

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE COMMUNITY EXTENSION PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTATION OF SELECTED HEIs

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Abstract

This study describes the implementation of the community extension programs in six (6) selected higher education institutions (HEIs). Primary data were gathered using researcher-made questionnaires that were content-validated by experts before the actual use by the respondents (students, teacher-volunteers, staff, and administrators). A total of 388 accomplished instruments were retrieved. Data obtained through either face-to-face interviews with the institutional heads or from their written responses to the interview questions supplemented survey figures.

Results show that the majority of the respondent-HEIs have separate Community Extension Program (CEP) offices; HEIs without a specific office carry out community extension programs under the umbrella of the National Service Training Program Office. All of the respondent-HEIs have no existing standard procedures in the conduct of their community extension programs with the barangays as their favored beneficiaries and donations as their key source of funds. Participation of students and employees is not purely voluntary; some participate because of the Memorandum Order No. 8 series of 2008 of the Commission on Higher Education, which mandates the implementation of community extension programs in higher education institutions.

The study recommends above all that HEIs work for the establishment of a separate CEP office under the Office of the President for effective implementation of CEP activities, which shall pursue a strategic alliance within the academic community and with possible external partners and with the beneficiaries.

Keywords: Community Extension Programs (CEP); CEP implementation in higher education institutions (HEIs)

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most enduring treasures one can ever have; it offers limitless possibilities arising from the knowledge and competencies derived from learning, especially in the higher education where one is led through a program of his/her choice.

Through education, one is equipped with an armor that can be truly employed in the various facets of life because a learner is molded holistically, whereby his/her physical, mental, social, spiritual, and moral well-being become the focus towards his development as a well-rounded individual.

This crucial role of education is supported by Macaranas (2008) in his study as he posited that:

Education is essential in fostering economic growth, personal and social development, as well as reducing inequality. Countries seek to ensure that their populations are well equipped to contribute to, and participate in, the process of social and economic development, and this may be achieved through education, which enables them to face the challenges of technological change and global commercial integration. Through its capacity to provide skills and enable effective participation in the workforce, education is crucial to economic growth.

An important facet of education, especially in countries like the Philippines, is the community extension program (CEP). Extension programs are not considered just another form of adult education; they have much to offer to students of all ages, and they are dedicated to improving their communities. In some colleges and universities in the United States, an extension program is in the form of a department within the school that offers classes to residents interested in learning new skills or information. Extension programs are designed to educate the entire communities. Unlike four-year programs in universities and colleges and community colleges, extension programs are not completed for credit. Individuals who enroll in extension programs take classes purely to advance their knowledge in a subject. Extension programs do not grant degrees of any kind; classes are informal and flexible. In the United States, extension programs accept anyone, regardless of his or her age or education level. Though classes are taught at a college level, there are no enrolment requirements, which means that whether the student is a grandparent or a doctor of Philosophy degree holder, he or she can choose any extension program that can meet his or her needs.

As defined by the Commission on Higher Education (2010)," extension is one of the three primary functions of higher education; it is a set of activities aimed at transferring knowledge or technology, or providing services to the community, in consonance with research and instructional programs of the HEI. Further, it also refers to the act of communicating, persuading and helping specific sectors of target clientele (as distinguished

from those enrolled in formal degree programs and course offerings) to enable them to effectively improve production, community and institutions, and quality of life.

In this sense, extension programs differ from adult education programs because the latter focuses on students who have not received any education or degrees beyond high school. These adults-only programs aim to teach working adults specific skills that both further their general knowledge and assist them in their job. Additionally, those who enter adult education programs often earn their degrees. Extension programs, on the other hand, exist to educate all individuals no matter what their education level or goals may be.

Similarly, extension programs differ from outreach programs in that the latter is usually undertaken only for a day. The term "extension" generally applies to the formal programs of a university. On the other hand, "outreach" is a more general and inclusive term that takes into account the whole range of activities that faculty are involved in, including the formal extension activities. A working definition of outreach and extension is as follows:

Outreach and extension are scholarly activities that cut across teaching, research, and service. Such activities occur in a variety of forms and places. They focus on generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences. Outreach and extension efforts represent an on-going exchange between the University and the larger society. Such efforts are an integral part of the broader University mission (Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor, 2006).

However, one study about the effectiveness of the extension program of a university in northern Luzon (Tacbas et al., 2010), made no such distinction when it defined "extension" as "reaching out," and—along with teaching and research—pointed out that educational institutions "extend" their resources, solving public needs with college or university resources through non-formal, non-credit programs that are skills-based. The subject university has an Extension Services Office which operates under the motto of "Reaching out for a better living." This motto encapsulates the office's mission and vision of touching base with the marginalized sector through the provision of skills training, technology transfer, and information drive that would allow them to live better and become partners of development.

Similarly, a Manila-based university applied the same interchangeability treatment of community extension and outreach programs (UE Office of Extension and Outreach, n.d.); in order to advance its social responsibility through highly visible extension and community outreach programs, this office partnered with the Department of Labor and Employment-National Capital Region (DOLE-NCR) in launching the "Kabalikatan sa Kabuhayan (KSK): the University's Sustainable Community Livelihood Project." Under this project, twenty-two (22) indigent residents from the university's two adopted communities were awarded seed money to help them start up their small businesses, considering their slim chance of employment. These twenty-two beneficiaries were subjected to a series of intensive seminars, training, and

workshops in order to enhance their skills in handling business and finances. Significantly, the university's outreach programs cover not only the usual areas of livelihood, literacy, environmental protection, and enhancement, proper nutrition, medical-dental care, cleanliness and beautification, solid waste segregation scheme and disposal management, but also infrastructure development to which it can accomplish through its partner institutions: the Philippine National Red Cross, Child Haus, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Metrobank Foundation, Manila Doctors Hospital, Department of Labor and Employment, Manila City Mayor's Office and various Local Government Units. The university considers its partnership with the public and private sectors as a significant factor in the success of its extension and outreach programs (UE's Community Extension Efforts, n.d.).

Another university in Bicol has a separate Community Extension Services (CES) office that implements the community development and outreach program of the university. The CES facilitates the implementation of outreach programs and services that are geared toward empowering communities, especially the poor. Recently, however, the CES re-packaged its services and implemented a new program called "BUHAI-CES Program," an acronym for "Building Communities through Unified and Holistic Approach to Implementation of Community Extension Services." The program is currently being implemented in five communities and being replicated in a new partner community in Camarines Sur (Universidad de Sta. Isabel, 2013).

Meanwhile, one university in Metro Manila made an extra effort to distinguish between community extension services and outreach programs by creating a separate office named the Integrated Community Extension Services (ICES); it is tasked to coordinate all community extension programs of the university. The core of ICES is drawn from the university's vision/mission, as follows:

Extending relevant community services that contribute to an improved quality of human life, commitment as evangelizers for the empowerment of the poor, involvement in the development of the community, and people, especially the poor (Adamson University, 2008).

Another university in Metro Manila went a step further in distinguishing community extension services from outreach programs when it created its Center for University Extension Services (CUES), which is at the forefront of what the university considers as a triadic function of the University—that is, community extension. CUES also addresses the organization of relevant community extension programs and services that are responsive to the needs of depressed communities in the City of Manila. Its effort to effect the inner transformation among administrators, faculty, and students to make them effective agents for social transformation and national development and assist in the professional enhancement and development of personnel doing extension function/task in the various units of the university is truly remarkable. These last two strategies of CUES are considered implementer-focused and therefore, are directed toward ensuring the emotional preparation and readiness of

involved sectors in the university and at the same time providing a means to tie up extension services to the implementers' professional growth (Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, 2009).

The key characteristics of outreach and extension efforts are that they are planned and implemented for the benefit of external audiences or clientele. For example, the Lewis Clark State College (LCSC) has its Orofino and Grangeville Outreach Centers that provide their communities a unique connection to LCSC through assisting with a multitude of student services. Also, community members are provided with the opportunity to extend their skill set through a variety of short-format non-credit enrichment classes and workshops (Lewis Clark State College, 2016).

Sometimes, extension programs offer a series of courses similar to that of a traditional college student's major. One good example is the University of San Diego (USD) that has for its outreach the Community Service Learning (CSL), which offers the option of taking courses throughout the student's college career that provide community service opportunities as a part of the course work. Some of these are the Center for Awareness, Service, and Action (CASA) that promotes cultural awareness and social consciousness by providing outreach opportunities and making lasting connections between USD and the community. Its free specialized legal clinics staffed by USD law students who offer legal assistance to lower-income individuals and families and the annual Thanksgiving House Project that provides USD business students the opportunity to renovate the home of a deserving family in the nearby Linda Vista neighborhood (University of San Diego, 2016).

Another US-based institution, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, offers community-based learning courses, which are sometimes called "service learning." Community-based learning (CBL) is "a credit-bearing course that integrates meaningful community service within the course curriculum. Along with traditional classroom learning, each student is expected to dedicate 25 hours to working with the course's community partner" (Morgridge Center for Public Service, n.d.). 100-110 CBL courses are taught at UW-Madison every year. Further, the community-based learning model emphasizes reciprocal relationships. Students provide a service to the community partner, while students in the course benefit from the experience and knowledge of the community partner (n.d.).

Other universities such as Iowa University offer a variety of extension programs that are community-based and done in partnership with entire communities. For example, the Iowa University College of Design has a project where it partners with community leaders, non-profit organizations and even government agencies in Iowa through the use of design knowledge and research expertise to help shape and empower the communities of the state in projects related to health and wellness, community revitalization, and infrastructure and prototypes. The Partnering Learning and Community Engagement (PLaCE) program is a program of the College of Design which aims to enhance and promote the quality and character of Iowa's landscapes and communities. It engages with communities in collaborative

efforts to understand, envision, and promote a fundamental enhancement of their physical environment (Iowa State University College of Design, 2010). Two other interesting extension program activities also offered by the Iowa State University include the Exercise Clinic at the Iowa State University (ISU), which is an on-campus adult fitness program sponsored by the Kinesiology Department and has been in existence since 1974. The primary objective of The Exercise Clinic at ISU is to enable participants to have a program of lifelong physical activity that will reduce their risk for chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity. The program is open to the ISU community and the general public, and to be considered for the program, the individual completes an application or registration form.

Another community extension program offered by Iowa State University is an economic development program named the Community Sustainability services, which is focused on helping organizations and individuals meet the needs of the present without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. These services provide communities, economic developers, individuals, and businesses with the tools to manage the financial, social, and environmental issues they face to ensure success in the long run (Iowa State University Extension and Research, 2016). Also, the Exercise Clinic, an on-campus adult fitness program, is sponsored by the Kinesiology Department, and it has been in existence since 1974. The primary objective of the Exercise Clinic at ISU is to enable participants to have a program of lifelong physical activity that will reduce their risk for chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity. The program is open to the ISU community and the general public. To be considered for the program, the individual completes an application or registration form (Iowa State University College of Human Sciences, 2016).

In the Philippines, the demand for education is increasing because of factors such as changing demographics and the growth of the knowledge economy. While demand is growing, the capacity of both the public and the private sectors to satisfy such demand is thus being put to the test. This is due to budget limitations, the changing role of the bureaucracy, increased emphasis on a market economy and privatization challenges for the public sector, as well as government policy restrictions, capital constraints and the need for more quality educators in the case of private institutions.

These factors serve as perpetual challenges to the leaders in higher education institutions so that continually, they endeavor "to sustain meaningful and productive discussions leading to recommendations and solutions for the improvement of higher education in the country" (The Manila Declaration on Philippine Higher Education, 2014).

Moreover, frontrunners of the higher education institutions (HEI) affirm collectively and individually "that quality higher education has a vital role in human, social, cultural and economic development and are regarded as vehicles in the cultivation of exemplary citizens who embody the values of academic integrity, democracy, patriotism, gender equity,

spirituality, and socio-civic responsibility. These leaders "spearhead to explore measures of progression and assessments of learning at the tertiary level" (Macaranas, 2014).

Based on Republic Act 7722 (An Act Creating the Commission on Higher Education of 1994), institutions of higher learning are mandated to respond to the call for a societal transformation to serve the poorest of the poor, the less privileged, the deprived and the oppressed. To implement this aspect and in order to serve and improve community life, CHED enjoined the HEIs to provide community extension programs that are designed primarily to increase the security of livelihood, alleviate poverty, reduce illiteracy, improve health and nutrition, create a system of governance that promotes, supports and sustains human development and protects and preserves the environment. For the poor to benefit, they must be empowered in mind, body, and resources. Moreover, to allow the poor's voice to be heard and make government responsive to their needs and aspirations, good governance demands for their greater participation. Hence, good governance increases their opportunity to participate in decision making, institution building, and social life.

Implementing this aspect of education could be a tall order for most HEIs. It is in this light that this study is undertaken; it seeks to describe the implementation of the extension programs, especially in the areas of poverty, illiteracy, health and nutrition, good governance, and achieving sustainable development among the marginalized people.

It is understood in this study that the extension program is one of the four central pillars of higher education. It has become a vehicle to attain CHED's objectives whereby "its thrust to mobilize knowledge and technology toward enhancing productivity, generating employment and reducing poverty is realized through active research and extension programs/projects, particularly transfer and application of technology/knowledge that contribute to the attainment of the country's development goals. Extension thus is referred to as "the act of communicating, persuading and helping specific sectors or target clientele (as distinguished from those enrolled in formal degree programs and course offerings) to enable them to improve production, community, and institutions effectively, and quality of life" (Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No. 8, 2008).

According to the Philippine Association for Extension Program Implementers, Inc. (PAEPI), "extension is one of the important trilogies of functions of higher education institutions. Vis-à-vis instruction and in light of recent technological advancement, extension complements and fills in the gaps left by instruction, especially for those who, for various reasons, cannot access formal instruction to gain individual transformation".

What may be considered ironic is that extension, as a significant pillar of higher education, is identified as vital, but in most instances, it is the least attended. As such, the spirit of volunteerism and commitment is strongly encouraged by the HEIs so that they may address and help alleviate societal problems that are the root causes of poverty, illiteracy, low spirituality, and distorted value orientations, which impede the development of the society.

Extension programs allow its participants to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge that are offered by such programs to make the participants/beneficiaries more self-sufficient and competent. The Extension Office of a university in Northern Luzon spearheaded its programs to realize its noble vision by building, forming, and organizing communities from the different municipalities of Ilocos Sur and adjacent provinces like Abra. These are being accomplished through skills training and technology transfer like auto-mechanic's troubleshooting, refrigeration and air conditioning, building wiring and troubleshooting, basic welding and metal-craft, basic pottery and ceramics making, plumbing, dressmaking and cloth bag making, food processing, baking and cooking, silkscreen and streamer printing, arts training, and basic and decorative candle making, carpentry, radio mechanics and cell phone repair, cosmetology and hair science.

Another university has been committed to pursuing sustainable extension programs through community development programs for the people of the Local Government Units (LGUs) to improve their living conditions. The university appreciates the support of the LGU to this endeavor through a collaborative partnership to bring a unified direction to improve the quality of life in the depressed and underserved barangays. The University of Northern Philippines in Vigan, Ilocos Sur established development centers under the University Community Extension Office. These centers are the Poverty Alleviation and Development Services and the Mobility Devices and Equipment Services. The former conduct development studies and implement projects to the marginalized and underserved members of the community, hand in hand with Gawad Kalinga and Pilipinas Natin, two non- governmental organizations under the Office of the Presidential Management Staff (PMS) based in Malacañang while the latter addresses the concerns of people with disabilities (PWDs) within Region I and part of Cagayan Province. It provides mobility devices and equipment and training to the end-users. It is linked with Latter Day Saint Charity, Inc. based in Libis, Quezon City, where a Memorandum of Agreement was formalized (University of Northern Philippines, n.d.). Through the extension programs, these beneficiaries are empowered to establish themselves as more productive and responsible members of society.

With the innumerable efforts of schools and universities to enhance their CEPs, and with their desire to become agents of change in the lives of their beneficiaries, this research was conceptualized. It does not only aim to define the CEPs of some selected HEIs; instead, it also aims to determine and describe the status of implementation of the community extension programs of six (6) participant-HEIs in a province. Moreover, it seeks to determine and describe ways by which participant-HEIs can sustain the implementation of their extension programs and encourage the participants to uphold their CEPs; and further, to identify problems that either define and limit the stakeholders' experiences related to the institution's extension program. Specifically, the study addresses the following areas: (1) whether or not there exists a separate unit/entity in these HEIs that is specifically tasked to carry out the community extension program; (2) the awareness of the teaching and non-teaching staff regarding the school CEP and its specific projects and their actual implementation; (3) the beneficiaries of these CEP programs and projects; (4) the bases that are used to evaluate the

extent of implementation of such programs; (5) the number of volunteers and percentage of those who are required to participate in these programs; (6) the incentives, rewards, and benefits that the implementers derive or receive from their involvement in the program; and, (7) the sources of program funds and which of these sources is responsible for sustaining the operation of the program and (8) lastly, the difficulties and risks that the student-volunteers experience during the program implementation.

For purposes of this study, the following operational definitions of community extension and outreach programs are provided: an outreach program refers to an activity that is intended to address the immediate needs of a specific sector of society, particularly the marginalized and the deprived members of society, on a short term basis, in order to achieve short term goals and objectives. On the other hand, a community extension program is more extensive in terms of coverage (it involves the entire communities which are adopted by organizations/institutions that implement the CEP); in terms of projects and activities undertaken to attend to the needs of the various sectors of the adopted community, and the beneficiaries because a CEP is designed as a holistic approach to alleviating conditions of the poor and the marginalized on a sustained basis for a prolonged period until such conditions of the target communities are improved. The beneficiaries can stand on their own.

The results of the study may prove to be beneficial to HEIs, which are mandated to implement community extension programs, especially considering the leeway given to these institutions in carrying out their specific programs. At the same time, the experiences of the participants during the implementation of the community extension programs may serve as critical inputs to future attempts to improve program implementation. Furthermore, this study may provide the impetus to the drafting of a community extension evaluation form that would systematize the manner through which program implementation is assessed; thus, in a way, synchronizing the implementation of the program at the level of the HEIs concerned.

Meanwhile, there is no attempt in this research to extensively evaluate current implementation of the community extension programs of the colleges and universities that provided the necessary data to this study; rather, the data collected may bring light to arrive at a means through which a more appropriate and efficient evaluation of such programs may be done for the program recipients and implementers. It does not also make a distinction between a community extension program and an outreach program that some universities and colleges in the Philippines consider the same and implement as their version of the CEP.

METHOD

This quantitative study used the survey method to elicit pertinent data. Three survey instruments were designed by the researcher and content-validated by experts before use. The first questionnaire was intended for the vice president and deans of target HEIs (Appendix C); the second for the teachers and personnel who were involved in the implementation of their school's community extension programs (CEP) (Appendix D; and the third was for the

students who participated in the CEP implementation in their respective schools (Appendix E). The surveys forms inquired about the respondents' perspectives on the CEP implementation in their schools specifically on those responsible for its implementation, the source of funding for the CEP, the bases for evaluating the program, the extent of CEP implementation, and the risks and difficulties experienced by the implementers/ participants.

A total of 388 respondents from six (6) selected HEIs accomplished the survey forms; 28 administrators, 45 teachers and personnel, and 315 students.

The selection of the HEIs was based on the number of years of their operation. These schools must have been operating for at least ten (10) years. Permission of the CHED and school authorities was sought before the conduct of the survey in the target HEIs. Informal interviews were also done among the respondent administrators (VPs and deans) to supplement survey data.

Data were summarized using the simple mean and percentage distribution. An arbitrary scale was used to assign a verbal interpretation to the quantitative data obtained. Below is the arbitrary scale used in the study:

Arbitrary Scale	Verbal Interpretation
1.00 - 1.74	Minimally Implemented
1.75 - 2.49	Fairly Implemented
2.50 - 3.24	Moderately Implemented
3.25 - 4.00	Highly Implemented

RESULTS

Status of the CEPs of Participant-HEIs

Results of the informal interviews with the vice presidents and school administrators revealed 66.67 percent of respondents with separate community extension offices, while only 33.33 percent of the respondents incorporate their CEPs in their NSTPs. Another finding gathered from the informal interviews was the alignment between the vision and mission of the respondent-schools and the implementation of the community extension programs. Lastly, there is the absence of a standard policy from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the implementation of the community extension programs.

The answers in the informal interviews conducted with the vice presidents and school administrators supported the answers in the survey that two of the HEIs incorporate their CEPs in their NSTP while four of these schools have separate offices. Significantly, these schools have their implementations of their CEPs because there are no standard guidelines in the conduct of CEPs from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Table 1.

Respondents' perceptions on the status of the institutional extension programs of selected HEIs

Existence of a CEP Office	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	42	63.63
No	24	36.34
Total	66	100.00
Department/ Entity In- Charge of the CEP	No. of Respondents	Percentage
NSTP	30	45.45
Departmentalized	12	18.18
Other	24	36.36
<i>Total</i>	66	100.00
Awareness of the Number of CEPs per Institution	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1 – 2	35	53.03
3 – 4	16	24.24
5 – 6	4	6.06
7 – 8	6	9.09
9 and above	5	7.58
<i>Total</i>	66	100.00
Implemented CEPs	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1 – 2	35	53.03
3 – 4	16	24.24
5 – 6	4	6.06
7 – 8	6	9.09
9 and above	5	7.58

Total	66	100
Beneficiaries of the CEPs	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Institution	15	22.73
Barangay	44	66.67
Others	7	10.61
Total	66	100.00
Tools as Bases for Evaluation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Student participation	21	31.82
Status of funds	8	12.12
Faculty & staff participation	17	25.76
Donations	5	7.58
Linkages	8	12.12
Sponsorships	6	9.09
None	1	1.52
Total	66	100.00
Required Participants in the Program	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Teachers	8	12.12
Students	18	27.27
Personnel	4	6.06
All of the above	36	54.55
Total	66	100.00

Percentage Requirement of the Total Employee Population	No. of Respondents	Percentage
At Least 70%	16	24.24
50 – 69 %	26	39.39
Below 50%	13	19.70
0%	11	16.67
Total	66	100.00
CEPs Relation to the Schools' Vision and Mission	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	50	75.76
No	16	24.24
Total	66	100.00
Participants' Role in their CEPs	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Organizer	8	12.12
Coordinator	13	19.07
Member	45	68.18
Total	66	100.00
Implementation Ratings of CEPs	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Highly Implemented	13	19.70
Moderately Implemented	32	48.48
Fairly Implemented	20	30.30
Minimally Implemented	1	1.52
Never Implemented	0	0.00
Total	66	100.00

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Personnel	4	6.06
All of the above	36	54.55
Total	66	100.00

As data in Table 1 reflect, four (4) of the six (6) respondent-HEIs have specific offices for their community extension programs; those who do not have specific CEP offices collaborate with the National Service Training Program in the conduct of the CEPs.

Further, the number of CEPs known to the respondent-institutions is equal to the number of community extension programs that are executed with the barangays as the much-favored recipient. Student participation appears to be dominant as a basis for the evaluation of the extension program. The selected HEIs require their teachers, personnel, and students to participate in the CEPs, but only more than half of the total population of their employees participate while there is a 100% involvement of the students in the CEPs. The community extension programs are moderately implemented, and like in the findings in the informal interviews, the implementation of the CEPs aligns with the vision and mission of the schools.

Sustainability of CEPs of Selected HEIs

Table 2 summarizes the pertinent data on the HEIs' strategies for sustaining their CEP implementation.

Table 2.

Ways by which participant-higher education institutions sustain their community extension programs

Sources in Sustaining the CEP Funds	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Donations	29	43.94
School funds	29	43.94
Others	8	12.12
Total	66	100.00

Employees' Benefit in Participating in the CEPs	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Ranking points	41	62.12
Rewards and incentives	12	18.18
Equivalent to teaching load	0	0.00
Others (Token, Gift, Certificate)	2	3.03
None	11	16.67
<i>Total</i>	66	100.00
Classification of CEPs	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Education	34	51.52
Livelihood generation	28	42.42
Environmental awareness	26	39.39
Good governance	15	22.73
Health and nutrition	36	54.55
Rating of Categories Based on the Benefits to the Recipients	Mean	Rank
Education	4.04	2
Donation	4.22	1
Livelihood generation	3.78	3
Environmental awareness	3.36	6
Good governance	3.51	5
Health and nutrition	3.58	4

School funds primarily sustain the CEPs while the teachers and personnel participate to earn ranking points. Education, health, and nutrition have opted for the CEPs while the beneficiaries of the CEPs preferred donations.

Problems and Difficulties Encountered in the Implementation of CEPs

Funds were identified as the main problem that impedes the pursuit of the CEPs, while the availability of volunteers was chosen as the highest risk when participating in the CEPs. Data are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3.
Problems and difficulties encountered in the conduct of the CEPs

Difficulties Experienced in the Conduct of CEPs	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Time constraints	21	31.82
Participation	17	25.76
Funds	23	34.85
Distance of beneficiaries	5	7.58
<i>Total</i>	66	100.00
Risks Considered when Participating in the CEPs	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Relationship towards participant	10	15.15
Safety	13	19.70
Time	19	28.79
Availability of Volunteers	24	36.36
<i>Total</i>	66	100.00

Perceptions on the Implementation of the CEP

Table 4.

Respondent-students' perceptions on the implementation of the CEP in their respective institutions

Experiences	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Extensive Orientation Provided for the Participants	3.41	Highly Implemented
2. Sufficient Funds for the Projects	2.96	Moderately Implemented
3. Office to Accommodate the Concerns	3.16	Moderately Implemented
4. Participants Are Provided with Incentives	3.04	Moderately Implemented
5. Participation is Based on Academic Performance	2.73	Moderately Implemented
6. Safety of Volunteers	3.39	Highly Implemented
7. Acceptance of Participants by the Beneficiaries	3.25	Moderately Implemented
8. Participants' Willingness to Dole Out Cash or Gifts to Support the Program	2.90	Moderately Implemented
9. Willingness to Dole Out for Community Extension Programs	2.67	Moderately Implemented
10. Participants Exceed the Required No. of Hours	2.85	Moderately Implemented
11. Participants Gain Meaningful Life Experiences	3.42	Highly Implemented
12. Participant Motivation toward Other Ministries	3.29	Highly Implemented

Overall mean (\bar{x}) = 2.99
Standard Deviation (SD) = 0.314

Based on the responses of the students, as seen in Table 4, the CEPs of the selected HEIs are moderately implemented. Notably, an extensive orientation is received by the respondent-students of the selected HEIs.

The overall mean shows that the CEPs are perceived by the students to be moderately implemented; notably, there is an extensive orientation provided for the participants in the community extension programs.

DISCUSSION

The extension program of an educational institution is the arm directly reaching out to the people in the community who need help – technical, financial, and moral - to improve their living conditions (Northwestern University, 2009). Extension programs are considered as the "connectors by which higher education resources could be brought into greater use in community settings" (Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, 2015).

The community extension program envisions developing socially aware, sensitive, and responsive members of the institution through active involvement in community extension, service learning, and outreach activities towards community development (University of Saint Louis –Tuguegarao, 2016). Hence, there must be a distinct office for the CEPs; if there is an identified workplace that is specially intended for the community extension programs, the implementers will be able to fully maximize their efforts in enhancing their tasks to achieve their goals.

These extension programs must have their own offices where they can thoroughly perform their functions. It was found that through the informal interviews that most of the selected higher education institutions (HEIs) have their own offices for their community extension programs (CEPs), but they do not have any guidelines in the execution of these programs.

In contrast to what was found in the study, an extension program "consists of an integrated set of intended outcomes, objectives, projects, and activities meant to address an identified need or problem in a particular community or sector" (Manual of Operating Procedures and Guidelines for Extension, 2011).

Further, an extension agenda also outlines the key characteristics that define and serve as reference points for all the extension programs (Saint Louis University, n.d.).

If there were no specific guidelines that are followed in the implementation of the CEPs, then these selected HEIs may not be able to fully achieve their objectives in becoming the channels of transformation for people and in making a difference as members of the society.

Data showed that two HEIs have their respective CEPs incorporated in their National Service Training Programs (NSTP) instead of having a separate office to take charge of the implementation. The NSTP aims to promote the role of the youth in nation-building (University of the Philippines, 2016). This provides the youth with the opportunity to become partakers in the development of society.

Extension programs focus on helping people solve their problems by connecting knowledge to their educational experiences and through this, they may be able to redirect

themselves toward improving their perspectives on how to deal with adversities that impede them from doing better for their lives, work, and communities.

This similarity in their objectives may have been the premise of the two (2) HEIs that delegate the task to their NSTP Department in the absence of a specific office that will handle the community extension programs.

The results of the informal interview with the school heads indicated that only four (4) of the participant-HEIs appreciated the importance of an independent and have, thus, concretized the creation of such an office.

In the current paper, while all the respondents showed an awareness as to the existence of an entity that should oversee the activities of the Community Extension Program, awareness as to the need for a separate unit is not the same as actually creating one which is believed to be what is needed for a successful CEP implementation. Two of the respondent-schools reveal a lack of appreciation for a single entity that can orchestrate the critical CEP activities to the benefit of more individuals and other beneficiaries under the extension programs.

The number of CEPs known to the selected HEIs is equal to the number of those which are implemented. This demonstrates consistency between the awareness of the number of CEPs and the number of community extension programs that are implemented in the respondent- institutions.

Significantly, there is a clear consensus regarding the beneficiaries which are grouped into institutions and barangays although there is a slight variation regarding the focus with more schools inclined to serve the barangays rather than the institutions; this may be complementary to the selected HEIs that disclosed the absence of specific offices for their CEPs in their institutions. They result in incorporating their community extension programs in their National Training Service Programs that commonly seek for barangays as their recipients.

One of the components of the NSTP, the Civic Welfare Training Service, embodies the common undertakings found in the community extension programs. The activities that are undertaken have social impact and could contribute to "health, education, environment, entrepreneurship, safety, recreation and morals of the citizenry" (University of the Philippines, 2016). On the other hand, the practice of incorporating the CEPs in the NSTP of the participant-HEIs is not a long-term venture, and it is not sustainable because of its nature. This is only within a semester, where the desirable yields are not fully achieved.

There is a gap between what exactly is a community extension program from what is precisely being practiced by most of the selected HEIs. The implementation of their CEPs does not result in long term outputs where the expertise of the faculty in their respective

disciplines results in the productivity of the beneficiaries. Since there is an interchanging definition between community extension program and outreach, in most cases, the respondent-HEIs only get into activities that can be accomplished in a day. Activities such as these are technically not considered as extension programs, as they generally involve one time and immediate need assistance to victims of disasters, calamities and other pressing needs in the community (The University Extension Agenda, n.d.).

A community extension program is evaluated based on its responsiveness in addressing the needs of the community where it is being implemented which is evidenced by (a) development sustainability, (b) people's opportunity to become productive and (c) developed self-reliance among client-partners (Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation, n.d.).

In the evaluation of the CEPs, student participation ranked the highest while faculty and staff participation was rated second.

In the execution of the community extension programs, the students, teachers, and personnel of the selected HEIs are required to participate. There is, however, a varying percentage in the total number of employees who are required to participate. The majority of the selected HEIs have between 50 to 69 percent requirement of teachers and personnel who extend services in their CEPs.

The CEPs were found to be aligned with the mission and vision of the institution. As such, these programs contribute to the accomplishment of the school's objectives that gear toward the development of individuals and society.

This orientation enhances the selected HEIs' claim that their community extension programs are well implemented. It displays a balance and synchrony in the desired outputs of the CEP and the institution as a whole.

Despite the congruence of the CEPs with the vision and mission of the institutions, most of the implementers only choose to become members. This response declines opportunities to collaborate with the goals of the institution fully. If there are no employees who will commit to spearheading the undertakings designed by the community extension programs actively, these will not be adequately effected.

Consequently, the implementation of the CEPs in the selected HEIs was found to be moderately implemented.

Another implementation dilemma that came out of the informal interviews showed the apparent half-hearted participation of some teaching and non-teaching staff who complained about not getting anything out of the activities due to the lack of incentives and rewards and the dreary involvement of students who were required to participate under their NSTP program.

These supposed "volunteers" only participated in the program implementation out of compliance with the CHED mandate.

Aside from such a mandate, the selected HEIs are challenged by another. CHED Memorandum Order (No.46, 2014), which imposes on the participation of professional institutions in the relevant geographic or special communities towards which the College mission is oriented; they must allow students to contextualize their knowledge within actual social and human experiences. The school must have links with the community that would ensure the development of relevant academic and extension programs as well as the application of their learning outcomes.

In order to pursue the CEPs, the generation of funds that will sustain the continuous implementation of the CEPs is a vital concern. Donations through aggressive solicitations and the allocation of school resources were equally chosen as the chief source of funds in carrying out the programs.

Solicitation of donations may be undertaken through Memoranda of Agreement with the public (with the local government units) and the private sectors (through the corporate social responsibility programs of big corporations). At the same time, the concerned schools may enjoin existing organizations such as the Parent-Teacher Association, the Alumni Association of the school, and other sectoral organizations to conduct solicitation meetings or activities to help the CEP implementation.

Employees who participate in the CEPs in the selected HEIs chose ranking points to be most beneficial. Their participation in the school's community extension programs is a criterion in order to earn points that will help them advance in their employment status.

Worth mentioning at this juncture is special attention and extra effort done by one Metro Manila university to imbibe the volunteerism spirit of its personnel and students. In formulating its strategies for the improvement of its community extension services, the Integrated Community Extension Service office of the university developed an innovative approach that would awaken the sensitivity of the university populace, composed of students, personnel, faculty, and administrators in responding to the needs and problems of the community, especially the poor. Continuous training and seminar-workshops to condition the minds of the CEP volunteers and instill in them the true spirit of community service is being undertaken regularly.

As regards volunteerism on the part of students, Lozano (2011), noted in his study that:

Community service works as a formative resource whenever institutions take seriously the moral and civic development of their students and make an intentional commitment to that goal by making it as central to

their mission statement as possible. Deliberately created ethos and culture of community service in higher learning institutions help students to embrace community service as a value.

CPEs do not only enable the faculty and the students to extend services to their recipients, instead, but they are also provided with the opportunity to have first-hand encounters with less fortunate people, deprived and abandoned. Doing so entails much patience and perseverance for the implementers to realize the task; this often results in a deeper sense of commitment whereby incentives become only secondary to the fulfillment that they gain. As such, they do not pay much attention to any material or monetary returns that they may have. Instead, the spirit of volunteerism is indeed developed toward a service that is authentic and selfless. Various activities for the benefit of the communities, such as needs or assets assessments, strategic planning, community visioning, parenting training, youth education and recreation, consulting on specialized areas such as farming practices, and many other community education activities must be developed.

Education, health, and nutrition were dominant classifications of the CEPs. It was earlier noted that most of the selected HEIs that do not have specific offices for their CEPs team up with the NSTP. Two components were identified as a means to help realize the CEPs: the Civic Welfare Training Service and the Literacy Training Service.

The Civic Welfare Training Service is one of the components of the NSTP, which is geared toward activities that have a social impact that could contribute to "health, education, entrepreneurship, safety, recreation, and morals of the citizenry." All of these stress the importance of youth involvement in comprehensive programs or activities that will benefit the people (University of the Philippines, 2016).

Also, the literacy training service was a user such that it has for its objective "to train students to become teachers of literacy and numeracy skills to school children, out of school youth, and other segments of society who are in need of their service" (2016).

Active teachers are called extension educators who render not only community education but also direct service activities. In some instances, these extension educators collaborate with their local government, businesses, farmers, non-profits, and residents on a wide variety of projects. They are experts in various fields and are holders of doctorate degrees who carry out various activities for the benefit of the communities, such as needs or assets assessments, strategic planning, community visioning, parenting, training, youth education, and recreation, consulting on specialized areas such as farming practices and many other community education activities.

In the conduct of the CEPs, the lack of funds was one of the primary concerns of the selected HEIs. This indicated the concerned school's seeming disinclination to allocate much-

needed funds for the CEP. If the institution is not supportive of the CEPs, then the much-needed funds will not be prioritized, thus disabling the CEPs to pursue their objectives.

In the study, the availability of volunteers was pointed out to be the main threat in the conduct of the CEPs. Without the teachers, faculty, and students who committed to extending their services for the CEPs, there will be no workforce, which is a vital component in order to pursue the goals of the community extension programs.

As to the respondent-students, their answers showed an extensive orientation on the community extension programs, the location of the CEPs are very favorable to their safety, and they gained meaningful experiences which led to their motivation toward other ministries. These criteria are highly implemented.

Participants in the CEPs may become appreciative of their tasks so that they can develop a deeper understanding of their experiences, thereby accepting other opportunities to commit themselves to help others.

The extent of implementation of the community extension programs is a vital issue. The core of its application must be carefully appraised regularly to keep abreast of the demands of the beneficiaries so that community extension programs may become a truly productive endeavor for both implementers and recipients.

This also includes the willingness of the students and the teaching/non-teaching staff to continue serving through the CEP voluntarily without any expectations for remuneration, rewards, and other forms of incentives.

It is a crucial consideration in the program implementation that partner communities do not just learn and earn. All four spheres (environmental, economic, social and cultural) must be equally considered to attain the following outcomes: conservation and development of the natural resources, more entrepreneurial activities for locals to increase income, preserved local culture and indigenous knowledge systems and practices, enhanced local people's involvement especially in decision making, and finally, generation of funds through the university's model projects to sustain the operation of the University's extension programs.

Based on the experiences of both the students and teacher-volunteers, the risks and problems during CEP implementation may be addressed through proper orientation of volunteers, ensuring that both the students and teachers are familiar with the locations and are assured of their safety while in transit to and from the site.

At the same time, the concern regarding rewards and incentives for volunteerism in CEP work may be addressed by giving academic or extra-curricular credits to those who actively participated in CEP implementation. In a community development service-learning model created by a University of Georgia graduate student, it was cited that students who

were involved in higher education service-learning activities "receive course or independent study credit for community service, including community-based research or volunteer work with community or government agencies" (Stoecker, 2014).

Communities are shaped through relational actions that can be and are influenced in several crucial ways by the knowledge created in extension programs. There is an opportunity for extension community development professionals to extend and accelerate the change process. Bringing people together by getting them to reflect on their positive experiences of living in a community can be a powerful tool for understanding and then building healthy communities (Northwestern University Community Extension, 2009).

Ideally, community extension programs in HEIs must be implemented in collaboration with the private sectors and the local government units. With this, a separate CEP office must be put up in the HEIs to coordinate with these external partner organizations and internally, to create a strategic alliance between and among the three vital sectors in a community extension program—the teachers and other school staff, the students and the beneficiaries. All three would have to work closely and in coordination with each other for a successful CEP implementation.

Overseeing the CEP activities and ensuring the alliance of the three sectors (i.e., the teachers and other school staff, the students, and the beneficiaries) would be a primordial function of a separate CEP office that will also be responsible for closely monitoring the implementation of the CEP. This would likewise result in a corresponding institutionalization of the community extension services of an organization similar to the experience of a known university in Metro Manila. This University created a separate entity that would orchestrate all the community extension activities of the school. Its community extension office was used as the venue where the students, faculty members, and administrative staff could share their resources and their expertise and be part of the school's social involvement program. In particular, the university's community extension service operates through self-support, self-reliance, self-sustaining, and self-propelling principles. (Chua, et al., 2014). The 2014 study which evaluated the level of CES implementation undertaken by this university, one objective was to make the beneficiaries more aware of the different programs prepared for them and also the identification of the barriers in the course of the program's implementation. These goals were designed to provide an impetus for the university to create a more responsible and improved community extension program in which the benefactors and the beneficiaries will realize the value of their works.

Meanwhile, the CEP office is likewise envisioned to be equipped with an implementation checklist to ensure that the CEP activities are efficiently, effectively, and economically managed at all levels of implementation. This checklist will be an output of this study and will consider all aspects of CEP implementation to include the source of funds, the beneficiaries, the implementers, the length of implementation time, and other such requirements for a successful CEP implementation. It will be recommended for CHED's and

the participant-HEIs' consideration to ensure a more systematic and holistic CEP implementation.

In view of the results, the following recommendations are offered: (1) that HEIs work for the establishment of a separate CEP office under the Office of the President dedicated for an effective implementation of CEP activities; (2) that the HEIs initiate and pursue a strategic alliance within the academic community as well as with possible external partners (private organizations and local government units) and with the beneficiaries for a more holistic CEP implementation; (3) that HEIs' authorities continue to empower and provide support to those who are responsible for the implementation of the CEP; (4) that a standardized evaluation form be used in the monitoring and assessment of the existing CEPs of the HEIs; (5) that a thorough review of the implementing guidelines on community extension programs of the selected HEIs be done to ensure the alignment of these rubrics to the vision and mission of the school; and (6) that the evaluation form for community extension programs be reviewed and enhanced by the Commission on Higher Education as a gauging tool on the implementation of community extension programs in HEIs so that an appropriate and standardized implementation of community extension programs may be achieved.

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