

Impact of community extension programs on the residents of selected adopted municipalities of Laguna State Polytechnic University-Siniloan Campus

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Abstract

One of the core functions of the academic institutions is to effect change by empowering the people in the community by way of extension programs and services. This study assessed the impact of the community extension programs of the Laguna State Polytechnic University-Siniloan Campus on the residents of its seven adopted municipalities in the province of Laguna, Philippines. This evaluation type of research intends to gain an understanding of the successes and challenges that the extension implementers of LSPU faced so as to guide future activities in a positive way. A total of 250 recipients of LSPU's extension programs and services were utilized as respondents. Frequency and percentages were used as statistical tools. Results showed that CHMT LSPU's extension programs have contributed to the communities especially in enhancing the knowledge and skills of the residents in Hospitality and Tourism Competencies which includes the ff. Food and beverage, Barista, Catering management operation, Tour guiding, Tourism Promotion and food processing, as well as, in promoting behavioral ethics in operations in the actual operation among the residents, and in maximizing the potentials of the residents in livelihood projects and programs. While respondents believed that they have gained and learned many skills through the extension programs and projects, almost all of the respondents perceived the necessity of further improving and enhancing the community extension programs of LSPU. An integrated extension project package should be developed and carried out based on the assessed community needs in order to have greater impact. Likewise, proper monitoring and evaluation of extended programs should be undertaken to determine their impact to the communities.

Keywords: extension, adopted municipalities, livelihood programs

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1. Introduction

Educational institutions, as the pillar of social development, have the social responsibility to be involved in empowering communities and in transforming lives through knowledge and technology transfer by way of trainings, workshops, seminars, and technical advisories. Further, as attested by Borbon, (2021); Borbon (2020), it plays an important role in the social transformation and became an instrument in changing lives of many. According to Paulican and Garcia, (2023) an integrated extension approach is needed to address multi-faceted community issues effectively. Dilao (nd a) in her study on the impact of community extension program on the residents of Barangay Catadman-Manabay averred that issues in the community will not be solely addressed by the local government officials nor by the residents, but these need a knowledge-based sector and the academe for it to come up with a scientific diagnosis with regard to the occurrences of problems in the community.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) by virtue of Republic Act 7722, mandates higher education institutions like State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to respond to the call for societal transformation. Educational institutions have formidable function to bring their knowledge, skills, best practices and material resources to the local folks to uplift their quality of life. In view of this, dynamic learning institutions are spirited to improve the capacity of the faculty members by way of extending their field of expertise to the communities. While extension services respond to the needs of the communities, the same also correspond to the vision, mission and goals of the university. Thus, cognizant to its goal of pursuing excellence in Extension and Training, the Laguna State Polytechnic University (LSPU) as partner of social change, incessantly implements extension programs and activities that is socially responsive to the needs of its service communities and is complementary to the curricular offerings of the university. The LSPU Extension programs and activities are being implemented by the different colleges of the university in collaboration and coordination with the Local Government Units (LGUs) and other partner agencies which is done through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

For years now, the extension and training department, through the academic units of LSPU has established a collaborative partnership with the LGUs most especially the barangays that led to the establishment of the Empowerment of Community Enterprises towards Green Development program. One of the projects under this program which is being facilitated by the Hospitality Management program is dubbed as Kaaya-ayang Kainan Buhat sa Malikhaing Kasanayan, “Train the Trainers”, We TRAINING through RESOURCE ACHIEVEMENTS to IMPROVED and NURTURE (T.R.A.I.N) You Performance, Assessment for Social Success (P.A.S.S.) and BALANGKAT TURISMO. This project draws its strength from the faculty members’ professional expertise and resource materials funded either internally from the general fund or special trust fund, and/or externally from partner agencies. CHMT faculty members who are engaged in extension works address community issues and needs by complementing what they have to offer from their respective program areas.

True to its commitment, CHMT has extended various community extension works in many the municipalities of Kalayaan, Paete, Pakil, Pangil, Siniloan, Mabitac- Famy and Santa Maria for so long a time now along Hospitality Skills Trainings, Seminar and Workshop, and Behavioral Ethics of the Operation Management. However, no assessment on the impact of the programs to the recipients has been done yet. Henceforth, this study was conceptualized and carried out to find out the impact of LSPU’s extension programs and activities on the beneficiaries in seven adopted municipalities.

The study aimed to assess the impact of community extension programs and activities to the residents. Specifically, it seeks to investigate the following: To describe the perceived effect of the services extended by LSPU to the following: a. communities b. individuals; To describe the perceived influence of extension programs

to the respondents; To describe the perceived reasons of respondents' participation and non-participation in the extension program; and To describe the felt need to improve the extension program.

2. Material and Methods

The research design was an impact evaluation, with the aim to assess the overall effects of the extension programs and activities implemented by the extension implementers of LSPU. This evaluation type of research intends to gain an understanding of the successes and challenges that the Extension implementers face so as to guide future activities in a positive way. According to M Wijeratne & De Silva (2024) extension agents need to believe that evaluations designed for learning means the willingness to collect information about the effects of action, including the crucial but not always welcome information that the action is not working.

This study was conducted in the adopted municipalities of Kalayaan, Paete, Pakil, Pangil, Siniloan, Mabitac-Famy and Santa Maria, Laguna. The seven municipalities in Laguna—Kalayaan, Paete, Pakil, Pangil, Siniloan, Mabitac, Famy, and Santa Maria—were selected for extension programs due to their shared rural setting, cultural richness, and economic challenges. These communities rely heavily on agriculture, fishing, and small-scale industries such as woodcarving (notably in Paete), and their livelihoods are deeply connected to local traditions and natural resources. Furthermore, these towns are known for strong religious and cultural traditions, with festivals like the Turumba in Pakil reflecting their vibrant heritage. PhilAtlas. (n.d.) These factors, combined with a lack of opportunities for skill enhancement and development, make them ideal candidates for interventions aimed at improving livelihood and personal development

The respondents of the study were the beneficiaries of the extension programs and activities of the campuses/colleges of Laguna State Polytechnic University (LSPU). Purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents of the study. Purposive sampling was utilized because only those concerned recipients or beneficiaries in the adopted municipalities were preferred to assess the impact of extension services, delivered and/or implemented by the extension implementers of the university. For all these adopted communities, they were given the same number of questionnaires. Only the retrieved questionnaires were used in this study. Thus, a total of 111 recipients or beneficiaries served as respondents in the study.

The main tool that was used by the researcher in this study is a survey questionnaire which was adopted from the study of Dilao (nd b). Slight revision and modifications were made in the instrument. The questionnaire was made up of two parts. Part I gathered the demographic profile of the respondents. Part II elicited the impact of the extension services on the recipients, which is composed of six questions. Frequency and percentage distribution of the SPSS were used to describe the impact of extension programs and activities to the respondents.

3. Result and Discussion

Table 1

Effect of community extension to the community

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It helped a lot to the community	74	66.70
It enhanced the knowledge and skills of the residents	79	71.20
It motivated the residents to clean their surroundings	52	46.80
It motivated the residents to establish livelihood projects in the community	53	47.70
It motivated the residents to adapt and apply new technologies and innovation in farming	44	39.60
It helped in promoting health and wellness among residents	59	53.20
It helped in promoting peace and order, and good governance in the barangay	54	46.60
It helped in promoting conservation and preservation of the natural resources	51	45.90
It helped the residents become aware of their rights, responsibilities and duties as citizens or member of the community	47	42.30
It helped augment the income of the families	46	41.40
It prevented the youth and the mothers not to be indulge with vices (drugs, gambling)	57	51.40

The Table manifests that 74 (66.70%) of the respondents agreed that the community extension of the Laguna State Polytechnic University has helped a lot to the community especially to the residents. A number of 79 (71.20%) respondents confirmed that their knowledge and skills were enhanced, while 59 or (53.20%) of them also averred that the LSPU extension helped in promoting health and wellness among residents. These results signify that the community extension programs of LSPU have contributed in one way or the other to the communities it serves. These findings conform with other impact studies on extension programs of educational institutions conducted by Dilao (nd c), Herrera (2010), and Tacbas, et al. (2010).

Table 2

Effect of community extension to the individual participant/ recipient/ beneficiary.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
It helped boost my confidence	35	31.50
It enabled me to find job	45	40.50
I gained knowledge and skills	69	62.20
It enabled me to increase my income	33	29.70
It helped augment to income of the whole family	33	29.70
It prevents the youth and the mothers not be indulged with vices	54	48.60

Table 2 shows that 69 (62.20%) of the respondent beneficiaries were able to gain knowledge and skills from the seminars, trainings, and workshops extended to them by the LSPU extension implementers. Meanwhile, 54 (48.60%) were in agreement that LSPU's extension programs in the communities prevented the youth and the mothers not to be indulged with vices like illegal drugs, gambling, among others. These results imply that the clientele are empowered and capacitated due to the knowledge and skills they have gained, and that they become more productive as they are drawn toward worthwhile activities.

Table 3

How community extension touches the respondents.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
I now love to help my neighbors sharing to them what I have learned from the trainers (extension implementers)	56	50.50
It awakens the spirit of volunteerism in me	44	39.60
It made me more proud	38	34.20
It made me feel that, there are others who care for me, inspired me to care for our community too	43	38.70
I was touched by the trainers for their patience and willingness to help	49	44.10
It made me happy especially when I have gained skills	65	58.60

Table 3 reflects how LSPU's extension programs and services touched the beneficiaries/ clientele. A total of 65 or 58.60% responded that they were happy of the programs extended to them especially when they gained skills, while 56 or 50.50% of the respondents declared that they now love to help their neighbors by sharing to them what they have learned from the trainers (extension implementers). The results indicate that the respondent beneficiaries experienced gladness and wellbeing because of the skills they have acquired and they also become compassionate and helpful to their neighbors.

Table 4

Reasons why do respondents participate in LSPU's Extension Programs.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
I wanted to learn and to gain many skills	76	68.50
I find it beneficial	48	43.20
I was recommended then eventually I loved joining it	47	42.30
I am interested to join the programs	55	49.50
I was ashamed that the extension implements will be the one to clean our surroundings	36	32.40
I am required by the Barangay officials	27	24.30

Table 4 reveals the reasons why respondents participated in LSPU's extension programs. A little more than half 76 (68.50%) of the respondents manifested their interest to learn and to gain many skills, while 55 (49.50%) claimed that they were interested to join the programs. These simply mean that the beneficiaries of LSPU's extension programs were very eager to gain and to learn many skills, and that they were interested to join the programs.

Table 5*Need to improve the extension program*

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	110	99.10
No	1	00.90

Table 5 indicated the need to improve the extension programs of LSPU as agreed by almost all or 99.10% respondents. This forthrightly signifies that LSPU's extension programs must be further improved.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

On the basis of these findings, the researcher forwarded the following conclusions: LSPU's extension programs have generally helped a lot the community and played a role in shaping the lives of the residents in the adopted communities. The extension services brought positive impacts such as: in enhancing the knowledge and skills of the residents, thereby capacitating and empowering them to be self-reliant citizens; in promoting health and wellness among residents; and in preventing the vulnerable members of society, who are the youth and the mothers not to be indulged with vices, thereby making them more responsible and conscientious individuals. The extension services of LSPU still needs further improvement and enhancement to reach out, touch lives, and empower the people in the communities at a greater extent and impact, and to correspond to the needs of the residents.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the researcher offered the following recommendations: The campuses and colleges, through the extension chairpersons and coordinators should come up with an integrated extension project package based on assessed community needs in order to improve their community extension. Needs assessment survey must be undertaken. Also, proper monitoring and evaluation of extended projects and activities of every college and/or campus must be undertaken to identify the strengths and weaknesses and to determine their impact to the communities. More extension programs that have greater economic and social impacts to the service communities of LSPU should be provided and implemented.

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