

48TH SUSTAINABLE SHARED GROWTH SEMINAR

NOV
2025

TRANSITION TOWNS AT THE FRINGES



A seminar by
Sekiguchi Global Research Association of the Atsumi
International Foundation (SGRA)
in collaboration with
Faculty of Management and Development Studies (FMDS)
of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU)





TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 INTRODUCTION

02 PROGRAM

04 • Opening Remarks:

JUNKO IMANISHI

(Chief Representative, SGRA/AISF)

07 • Presentation 1:

Koyama Mikae (Director, TTF)

Shunro Yoshida (Co-Director, TTF)

12 • Presentation 2 :

DR. Ferdinand "Max" Maquito (UPOU)

17 • Discussion:

DR. Finaflor F. Taylan

(Dean, FMDS/UPOU)



TABLE OF CONTENTS



21 • Open Forum

**Dr. Max Maquito
Koyama Mikae
Shunro Yoshida
Dr. Finaflor Taylan**

26 GALLERY

30 • CLOSING REMARKS:

**DR. Joane V. Serrano
(Chancellor, UPOU)**

33 NEXT STEPS

36 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

48TH SUSTAINABLE SHARED GROWTH (KKK) SEMINAR TRANSITION TOWNS AT THE FRINGES

Organized by: Faculty of Management and Development Studies (FMDS) of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) and Sekiguchi Global Research Association (SGRA) of Atsumi International Foundation (AISF)

We focus on one engine by which we could achieve KKK: a Transition Town (TT). More specifically, we focus on issues at the fringes of a society where a TT could play a role. One such issue is about a community across the national border. We take the recent report of Transition Town Fujino (TTF) of their visit to Hong Kong and Mainland China as departure point to explore Local-to-Local Across Border Schemes (LLABS), and the other fringe issues of gender and aging. Hong Kong, Mainland China, and even Japan are now aging societies. The Philippine Statistic Authority has also forecasted that the Philippines will be an aging society come 2030. In deepening the relations with TTF, we could also go farther in our exploration of UPOU's vision of sustainability through its Sustainability in Action-Living Laboratory Campus initiative (SiALLC).

HK Report



Mikae Koyama
Director, TTF

Mainland China Report



Shunro Yoshida
Co-Director, TTF

Role of TTs: Lab Notes from SiALLC



Max Maquito
FMDS/UPOU



21 Nov. 2025 (Fri)
9 AM - 12 NN
(PH Time)



UPOU or ZOOM



Junko Imanishi
Exe. Dir. SGRA/AISF
Opening Remarks



Fina Taylan
Dean FMDS/UPOU
Discussant



Joane Serrano
Chancellor UPOU
Closing Remarks

Now Accepting Registrations

- open to the public
- no fees
- limited slots
- language: English + Japanese



<https://url.upou.edu.ph/KKK48-Reg>

INTRODUCTION

September 18, 2025

48th Sustainable Shared Growth Seminar / SUS304 Public Session

KKK Seminar #48

Topic: Transition Towns

Description:

We focus on one engine by which we could achieve KKK: A Transition Town (TT). More specifically, we focus on issues at the fringes of society where a TT could play a role. One such issue is about a community across the national border. We take the recent report of Transition Town Fujino (TTF) of their visit to Local-to-Local Across Border schemes (LLABS), and the other fringe issues of gender and aging. Hong Kong, Mainland China, and even Japan are now aging societies. The Philippine Statistic Authority has also forecasted that the Philippines will be an aging society come 2030. In deepening the relations with TTF, we could also go farther in our exploration of UPOU's vision of sustainability through its Sustainability in Action-Living Laboratory Campus initiative (SiALLC).

PROGRAM

OPENING REMARKS

JUNKO IMANISHI

Chief Representative, Sekiguchi Global Research Association

Executive Director, Atsumi International Foundation

PRESENTATION

- PRESENTATION 1| Our Transition Journey to Hong Kong and Mainland China
Koyama Mikae (Director, TTF)
Shunro Yoshida (Co-Director, TTF)
- PRESENTATION 2| Transition Town at the Fringes
Dr. Max Maquito (FMDS/UPOU)

DISCUSSION

Dr. Finaflor Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)

OPEN FORUM

Dr. Finaflor Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)

Dr. Max Maquito (FMDS/UPOU)

Koyama Mikae (Director, TTF)

Shunro Yoshida (Co-Director, TTF)

CLOSING REMARKS

Chancellor Joane V. Serrano (UPOU)

PROGRAM

FACILITATOR

MS. NOREEN DIANNE ALAZADA (FMDS/UPOU)

PRESENTER



Noreen Alazada currently works at the Faculty of Management and Development Studies (FMDS), University of the Philippines Open University under the Youth for Ifugao Rice Terraces Project. Noreen Dianne does research in Sustainable Development, Massive Open Online Courses, Open Educational Resources, Capacity Building through Technology, Quantitative Social Research, Qualitative Social Research and Communication and Media.

E-Mail: noreen.alazada@upou.edu.ph

OPENING REMARKS: JUNKO IMANISHI

Chief Representative, SGRA/AISF

Good day!

I'm Junko Imanishi, Chief Representative of the Sekiguchi Global Research Association. I would like to welcome you to the 48th Sustainable Shared Growth Seminar, jointly organized with the Faculty of Management and Development Studies of the University of the Philippines Open University.

Most especially, welcome to our guests from the Transition Town Fujino, Koyama Mikae and Yoshida Shunro. They will be first sharing the report on their visit to Hong Kong and Mainland China as part of their transition town advocacy. As you might know, China-Japan relations are a bit strained these days, as I think it is with China and the Philippines. As good global citizens, we try to have good relations with each other based on the principle of harmony amidst diversity. I am very happy to see that this principle is being practiced by Koyama san and Yoshida san.



"As good global citizens, we try to have good relations with each other based on the principle of harmony amidst diversity."

OPENING REMARKS: JUNKO IMANISHI

Chief Representative, SGRA/AISF

This principle is also enshrined in the Local-to-Local Across Border Scheme (LLABS) that FMDS/UPOU is pushing. In the second presentation, Dr. Max Maquito will share his thoughts on LLABS based on his lab notes inspired by the Sustainability in Action--A Living Laboratory Campus initiative of FMDS/UPOU and his research on Japanese studies. Dr. Max will focus on issues at the fringes of society, which the report of Mikae san and Shunro san also touches on, namely, cross-border networks, gender, and aging society.

The discussion that follows, our guests from Fujino and FMDS Dean Fina Taylan will elaborate more on the two presentations, before we open the floor to the participating audience. Chancellor Joane Serrano will give the closing remarks. It is very much encouraging that we have the UPOU Chancellor and FMDS Dean onboard for this research and advocacy.

We hope that this seminar will contribute to the forming of a LLABS between Maahas, the town in which FMDS/UPOU is located, and Fujino, given their common vision of sustainability.

Yoroshiku onegai shimasu!



"This principle is also enshrined in the Local-to-Local Across Border Scheme (LLABS) that FMDS/UPOU is pushing."

OPENING REMARKS:

JUNKO IMANISHI

Chief Representative, SGRA/AISF

どうもありがとうございます
Many Thanks!



The Sekiguchi Global Research Association (SGRA), under the Atsumi International Scholarship Foundation, promotes global citizenship and harmony through international research and collaboration.

PRESENTATION I

Our Transition Journey to Hong Kong and China

Shunro Yoshida and Koyama Mikae

Introduction and Context

- This summary presents the key insights from the Transition Journey conducted by Shunro Yoshida and Mikae Koyama of Transition Japan to Hong Kong and Chengdu, China in August 2025. The trip was initiated following growing interest from Chinese-speaking civic groups after the publication of Hidetake Enomoto's Transition book in Traditional and Simplified Chinese.

The purpose of the journey was to:

- Share 17 years of Japan's Transition Town experience
- Support emerging Transition-inspired initiatives in China and Hong Kong
- Learn from local civic and ecological practices
- Strengthen grassroots connections between Japanese and Chinese communities

Hong Kong: Key Activities and Insights

Workshops

Yoshida and Koyama facilitated sessions on:

- Transition worldview and visioning
- Timeline exercises
- Open Space Technology
- Local currency concepts
- Japanese food and agriculture education

These workshops were met with enthusiasm, reflecting strong curiosity about Japan's Transition methods.



PRESENTATION I

Our Transition Journey to Hong Kong and China

Shunro Yoshida and Koyama Mikae

Community Field Visits

- Tin Shui Yuen Community Garden: Built by a young migrant couple through collaborative working groups; partially government-funded.
- Life Academy: Observed local currency use, communal cooking, and laughter yoga.
- Green Hub: A former colonial police headquarters transformed into a sustainability-focused community space.



Key Observations

- Hong Kong faces severe space limitations for farming and civic activities.
- Despite constraints, groups find creative ways to conduct environmental and community programs.
- Public events gathered participants from Kaduri Farm, PCD, and other civic networks.



Chengdu: Community Innovation and Learning

- **Dongfang Yijing Residential Community**
- A standout example of 19-year self-governance, where residents manage cleaning, security, and community spaces themselves. Funds saved by eliminating management companies are reinvested, with surplus returned to residents. Shared spaces have been transformed into gardens and biotopes using reclaimed materials.



PRESENTATION I

Our Transition Journey to Hong Kong and China

Shunro Yoshida and Koyama Mikae

Natural Farming CSA (Anlong Village)

- Run by a Sichuan University professor integrating soil microorganism research.
- Produces organic doubanjiang and supplies urban CSA members.
- One of the few remaining farms after widespread farmer relocation.

Mountain Nature School Workshops

Day 1: My Story workshop, Inner Transition, Mirror walk, Visioning timeline

Day 2: Local currency worldview, case studies, "Give you give me" simulation game

Day 3: Open Space Technology; cultural exchange through noodle-making (Yoshida) and matcha tea (Koyama)



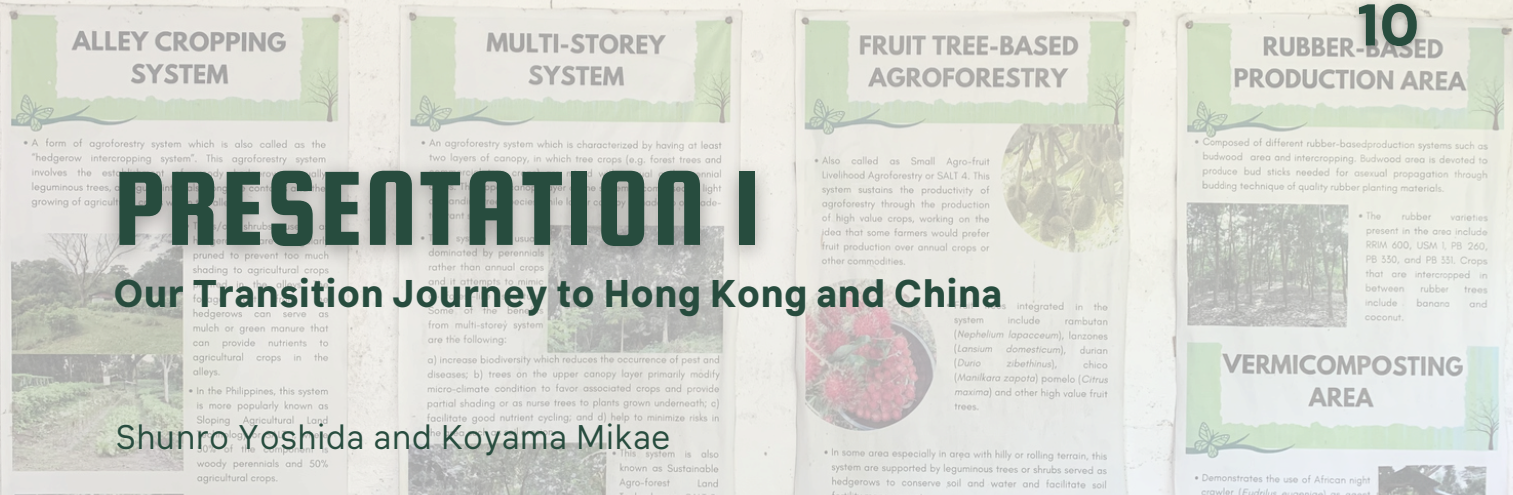
Community Engagement

- A final Transition information session was hosted at a Chengdu bookstore, extending outreach to local activists and citizens.

Cross-Regional Insights

- Shared Values and Convergences
- Yoshida and Koyama observed strong commonalities between Japan and China:
 - Commitment to environmental sustainability
 - Community-level innovation
 - Patience and persistence in civic efforts





Shunro Yoshida and Koyama Mikae

Conclusion

- The Transition Journey highlights a growing ecosystem of civic and environmental movements across Hong Kong and China. Through workshops, community visits, and personal exchange, Yoshida and Koyama strengthened cross-border relationships and demonstrated the relevance of Transition principles in diverse East Asian contexts.



PRESENTATION I

Our Transition Journey to Hong Kong and China

Shunro Yoshida and Koyama Mikae

Rubber-based Production System



LLA Brochure

or type
<https://bit.ly/LLABrochure>

Gmelina Stand (AKECOP Area)

PERSONNEL	DATE	SECTION	FACULTY ASSIGNED
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/01	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/01	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/02	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/02	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/03	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/03	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/04	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/04	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/05	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/05	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/06	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/06	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/07	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/07	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/08	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/08	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/09	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/09	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/10	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/10	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/11	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/11	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/12	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/12	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/13	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/13	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/14	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/14	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/15	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/15	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/16	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/16	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/17	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/17	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/18	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/18	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/19	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/19	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/20	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/20	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/21	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/21	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/22	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/22	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/23	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/23	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/24	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/24	LLA	Mikae Koyama
Yoshida, Shunro	2025/08/25	LLA	Shunro Yoshida
Koyama, Mikae	2025/08/25	LLA	Mikae Koyama

<https://news.transitionnetwork.org/our-transition-journey-to-hong-kong-and-china/?lng=en>



Our Transition journey to Hong Kong and China

Shunro Yoshida sharing his photo blog from the Transition Journey he had with Mikae Koyama to Hong Kong and China in August 2025

 Transition News / Dec 12

PRESENTATION 2

Role of TTs: Lab Notes from SiALLC

Dr. Max Maquito (FMDS/UPOU, SGRA/AISF)

Introduction and Context

The presentation of Dr. Max Maquito draws from work conducted over the past two to three years with the Sustainability in Action Learning Laboratory Campus (SiALLC) at the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) campus of FMDS. It highlights the urgent need for sustainable and shared growth in the Philippines. Despite being a founding member of ASEAN, the Philippines has fallen behind its peers—Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia—and has been overtaken by Vietnam in terms of GDP per capita. The country also faces significant wealth inequality, as indicated by a high Gini coefficient, and environmental concerns, with an ecological footprint that exceeds its biocapacity. These conditions underscore the importance of exploring mechanisms, such as Transition Towns, that promote economic viability, social equity, and environmental conservation at the community level.

Objectives

Highlight the potential of Transition Towns to promote:

- Sustainable Growth – economic viability, social equity, environmental conservation.
- Shared Growth – fair distribution of resources and wealth.
- Community Resilience – self-help, participatory development, and local empowerment.

Compare initiatives in Fujino, Japan, and Maahas (UPOU), Philippines to extract lessons for the Philippines.



PRESENTATION 2

Role of TTs: Lab Notes from SiALLC

Dr. Max Maquito (FMDS/UPOU, SGRA/AISF)

Country Context – Philippines

- **Economic Development:** Lagging behind ASEAN peers; overtaken by Vietnam.
- **Wealth Distribution:** High inequality; concentration of wealth among few (“Philippines is plundered, not poor”).
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Declining biocapacity; increasing ecological deficit compared to peers.

NO GROWTH

Country	Population in million	GDP Nominal millions of USD	GDP Nominal per capita USD	GDP (PPP) millions of USD	GDP (PPP) per capita USD
ASEAN	650.494	2,891,020	4,444	8,557,573	13,155
Indonesia	265.316	1,005,268	3,788	3,495,920	13,176
Thailand	69.182	490,120	7,084	1,323,209	19,126
Malaysia	32.446	347,290	10,703	999,835	30,815
Singapore	5.661	346,621	61,230	556,219	98,255
Philippines	107.018	331,678	3,099	956,030	8,933
Vietnam	94.575	241,434	2,552	707,620	7,482
Myanmar	52.832	71,543	1,354	359,107	6,797
Cambodia	16.253	24,141	1,485	70,265	4,323
Laos	6.777	18,230	2,690	53,912	7,955
Brunei	0.434	14,695	33,824	35,456	81,612

Table 2. GDP of ASEAN Countries Estimates as of 2018
Source: International Monetary Fund (International Monetary Fund, Research Dept., 2018)

Transition Towns and Sustainability

Fujino, Japan:

- Population: ~10,000; declining.
- Core vision: sustainability (economic, social, environmental).
- Components: working groups in energy, forests, health, permaculture, communication, and entrepreneurship.
- Community currency: Yorozu.

Maahas, Philippines (UPOU):

- Population: ~9,000.
- SILV campus applies similar sustainability principles.
- Components: sustainable infrastructure, wellness, arts/culture, entrepreneurship, communication.
- Community currency: Alitaptap, Otaro.

Similarities:

- Both focus on participatory community-driven projects.
- Emphasis on local to local collaboration (LABS).
- Common vision: sustainability and social equity.

TOWN	FUJINO (old name), Sagami-hara City, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan (Pop. approx. 10,000)	MAAHAS, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines (Pop. approx. 9,000)
INITIATIVE	Transition Town	Sustainability in Action - a Living Laboratory Campus (SiALLC)
CORE	Mikae Koyama and Shunro Yoshida (and friends)	Dr. Joane Serrano and FMDS Dean Fina Taylan (and faculty/staff)

PRESENTATION 2

Role of TTs: Lab Notes from SiALLC

Dr. Max Maquito (FMDS/UPOU, SGRA/AISF)

Insights and Lessons from Transition Town Fujino

- **Role at the Fringes:**
 - Can address geopolitical conflicts through community-level cross-border collaboration (LLABS).
 - Can support marginalized groups based on gender and age.
 - Promotes inclusive community building and social cohesion.
- **Key Observations:**
 - High participation of youth and women in community initiatives.
 - Citizen movements can function effectively even under challenging political contexts.
 - Encourages self-help, resilience, and local leadership.
- **Policy Implications for the Philippines:**
 - Leverage decentralization (Local Government Code of 1991).
 - Foster common vision and participatory governance.
 - Emphasize shared growth over mere poverty alleviation.

Recommendations and Proposed Actions

- **Strengthen Maahas-Fujino LABS Collaboration:**
 - Deepen the partnership and expand connections, including with China.
- **Gender and Aging Focus:**
 - Learn from Japan's experience with aging society.
 - Promote women's active participation in community projects.
- **Sustainable Practices Co-Learning:**
 - Permaculture initiatives.
 - Community currencies (Yorozu, Alitaptap).
 - Renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure.
- **Future Steps:**
 - Mentorship programs for youth to sustain long-term community initiatives.
 - Further co-learning, research, and knowledge exchange with Fujino.

PRESENTATION 2

Role of TTs: Lab Notes from SiALLC

Dr. Max Maquito (FMDS/UPOU, SGRA/AISF)



Conclusion

- Transition Towns provide a practical framework for promoting sustainable and shared growth at the community level. By fostering participatory governance, self-reliance, and resilience, these initiatives can address economic, social, and environmental challenges in communities at the fringes of society. The experiences of Fujino, Japan, and Maahas, Philippines, demonstrate strong alignment in vision and principles, highlighting opportunities for international collaboration, knowledge exchange, and the promotion of sustainable community development practices.

PRESENTATION 2

Role of TTs: Lab Notes from SiALLC

Dr. Max Maquito (FMDS/UPOU)

Dr. Max Maquito (FMDS/UPOU, SGRA/AISF)

PRESENTER



In his "previous life", DR. FERDINAND C. MAQUITO (nickname: Max) was a mechanical engineer at a state-owned shipyard, after finishing his BS at the Engineering Department of the University of the Philippines, Diliman. A series of scholarships enabled him to shift specialization and earn his MS in Industrial Economics from the Center of Research of Communication (now within the University of Asia and the Pacific). Right after that, he was able to get into the Japanese Ministry of Education scholarship to get into the PhD in Economics program of the University of Tokyo. From then the Atsumi International Foundation enabled him to finish his doctorate in Economics. He was an Adjunct Professor in Temple University Japan campus, before coming back to the Philippines to join the College of Public Affairs and Development of UPLB. He is now a Senior Lecturer in FMDS/UPOU. His long stay in Japan, and work with the Sekiguchi Global Research Association of the Atsumi International Foundation have fueled his lifelong research and advocacy on sustainable shared growth.

E-Mail: ferdinand.maquito@upou.edu.ph

disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the presentations are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the views or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

DISCUSSION

I Still Believe In Community Organizing: Discussion Points

Dr. Finaflor Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)

The discussion opened with reflections on the group's immersive walk from Fujino Station toward the transition and permaculture area. Participants noted the physical environment—particularly the foliage, gardens along the road, and walkability of the area. The experience served as an informal yet meaningful introduction to the themes of community life, place-based practices, and the landscape that supports Fujino's Transition Town initiatives.

Community Gardens and Transition Towns as Platforms for Collective Action

The experiences shared from Fujino and the Transition Town initiative illustrate how community gardens serve both as environmental assets and as social infrastructure. Beyond food production, these spaces foster relationships, shared responsibilities, and dialogue. The examples from Japan and China demonstrate how localized sustainability projects can mobilize residents, create mutual understanding, and bring community issues to the forefront.

Community Organizing as a Framework for Sustainable Development

Community organizing provides an essential framework for interpreting these practices. As a development method, process, and goal, it emphasizes people's participation, shared issue identification, and collective decision-making. The Fujino case reflects these elements: communities mobilize around local concerns, articulate common objectives, and act collectively. Such participatory actions align with long-standing models of community organizing used in the Philippines and elsewhere.

DISCUSSION

I Still Believe In Community Organizing: Discussion Points

Dr. Finaflor Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)

Key Processes: Capacity Building, Organizing, and Mobilization

Community organizing may involve many steps, but its core processes can be summarized into three components:

1. **Capacity Building** – Raising awareness and strengthening community members' skills to understand and respond to sustainability challenges.
2. **Organizing** – Forming people's organizations or similar structures that ensure representation, coordination, and accountability.
3. **Mobilization** – Harnessing community assets to implement actions addressing collectively identified needs.

These processes place community members at the center, while professionals or institutions—such as universities—ideally serve as facilitators rather than directors. Community-led awareness and self-mobilization reflect the highest form of empowerment.

Indicators of Effective Community Organizations

Effective people's organizations exhibit several characteristics:

- A clear vision, mission, and strategic direction
- Grounded community plans and participatory structures
- Leaders who authentically represent the sector and nurture second-line leadership
- The ability to manage internal differences and external pressures
- Sustained engagement that leads to tangible improvements at both community and personal levels

The Fujino initiatives, including the use of community currency, demonstrate how empowered communities can innovate mechanisms that reinforce cooperation and shared values.

DISCUSSION

I Still Believe In Community Organizing: Discussion Points

Dr. Finaflor Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)

Structural Challenges and the Philippine Context

Community organizing in the Philippines faces structural constraints that influence sustainability efforts:

- Bureaucratic certification requirements for people's organizations can restrict participation and exclude grassroots groups lacking resources to complete formal processes.
- Political dynamics, such as co-optation or red-tagging, create risks for community groups advocating for transparency, sustainability, or governance reforms.
- Misalignment between representation and lived experience, as seen in some party-list systems, may weaken the authenticity of sectoral advocacy.

These challenges highlight the importance of protecting civic spaces and ensuring that community voices are not merely symbolic but genuinely influential in governance processes.

The Role of Universities and External Partners

Universities can play a strategic facilitating role in community-led sustainability work. Initiatives such as UPOU's SILK program and collaborations with barangays in Los Baños demonstrate the potential for academic institutions to support communities through technical assistance, participatory planning, and gender-responsive programming. Such engagement must be grounded on the principle of non-imposition—ensuring that communities themselves define needs, priorities, and solutions.

The discussion underscored the importance of gender responsiveness and inclusion in community initiatives. Gender norms, representation, and the roles of women's groups must be consciously addressed. Similarly, while the law mandates the formation of senior citizens' organizations, their actual participation in sustainable community development needs strengthening. Meaningful inclusion across gender and age groups contributes to more resilient and socially cohesive communities.

DISCUSSION

I Still Believe In Community Organizing: Discussion Points

Dr. Finaflor Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)

Integrating Gender, Aging, and Inclusion in Community Sustainability

The discussion underscored the importance of gender responsiveness and inclusion in community initiatives. Gender norms, representation, and the roles of women's groups must be consciously addressed. Similarly, while the law mandates the formation of senior citizens' organizations, their actual participation in sustainable community development needs strengthening. Meaningful inclusion across gender and age groups contributes to more resilient and socially cohesive communities.

Dr. Finaflor F. Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)



Finaflor F. Taylan, DProfSt, is a distinguished academic and social work professional who brings extensive experience in teaching, research, and leadership to the role.

Dr. Taylan has been a faculty member at UPOU since 2012, serving as the Program Chair for the Diploma in/Master of Social Work program and Director of the Office of Gender Concerns. Her leadership in national and international organizations, such as the National Association for Social Work Education, Inc. (NASWEI) and the Asian Association of Women's Studies (AAWS), highlights her commitment to academic excellence and social advocacy.

With a strong background in research and public service, Dr. Taylan has led various projects focusing on gender, sustainability, and social work education. Currently, she serves as the Dean of the Faculty of Management and Development Studies at UPOU.

E-mail: finaflor.taylan@upou.edu.ph

disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the presentations are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the views or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.



Are there any barangays in the Philippines that have implemented "transition town" approaches?

- There is no widely used or officially adopted term "Transition Town" at the barangay level, but several communities across the Philippines are already practicing similar sustainable and community-driven approaches. Many indigenous communities naturally engage in practices aligned with transition principles—living in harmony with nature, self-sufficiency, collective work, and ecological stewardship. These communities may not use the Western label "Transition Town," yet their cultural systems, farming traditions, and communal lifestyles reflect the same vision of resilience and sustainability. Examples include mountainous areas such as Baguio and the Ifugao rice terrace communities, where traditional ecological knowledge continues to guide daily life and land management.

What is the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), and how is it connected to transition initiatives?

- The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) is an international network that connects communities working toward ecological living, cultural preservation, sustainability, and regenerative development. It supports villages, neighborhoods, and citizen groups that practice nature-based living. Within the Philippines, communities engaged in Satoyama-inspired practices or culturally rooted ecological systems have engaged with GEN or GEN-Asia through training, networking, and shared projects. GEN provides frameworks, learning sessions, and regional linkages that encourage communities to adopt sustainable lifestyles, share innovations, and collaborate with similar groups around Asia.

disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the presentations are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the views or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.



OPEN FORUM

Dean Finaflor Taylan, Dr. Max Maquito,
Koyama Mikae, Shunro Yoshida

Are there existing Philippine concepts similar to "Transition Towns" or "Ecovillages"?

- Yes. Although national terminology varies, many Filipino communities embody similar ideas. For example, in Ifugao, the concept of *payo* refers to a harmonious relationship with nature anchored on traditional practices such as terrace farming, forest stewardship, and community rituals. These systems provide ecosystem services while supporting cultural resilience. Other local communities practice permaculture, community-based farming, or indigenous land care that mirrors global sustainability movements, despite not using the same labels. The diversity of indigenous groups and localized practices means there is no single term, but the underlying values are present across regions.

What distinguishes Japanese Transition Town practices from Western models?

- The Japanese approach to Transition Towns evolved differently from the UK model, where the movement originated. In Japan, communities tend to start small, informally, and with fewer structural requirements. Instead of creating formal core groups with defined roles, Japanese communities often begin with just a few motivated individuals who feel ready to initiate action. The emphasis is on gradual, organic growth, minimizing fear of failure, and encouraging participation even at a small scale.
- Cultural traits also play a role. Many Japanese communities have deep historical ties to nature, reflected in traditional beliefs that regard natural elements as sacred. This worldview influences how people come together, emphasizing harmony, patience, and mutual support. Japanese groups typically move more slowly and cautiously, which helps sustain long-term commitment and preserves community relationships over many years.
-

disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the presentations are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the views or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

OPEN FORUM

**Dean Finaflor Taylan, Dr. Max Maquito,
Koyama Mikae, Shunro Yoshida**

How do Asian community-building tendencies influence Transition Town initiatives?

- Many Asian communities—including those in Japan and China—naturally form small working groups or teams, often spontaneously. These groups typically emerge based on shared interests or complementary skills. They collaborate on specific tasks such as gardening, food preparation, or maintaining local facilities. This group orientation strengthens collaboration and social bonds.
- In contrast, some Filipino communities may face challenges due to more individualistic tendencies or Westernized lifestyles, which can hinder spontaneous community formation. However, with intentional community organizing, this gap can be bridged. Key strategies include empowering small teams, fostering trust, and creating shared activities that build collective identity over time.

What opportunities exist for collaboration among Fujino, Maahas, the Philippines, and partners in China?

- Several opportunities for partnership were identified, including continuation of existing friendships with individuals active in GEN-Asia and permaculture networks. Planned visits to Japan—particularly in August—offer chances to reconnect, observe local initiatives like community currency systems and renewable energy groups, and design new joint activities.
- There is also interest in connecting with community builders in China, particularly organizations involved in ecological design and grassroots development. Through shared workshops, online sessions, and community visits, the network can expand to support knowledge exchange and regional learning.

disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the presentations are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the views or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

OPEN FORUM

Dean Finaflor Taylan, Dr. Max Maquito,
Koyama Mikae, Shunro Yoshida

How can community currency and community organizing support Transition Town efforts?

- Community currencies are seen as a practical tool for strengthening community ties by encouraging local exchange, collaboration, and shared contribution. The digital currency experiment underway seeks to build a cohesive community, but participants noted that stronger social bonding is needed for it to flourish.
- Using lessons from community gardens abroad—where people cook, farm, and work together—there is potential to transition from individual participation toward more communal practices. Successful community currency systems rely not only on technology but also on relationships, shared activities, and collective identity.

What role does physical health play in community-building work?

- Community-building and transition work demand physical presence, active participation, and engagement in outdoor or manual activities. Participants reflected that maintaining physical well-being is essential, especially as many in the group recognize the realities of aging. Activities such as garden work, community walks, and organizing events require stamina and overall health. Prioritizing wellness therefore supports the sustainability of community initiatives.

disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the presentations are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the views or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

OPEN FORUM

**Dean Finaflor Taylan, Dr. Max Maquito,
Koyama Mikae, Shunro Yoshida**

What forms of People's Organizations (POs) can support Transition Town development?

- People's Organizations can be formed in various ways. They may be locality-based, composed of individuals who live in the same community and therefore share common issues and everyday challenges. Alternatively, they may be sectoral, formed around shared experiences or identities—for example, women's groups, fisherfolk, or overseas workers.
- Both types can be legitimate and effective partners in sustainability initiatives. Cooperatives and labor unions are also recognized forms of community organization under Philippine law. Organizing a PO provides structure, shared goals, and a mechanism for long-term participation, making it a valuable step for communities beginning their transition journey.

Closing points from speakers:

- Continue active dialogue among partner groups to strengthen collaboration.
- Plan joint visits, including a return to Fujino during the next Japan trip.
- Explore partnerships with renewable energy initiatives such as those in Fujino.
- Prepare for academic presentations, including participation in Gakkai in Sendai.
- Work toward connecting small, community-level initiatives across Japan, China, and the Philippines.
- Build a regional network that shares practical innovations, cultural knowledge, and sustainability practices.
- Aim collectively for more resilient, nature-aligned, and interdependent communities.

disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the presentations are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the views or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

GALLERY



SGRA CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE JUNKO IMANISHI
@KARUIZAWA

GALLERY



GALLERY



Gallery



TRANSITION TOWNS

CONGRATULATIONS!

CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Joane V. Serrano (Chancellor, UPOU)



As we conclude the 48th Sustainable Shared Growth Seminar, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who took part in today's insightful and inspiring discussions. This seminar has once again reminded us that achieving Sustainable Shared Growth or KKK, Kahusayan, Katarungan, and Kalikasan, which translates to efficiency, equity, and environmental friendliness in English, is not only a policy goal, but a shared human responsibility. The conversations today highlighted that this vision can be realized through community-based initiatives such as Transition Towns, which serve as living examples of how sustainability can be pursued at the local level.

Through the efforts of SGRA and its partners, we are reminded that Sustainable Shared Growth is not just an academic discussion. It is a journey of learning, reflection, and collaboration that we take together as global partners, one that crosses sectors, disciplines, and borders. Initiatives like these show us that when local communities work together, they can inspire broader global movements towards balance, cooperation, and care for both people and the planet.

disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the presentations are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the views or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Joane V. Serrano (Chancellor, UPOU)



For UPOU and our local community in Ma'ahas, today's seminar strengthens our commitment to deepen our engagement with initiatives like Transition Town, Fujino, (1:36) and to advance our own Sustainability in Action Living Laboratory Campus or SEAL program. Through such collaborations, we can continue exploring how to achieve sustainability that balances economic viability, social equality, and environmental conservation. As we reflect on today's discussion, I hope that we can carry forward the spirit of collaboration and compassion that defines Sustainable Shared Growth, a spirit that reminds us that caring for people and the planet must go hand in hand.

To our speakers, discussants, and participants, thank you for your time, your ideas, and your dedication to these continuing conversations on Sustainable Shared Growth. May we all carry forward the lessons from today's seminar as we work together for a future that is efficient, equitable, and environmentally sound.

disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the presentations are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the views or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Joane V. Serrano (Chancellor, UPOU)

Dr. Joane V. Serrano (UPOU)

PRESENTER



Joane V. Serrano, PhD, is a professor of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU). She serves as the Chancellor of UPOU. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Development Communication, Master of Management Major in Development Management, and Doctor of Philosophy Major in Development Management, and Doctor of Philosophy Major in Development Communication from the University of the Philippines Los Baños. She teaches Environmental Advocacy, Communication of Scientific and Technical Information, and Socio-Cultural Perspectives on the Environment. She has a wide array of research interests including sustainability, socio-cultural perspectives on the environment, development and environmental communication, health promotion, gender and indigenous knowledge, and open and distance eLearning (ODEL). She is currently the editor in chief of the UPOU-managed Journal of Management and Development Studies.

She has published more than 30 publications, presented in 90 conferences, and more than 60 public service engagements. Her recent international engagements are Won by Walking Network initiated by University of Gothenburg, University of Plymouth, Abo Akademi, University of Oulu funded by Riksbanken Jubileumsfond; Digital Trust and Intuition with focus on Sustainability with Ostfalia University, and Satoyama Initiatives with International Partnership for Satoyama Initiatives and Satoyama Development Mechanism. As part of her commitment to lifelong learning and sustainability, Dr. Serrano continues to find ways of discovering innovations that will help improve education and research practices in the Philippines.

E-Mail: jserrano@upou.edu.ph

disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the presentations are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the views or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

NEXT STEPS



The 8th Asia Future Conference
第8回アジア未来会議

Space and Distance **空間と距離**

- Crossing, Closing, Creating - ~こえる、縮める、つくる~

Date
August 25 (Tue) – August 29 (Sat), 2026
2026年8月25日(火)～29日(土)

Venue
Tohoku Gakuin University, Sendai, Japan
東北学院大学(日本、仙台市)

Host : Atsumi International Foundation
Sekiguchi Global Research Association
渥美国際交流財団関口グローバル研究会 (SGRA)

Co-host : Tohoku Gakuin University
東北学院大学

Call for Papers
<https://www.aisf.or.jp/AFC/2026>
(Open on May 1, 2025)

The Asia Future Conference aims to provide a platform for researchers and scholars who have studied in Japan or who are interested in Japan to meet and discuss the future of Asia. The AFC is interdisciplinary at its core and encourages diverse approaches to global issues. The AFC is not a conference for a specific field of study, so please try to make your presentation comprehensible to a general public.

NEXT STEPS

“Space and Distance – Crossing, Closing, Creating”

空間と距離 -こえる、縮める、つくる-

“Social distance” became a familiar phrase to all during COVID, and despite the distance it invokes, a phrase that crossed cultural and geographical divides to create a rare universal experience. In this way, distance can serve to divide as well as unite us. Space and distance can be physical or intangible, and in many cases, both. It can be examined in the physical and categorical barriers that serve to draw distinctions between groups of people, the geographical distance that leads to different concentrations of power as well as maintains different hierarchies (urban/rural, wealthy/poor), the creation and dissolution of categorical differences in the sciences, and literal discussions of space/distance in different fields. Through this theme, we encourage diverse perspectives and seek to explore how space and distance function in and across various fields – what relationships do they foster, how are they used to maintain or break down specific power dynamics, how may they be desirable, necessary, or even harmful?

コロナ禍により「ソーシャルディスタンス」は馴染み深いフレーズとなったが、ディスタンス（距離）を謳ったスローガンとは裏腹にこの言葉は文化的・地理的な隔たりを軽々と越えた。距離は物理的にも心理的にも存在し、私たちを分かっただけでなく“結びつける何か”を示す役割も果たす。社会の中で人々を区別しカテゴライズする境界線が生み出す距離感、都市と地方という地理的な条件がそのまま権力との距離となり様々な階層（都市と農村、富裕層と貧困層等）を社会に生む現象、科学技術における様々な創造や再編が織りなす異分野・多分野間の距離の伸縮など、あらゆる分野においてそこに存在する空間／距離を考察することができる。このテーマを通じ、私たちは多様な視点から空間と距離の分野横断的な役割や機能を見つめ直し、特定のパワー・ダイナミクスの維持や打破にどのように利用されているのか、どのように利用されることが望ましく必要なかを一緒に考えたい。

■ Screening Procedure

If your proposal (abstract) submitted by September 20, 2025 is accepted, you will be asked to submit a full paper and present it at the 8th Asia Future Conference to be held in Sendai in August 2026. You can also apply for AFC Scholarships. The Best Papers will be selected from the full papers submitted by March 31, 2026. We look forward to your active participation.

■ Schedule A: Eligible for AFC Scholarships and Best Paper Award

May 1, 2025	Call for abstracts, online user-registrations and submissions
October 31, 2025	Announcement of screening results of abstracts
February 1, 2026	Registration as participant (Early Bird 20% discount until April 10)
June 10, 2026	Announcement of screening results for Best Papers
June 20, 2026	Deadline for registration
July 31, 2026	Announcement of session schedule

■ Schedule B: General Participants (Not eligible for AFC Scholarships and Best Paper Award)

May 1, 2025	Call for abstracts, online user-registrations and submissions
February 28, 2026	Deadline for abstract submissions
May 31, 2026	Deadline for online submissions (PDF file upload) of full papers
June 20, 2026	Deadline for registration
July 31, 2026	Announcement of session schedule












Session Themes & Topics for Parallel sessions

Natural Sciences	Innovation / Automation Robotics / Climate Change and Disaster Management / Environment and Energy / Bioengineering Food and Water / Health / and other topics related to the Natural Sciences
Social Sciences	Globalization / Peace / Area Studies / Social Development and Human Security Management / Human Resource Development Income and/or Wealth Gap / Aging Society / and other topics related to the Social Sciences
Humanities	Philosophy / Religion / History / Ethics / Literature / Linguistics / Language Education / Arts / Media / Culture / and other topics related to the Humanities

■ Languages of presentations/papers Japanese or English

■ Contact **Asia Future Conference Organization Committee**(Atsumi International Foundation Sekiguchi Global Research Association)
3-5-8 Sekiguchi Bunkyo Tokyo 112-0014 Japan TEL: +81-(0)3-3943-7612/FAX: +81-(0)3-3943-1512 Email: afc2026@aisf.or.jp

NEXT STEPS

<input type="text" value="alitaptap"/> ✕ Search		
5 Entries on the List		
ID ▲▼	Title	Author(s)
	Submission Type / Conference Track · Uploaded	Submitting Author
343	A Voluntary Alitaptap  Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Dayson, Reinald ; Cruz, Larry ; Ordanes, Jurell; Cometa, Jezreel Ann; Unlayao, Naomi Jean; Capio, Zia Bernadette Dayson, Reinald 
346	A Sociable Alitaptap for Community Building   Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Taylan, Finaflor ; Maquito, Ferdinand ; Autor, Vanessa ; Catbagan, Tiffany Taylan, Dr. Finaflor 
348	A Playful Alitaptap  Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Serrano, Joane Vermudo ; Maquito, Ferdinand Serrano, Prof. Joane Vermudo 
349	A Learning Alitaptap  Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Serrano, Joane Vermudo Serrano, Prof. Joane Vermudo 
394	A Resilient Alitaptap for Micro Enterprises: What OUnayan Wednesdays Merchants Need to Successfully Adopt Community Currency  Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Ascan, Tricia ; Climaco, Emilio Ascan, Prof. Tricia 
5 contributions submitted and 0 contributions withdrawn on this list.		

Papers to be presented at a special panel session the AFC8 on the
Alitaptap Community Currency Pilot Study of UPOU

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

(The summaries were generated with the help of Turboscribe and Tactiq AI app., but was subjected to further editing by the team)

TravelswithCharie

Behind-the-Scene Assistance

- Lenie M. Miro
 - SGRA PH



- Columbus C. Maquito
 - SGRA PH



We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to Sustainable Shared Growth.



- Isabella O. Gayoso
 - SGRA PH



©Sekiguchi Global Research association November 2025

Chief Editor | Max Maquito

ferdinand.maquito@upou.edu.ph

Associate Editor | Lenie M. Miro

sgraphil@gmail.com

**Sustainable Shared
Growth Seminar
#48 Report**

