

PROBLEM-SOLVING SESSION
Immigrant and Local Conflicts

After Atty. Ronnie Menor's presentation on "Leadership," the conference planning committee put on a short skit that portrayed the conflict between local Filipinos and immigrant Filipinos. The setting was at Farrington High School during recess period. The immigrant students were "hanging around" in one section of the school. A group of local Filipino students happened to walk by as the immigrant students began to laugh and speak in Ilocano. The local students stopped abruptly and accused the immigrant students for talking about and laughing at them. A fight starts and many angry words are exchanged -- all reflecting the common stereotypes placed on immigrants as well as locals -- such as "funny accent," "tight and shiny pants," "colorful shirt," "go back to the Philippines where you belong," toward the immigrants, and toward the locals, "tough," "you think you own this place," "rude, no manners."

Following the skit, the conference delegates were put to a task. They went into their "barangay discussion groups" and were to imagine that they were the "State of Hawaii's Commission on Immigrant and Local Issues" -- prominent leaders of the community. Now faced with a major problem of immigrant and local conflicts, they had to find ways to cope with or solve that pressing problem, using the leadership techniques discussed by Atty. Menor.

The delegates were told not to rule out any kind of thought or idea -- "ANYTHING GOES!" -- because they could utilize all the money in the world in order to implement the solutions they came up with. But the solutions had to be realistic.

And so the delegates put their heads together and produced an outstanding list of solutions to the problem of immigrant and local conflicts. You will find the list and brief discussions on the following pages.

SOLUTIONS TO IMMIGRANT AND LOCAL CONFLICTS*

1. More Filipino faculty members and counselors -- Students can better relate with each other if they have a common point.
2. Multicultural clubs -- This is getting all the clubs together in school and just mingling, having socials...so that they would better get to know each other and each other's culture.
3. Encourage friends from the different branches, locals and immigrants to join a club, a Fil-Am club, for example, so they can get to know each other better.
4. A film to show the differences and conflicts -- We can get the locals and immigrants to sit in an auditorium, watch the film, realize that there is something wrong out there, and then have them talk it out. May they'll get better communication.
5. A Filipino day -- A cultural event to give everybody a taste of Filipino-ness. This way, we'll get all the cultures educated. They'll know about the Filipino culture and Filipino food, and Filipinos.
6. Films depicting culture, history, foods, dances, etc. -- Interview locals and immigrants, the youths to explore their views.
7. Aloha committee -- It's more of a local/immigrant, big brother/big sister type of deal. An immigrant from the Philippines coming to Hawaii could be introduced by the aloha committee to all the Filipinos in the club if there is one or just get to know the other Filipinos in the school.
8. Filipino athletic club -- This is so that both locals and immigrants can work together. In sports, communication, language is not really important. It's more teamwork. It's what the other person can produce.

...continued...

*Developed by the Delegates of the First Statewide Sariling Gawa Main Conference, March 6, 7 and 8, 1981 at Camp Harold Erdman, Mokuleia, Oahu.

Solutions to Immigrant and Local Conflicts

If a local and an immigrant work together and produce a winning team, that's good enough for them and they will feel good about it.

9. Bilingual education -- Especially for immigrants who need the kind of services that will help to ease the transition to integrate into the local community.
10. Filipino languages (Ilokano and Tagalog) taught in the secondary or high school level -- For locals who are generally kept from learning about their background and history as Filipinos. They grow up in an American society and are taught more about white American history and less about their history as an ethnic group.
11. Educate the community in general -- The media should also play a role in trying to disseminate this kind of information about what's going on in the community and create public awareness about what's going on.
12. Understand one another through education.
13. Ethnic studies class -- Available for everyone to take so Filipinos would get to know what it means to be Filipino and that one need not be distinguished as local or immigrant. Major ethnic groups such as Japanese, Chinese, etc. should also be taught in high school, and should be required. Also, ethnic studies should be complete with languages of different groups.
14. Scholarships -- Since we have all this money, the scholarships would be available to both locals and immigrants. That would be a way of uniting everybody.
15. Practical experience -- If local people could somehow go back to the Philippines and see how the immigrants live and how their culture is, that way people would gain better understanding.
16. Older and younger generations of both immigrant and local Filipinos should get together -- We could also get some kind of understanding that way.

Solutions to Immigrant and Local Conflicts

17. Developmental programs for youth such as Alu Like in the Hawaiian community. Both local and immigrants would have to work with one another because they're getting paid minimum and they have to do the job. If they work together, then they can understand one another better.
18. Cultural events -- If there was a combination of ethnic dances and disco dancing into one event, it would bring everybody together because there would be something for everyone. If there were a lot more publicity about Filipino activities and affairs, that would also broaden our understanding.
19. Multicultural get-together -- We could share food and drama like the drama we saw, and a lot of other things. We thought that would be a good way to achieving understanding.
20. Appreciate and respect the culture that the immigrants are coming from -- A lot of immigrants are identified by the way they speak, by the way they dress, by the company they keep or the company they hang around with. That's true, in a lot of ways, everybody in our group agree that those are usually the first basic impression about a local person. It's not so much his or her educational background. It's those three basic things. Even though you are a Filipino, that doesn't mean that you actually have the culture; you're just like any other person.
21. Invite speakers to schools -- If you're Filipino and you're an immigrant... most likely you'll behave like a Filipino and dress like a Filipino from the Philippines. That's upsetting for a lot people, but it's hard to change. How can they change? Our group felt that if an individual was exposed to different role models then they (speakers) can share what they have gone through, what they have accomplished, and what they can accomplish in the future. With these role models, we can overcome problems in the future and follow them (the role models).
22. Send locals to another country to really understand what it is like

Solutions to Immigrant and Local Conflicts

in a different country. There's no way you can understand something just by reading. Maybe you can accept the content, but you can't really say that you know how it feels. Have a handful of students from the high schools go to the Philippines, live there for a while, maybe even go to school and they'll find out that a lot of Filipinos in the Philippines will be able to communicate with them in English. But, they (locals) won't be able to communicate with them in Tagalog or Ilokano or Visayan. This will make them (locals) feel that it's not such a good feeling to be left out. It's not such a good feeling to be not in with the crowd. It's not such a good feeling to be different. Maybe when they come back here these students will be instigators, be prime examples for the other locals to follow. Their changed attitudes will make a very important impact in their schools.

23. Locals and immigrants should be exposed to cultural activities like a Filipino day, Filipino sports...exposure to different Filipino foods and the history of these foods. Maybe a cultural week to promote the appreciation of languages and cultural differences.
24. More conferences with other ethnic groups, not just with Filipinos but with other ethnic groups so we can learn from each other and understand the differences between various ethnic backgrounds.
25. Have a community facility like another YMCA where different ethnic groups can come together and share cultural activities such as dances and songs. We can have educational appreciation of various other ethnic histories.
26. More emphasis on bilingual/bicultural classes in each school. It should be required in each school to learn about each other's culture so that most of the stereotyping and discrimination can be eliminated.
27. Emphasize the positive things and similarities, educating each other, locals and immigrants, about the cultures in Hawaii, emphasizing also that cultures can get along with each other. They should not be viewed as polarizing cultures.

Solutions to Immigrant and Local Conflicts

28. Buddy system -- Have locals teach immigrants how to adapt to Hawaii. Maybe on a paying basis, given them stipend so there's an incentive for it. At the same time, have immigrants teach locals Filipino culture and history.
29. Solicit funds from private groups, churches, businesses, and maybe utilizing volunteer groups so that the programs can continue on because we see them as meeting the needs of the immigrant and local people. We foresee that bilingual programs and other social programs will be cut because of the Reagan administration.
30. Utilize the media -- T.V., newspaper, radio -- to talk about cultural history, emphasizing the social, political and economic contributions of Filipinos in Hawaii. We could do this by having excerpts in prime time on social history in Hawaii. This way, it's not only us learning our Philippine history but also the public.
31. Filipino studies in school -- Since we belong to the community, we should have Filipino language(s) taught like the other ethnic groups. We should be proud of our Filipino heritage. Cooperate with other ethnic groups. Join activities in school.
32. Get people to know each other -- Stereotypes are lies because of ignorance and ignorance leads to a lot of mysterious things, then it starts stories and the hate begins. We should get people into situations where they have to work things out together. The activities we came up with are socials, recreational things, camps.
33. Find out what it means to be a Filipino, the background in the Philippines and also what it means to be a Filipino in Hawaii.
34. An orientation for immigrants who come to Hawaii, tell them about what it's like in Hawaii. What are the economic possibilities? What kind of jobs can you expect to get.

Solutions to Immigrant and Local Conflicts

35. Ask questions and find the answers -- What is the school system like here? How is it different from the Philippines? How are teachers treated? What are you expected to do? This is something people need so that they can get along.
36. Uplift the whole image of Filipinos -- That's what we're trying to do at this camp. A lot of problems come out of denials because of locals. They see immigrants being teased by other locals because they wear tight pants, have strange cars. They come with this feeling that it's not cool to be a Filipino because you see all these other guys being teased and you say, "I'm Filipino, too, but I don't wear pants like that."

* * *

Being a Filipino in Hawaii means it's wonderful. It makes me feel important. I know I can help my own people or other nationalities. I can also cook Filipino food. I would like to share this cooking with others, if they are interested. Now that I am in Hawaii, I would like to finish my education to show other nationalities that Filipinos are not dumb.

(Anonymous)

SPEECH: HOW TO MAKE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE LEGISLATURE
TO MAKE APPROPRIATE CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY
Presented by Sen. Benjamin Cayetano

(Introduction of Sen. Cayetano by Mr. Domingo Los Banos, Jr.: "Sen. Cayetano is a highly respected man, he is straight forward and knows wherefor he speaks. He has great community base support from the community of Pearl City and has a strong stance for what he believes is good for the state. People must know what they are talking about when talking to Sen. Cayetano.)

"Thank you for inviting me to speak on the legislative process.

"Those of you young folks, as you get on and become more experienced, you will find that learning how to work with the government is very important to the advancement of your ethnic group. You will find that, for example, the Japanese, the Chinese and the Caucasians have advanced very far in our society because they have learned how to use the government process. They have run people for office, for example, they have learned how to touch bases in the executive government to get things done.

"I have been in politics now for seven years. I started in the house. I was a representative for Pearl City and in 1978, I was elected to the Senate. I have to say, without trying to degrade our own people, that Filipinos have really much to learn when it comes to lobbying in the legislature. So I will touch a little on this subject and I will throw it out to questions.

"How many of you have ever gone to the legislature to lobby? One, two people out of 80. Not a very high percentage.

"Well, why do you go to the legislature to lobby? First of all, you obviously want the legislature to do something, to try and solve a problem you may have. Whether it is in education or any other field or endeavor. So when you go to the legislature, there are some preliminary steps you have to take so that you may be able to convey the message that you have to the respective legislators you will talk to.

"First, is to get organized. If you can get a number of people who can agree with you on a certain cause, that would be a good start.

"Secondly, you and your group should get together and really determine what your goals are. What is it that you want to tell the legislature because we have a lot of people who contact us and very few of them are well-organized. The ones who are well-organized, make their points and manage to convey the information they want on us. And very often it affects the way we vote on issues.

"Third, you should approach the legislature with the idea that if you don't get what you want the first time around, you have to decide whether you want to persist in your efforts because very often it takes a long time to get a bill passed in the legislature. Everytime you come to the legislature to lobby, it is an educational process for us as well as for you.

"Given that, the next thing you have to do is to find out how the legislature works. Structure, organization is very, very important.

"One things about us Filipinos, sometimes we don't pay attention to the details, and these are the things that are boring and tedious, but they are very, very important. Why are they important?

"For example, there are 76 legislators and obviously you cannot speak to all of them. So you have to find out who are the influential ones.

"If you have a question about education or you have a problem in education that you would like to address, then you should look to the members of the education committee. Find out who is the chairman of the committee. That way you can narrow the focus of your efforts and put your energy where they can best be used. Having done that another good idea is to try and find out as much as possible the personal things about each legislator you know. Yesterday, we had a hearing on the death penalty. On Thursday, this guy came into my office and wanted to talk to me about the death penalty and he was opposed to

it. He went on for about 10 minutes, I just let him go on. He got out everything he wanted to say, then I said, 'You know, why are you talking to me about it?' He said, 'Well, I want you to oppose it.' I said, 'Well, if you had asked me that at the very beginning, I would have told you that I was opposed to the death penalty. If you bothered to find out, then you could have spent one minute with me and the other nine minutes with somebody who was not convinced one way or the other as to how he should vote on the death penalty.'

'These are the kinds of little hints that I think you should take into consideration.

'Let me give you an example of successful lobbying by a Filipino organization. As some of you may know, Filipinos comprise the bulk of the people involved in care homes for people with emotional problems, elderly people -- mostly Filipino. And for many years, the money they have been receiving for the kind of work that they do which is very, very important was really low. So in 1979 they began lobbying. They wanted us to put an extra \$100,000 into the budget. They weren't very well prepared but because I was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, I asked my colleagues to go along with their request and we put \$100,000 in the budget. But later on, I pulled the group aside and said, 'Look, the next time you come to us, be better organized. Be ready to argue your points more effectively.' Too many of them had not done their homework. So what happened was they got better organized, they got their game plan together and they came back to us in 1980 for more money. And this time we gave them over one million dollars.

'I really don't think that if you go to the House of Representatives that it makes much sense to see the Republicans because they don't control the committees there. You should focus on the people who are wielding the power at that time and in the House, it's the Democrats. Whereas in the Senate now, Republicans do have power because we have a coalition.'

A question and answer session followed Sen. Cayetano's presentation. One participant discussed the details of his involvement in successful

lobbying at the legislature with the University of Hawaii Ethnic Studies Program. Sen. Cayetano reiterated the key techniques that the Ethnic Studies lobbying group had used to lobby successfully.

Sen. Cayetano was asked how can someone introduce a bill into the legislature or ask for an appropriation. He indicated that "it is very important to approach a legislator on a personal basis. Although many times there is a public hearing on a bill, 90% of the legislators have made up his mind before the hearing as to what he wants to do on the bill. There are a few cases where legislators have been swayed by what they hear in the public hearings." Sen. Cayetano further emphasized that approaching legislators who are committee chairpersons is a very effective technique. He encouraged the participants to seek the help of the legislators who are from the district or area they live in. It is important when approaching the legislators that one immediately identifies himself and the group, and states his purpose.

Another question was asked: How can young people become involved in the system? Sen. Cayetano responded, "Make an effort on your own, read articles and literature on how the legislature works, how a bill is passed, and so forth. With this knowledge, the next step is to get involved in a campaign. Find a candidate, and if you support him and his ideas, get involved in his campaign. If he wins the election, you can ask him for a job in the legislature. Legislators have patronage positions, but there is great competition for these positions and legislators usually hire people only from their districts. But I hire for competence and skills. There is a lack of qualified Filipino applicants in the legislature. There are not too many who apply. Those who possess good qualifications are highly demanded by others. At present, I only have one Filipino in the patronage position, but none on my staff. I had several during the last two years, but they went on to better jobs in the state government as soon as they had enough experience with me."

The next question was: How can we get information on dates and times of public hearings on subjects we are interested in? Sen. Cayetano suggested that

you "get yourself on a specific committee's mailing list, check the daily capitol calendar in the newspaper." He says that keeping track of the legislature requires effort on your part.

In his concluding remarks, Sen. Cayetano emphasized that a person be "very business like. Do not try to intimidate the legislators. Most legislators are not vulnerable to intimidation anyway. Remember, you may lobby for many more years. Legislation is a very long process. Sometimes a lobbying group will come in knowing their bill will not be passed but hoping to educate the legislators and the public about the merits and demerits of the bill. Credibility and sincerity is important." Sen. Cayetano further stressed that legislators remember the behaviors of past lobbyists.

* * *

Being a Filipino in Hawaii means being able to accept myself as an individual with a different culture, to be able to state exactly what I am when someone asks me, to be able to speak my ethnic language even if only a little, to be able to appreciate Filipino food and culture.

(Oahu delegate, Age 17)