

TAYO – PAGPAPANIBAGO – PAMUMUNO: A REFLECTION ON TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP¹

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Mapagpalang araw sa inyong lahat.

When I heard about the theme of your congress, “Pagbabago: Ako ang Simula”, I remembered a beautiful story about a fictional young person who have had a rare opportunity to speak to God. In this story, it appears that God is asking a big favor from the young person. The story goes like this:

God said, “Build a better a world!” And with so much doubt and uncertainty, the young person reacted, “But Lord, the world is such a big place, cold and complicated, I’m so young, there’s only little that I can do?” And God said, “My dear child, just build a better you!”

This idea of “building a better you” is the battlecry of many self-help books that flooded the psychological sections of bookstores around the world. Our curricula on values education, I would argue, is angled on this individual-based, psychological premise. That is, change starts from within and that change is only possible if each of us willfully contribute to this process of change – ang *pagbabago*.

AKO – TAYO

While this psychological premise is an interesting and effective idea (probably to some persons, organizations and institutions), as a sociologist whose main interest is the study of the “social” rather than the “individual”, I would like to propose an addition to the idea of change that is “individually-based” to change that is based on the “relations among individuals”. This relational point of view suggests that instead of just focusing on “Ako” (“I”) – “to build a better you”, the action is directed to “Tayo” (“We”), that is, “building a better “we” – a better community of individuals.

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If I am given the chance to talk to God, and if he asked me, “Yayet, build a better world”, I think I will have the same sentiment as the young person in our fictional story and I will complain to God: “Lord, medyo mahirap naman po yata yang gusto Niyong mangyari?” And if God would react, “Yayet, just build a better you.” My conversation with God will not end there. I will gather all my strength, overcome my fear and with humility I will dare request: “Lord, if it is not too much to ask, can you also please talk to my parents, relatives, teachers, classmates, neighbours, co-workers, barangay officials, mayor, governor, justices, mga pulis, government officials, all those powerful and marginalized, and tell them, that we need to be together to build a better world.” Dahil ang pagbabago ay TAYO, hindi lang ako!

PAGBABAGO - PAGPAPANIBAGO

To include the concept of “TAYO” with “AKO” into the equation of understanding “how change is possible” gives more meaning to the term “pagbabago”. Dahil ang proyekto ng pagbabago ay hindi lamang pagbabago ng sarili subalit pagbabago ring kasabay ang lipunang ginagalawan. In this congress, I would like to propose this view of the process of change as the process of transformation. Sa ating wika, walang direktang translation ang transformation ngunit sa aking palagay, maaaring katawanin nito ang konsepto ng “pagpapanibago”.

To transform is to change into another state. Kung pag-uusapan natin ang kalagayan ng ating bansa, nakakalungkot na palagi nating naririnig sa paligid ang komentong, “Naku, wala namang pagbabago sa bayan natin.” Sa maraming aspekto, totoong kumpara sa mga karatig-bansa sa nakaraang 30 taon, hindi dama ang pagbabago sa buhay nating mga Pilipino lalo na sa larangan ng ekonomiya, politika at serbisyong-panlipunan (Datamonitor Plc, 2009; Wallace, February 2008, June 2004). This means that our Philippine society has yet to transform. Ibig sabihin, meron tayong hinihintay na pagbabago. Pero, ano ang pagbabago kung lahat ay naghihintay? Kung mabibilang lamang ang nagbibigyan ng pagkakataon na maging aktibong bahagi ng proseso ng pagpapanibago?

THE CASE OF FILIPINO ISTAMBAYS

Siguro makakatulong kung tignan natin ang sitwasyon ng mga istambay sa pag-intindi ng konsepto ng “pagpapanibago”. For my PhD dissertation in Canada (Batan, 2010b), I problematized the fascinating world of selected istambays in Luzon. I first struggled with the stereotypes, dahil noong una, batid ko, tulad ng nakararami, pangit ang pagtingin ko sa mga tambay. Alam ko sila ay tamad, walang kuwenta at pasaway sa buhay. However, as I listen to their stories, my perception of them transformed into a moving critique of our Filipino society. I discovered that it is not entirely correct to see our Filipino istambays as “bums” similar to North American youth. Our istambays want and clamor for change. Their situation is not a question of not willing to work. Theirs is a question of no available work. Walang sapat na trabaho sa Pilipinas!

So how is economic change and social mobility possible for Filipino istambays? Paano magiging bahagi ng proseso ng pagpapanibago ang mga istambay sa Pilipinas kung wala ngang oportunidad at istrakturang tutulong para mabago ang kahirapan sa kanilang buhay?

Marahil makakatulong ang tulang ginamit kong konklusyon sa aking disertasyon. Dito nangarap ako ng pagbabago na “TAYO” ang binibigyan diin, kabahagi ang “AKO” na may paniniwala sa tulong ng Poong Maykapal.

HINDI LAHAT

Hindi lahat ng mga kabataan ay nakapag-aral o nag-aaral.
Hindi lahat ng kabataan na nag-aaral ay nakakapagtuloy ng pag-aaral.
Hindi lahat nang nagtatrabaho ay nag-aral.
Hindi lahat nang nag-aral ay may trabaho.
Hindi lahat nang nag-aral ay may trabahong ginagamit ang kanilang pinag-aralan.
Hindi lahat ng istambay ay tamad at ayaw magtrabaho.
Hindi lahat nang humahanap ng trabaho ay nakakakita nito.
Hindi lahat ng kabataan ay gustong umasa sa kanilang mga magulang.
Hindi lahat ng kabataan ay masaya kapag nakikita nilang nahihirapan ang kanilang mga magulang.
Hindi lahat ng kabataang nakagawa ng maling desisyon sa kanilang buhay ay ayaw ng pagbabago.

Saan, kailan at sa paanong paraan Mabibigyang-solusyon ang mga Suliraning transisyon ng Kabataang Pilipino?

Hindi lamang sa pamamagitan ng kanilang mga sarili.
Hindi lamang sa palagiang tulong ng kanilang mga magulang at mga kapamilya.
Hindi lamang sa pagmamalasakit ng pamayanan.
Hindi lamang sa polisiya at batas.
Subalit higit sa lahat, ang pagtangan ng Kalidad ng pag-iisip —
Na may kakayahang intindihin ang proseso’t sumuri
Sa mga istrakturang depekto ng mga isyung ito – Na kung saan ang buwang-liwayway ng perspektibong ito
Ay magsisilang ng bagong henerasyong Makikipagtulungan sa dating henerasyon

Upang baguhin ang kasalukuyan.
Nang ang di pagkakapantay-pantay sa lipunan

NOT ALL

*Not all Filipino youth that I know went to school or are studying.
Not all youth who are studying are able to finish their education.
Not all Filipino youth who are currently working were able to go school;
Not all those who went to school have jobs.
Not all working educated Filipino youth are able to practice their professions.
Not all istambay youth that I know are lazy and not willing to work.
Not all youth who are looking for work are able to find them.
No, not all youth that I know like to remain dependent on their parents.
Not all want to see their parents desperate due to their dependence.*

Not all Filipino youth who made wrong decisions do not want meaningful change in their lives.

Where, when, and how could These transition crises of Filipino youth be abated?

*Not just through personal dispositions to change.
Not just by the charity of parents and family's welfare.
Not just with community's care.*

*Not just through policies and law.
But more salient, is having a Quality of mind –
Able to process and ponder*

*The structural defects of these issues –
And that this daybreak of perspective would*

*Give birth to a new generation of Filipinos
Willing to work well with the older generation -
To change the present.*

Di man mawala nang tuluyan ay maibsan nang labis –
Upang ang susunod na henerasyon ay
Hindi na magkukwento ng naratibo ng hirap ng kanilang
mga magulang.

*That inequalities in our Philippine society
Though persistent, may be mitigated,*

Sa halip, ang ibubunyag ay
Kwento ng pag-asa, pagmamahalan at tulongan.
Ang salaysay kung paano ang nakararaming
Karaniwang pamilyang Pilipino ay nakaalpas
Sa tanikala ng kahirapan.

*So that the future generation will no more
Tell about the poverty narratives
of their parents.*

Hindi lahat ng pangarap ay natutupad.
Ngunit sana, ang mga kataga sa tulang ito ay

*Instead, the visions that they would share
Are stories of hope, care and reciprocity.*

Hingahan ng Maykapal –
Upang magkabuhay.

*A narrative where the majority of
Ordinary Filipino families would be freed
From the knuckles of poverty.*

*Not all social ideals come into being,
But who knows, may be, the words spoken in this
poem
May be touched by a Great Spirit
And breathe life.*

PAMUMUNO

Malaking karangalan ang maging bahagi ng Bicol Youth Congress. Malaking karangalan ang mabigyan ng pagkakataong magbahagi ng pananaw tungkol sa pagbabago at proseso ng pagpapanibago. But there is one concept that I did not choose to articulate although I was asked to do so. This is the concept of leadership. Let me tell you why.

With the Internet and all forms of media around us, one could readily read, watch and discuss the concept, tricks and tips on how to become an effective leader. However, in gathering of leaders like this, I require myself to be competent enough not to insult your intelligence. Because if my estimation is right, most of us here do not need another lecture on leadership. What we need is a strong reminder. Enough with thinking, talking and doing leadership from a person-centered point of view. Let us work together to become leaders with social conscience, oriented towards serving others and building a world of community. In such scenario, “TAYO” may give us a better grasp of transformed Filipino society in the future.

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