passive documenters but active interpreters of their own contributions to community resilience, echoing Özbay and Esen's assertion that photovoice fosters both personal and societal transformation.

By integrating these frameworks, the SAHMOP training transcended technical instruction and became a platform for cultivating civic identity. The students' visual narratives revealed not only their understanding of gardening tasks but also their evolving sense of responsibility and community connection—outcomes that resonate with the transformative aims of both Rosario's and Özbay & Esen's studies.

3.1. Photovoice Content from the Stages of SAMHOP Training

Students selected to cultivate vegetables either individually or in groups, adhering to the SAHMOP stages that corresponded with the themes of community immersion. The stages of vegetable cultivation are as follows**: Stage 1**: Needs assessment in planting vegetables; **Stage 2**: Planning on how to start and finish the vegetation training ; **Stage 3**: Coordinating and identifying the location; **Stage 4**: Engaging the garden plan, which specifies the types of vegetables to be planted, to the ParSU NSTP Implementers , such as the CWTS adviser and NSTP director, with proper coordination with the parents and relatives of the identified garden area; for individuals planting vegetables at home, notifying the neighborhood, parents, and barangay officials; for those planting within the barangay, informing the CWTS adviser, NSTP director, parents, principal, classroom adviser, and parents of students involved in the vegetable planting at the barangay elementary school; **Stage 5** involved preparation of the garden area and collecting seeds utilized to ascertain which vegetable varieties to incorporate, considering criteria such as climate, spatial limitations, and ability **Stage 6** involved cultivating seeds or establishing a nursery; **Stage 7** entailed transplanting the nursery to garden plots or containers**; Stage 8** focused on growing vegetables; **Stage 9** encompassed harvesting vegetables; and **Stage 10** included harvesting vegetables for cooking for the family, as well as for the sale or distribution of surplus harvests.

The majority of the students cultivated vegetables in their backyards. Certain students residing in the university dormitory and boarding residence choose to cultivate plants on campus. Individuals around the Barangay Captain, together with Barangay authorities and volunteers, opted to plant in the vacant lot within the barangay. The photographs served as evidence of the students' gardening practices, and during the second-semester training, the CWTS students experienced an enhancement in self-esteem and had the opportunity to supply food for their families. Nykiforuk et al. [21] asserted that

photovoice offers a powerful means to visually represent events and disseminate personal insights, particularly in capturing community perceptions of the built and social environment. This assertion aligns with the findings of the SAHMOP implementation, where CWTS students used photovoice to document their gardening experiences and civic engagement. However, while Nykiforuk et al. emphasized photovoice as a tool for revealing environmental and health-related concerns within communities, the SAHMOP study extended its application to educational contexts specifically, as a formative tool for cultivating discipline, volunteerism, and civic consciousness among students. This shift in focus, from community critique to personal development, suggests that photovoice is not only effective in surfacing collective concerns but also in fostering individual transformation through structured reflection and visual storytelling.

Supporting this educational application, Schell et al. [22] demonstrated that photovoice can be a successful pedagogical tool for teaching students to think critically and engage with qualitative research methods. Their study, conducted in a graduate sociology course, found that students developed a deeper awareness of social issues and experienced the dual role of researcher and participant through visual inquiry. This confirms the SAHMOP approach, where students were empowered to interpret their own civic actions through photography and journaling.

Conversely, Nurhadi et al. [23] explored photovoice in the context of thesis examinations and highlighted challenges in communication and argumentation among students. Their findings suggest that while photovoice fosters creativity, it may not always translate into clear academic discourse, especially when students struggle to articulate the meaning behind their images [22]. This contrasts with the SAHMOP experience, where structured training and guided reflection helped students maintain the centrality of their voices and align visual outputs with civic learning outcomes.

Further, Latz [24] emphasized the importance of conceptual frameworks and ethical scaffolding in photovoice research, noting that without intentional design, the method risks becoming superficial or tokenistic. SAHMOP's integration of Rosario's [19] participatory framework and Özbay & Esen's [20] emphasis on emotional resonance ensured that students' outputs were not only expressive but also analytically grounded.

Taken together, these studies affirm that photovoice is a versatile methodology whose effectiveness depends on context, scaffolding, and participant engagement. SAHMOP's success lies in its deliberate fusion of civic education, visual inquiry, and structured reflection, an approach that both confirms and extends the pedagogical potential of photovoice

3.2. Photovoice reflecting CWTS Students challenges encountered in SAHMOP Training

Nine hundred (900) CWTS students across the eight campuses of Partido State University participated in the SAMHOP Program, documenting their weekly vegetable gardening activities through journals and photovoice. While initial participation was high, only five hundred ninety-six (596) students were determined by CWTS implementers to have successfully completed all ten (10) stages of the vegetable gardening cycle. These

stages included site selection, land preparation, seed selection, sowing, watering and maintenance, pest management, growth monitoring, harvesting, post-harvest handling, and community sharing. Each stage required specific outputs such as time-stamped photovoice entries, reflective journal documentation, and video uploads, which were evaluated for completeness, authenticity, timeliness, and depth of reflection.

CWTS implementers employed a rubric-based assessment to measure student success, emphasizing originality and personal engagement. However, several challenges emerged during implementation. A significant number of students submitted duplicated photovoice presentations, particularly those working in teams within barangay gardens. Journals were often replicated among classmates, undermining the authenticity of individual experiences. Only a minority of students cited technological barriers, such as the lack of a cellphone or internet access, as reasons for incomplete documentation. More commonly, delays in submission, ranging from three weeks to a month, were attributed to environmental disruptions. Heavy rainfall, flooding, insufficient sunlight, and the intrusion of animals such as ducks, chickens, dogs, and cats adversely affected plant growth and garden maintenance.

These challenges mirror broader agricultural issues faced by local farmers near Partido State University. As noted by Pesimo et al. [25], farmers in the Mt. Isarog Watershed Area have adopted various strategies to cope with extreme weather conditions. Yet, climate change continues to negatively impact farming practices until the present across ecological, economic, and social dimensions. Gratela-Caballero [26] further highlights how environmental shifts and modern influences, including social media, are reshaping traditional agricultural norms and threatening local food systems.

3.3. Participatory Analysis in Selecting the Best Photovoice for Exhibit

In this study, the Photovoice method was employed as a participatory visual research tool to evaluate the civic engagement and experiential learning of CWTS students under the SAHMOP program. Students selected compelling photographs of their classmates that encapsulated key themes – constructive volunteerism, civic consciousness, discipline, and proactive effort, and engaged in structured discussions with peers and CWTS advisers. This approach was adapted from Rosario [19] whose study utilized Photovoice to document community-based health interventions. However, the present study diverges significantly in its focus, population, and thematic framing. While Rosario emphasized community health narratives, this research centers on civic education, ecological responsibility, and values formation among underprivileged college students in a post-pandemic context. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of Photovoice within a national service training program (NSTP) framework, using vegetable gardening as both a pedagogical and civic platform, a methodological extension that positions Photovoice not only as a tool for reflection but also as a mechanism for values-based transformation and disaster resilience education.

The participatory analysis of 596 Photovoice entries across 12 CWTS classes led to the selection of 63 outputs representing civic consciousness, 52 reflecting proactive effort and constructive volunteerism, and 51 highlighting disciplines. These were deliberated by

CWTS implementers and the NSTP director, culminating in a public exhibit where 22 students confidently presented their visual narratives. This process exemplifies Photovoice's capacity to empower marginalized youth by amplifying their voices and fostering self-efficacy through visual storytelling.

To strengthen the methodological foundation, this study draws on recent international scholarship. Budig et al. [27] emphasized Photovoice's transformative potential in fostering empowerment through increased self-perception, social recognition, and access to community networks. Azzarito [28] positioned Photovoice within participatory visual research (PVR), highlighting its role in humanizing research and revealing hidden power relations in marginalized communities. Suprapto et al. [29] conducted a systematic review of Photovoice as a participatory action research strategy, underscoring its effectiveness in bridging scientific inquiry and grassroots action across education, health, and social domains.

Together, these frameworks affirm the methodological rigor and social relevance of the SAHMOP Photovoice implementation. By embedding Photovoice within civic training and ecological practice, this study contributes a novel model for participatory education that aligns with SDG goals on poverty reduction, health, and community resilience.

During a participatory analysis of the 596 Photovoices that successfully completed the ten (10) stages of vegetable gardening by CWTS students and the NSTP adviser in 12 classes, they chose the Best Photovoice for Exhibit to the inter-raters. In the classroom, students discussed visual images with their companions and teachers. CWTS students in classrooms were given the opportunity to choose the finest Photovoice to represent their personal challenges experienced in gardening in the entire stage. According to Huber et. al. [30] the photovoice participatory technique differs from documentary photography and visual anthropology in that its major goal is to improve grassroots living conditions and activities with visible results. The majority of Partido State University students come from low-income families, with parents working as farmers, tenants, fishers, and laborers, as well as barangay officials or volunteers. Students should boost their self-esteem and confidence not only in academic performance but also in their understanding of the importance of grassroots farmers and farming as a vital profession for fostering zero poverty, excellent health, and well-being. Each CWTS adviser serving as the SAHMOP implementer presented the chosen photographs from his or her class for thematic interpretation for deliberation and discussion during a cluster meeting with the other NSTP CWTS implementers and the director to identify the best in the initial screened photo voice in the class to engage with the advisory committee about the photographs and narratives to be featured in the public exhibit. The designated implementers brainstormed ideas for the best photovoice, and a thorough analysis led to the reduction of 596 in the class participatory analysis to 63 photovoice outputs showing the impact of the implementation on the values of the CWTS students with the indicators of civic consciousness; 52 photovoice outputs showing both proactive effort and constructive volunteerism; and 51 photovoice outputs showing discipline. However, during the exhibition and validation, only 22 CWTS students from the eight campuses arrived with confidence and were

prepared to exhibit and present the themes and challenges they captured in their photovoice at specific stages.

3.4. Exhibition of Best Photovoice to Inter-raters for Evaluation of SAHMOP Participation

Before the photovoice exhibition, CWTS students participating in the SAHMOP training were invited to write personal narratives reflecting on their experiences. These narratives captured not only the actions and responses throughout the five-month vegetable gardening initiative but also the concerns and challenges they encountered from inception to completion. The documentation process was intentionally designed to present each student's best photovoice entry – an image paired with a story to illustrate their journey, approaches, and reflections. This exhibit became a transformative experience, aligning with the work of Teti and Myroniuk [31], who conceptualize photovoice as a bridge from image to action, empowering participants to articulate their lived realities and health needs. However, while their study emphasizes individual empowerment, the SAHMOP implementation extended this concept into a collective civic platform, where students not only shared personal insights but also engaged in institutional dialogue and policy advocacy.

The selection of photovoice entries for the exhibit was guided by five inter-raters, each an expert in a distinct field – policymaking, economics, photography, agriculture, and cultural communication. Their evaluations added depth and credibility to the students' work, validating the narratives and images through a multi-sectoral lens. The first inter-rater, a policymaker from the Department of Education, highlighted the students' clear documentation of mini-garden preparation, soil utilization, and community engagement. He noted the emergence of civic consciousness, volunteerism, and group transformation elements that resonate with Paulo Freire's pedagogy of liberation. Freire's concept of *conscientization*, the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality, was evident as students moved from passive participants to active agents of change. Their praxis, or reflective action, was embodied in the tangible outcomes of their gardening efforts and the narratives they constructed.

The second inter-rater, an expert in socioeconomic research, offered a comprehensive analysis of the photovoice entries, identifying themes such as gender collaboration, resource optimization, and the economics of vegetable cultivation. His observations highlighted the students' ability to articulate complex ideas – utility, satisfaction, recycling, and cost-benefit analysis through visual storytelling. These insights suggest that the SAHMOP initiative not only addressed food security but also cultivated economic literacy and social responsibility. The integration of these themes aligns with participation theory, which emphasizes inclusive engagement and shared decision-making. In this context, students were not merely recipients of training but co-creators of knowledge, influencing institutional and policy-level discourse.

The third inter-rater, a communication and photography expert, focused on the visual and expressive quality of the photovoice entries. He observed that students employed advanced communication technologies to convey their challenges and triumphs,

demonstrating how photovoice can serve as a tool for marginalized groups to engage in self-expression, empowerment, and advocacy. This aligns with Henry and Gabel's [32] assertion that photovoice fosters connections and drives policy change, particularly within agricultural communities. In the SAHMOP context, students used imagery not only to document their work but to challenge perceptions and advocate for sustainable practices.

The fourth inter-rater, an LGU policymaker and agriculturist, commended the students' efforts while identifying common challenges such as time management, resource availability, and sustainability. He emphasized the strengths of community mobilization, adaptability, and civic consciousness. His remarks reinforce the notion that with adequate support, the SAHMOP model can evolve into a sustainable, community-based environmental initiative, an embodiment of Freire's vision of education as a practice of freedom.

Finally, the fifth inter-rater, a university expert in social and cultural studies, highlighted the role of constructive volunteerism and gender-sensitive task allocation. He noted that students gained practical knowledge through experiential learning, further validating the program's impact on personal and collective development.

All discussions during the exhibit were systematically recorded and transcribed, and the photographs with accompanying narratives were showcased to engage decision-makers and policy influencers. While the initial focus was on a limited set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the exhibit revealed broader thematic relevance, particularly to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). This expanded alignment emphasizes the study's potential to inform cross-sectoral policy and community development initiatives.

In contrast to previous literature that often treats photovoice as a static documentation tool, the SAHMOP implementation demonstrates its dynamic potential as a participatory, transformative, and policy-influencing mechanism. By critically linking student experiences to Freirean pedagogy and participation theory, this study not only supports existing findings but extends them, showing how photovoice can cultivate civic consciousness, economic awareness, and sustainable development competencies among university students.

3.5. Sample of Photovoice Evaluated by Inter-raters in the Exhibit that Reflects Constructive Volunteerism (CV), Civic Consciousness (CC), Discipline (D), and Proactive Effort (PE) evaluated by the inter-raters

In the context of the SAHMOP program, Proactive Effort (PE) serves as the motivational foundation upon which Constructive Volunteerism **(CV)** is built. PE refers to the students' initiative to act without external prompting—anticipating challenges, preparing solutions, and engaging meaningfully in their tasks. This internal drive often manifests in behaviors that go beyond compliance, leading to voluntary actions that benefit others and the community. Within SAHMOP, this dynamic was clearly observed in students who, despite environmental and logistical constraints, demonstrated initiative that evolved into sustained volunteerism.

For instance, in Figure 1, BSIT students from ParSU Goa Campus were documented preparing a vegetable garden under intense heat, without shade or cover.

3.5.1 Constructive Volunteerism (CV) and Proactive Effort (PE)

Figure 1. Students of BSIT-PSU, Goa, Camarines Sur, preparing the gardening venue

Their decision to proceed with the task, despite discomfort, was not mandated; it stemmed from a proactive mindset. As one student reflected, "We came here to give our best effort so our SAHMOP would succeed." This proactive behavior catalyzed a deeper sense of ownership and responsibility, which then translated into constructive volunteerism as they collaborated, supported one another, and extended their efforts to benefit the broader community.

Figure. 2. Axcel B. Beringuela, BS Geology, April 11, 2023, PSU, Goa, Camarines Sur, preparing the vegetable gardening activity

Proactive Effort: "May sarong aldaw na nagigdi kami para ibuhos ang samong best and effort para maging successful po ang SAHMOP mi. *English Translation: "There was a day when we came here to become successful in SAHMOP."*

Similarly, in Figure 2, a BS Geology student showcased a recycled vegetable pot made from plastic waste. The student's initiative to repurpose discarded materials was driven by environmental awareness and a desire to reduce pollution. This proactive act not only addressed climate concerns but also inspired peers to adopt similar practices. The

student's narrative emphasized, *"We reused what we had, not just for our garden, but to show others it can be done."* This individual effort evolved into a collective movement, with classmates and neighbors contributing materials, thereby reinforcing CV through shared environmental stewardship.

3.5.2 Constructive Volunteerism and Proactive Effort

Another compelling example is found in Figure 3, where BS Fisheries students from Sagñay Campus deviated from vegetable gardening to plant mangroves, an adaptation based on their coastal context and academic discipline. Their proactive decision to respond to local ecological needs, rather than follow a uniform program design, demonstrated both initiative and contextual intelligence. Their narrative, "We planted mangroves to protect our shoreline and encourage others to volunteer," illustrates how PE led to CV by aligning personal action with community benefit.

Figure 3. Minerva Villarico, BS Fisheries Sagñay, Camarines Sur

According to her, **"***this is the result of our SAMHOP. It helps those who live near the shore because it controls the waves that may hit the houses in their community. I also encourage the youth who also want to volunteer in their community."*

3.5.3 Constructive Volunteerism, Discipline, Proactive Effort, and Civic Consciousness

Moreover, Figure 4 captures a student crafting a wooden holder for recycled pots, using donated plastic bottles from neighbors. The student's proactive effort in mobilizing local resources fostered a ripple effect of volunteerism, as families and barangay members became involved. This act exemplifies how PE can activate CV by creating inclusive spaces for civic participation and shared responsibility. This image depicts the Stage 5 SAHMOP activity, which required preparing the garden area and collecting seeds to determine which vegetable varieties to include, taking into account characteristics such as climate, spatial limits, and aptitude. It also depicts discipline and proactive effort to consider important elements in gardening.

Figure 4. Student crafting a wooden holder for recycled pots

I used plastic bottles from the Bgry. and mga kapitbahay namin po, some donated several plastic bottles para magamit ko po" **Translation**: "I used plastic bottles from our barangay and neighbors. Some people donated several plastic bottles that I could use."

3.5.4 Constructive Volunteerism, Discipline

Finally, in Figure 5, Daniel Rivero, the student, described how their group borrowed tools from the barangay and worked together to measure and divide the gardening plot. The student emphasized, *"We didn't just do this for grades, we built friendships and helped each other."* This reflection highlights how proactive planning and collaboration nurtured a culture of constructive volunteerism rooted in solidarity and mutual support.

Figure 5. Daniel Rivero, BS Math, February 18, 2023, Matacla Goa, Camarines Sur, showed this Photovoice, measuring garden site with his groupmates.

4. CONCLUSION

Three years after its implementation, the ParSU NSTP SAHMOP program has demonstrated enduring educational and social impact across students, families, and communities. Through the integration of Photovoice as a participatory methodology, students were empowered to reflect on their vegetable gardening experiences, articulate

personal growth, and engage in civic discourse. Weekly visual documentation served not only as a technical record of agricultural tasks but also as a medium for expressing resilience, critical thinking, and civic engagement, the core values embedded in the SAHMOP framework.

Despite challenges such as content duplication and limited access to technology, the Photovoice outputs revealed substantial educational value. Students acquired practical agricultural skills while cultivating a deeper sense of civic responsibility, self-sufficiency, and empathy for community well-being. These outcomes affirm Photovoice's role as a transformative pedagogical tool, aligning with Paulo Freire's concept of conscientization and participation theory, which emphasize reflection, agency, and collective action. The thematic distribution of Photovoice entries – 63 on civic consciousness (CC), 52 on constructive volunteerism and proactive effort (CV/PE), and 51 on discipline, offers meaningful insight into student perception. The dominance of civic consciousness suggests that students internalized the broader social implications of their work, viewing gardening not merely as a task but as a contribution to community resilience and public welfare. This reflects a shift from individual compliance to collective responsibility, indicating that SAHMOP successfully fostered values aligned with national service and sustainable development.

The practical contribution of this study lies in its demonstration of how immersive, community-based education can generate personal transformation and policy-relevant insights. The public exhibition of student narratives, validated by a multidisciplinary panel of inter-raters, facilitated dialogue with local policymakers and stakeholders, reinforcing the program's relevance to pressing local issues. The initiative's alignment with Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), positions SAHMOP as a replicable model for civic education and grassroots sustainability.

Theoretically, this study extends the application of Photovoice beyond health and community diagnostics into the realm of civic training and disaster resilience education. It demonstrates how visual storytelling can serve as a bridge between experiential learning and institutional advocacy, empowering students as co-creators of knowledge and agents of change. Conceptually, SAHMOP illustrates the potential of participatory education to cultivate empathy, agency, and ecological consciousness, the values essential for navigating complex social and environmental challenges.

In sum, the SAHMOP program exemplifies how structured, values-based training can transcend classroom boundaries, fostering civic identity and sustainable development through experiential learning. Its success highlights the importance of integrating participatory methodologies like Photovoice into national service curricula, not only to document student experiences but to shape future-ready citizens capable of leading community transformation. Local Government Units (LGUs) and the Department of Education (DepEd) can adopt SAHMOP principles by integrating civic gardening, participatory learning, and environmental stewardship into community programs and school curricula. By aligning SAHMOP's experiential approach with youth development and climate resilience goals, LGUs can promote localized food security initiatives, while

DepEd can embed service-learning models that foster ecological awareness, volunteerism, and student activity. This convergence supports intersectoral collaboration, empowering young citizens to become proactive contributors to sustainable development.

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