

# Community-Centric Programs implemented by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines: Leading to Sustainability and Community Development

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## Abstract

The Community Development in Southeast Asia has been explored and adapted into a locally approach to analyze the dynamics of concept, organization, system and grass-root economic status within different groups in the region. This has been initially developed within the last thirty years and still developing. (The World Bank, 2009)

In the case of Philippines, the academe either, Private or State University is playing a big role as conduit to transfer such technology and knowledge for the development of one community. Academe extends services and implements programs for sustainability of the identified groups and community. (Zuberr-Skerriit, 2012)

This study focused on the Perception of the selected Community in the Programs Implemented by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, the country's largest State University in terms of population, which leads to sustainability and community development. It aims to identify and to assess the perception of the selected communities in the programs implemented by PUP which solely focused on Literacy (*Basic and Advance Correspondence for the Barangay*), Livelihood (*Meat and Fish Processing*) and Environmental Awareness (*Urban Gardening and Waste Segregation, Techniques, Treatment and Disposal Technologies*) and how these programs contribute to the development of the communities. Also, this study will show the impacts of the continuous implementation of the programs that wrap up into economical attribute (in the case of literacy and livelihood) and environmental sustainability which lead to community development. The study used a validated survey-questionnaire to evaluate the perception of different respondents coming from District 6 of Metro Manila which where the Polytechnic University of the Philippines is located. Also, an interview was conducted to supplement the information gathered.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Development, Community Development, Literacy, Empowerment, Livelihood*

## Introduction

The movement of community development in Asia has faced different changes through the years from the initial exploration thirty (30) years from initiation and experimentation. In different countries, the programs had acquired different faces reflecting their own cultural, economical and political influences. Such as the earlier colonial experiences of these countries also a reflection of the said faces. In the case of Philippines with its early Spanish culture due to the colonization of Spain, the government tried to build Barangai as a base for rural development. This succeeded in the early years which resulted to decentralisation of community development programs the rural areas. (Nanavatty, 1988 p. 96)

Countries in Southeast Asia bring together various efforts towards a holistic approach for development of its community (Brennan et al., 2013). These countries, together with their development partners, have been trying to plan and work with the local governments and its citizens to achieve significant impact to their communities (The World Bank, 2010).

The academe plays a critical role in development by providing the human capital that may respond to needs of society. It has a functions and it provided vocational educational and training coming from the top professions resulting into a developed and direct long-term link to the economy and to the practical needs of the society. (Altbach, 2007, as cited in Aguirre Jr. et al., 2013)

In the Philippines, there are universities and educational institutions that are working closely with local government to engage with the community members. The universities' community engagement has allowed them to address the needs in community literacy, livelihood and environmental awareness (Ontoy and Paspasan, 2016).

An example for this notion is the Polytechnic University of the Philippines residing at the heart of Metro Manila. With more than twenty (20) campuses and serving 70,000 students and 3,000 employees and faculty member, PUP is the largest State University in terms of populations.

One of the key elements of the University aside from Research and Academic, is the Extension Program which 1/3 of the time of the faculty members of the University were dedicated into. And the University vowed to offer responsive and relevant extension service and engagements with government, industry and other communities at the local, national and international levels for the improvement of the lives of the people the University serves which can be seen at the Quality Policy Statement of the organization.

The University is extending its technology, effort and resources to intervene in the lacking in the community around its area which consider to be part of the University's external relationship. Three of major categories where the PUP shows exemplary are the literacy, livelihood and environmental awareness.

Through literacy, a person is empowered to interact in his community and makes him realize on how he can contribute to the sustainability development of community. The Philippine government, with the help of different organizations work together to promote literacy in the country.

Another need to be addressed is the livelihood, particularly to those who are located in remote areas of the country. Such needs includes the support services for livelihoods and microenterprise programs to keep the members productive. Since 2011, The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) initiated the Sustainable Livelihood Program, which continuously give opportunities for livelihood development and income-generating programs for various communities (The World Bank, 2018).

Meanwhile, the Republic Act No. 9512 or the National Environmental Awareness and Education Act of 2008, provides the policy framework for incorporating environmental awareness into the country's educational system. The act aims to promote environmental education through multilevel approach. This is just one initiative of the government to raise awareness environmentally. The community has a lot to learn on how to take care of the environment - urban gardening and waste segregation and its treatment, and various techniques in proper disposal.

Sustainability and community development can be achieved by embracing the social, environmental, and economic aspects through active participation of the community and the initiatives of development partners, such as educational institutions. One of the universities in taking such initiative is the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, the country's largest State University in terms of population.

### **Problem statement, research questions and objectives**

Academic institutions with corresponding mandate to extend their capabilities might help the community member to attain their productivity and sustainability of the whole community. However, this movement might be superficial if the core problem might not be address. In this case, this paper will be guided by the questions such as the following:

1. What are the perceptions of the selected community members in the following programs implemented by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines:

#### **a. Literacy**

Basic Correspondence for the Barangay

Advance Correspondence for the Barangay

#### **b. Livelihood**

Meat and Fish Processing

#### **c. Environmental Awareness**

Urban Gardening

Waste Segregation, Techniques, Treatment and Disposal Technologies

2. How are the following implemented programs contributed to the development of the community:

**a. Literacy**

Basic Correspondence for the Barangay

Advance Correspondence for the Barangay

**b. Livelihood**

Meat and Fish Processing

**c. Environmental Awareness**

Urban Gardening

Waste Segregation, Techniques, Treatment and Disposal Technologies

3.1 How do the programs for Literacy and Livelihood contributed to the economical aspect of the community where the programs were implemented?

3.2 How does the programs focused on environmental awareness contributed to the sustainability of the community where it was implemented?

Also this study aims to:

- To identify the perception of the selected communities in the programs implemented by PUP which solely focused on Literacy (*Basic and Advance Correspondence for the Barangay*), Livelihood (*Meat and Fish Processing*) and Environmental Awareness (*Urban Gardening and Waste Segregation, Techniques, Treatment and Disposal Technologies*)
- To evaluate the contribution of these implemented programs to the development of the identified community ; and
- To assess the impact of these programs to the sustainability of the communities.

## **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

In the course of time, the concept of community development spans and become multidimensional. Community development is not only concerned with the physical aspect of the community, but it involves social, cultural, economic, political and environmental aspects as well (Phillips, Pittman 2009).

As cited in (Wijayaratna, 1997) in the past, and currently existing, the government is involved in the protection, preservation and developing local communities. They are directly involved in the creation and management of economic and social infrastructure and technical assistance. And this movement is usually in the form of Extension works. The government had adapted different approaches and concept of socio-economic development. However, these approaches have been said as highly patronizing and bureaucratic and have a little sense of belongingness to the local communities. (Asian Productivity Organization, 2004a)

That is why the local government, institution (academe included), and local community organization created a partnership wherein their responsibility for developing their visions, strategies in designing, planning, source allocation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation could take place. And from the previous design of “supply driven” for the integration of development of the local communities, it evolved into a more considerable strategy which contemplate to the needs of each community –the so-called “demand-driven” strategy. (Asian Productivity Organization, 2004b)

In the case of Philippines, DSWD, an institution which focused on alleviating the welfare of the members of the country who belong to the grassroot is untiringly developing and implementing programs for all levels of needed community.

In aims to alleviate poverty, Department of Social Welfare and Development in Region 12, utilized Php 700 million through various community-based projects. “These projects have been implemented not just to address the various identified community problems but also to empower the villagers and local government units by adopting community-driven development as a strategy,” Gemma N. Rivera, DSWD Assistant Regional Director and Kalahi-CIDSS Program Manager. With the help of different organizations and other developmental partners, community-based programs tries to empower the ordinary community members in taking part of planning and implementing for their common good.

“These projects are usually located in hardest-to-reach communities in the region basically to facilitate the access of basic social services especially of the poorest among the poor villagers,” Rivera said. The projects include bridges, water systems, roads, pre and post-harvest facilities, health stations, disaster response and rescue equipment, livelihood, flood control and and other development projects which will spur the socio-economic development of the region (Manila Bulletin, 2018).



**Figure 1. Community-Based Development Model**

In the Community-Based Development Model, suggest that the through direct involvement of the community members is the best way to help them in the planning and implementation community development programs. This model was presented by *Trees, Water & People*, a nonprofit organization since 1998 in Colorado, USA. This creates involvement and ownership in sustaining the programs for themselves. Programs and activities geared up with entrepreneurial approach engage the community members to preserve their natural resources.

Development needed by the community starts with identifying the problem, which involves a wholistic view. Problems to be addressed varies in the community, wherein various organizations and developmental partners try to help in addressing those problems, particularly natural resource issues within the community. The developmental partners addresses community's issues through environmental and livelihood programs. Community members must work together to build better atmosphere for themselves. Community-led conservation projects create jobs for local people as well purpose and meaning in life. In ensuring that those programs and activities are running smoothly and efficiently, the community leaders and developmental partners must also work together to evaluate successes, challenges, and plan for future needs (Bright Funds Inc.,2015).

The Philippine government exerts effort in improving Filipino's ability to read and write in promoting literacy. This effort is made possible with the help of the government, organizations, or even private individuals (Cristobal, 2015).

“It is through literacy that one is empowered to interact in his community and realizes his worth, what he can do and eventually make him do things that contribute in sustainable development of his society,” said Department of Education's (DepEd) Literacy Coordinating Council OIC Dina Ocampo in a speech during the 2014 National Literacy Conference and Awards.

Based on the national census, country's literacy has been progressively expanding — an increase record of 92.3% from the 2000 Census of Population and Housing (CPH). Results from the National Statistics Office's 2010 CPH show that 97.5% of the 71.5 million individuals who are 10 years old and older were literate or could read and write.

Moving forward, Philippine government commits to a plan that focuses on achieving wider access to education and life skills programs, a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy (age 15 and older), and

remarkable learning outcomes in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills. It was in line with commitment to the Education for All (EFA) 2015 Goals at the World Education Forum in Dakar, resulting in the Philippine EFA 2015 National Action Plan, “Functionally Literate Filipinos: An Educated Nation” (International Literacy Association, 2015).

In 2011, DSWD launched the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) to provide livelihood assistance to poor, primarily Pantawid households. The livelihood assistance is in the form of microenterprise development and employment facilitation. The microenterprise development track is derived from the Self Employment Assistance Kaunlaran (SEA-K) program of the DSWD, a microcredit program that provides small loans to the poor to encourage entrepreneurial activity and savings generation. While the employment facilitation track is patterned after the DOLE strategy of job matching and skills training to facilitate employment.

According to the assesement of Marife Ballesteros et al. (2017), presented to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, the Sustainable Livelihood Program provides identified poor and vulnerable families and individuals the appropriate income-generating opportunities to help improve their level of economic sufficiency. Economic sufficiency is defined in terms of several indicators such as employable skills, employment, income, social security and access to financial institutions. These are long term goals that can be achieved through different interventions of government and are not necessarily directly attributed to the SLP.

### Methodology

An evaluative design was employed to assess the perspective and how do the programs implemented are beneficial to 100 beneficiaries coming from 20 different barangay communities of District 6 which where the Polytechnic University of the Philippines is located. The evaluation was consisting of a 5-point likert scale wherein:

Scale	Numerical Description	Description
4.20 - 5.0	5	Outstanding
3.40 – 4.19	4	Very Satisfactory
2.60 – 3.39	3	Satisfactory
1.80 – 2.59	2	Fair
1.00 – 1.79	1	Poor

The study had the used the Descriptive Research Method, an approach in which the researcher observe and describe his observations based on the quantifiable information gathered through the course of the study. (Hasco et.al. 2016)

The employed survey-questionnaire had 3 parts: the demographic profile of the beneficiaries, the perception of the beneficiaries to the three highlights which are the literacy, livelihood and the environmental awareness.

Also, there were guide questions implemented for the personal interview. This was conducted to assess the contribution to the economical aspect and to the sustainability of the community based on the perspective of beneficiaries of the programs under literacy, livelihood and environmental awareness. This was done through purposive sampling which aims to produce a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population. (James, 2013). The assessments were casted after the first and second phase of the activity.

### Result

#### Analysis and Findings

The analysis and findings of the study entitled Community Centric Programs implemented by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines: Leading to Sustainability and Community Development are the following:

### LITERACY

### Perceptions of the selected community members to **Basic Correspondence for the Barangay and Advance Correspondence for the Barangay.**

**Table 1**

Category	Frequency			Interpratation	
	5	4	3	Numerical	Verbal
The program is beneficial to me.	75	20	5	4.70	Outstanding
The program is providing appropriate service and knowledge to the participants.	83	12	5	4.78	Outstanding
The design of the program is suitable to the community member.	90	6	4	4.86	Outstanding
AVERAGE MEAN				4.78	Outsatnding

As shown in the table 1, The program is beneficial to me got the 4.70 or Outstanding, the program is providing appropriate service and knowledge to the participants got 4.78 or Outstanding while The design of the program is suitable to the community member got 4.86 or Outstanding.

The Philippine government exerts effort in improving Filipino's ability to read and write in promoting literacy. This effort is made possible with the help of the government, organizations, or even private individuals (Cristobal, 2015). As stated by the Department of Education on 2014 National Literacy Conference and Award:

*"It is through literacy that one is empowered to interact in his community and realizes his worth, what he can do and eventually make him do things that contribute in sustainable development of his society,"*

### **LIVELIHOOD**

Perception of the selected community members to **Meat and Fish Processing**  
Meat and Fish Processing.

**Table 2**

Category	Frequency			Interpratation	
	5	4	3	Numerical	Verbal
The program is beneficial to me.	60	26	14	4.46	Outstanding
The program is providing appropriate service and knowledge to the participants.	70	21	9	4.61	Outstanding
The design of the program is suitable to the community member.	65	17	18	4.47	Outstanding
Average Mean				4.51	Outstanding

As shown in the table 2, The program is beneficial to me got the 4.46 or Outstanding, the program is providing appropriate service and knowledge to the participants got 4.61 or Outstanding while The design of the program is suitable to the community member got 4.47 or Outstanding.

According to the assesement of Marife Ballesteros et al. (2017), presented to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, the Sustainable Livelihood Program provides identified poor and vulnerable families and individuals the appropriate income-generating opportunities to help improve their level of economic sufficiency. Economic sufficiency is defined in terms of several indicators such as employable skills, employment, income, social security and access to financial institutions. These are long term goals that can be achieved through different interventions of government and are not necessarily directly attributed to the SLP.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

### Perception of the selected community members to **Urban Gardening and Waste Segregation, Techniques, Treatment and Disposal Technologies**

**Table 3**

Category	Frequency			Interpratation	
	5	4	3	Numerical	Verbal
The program is beneficial to me.	79	14	7	4.72	Outstanding
The program is providing appropriate service and knowledge to the participants.	68	20	12	4.56	Outstanding
The design of the program is suitable to the community member.	75	11	14	4.61	Outstanding
Average Mean				4.63	Outstanding

As shown in the table 3, The program is beneficial to me got the 4.72 or Outstanding, the program is providing appropriate service and knowledge to the participants got 4.56 or Outstanding while The design of the program is suitable to the community member got 4.61 or Outstanding.

The developmental partners addresses community's issues through environmental and livelihood programs. Community members must work together to build better atmosphere for themselves. Community-led conservation projects create jobs for local people as well purpose and meaning in life. In ensuring that those programs and activities are running smoothly and efficiently, the community leaders and developmental partners must also work together to evaluate successes, challenges, and plan for future needs (Bright Funds Inc.,2015).

### **Contribution of the Implemented Programs to the Development of the Community**

#### **Literacy** (*Basic Correspondence for the Barangay and Advance Correspondence for the Barangay*)

The beneficiaries from different barangay commonly said that the program ( Basic and Advance Correspondence for Barangay) adds skills and knowledge for barangay officers especially to the newly elected officers. In addition, the said program helped them make simple to complex communication letter wich add more confidence to their job in the community.

#### **Livelihood** (*Meat and Fish Processing*)

The beneficiaries stated that mostly the program conducted by the university helped them a lo and in a different way. They gained additional knowledge and new skills that can help to start their own little business. They also said that the meat and fish processing is very timely and perfect for their barangay particularly for plain parents who is stay at home because it gives new opportunity for them to produce income to finance the family even they are at home.

#### **Environmental Awareness** (*Urban Gardening and Waste Segregation, Techniques, Treatment and Disposal Technologies*)

Beneficiaries said that they obtained additional knowledge from the urban gardening seminar conducted by the PUP and they were able to plant not only in rural areas but also in urban. They were able to provide their own simple needs such as garlic, pepper, calamansi etc. Also, they said that even the simple disposal material could turn into a beneficial material in the household due to the recycling and reusing methods.

### **Contribution of Literacy and Livelihood Programs to the Economical Aspect of Community**

The academe serving and extending services for the benefits of community members plays a big role in campaigning development to the lives of the people they are serving. Empowering the members of the community through literacy is such a big steps in providing their needs for the long term. By this, the people learned and applied the learnings to their everyday lives and incorporate this to the whole community. Teaching

and showing practical methods ready to use for future endeavor in livelihood makes progress available and accessible to all. They learned skills which helped them do a living in the near future.

It also shows that most of the answers of the respondents are about the impact of livelihood programs in their community. The livelihood programs (food processing, dish washing liquid making, bartending baking and massage therapist) has a positive outcome in order to lessen the unemployed people in their community and encouraged to use the knowledge they learned from the programs in pursuing a business or as an additional income. According also to the respondents the programs about waste segregation and urban gardening have a lots of contribution in order to maintain a green and clean environment.

### **Contribution of the Environmental Awareness Program to the Sustainability of the Community**

Most of the community already have the program about Waste Segregation, this program was implemented to lessen and organize the waste in a community. The community where the interviews were conducted, the researchers observed that they are clean. where reuse, reduce recycle are practice by providing bins in public and automatically separate plastic and other waste. The waste like plastic was reuse a pot for plants. A sustainable community manages its human, financial capital and natural to meet current needs while ensuring enough resources for the future generations.

According to the book of Friedman, A. (N.D), there is some waste management technique that can be used, such as shipping trash to an out-of-landfill, but it is just also causing another complication to the environment. In relation, the programs conducted by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines that focus on environmental awareness is effective for the betterment of the citizens and the community, because it leads them to a clean and safer surrounding, free from polluted water and polluted air. PUP is allowing them to take the opportunity to step forward and make move towards the betterment of the citizens and also the community.

### **Discussion**

The perception of the community members to the programs implemented by the PUP were gathered through a survey which contained a individually answered questioned if the program implemented is beneficial to them, if the program is providing appropriate srvcies and knowledge to them as a participants and if the design of the program id suitable to the community memebers. This questions are all translated into Filipino so that the beneficiaries are answering the question easily.

For the Literacy Program (Basic and Advance Correspondence), the average mean is 4.78 or Outstanding for all the questioned answered by the 100 beneficiaries. Therefore, their perception to the programs implemented as well as the design of th programs and the gained knowledge are beneficial to them individually and for the whole community.

The reason for this are the impact of the programs to the newly elected barangay officials. They are the one who are doing the frontline services in and outside their barangay hall. The work does not end up with socializing to people but to creat more paper works such as letters, ordinances and project proposals. They find it very beneficial because this is what they need in their job.

For the Livelihood Program (Meat and Fish Processing), the average mean is 4.51 or Outstanding for all the questioned answered by the 100 beneficiaries. Therefore, their perception to the programs implemented as well as the design of th programs and the gained knowledge are beneficial to them individually and for the whole community.

This programs are beneficial to the community members who are home-based and do not have permanent job. This was introduced to the community to be more self-sustaining. People in the rural community usually do not have resources such as refrigerator to prolong the span of their food. So this program was introduced to them hoping to be beneficial and to creat a living for the members of community. However, as much as the programs promotes stability and self-sustaining, the capital for starting a business is still in question. They have the skills yet the capital from local government or other priate sector is still needed.

For the Environmental Awareness (Urban Gardening and Waste Segregation), the average mean is 4.63 or Outstanding for all the questioned answered by the 100 beneficiaries. Therefore, their perception to the programs implemented as well as the design of th programs and the gained knowledge are beneficial to them individually and for the whole community.

Different light was offered by this two programs. Urban Gardening and Waste segregation may differ in implementation but both surely for the campaign of environmental awareness and both champion in self-sustainability. For the community memebers, they support this because it promotes food availability within the community. For them, the program highlighted the essence of self-sustainable vegetation made available for all. Meanwhile, the two-part waste segragtaion I promoting the reduce, reuse and recycling method. The ouput is considered a material eady to sell for the benefits of the community.



Both Literacy and Livelihood Programs showed impact to the community because it helped them alleviate the problems of community by using what they have learned in the programs. Through the programs, empowerment took place. They learned skills that have huge impact in their economical attribute. However, this needs to be supplemented by the financial assistance of the government and other potential sponsors.

Environmental awareness in no doubt contributed to the sustainability of the community. Making the food available to the community. Other part of the country promotes this through the “Gulayan sa Barangay” a program of DSWD for the 4Ps beneficiaries. The people learn to plant vegetable usually needed within the households.

## Conclusion

Community-centric programs implemented by the PUP to the nearby barangay under District 6 of Metro Manila is still on going and implementing by phase. The programs were evaluated and assessed and this study had shown the some levels of information from Literacy, livelihood and Environmental Awareness program.

Literacy programs helped the community members to empower themselves and it helped them in their role within the community. From basics to advance literacy programs, it uplifts their sense of individualism as well as collective members of the community.

Livelihood programs such as fish and meat processing teach the community members to a self sustain entrepreneurship which uplift and encourage people to earn despite of staying inside the households.

Environmental awareness programs such as urban gardening and techniques in waste segregation helped and empower the community member to get involved in reducing waste in the community. Urban gardening, in the other hand promotes self-sustaining environment which help the whole community and every individual to be sustainable.

With this, the researchers recommend the future researches to take more advance steps to address the beneficiaries/ participants needs. By this, it will helped identify the other factors which may contribute to the deeper and wider assessment to the sustainability of the community-centric programs.

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