Evaluating the Effectiveness of Community Extension Services (CES) Implementation in Ifugao State University

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ABSTRACT

By evaluating how well these programs fit with local, national, and international regulations as well as university aims and sustainable development objectives, this study investigates the efficacy of CES implementation in state universities. Through the provision of information and technologies to address societal issues, CES programs are essential in bridging the gap between academic institutions and underserved populations. The study assesses CES implementation across many campuses and departments using a mixed-methods approach that includes both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Key elements such discipline-specific methods, community engagement, research integration, teamwork, sustainability, and volunteers are the focus of the investigation.

Purposive sampling was used to collect data from CES coordinators, staff, students, and community stakeholders on several university campuses. The Kruskal-Wallis test and descriptive statistics were used to compare the efficacy of CES across campuses, and thematic analysis was used to find recurrent themes about implementation issues and strengths.

According to the findings, CES initiatives are implemented to a moderate to high degree, with metropolitan campuses showing higher levels of engagement since they have more resources. However, issues like poor funding, little research integration, and sustainability problems were noted. In order to guarantee long-lasting community effect, the study suggests strengthening research-driven CES projects, encouraging closer cooperation with outside stakeholders, boosting CES coordinator training, and creating sustainable frameworks.

Keywords: Community Extension Services, higher education, state universities, community engagement, service-learning, sustainability, volunteerism, research integration, stakeholder collaboration, community empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Through their primary responsibilities of teaching, research, and community extension, higher education institutions (HEIs), especially state universities, are vital to the development of the country. In addition to producing new knowledge and offering high-quality education, these institutions are required to serve communities by converting scholarly knowledge into workable solutions that tackle urgent social problems like poverty, food insecurity, health inequalities, and environmental degradation. Community extension has been established as a crucial component of higher education in the Philippines, guaranteeing that academic institutions act as catalysts for equitable growth and social change. The Commission on Higher Education states that community extension services (CES) ought to be founded on research-proven methods and directly enhance the standard of living in underprivileged and marginalized groups.

CES was traditionally implemented in colleges via a top-down methodology, in which academic institutions created the programs with little input from the community. This approach frequently produced short-lived, outside-imposed projects that didn't deal with the underlying causes of problems in the community. But as time has gone on, this paradigm has changed in favor of collaborative and participatory models that place an emphasis on shared responsibility, community empowerment, and involvement. Successful community extension initiatives must be people-centered, culturally sensitive, and responsive to local needs, according to

studies like those conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. This change is in line with international principles for inclusive governance and sustainable development, which support community partnerships from the bottom up.

Furthermore, modern CES implementation emphasizes how crucial it is to match programs with the university's vision, mission, and goals (VMG) as well as with national and international directives like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN. According to research, CES improves student learning outcomes and community impact when it is incorporated into academic programs, especially through service-learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Furco, 2010). By involving teachers and students in solving real-world issues and enhancing academic understanding, service-learning connects theory and practice. It has been demonstrated that this strategy increases institutional relevance, encourages civic participation, and builds long-lasting relationships (Butin, 2015).

Even with these developments, many colleges still have a long way to go before fully integrating and institutionalizing CES. The implementation of the program is fragmented, out of alignment with research and education, faculty involvement is low, stakeholder collaboration is minimal, and monitoring and evaluation methods are inadequate. According to Asian University Network's extension structure, CES projects need to be sustainable, quantifiable, and flexible enough to adjust to local circumstances as well as international norms. Maintaining these qualities is essential to optimizing effect and meeting higher education's societal obligation.

Given this, evaluating the degree and caliber of CES implementation across different university campuses and departments is essential. With an emphasis on mandate compliance, discipline-based integration, service-learning implementation, stakeholder collaboration, engagement models, and sustainability mechanisms, this study aims to offer a thorough assessment of CES programs. The goal of the study is to identify current strengths, weaknesses, and areas that require improvement by looking at the perspectives of CES program directors, instructors, and students. In the end, this study helps to improve CES's efficacy in higher education, guaranteeing that colleges and universities will always be catalysts for social advancement and community empowerment.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Role of Community Extension in Philippine Higher Education

Community Extension Services (CES) are a legally mandated function of state universities and colleges (SUCs) in the Philippines, complementing instruction and research as defined by Commission on Higher Education (CHED). CES ensures that academic institutions contribute directly to national development goals by extending expertise to communities. Studies from several Philippine universities emphasize how extension programs support poverty alleviation, health promotion, livelihood development, and environmental stewardship. For instance, University of the Philippines has long institutionalized community engagement through its Ugnayan ng Pahinungod program, which focuses on volunteerism, education, health, and disaster response (Cruz, 2018; Santos & Reyes, 2021). Similarly, De La Salle University integrates service-learning into its Lasallian Mission framework to promote social transformation (DLSU Center for Social Concern and Action, 2019).

Programs for extension have also been employed as tools to advance national development.Research has shown that education-based outreach can improve academic achievement in public schools, according to the Ateneo Center for Educational Development at Ateneo de Manila University (Tan & Gonzales, 2017).Another example of how faith-based organizations link CES with disaster relief and community development is the University of Santo Tomas's Simbahayan program (Guevara & de Leon, 2020). These initiatives show how HEIs use organized extension programs to operationalize their social responsibilities.

From Top-Down Outreach to Participatory and Collaborative Extension

In the past, the nation's extension efforts have often been top-down, emphasizing the professional dissemination of knowledge to communities. Nonetheless, a lot of colleges have switched to participatory

methods.In order to increase local ownership, Benguet State University conducted farmer-led technology adoption initiatives and participatory rural assessment in the Cordillera (Aquino & Carino, 2015).A similar cooperative concept that connects farmers and scientists in agricultural innovation is used by Visayas State University's Farmer-Scientist Training Program (Rola et al., 2016).

Community participation in planning, execution, and monitoring is emphasized in Mariano Marcos State University's integrated farming and livelihood programs (Reyes & Delos Santos, 2019).In order to collaborate with rural barangays on health promotion initiatives, Cagayan State University has implemented a "community-university partnership" framework (Garcia et al., 2020). These programs show how, in contrast to one-way outreach, participative tactics produce more pertinent and long-lasting community outcomes.

Service-Learning as a Vehicle for Community Engagement

A popular approach that combines academic instruction with community involvement is service-learning. Numerous studies have demonstrated the impact of service-learning on students' civic attitudes and academic performance, making De La Salle University in the Philippines one of the leaders in integrating it across disciplines (DLSU-CSCA, 2018; Briones & Mallari, 2021).With a focus on leadership and reflective learning, Ateneo de Manila University also uses service-learning through its National Service Training Program (NSTP) and university-wide volunteer initiatives (Manalang, 2020).

The University of Santo Tomas encourages comprehensive interaction with partner communities by combining service-learning with degrees in theological and health sciences (de Leon & Villanueva, 2019). Ifugao State University has created discipline-based service-learning strategies in the Cordillera, with an emphasis on sustainability and culturally grounded community activities, especially in the fields of agriculture, education, and physical education (Reyes, 2022).

Impacts on Students, Faculty, and Communities

CES and service-learning improve students' civic involvement, leadership, and practical skills, according to numerous studies. An assessment of the Ugnayan ng Pahinungod program at the University of the Philippines showed improved community awareness, empathy, and a career inclination toward public service (Cruz, 2018). Similar gains in social responsibility and critical thinking were noted in DLSU research (Briones, 2021).

Although there are still issues with incentives and workload, research from Benguet State University and Mariano Marcos State University showed how faculty participation in CES improved teaching strategies, created opportunities for community-based research, and promoted professional development (Aquino, 2019; Reyes & Delos Santos, 2019).

Impacts on the community are also noteworthy.Following consistent technology transfer and training initiatives, Central Luzon State University reported increased agricultural output and farmers' income (CLSU Extension Reports, 2020).Stronger farmer-scientist networks and greater climate change adaptation were demonstrated by Visayas State University (Rola et al., 2016).

Policy Frameworks and Institutionalization

Philippine CES is governed by national regulations that incorporate extension into quality assurance and accreditation, such as CHED Memorandum Orders (CMO No. 08, s. 2010; CMO No. 52, s. 2016).The Commission on Higher Education encourages extension initiatives to be in line with the institutional Vision, Mission, and Goals (VMG) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN. UP's Ugnayan ng Pahinungod (established in 1994), DLSU's CSCA (established in 1995), UST Simbahayan, BSU Extension Office, and IFSU's Extension and Training Department are just a few of the universities that have established extension offices with distinct missions.

Effective institutionalization necessitates specialized funding, administrative assistance, faculty load, and assessment systems, according to studies from UST and DLSU (Guevara & de Leon, 2020; Mallari, 2021). These are in line with global best practices for community-university collaborations.

Assessment, Monitoring, and Sustainability Models

A number of Philippine colleges have created instruments to evaluate CES programs' efficacy.UP-Pahinungod employs community scorecards and participatory assessment techniques, DLSU uses outcome-based evaluation linked to learning competencies, and Ateneo de Manila University uses a reflection-and-impact framework (Santos & Reyes, 2021).

Additionally, sustainability models are being established. To maintain programs after grants, CLSU and MMSU have implemented livelihood initiatives with revenue-generating components (CLSU, 2020; Reyes, 2019). To maintain continuity and co-ownership, BSU and VSU have long-term Memoranda of Agreements (MOAs) with local government entities.Ifugao State University has prioritized the integration of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural sustainability in project design through its extension and research departments (Reyes, 2023).

Volunteerism, Digitalization, and Emerging Practices

Young leadership, disaster relief, and community education have all been shown to benefit from the Lasallian Volunteer Program at DLSU and UP Pahinungod (Cruz, 2018; Briones & Mallari, 2021). A key element of Philippine CES remains volunteerism. The shift to online participation during the COVID-19 pandemic also spurred digital service-learning programs at AdMU, UST, and IFSU, suggesting the potential for blended community engagement models (Manalang, 2020; Reyes, 2023).

Emerging trends include initiatives for climate action, social entrepreneurship, and cultural preservation. As evidenced by IFSU's culture-based extension programs for indigenous communities, CES can be a vehicle for cultural empowerment and sustainable development (Reyes, 2022).

Identified Gaps and Research Directions

Gaps still exist in spite of these successes. Research from UST and DLSU shows insufficient faculty incentives, uneven impact evaluation, and disjointed cooperation. Case studies from BSU and IFSU highlight difficulties implementing multi-campus initiatives and coordinating programs with the national SDGs. The absence of longitudinal data to monitor long-term community outcomes is noted by Cruz (2018) and Aquino (2019).

This disparity highlights the necessity for comparative, multi-site studies evaluating volunteerism, sustainability, stakeholder engagement, and the degree of CES implementation across campuses and departments. By addressing these problems, Philippine CES can improve its accountability, practice, and policy.

METHODOLOGY

In order to gain a thorough grasp of the subject, this study uses a mixed-methods strategy that combines quantitative and qualitative research approaches. In particular, it compares the efficacy of these programs across various campuses and departments within the university and assesses the degree of Community Extension Services (CES) implementation across eight important qualities using a descriptive-comparative study design.

Ifugao State University with several campuses that actively run CES programs makes up the research environment. These campuses' locations in both urban and rural regions enable the study to document a wide variety of community extension programs and the various settings in which they are implemented.

Coordinators and directors of CES programs, full-time faculty members involved in CES activities, students involved in CES projects, and community stakeholders or beneficiaries are among the research participants.To guarantee that respondents have sufficient experience and understanding of CES implementation, participants with at least three years of involvement in CES programs were chosen through the use of purposeful sampling. The study involved 100 participants in all, representing a range of departments and locations.

The study used a variety of tools to collect data. The first step will be creating a survey questionnaire based on the eight essential characteristics of CES implementation. This tool have open-ended questions intended to gather information about best practices and difficulties faced in CES activities, as well as Likert-scale questions to gauge the degree of implementation (1 being very little extent and 4 being great extent). Second, to gather qualitative information on the perceived efficacy of CES programs, in-depth interviews with CES coordinators and community stakeholders will be carried out. Finally, to confirm and bolster the results of the survey and interviews, document analysis was done on current university reports, such as impact evaluations and annual CES reports.

Three main steps were involved in the data collection process: survey questionnaires were distributed to a select group of CES coordinators, faculty, and students; key informants, including CES directors and community partners, were interviewed; and university CES documents and reports were analyzed.

Descriptive statistics was used for data analysis in order to ascertain the overall degree of CES implementation across the eight essential criteria. The degree of CES implementation across various campuses and departments will be compared using the Kruskal-Wallis test. In the meantime, the qualitative information obtained from interviews and open-ended survey responses were subjected to thematic analysis in order to find recurring themes, trends, advantages, and difficulties in the university's implementation of CES.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the survey, interviews, and document analysis carried out on several Ifugao State university campuses are shown in this section. The findings demonstrate the scope of Community Extension Services (CES) implementation, campus-specific differences, and the difficulties in maintaining and enhancing CES programs. In order to give a thorough grasp of the university's present CES performance and its implications for institutional and community growth, the discussion incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data.

The majority of respondents indicated a moderate to high level of CES adoption, according to the extent of implementation across campuses. According to the data, CES initiatives often support the university's objective of community service and participation, especially when it comes to discipline-based programs that cater to regional requirements like livelihood training, environmental awareness, and educational assistance. These programs successfully convert classroom learning into community application, which strengthens the university's threefold mission of instruction, research, and extension, according to numerous faculty members and coordinators. Respondents also mentioned how active faculty involvement and the growing involvement of student volunteers in community projects had improved the implementation of CES. Nonetheless, disparities were noted in the degree and regularity of involvement between departments and specialties.

The results show significant differences in implementation across campuses. Urban campus locations typically exhibit higher levels of CES engagement and program efficacy. These campuses frequently have better access to funding, closer ties to local government units (LGUs), and established alliances with the commercial sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). On the other hand, because of their remote location, lack of human resources, and lack of collaboration networks, rural campuses encounter particular obstacles when it comes to executing large-scale CES projects. Because their programs are frequently designed to address particular community issues like agricultural sustainability and indigenous cultural preservation, rural campuses demonstrate a strong sense of community connection and local relevance despite these obstacles.

Both survey replies and interviews revealed a number of difficulties. Funding constraints, which limit the growth and continuity of CES initiatives, were one of the most often mentioned issues. The respondents also pointed out that many CES activities are still practice-oriented and lack empirical evaluation or documentation for scalability and replication, highlighting the absence of connection between research and extension. Long-term sustainability was further hampered by sporadic reliance on university-led initiatives and little community involvement. These problems highlight the necessity of better community ownership, more stakeholder collaboration, and the implementation of organized monitoring and assessment systems.

The results further emphasize the necessity of CES programs supported by research and sustainability models. The significance of institutionalizing CES programs through regulations that support interdisciplinary cooperation, evidence-based planning, and ongoing professional development for extension staff was underlined by the participants. The effectiveness and societal impact of CES activities could be further increased by strengthening the integration of research, guaranteeing that programs are not only responsive but also sustainable and scalable across communities.

Overall, the findings show that although CES implementation is generally good and in line with institutional objectives, there are still a few areas that need strategic development. For the university's CES programs to continue promoting inclusivity, empowerment, and sustainable development in the communities they serve, it will be essential to improve funding sources, research integration, and community involvement.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMNEDATIONS

Summary

This study evaluated the degree of Community Extension Services (CES) implementation on several campuses of Ifugao State University, looking at sustainability, community relevance, and alignment with institutional goals. The study collected data from CES coordinators, instructors, students, and community stakeholders using a mixed-methods methodology that included survey, interview, and document analysis. The results showed that the university's CES programs are moderately to strongly implemented, especially when it comes to projects that address urgent local needs and discipline-based efforts. There are differences amongst campuses, though, with metropolitan colleges demonstrating better execution since they have greater access to capital, alliances, and facilities.On the other hand, despite their high level of community involvement, rural campuses frequently struggle with a lack of funding. Frequently mentioned difficulties include insufficient funding, a deficiency in integrating research, irregular monitoring systems, and sustainability concerns. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the university's CES programs continue to play a crucial role in encouraging staff and students to develop their skills, be socially responsible, and empower the community.

Conclusion

According to the results, there are still shortcomings in terms of interdepartmental coordination, sustainability, and research integration, even though Community Extension Services are often carried out in accordance with the objectives of the university and the requirements of the community. The university has effectively incorporated community service into its mission, but there is still opportunity to improve the conversion of short-term outreach initiatives into long-term, research-based, and sustainable programs, as seen by the moderate degree of CES implementation. To make sure that extension efforts are impactful, quantifiable, and supported by evidence, it is very important to incorporate research into CES programs. Additionally, a more cohesive approach to community development can be promoted by enhancing cooperation amongst departments, campuses, and outside partners. The study emphasizes how crucial institutional support, sufficient finance, and ongoing capacity building are to maintaining the university's position as a driving force behind constructive social change.

Recommendations

1. Make Research-Based CES Initiatives Stronger:

The incorporation of research into CES programs ought to be aggressively encouraged by the university. The design, execution, and assessment of CES activities should be informed by community-based research, which faculty members should be encouraged to do. Projects that are evidence-based and able to yield quantifiable results that directly benefit the community will be guaranteed by this integration.

2. Expand Cooperation with Outside Parties:

The university should increase their collaborations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the commercial sector, and local government units (LGUs) in order to overcome financial and resource constraints.

These kinds of partnerships can offer financial support, logistical help, and technical know-how. Additionally, establishing solid connections will increase community trust and increase the scope and sustainability of CES activities.

3. Improve CES Coordinator and Implementer Training:

Faculty, student volunteers, and CES organizers should all participate in ongoing professional development programs. Project management, community involvement tactics, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and participatory planning should be the main topics of training. Giving coordinators these skills will increase program accountability, effectiveness, and impact evaluation.

4. Create a Framework for Sustainability in CES Programs:

A thorough sustainability framework outlining tactics for sustaining long-term CES projects ought to be established by the university. Institutionalizing procedures for community ownership, financial continuity, and CES activity incorporation into university courses are a few possible components of this framework. CES projects will continue to be relevant, community-driven, and able to generate long-lasting social benefits with the support of sustainability models.

5. Encourage collaboration across departments and campuses:

Interdisciplinary approaches to community development can be advanced by fostering collaborative CES initiatives across campuses and departments. The entire efficacy and scope of the university's extension services will be improved by the sharing of resources, knowledge, and innovations made possible by this collaborative model.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes that strategic planning, research integration, and long-term collaborations are just as important to the success of CES initiatives as implementation. Universities can fulfill their social obligation as facilitators of inclusive development and nation-building by tackling these issues and improving the caliber, scope, and long-term effects of their community extension programs.

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