Exploring Community Engagement Initiatives: Understanding the PUP Community

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ABSTRACT

Community engagement in the Philippines has its major barriers regarding communication and implementation of strategies between the beneficiaries and implementing organizations including universities. A very serious issue that is observed is the absence of knowledge about the correct methods to engage the communities and as such interventions fail. Other problems include implementation problems, limited access to facilities, lack of funding to support programs, and appointment of officials who may not adequately meet the needs of the community. This research fills these gaps by establishing whom the various stakeholders may be who are not being catered to by current information systems, what their needs may be, and what they can offer. The focus of the study lies with the educational institutions in relation to the establishment of adequate communication plans; moreover, the research explores the live-limitation factors of sustainable projects. In this regard, the research seeks to improve on the levels of decision-making on the programs as well as facilitating participatory community engagement in university extension. In particular, it looks at the those key stakeholders in line with the organisation's management to fit the requirements for sustainable community engagement initiatives, communication channels that currently exist, and factors that may hinder sustainability of community engagement.

Keywords: Community Engagement, Sustainability, Stakeholders, University Extension Programs

INTRODUCTION

A common perception of a community is a complex association of people who are bound together by social relations, possess related perceptions, and engage in activities within specific settings or settings of operation (MacQueen et al., 2001). In reality, community boundaries are often well-defined, clearly distinguishing those who are part of it from those who are not. The term can also refer to a body of individuals who bear similar features such as their location, passion, beliefs, lifestyles, or ancestry. It can also mean a group that is identified by certain criteria such as geographical location, interest, values, and experiences, culture, and heritage. Furthermore, community is about membership, connections and interactions, territories or organizations.

Stakeholder engagement refers to an act of appreciating the given activity, accepting responsibility by participating in the program and supporting the process and results in a positive manner with the aim of achieving positive results in the project. Citizens are perceived to be active or involved when they engage in deliberations, decision-making, and the planning, coordination, and execution of development projects or programmes that affect them. Therefore, organizational and government leaders should add their roles to being enablers, diffusers, partners and enablers of citizens and stakeholders (PennState, 2024).

In the Philippines, The government through the Administrative Order No. 142 passed on October 9, 1989, released a Policy and Implementing Guidelines Governing Livelihood and Projects in the Philippines. The

purpose is to supervise, coordinate, and regulate the government livelihood development programs and projects and their funding as well as to make the program as efficient as possible. Currently, the Local Government Units provide various job opportunities and livelihood activities to support community members. Addressing the employment needs, there is a Public Employment Service Office or PESO in place. The department that deals with SLP is the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). In the same year, the Tulong Pagkabuhayan sa Ating Disadvantaged Workers was implemented (TUPAD) by DOLE or the Department of Labor and Employment. In order to overcome poverty in the Philippines, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) has been mainstream. In order to reward deserving students and enable them to continue their education through employment the Philippine government introduced the Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES) Moreover, the Local Government Unit of Las Piñas and Parañaque presented their community engagement through Livelihood and Development Program.

The University extension programs are administered by the Research and Extension Management Office (REMO) with a starting concept to construct, develop, and organize extension communities in different centers. Another major implementation of REMO is the "Salin Kaalaman Tungo sa Kaunlaran Extension Program" or SALIN which was started in August 2014. The goal of this program is to ensure that recognised communities and institutions that require professional and reliable knowledge and technology receive it from the University. The beneficiaries are empowered to start businesses in common area dishwashing liquid enterprises and beauty salons which creates a sense of economic independence among the beneficiaries. Furthermore, programs such as those implemented by SALIN increase awareness that can be utilized in a positive way to enhance the lives of the beneficiaries of the programs. Such interventions show that PUP remains committed toward improving the lives of those in society and contributing toward the sustainable development of communities (Hasco et al., 2016).

According to Gagan (2023), their participation ensures that their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed, preventing projects that could disproportionately harm these communities and promoting development that supports them. Research shows that initiatives with high levels of community involvement yield better social, economic, and environmental outcomes compared to those with lower engagement. Despite its clear advantages, effective community participation is often hindered by several challenges, including limited community resources, lack of information, language barriers, and insufficient time and resources. Without proper guidance and support, community engagement programs can become chaotic and ineffective.

However, the benefits, such as enhanced trust and ownership, make community participation a valuable effort for fostering inclusive and sustainable communities. It is vital for establishing democracy and a sense of belonging, encouraging active involvement, and giving people a voice in decisions that directly impact their lives. By incorporating diverse perspectives and leveraging the community's collective wisdom, participation can lead to innovative ideas and better outcomes for all, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and accountability as community members become invested in their community's success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the advancement of different causes to enhance the standard of living, health, environment, and general well-being of the community, community engagement has turned into an essential part of these endeavors. It is a collaborative process that is representative of people in groups aggregated through common place or interest or similar difficulty in handling a problem that affects the well-being of those people. The processes of engaging with communities are diverse and so are the purposes and outcomes: increased trust, resources, and systems that promote health and environment. There are usually many people involved in the projects and any given project will have those having a key role in its execution. There are also other ways that can also be applied in terms of community engagement for example conducting training on income generating activities, giving employment opportunities or volunteer chances. Moreover, integration of inclusiveness and diversity is important when it comes to the stakeholders.

Importance and benefits of community engagement

The term "community" has been a topic of extensive debate among researchers and practitioners, leading to the creation of numerous definitions (Bell & Newby, 1971, as cited in Walker, 2020). Communities are significant because they serve as the settings for our housing, education, health care, daily convenience, shopping, and other activities that support us physically, emotionally, socially, and psychologically (DeFlippis & Saegert 2012, as cited in Walker, 2020).

A community is defined as a unified body of individuals. It can be a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society, a body of persons with common and especially professional interests scattered through a larger society, or the people with common interests living in a particular area, broadly including the area itself (Merriam-Webster, as cited in Steinberg, 2021). It also refers to a body of persons or nations with a common history or common social, economic, and political interests, a group linked by a common policy, and an interacting population of various kinds of individuals (such as species) in a common location.

Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people. It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices (CDC, 1997, as cited in Medina, 2019).

Although research on the benefits and importance of community engagement varies, there are several key opportunities that are commonly identified. First, individual citizens engaging in projects may find their influence limited in significantly altering project execution. However, greater impact can be achieved when groups of citizens exert their influence through designated representatives (Gasik, 2023). Utilizing native knowledge from diverse groups leads to effective and practical solutions. This involvement also enhances citizens' problem-solving skills, offering a deeper understanding of issues and allowing them to view problems from multiple perspectives. Additionally, through community engagement, residents have the opportunity to influence external social systems and collaborate with neighbors and community organizations to enhance their neighborhoods (Ohmer, 2007, as cited in Ohmer et al., 2022). Moreover, through active engagement, residents can acquire experience in organizing, identifying resources, and devising strategies to enhance community well-being and accomplish their objectives (Ohmer, 2019, as cited in Ohmer et al., 2022). Regular discussions provide opportunities to address concerns early, preventing problems from escalating. This collaboration builds trust in community organizations and governance by improving communication and understanding, and clarifying the roles and limitations of government, community leaders, and organizations, thereby reducing potential conflicts (Bassler, Brasier, Fogle, & Tavern, 2008).

Community engagement involves influencing the project agendas in a way that expands the scope of the current or redefine the focus of the initiative, discovery of more information that was unknown and, establishing a connection for funding and additional contributors. Processes involving the public bring more diverse and complex stakeholder groups into view. Stakeholders involvement helps in creating awareness of the issue and assists the people involved to apply their acquired knowledge and skills. This explains why, when members of a community are engaged right from the beginning, and throughout a project, one is likely to accept the result when it is completed, has capacity to ensure that change takes place and can also nurture long-term partnerships (Walker, 2020).

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) encourages universities and colleges to conduct extension programs that address community and societal needs; this improves the position of the higher education institutions (HEIs) in the promotion of community extension (CHED, 2010). One of the well known policies is the Republic Act 9163, known as the "National Service Training Program (NSTP) Act of 2001". This policy is: (a) Enhance civic awareness and national defense readiness through service and patriotism training. (b)

Train students to become literacy and numeracy educators for school children, out-of-school youth, and other segments of society in need of their service; (c) Initiatives that promote community development by improving health, education, environment, entrepreneurship, safety, recreation, and morals. The NSTP offers several services to communities, like in conducting clean-up operations where citizens, students, local government units, and others are mobilized to clean up particular places as a form of awareness and cooperation to maintain cleanliness of the surroundings (Republic Act No. 9163, 2002).

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) explained that communities are mandated to join such programs like the Community Clean- Up which is popularly called the Barangay at Kalinisan Day or the "BARKADA". This program requires that each of these barangays effect a weekly clean-up campaign as a way of creating awareness on the need to preserve the environment. Another is the Community-Based Solid Waste Management program where activities include participation in webinars, workshops, and other related events in support for the management of wastes through activities such as reduce, reuse and recycling. Moreover, the DILG has also produced several guidelines that can be used in the promotion and implementation of the Kalinisan sa Bagong Pilipinas Program to ensure that cleanliness and environmental sanitation will be achieved across the country.

Gagan's (2023) work titled 'Evaluating the Impact of Community Engagement in Urban Planning on Sustainable Development' focuses on the real and complex connection between community engagement in the planning process and sustainability. To this end, the research examines case experiences and evaluates the results of participatory actions in order to determine the impact and prospects of involving communities in the creation of socially integrative and eco-friendly urban spaces. The research stresses the significance of involving the community in the planning process of cities mainly in the aspect of fair, responsible, inclusive, and equitable development. It also highlights that there is a positive relationship between the community's involvement in the decision-making process and the effectiveness of decisions made, which emphasizes the necessity of including various stakeholders' input to guarantee that the decisions are congruent with the community's needs and concerns.

The study highlights main areas of study such as; the involvement of the community in the planning of the cities, the effects of the community in decisions making, best practices, issues with the involvement of the community, ways of measuring the effectiveness of the involvement of the community, and policies to be recommended. These theoretical frameworks include Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation and social equity theories which enhances the study. Thus, it can be stated that the subject under consideration proves the significance of community engagement in achieving the sustainable development objectives, as it contributes to increasing the responsibility of those who make decisions, considering the needs and requirements of all stakeholders, and participating in the management of community development. The research offers practical suggestions that can be used by urban planners and local government and other community based non-governmental organizations to ensure that community engagement is integrated into sustainable development initiatives.

Stakeholders role and their characteristics

Stakeholder engagement is a critical process in organizational operations, focusing on actively engaging and listening to those affected by the organization's actions. This process requires engaging in straightforward, transparent, and genuine discussions with stakeholders, including those who may be critical or have conflicting interests with the organization.

In identifying stakeholders, several dimensions should be considered: responsibility, which involves individuals to whom the organization has legal, financial, and operational obligations; influence, which includes those who can impact the organization's ability to achieve its goals; proximity, which refers to individuals the organization interacts with most frequently, including internal stakeholders and those residing near production sites; dependency, encompassing individuals who are most reliant on the organization, such

as employees and their families, customers, and suppliers; and representation, involving individuals entrusted to represent others, such as community leaders and union representatives.

There are stages in the Stakeholder Engagement Framework that provide a structured approach, consisting of the following stages: Act, Review and Report; Think Strategically; Analyze & Plan; Strengthen Engagement Capabilities; and Design the Process & Engage.

Stakeholder engagement is integral to sustainability efforts, offering valuable insights, fostering innovation, and creating research opportunities for organizations. The benefits of effective stakeholder engagement include enhanced risk assessment, improved learning on products and processes, increased credibility, better employee recruitment and retention, securing the license to operate, and facilitating collaboration to address challenges and opportunities.

According to preliminary poverty statistics for the first semester of 2023 from the Philippine Statistics Authority, here are some key findings: The poverty incidence among the population in the Philippines was 22.4 percent in the first semester of 2023, equivalent to 25.24 million poor Filipinos. On average, a family of five members needed at least PHP 13,797 per month to meet their basic food and non-food needs. The subsistence incidence among the population, or the proportion of Filipinos whose income is insufficient to cover even basic food needs, was recorded at 8.7 percent, or about 9.79 million Filipinos. For a family of five, the monthly food threshold was estimated at PHP 9,550. Among families, the poverty incidence was estimated at 16.4 percent, equivalent to 4.51 million poor families, while the subsistence incidence was 5.9 percent, or about 1.62 million food-poor families. Currently, many Filipinos are struggling with higher prices for essential goods because their incomes aren't enough to cover basic needs like food. This is especially hard for families with children who want to be lawyers, doctors, or start their own businesses. In this situation, it also affects the economy in several ways; when the country has low wages to their employees this can cause a decrease in buying things in businesses, and if fewer people earn enough to pay taxes it can impact the government budgets and public services, which slows down economic development. Poor people will lack access to healthcare, it can make them unproductive in the workplace and their education can be affected by choosing to work rather than pursue a diploma (Gonzales, 2023).

In the case of the employment labor in July 2020 in the Philippines (Figure 3 as cited in PSA, 2021), there was a high rate of labor force for 61 % male and a 39 % female employment rate. The biggest employer ages 25-34 group, which made up 27.1% of the total employed followed by 35-44 group (23.9%) and 45-44 group (18.8%). Based on the three sectors the services sector had the highest share of employment followed by agriculture and industry.

According to Llenares, I. I., and Deocaris, C. C., community development involves a collaborative effort among various stakeholders including government entities, charitable organizations, volunteers, and businesses. This process promotes economic, social and political change in the society at large and particularly targets specific communities with a view to assisting the marginalized groups in order to overcome their obstacles. Community development projects rely heavily on the involvement of the community members. This involves bringing together those who work in the local area, public servants, lecturers and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) leaders along with residents themselves to address issues jointly and sort out remedies. In practice, through various community development programs, individuals are empowered with necessary skills including financial management, strengthening family dynamics, creating reproductive health awareness and ensuring safe living environments. These projects help to build communities that are strong and united over time.

Based on the 2020 Census of population and Housing by the Philippines Statistics Authority, regions of CALABARZON, NCR, and Central Luzon play a huge demographic importance in the Philippines. The Region IV-A or known as the Calabarzon region has the largest population count and number of households combined including the provinces in the country. Due to the area's connection with NCR it experienced rapid population increase and growth. The NCR or National Capital Region known as Metro Manila has 16 cities

and one municipality, it is a heavily populated region in the country. NCR is the political, economic, and cultural center in the Philippines. Using the data of the census, it is noticeable that NCR has the overall impact on population and households, to solve problems on congestion, inadequate housing and put pressure on social infrastructures while harnessing the economic sake of the region calls for the needs of having planning and development strategies. In terms of demography and economy in the Philippines another notable region is Region III known as Central Luzon that consists of 8 provinces and is geographically located at the north side of the NCR. This region has become significant as producers of crops and industrial products in the philippines; for agriculture the wide plain area is important and also job offering and investment opportunities are handled by industrial centers. The infrastructure such as major highways and ports make the region more connected and economically integrated with NCR and other regions in the country.

Census of Population and Housing (2020 CPH) of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the Philippines had a total population of 109,035,343. The household population made up 99.7 percent of this, totaling 108,667,043 people. Among the 108.67 million household population in 2020. 50.6% were male, and 49.4% were females. In terms of age distribution, 30.7% were under the age of 15 (young dependents). Those aged 15 to 64 years (working-age or economically active population) were 63.9%, while individuals aged 65 years and over (old dependents) were 5.4%. Moreover, the total voting age of the philippines is aged 18 and above. The overall dependency ratio of the Philippines was computed at 57, which indicates that for every 100 working-age or economically-active population, there were about 57 dependents (48 young dependents and 9 old dependents). In 2020, the school-age population (5 to 24 years old) were 39.4% of the household population. This is compared to 2015, when the school-age population was 40.6%. The NCR comprised 4,805,646. The City of Las Piñas comprised 216,172. The City of Parañaque comprised 232,046.

The three regions combined contribute 40 percent and Central Visayas to 10.2 percent of the household and about 38 percent for the population of the said region. It's been observed that 6% of the total population will be in the Philippines in 2020. The demographic characteristics of these regions are essential to policy makers and development planners in tackling related issues with urbanization, development of infrastructure, and secure economic growth and social well being for the population. All of these suggest the need for structural and spatial regional cooperation and integration aimed at efficiently allocating resources and improving the living standards of the people.

Meanwhile, according to the Commision on Higher Education (CHED) (2020), the higher education enrollment in the Philippines is at 3,408,425. State University Colleges (SUC) comprised 1,321,773. Local University Colleges (LUC) comprised 248, 731. Other Government Schools (OGS) comprised 5,141. Private colleges comprised 1,832,780. In the National Capital Region (NCR), the total was at 662,688. It is composed of 141,523 for SUC, 79,667 for LUC, 790 for OGS, 440,708 for Private Colleges respectively.

Community engagement through livelihood trainings, employment programs, and volunteer opportunities

In relation to community engagement, various institutions like the DSWD, DOLE, LGUs of Parañaque and Las Piñas City offer policies for active participation and development. They play a crucial role by offering holistic livelihood skill training to help attain personal development and economic stability. The objective of this program is to generate employment that would help those people to find work that is relevant to their area. Through such collaborations, they not only enhance the connection in the community but also promote development, enabling individuals to effectively contribute to the development of rich and sustainable communities.

Under Republic Act No. 11310 or the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Act launched in 2008, this strategy is to reduce poverty and enhance human capital. It provides conditional cash transfers to low-income households to have health, nutrition, and education outcomes for children 0-18 years old and their families. The conditions for this program are children's school enrollment, attendance, child health check-ups, and

parent's attendance for family development sessions. This was implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development in partnership with other government agencies.

Republic Act No 8759 or the Public Employment Service Office Act of 1999 contains the policy to promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities via a Public Employment Service Office (PESO) in each province, a city or a strategic zone. The PESO shall offer a platform through which the job seekers can learn about different employment opportunities; act as a referral agency for other government departments; and cooperate with the other PESOs when it comes to exchanging jobs. It shall also provide a host of services like job fair, livelihood and entrepreneurship training and support, and reintegration services for OFWs who will return to the country. The DOLE on the other hand shall: Administer the PESO program and establish a computerized National Manpower Registry; Extend technical support and/or assistance as well as extend appropriate services to PESOs.

Recently, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)-National Capital Region (NCR) recognized the Las Piñas Public Employment and Services Office (PESO) for its efficient and effective conduct and monitoring of job fairs that contributed to the increase of employment in the region. The department awarded the Las Piñas PESO as the best performing PESO in job placement for 2023. The recognition was given to PESO during the regular flag raising ceremony on Monday, March 4. The city's Vice-Mayor acknowledged the achievement and expressed pride for the recognition, reiterating the city government's commitment to increasing employment opportunities for Las Piñas residents (Fernando, 2024).

The Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) have partnership with employers under Republic Act No. 9547 for the Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES) in the Philippines is an workforce development initiative in order to help out of school youth to augment their family's income and help them to pursue their education. Students are employed for a minimum of 20 to a maximum of 78 working days, with employers paying 60% of their salary, the government paying the remaining 40% as wage subsidy. This enhances the employability of youth, providing them with valuable work experience and income to support their education, and is designed to increase employment opportunities for young people in the long-term (DOLE, 2017).

Among those livelihood programs launched by the DSWD, the SLP (Sustainable Livelihood Program) is centered on upcycling and crafts making. Ideally, this community-based approach educates participants on how to turn waste material into useful items and at the same time provides them with sufficient knowledge and tools in entrepreneurship to enable them set up their own petty businesses. The program operates through two tracks: MD and Employment Facilitation relates to microenterprise development investment support which has been successfully completed. While, the MD track focuses on the financial capital for the creation of micro enterprises, skills enhancement and assets building, the Employment Facilitation track offers the technical skills, occupational guidance and job placements for participants. Thus, the SLP raises the nation's appeal by allowing people to create and enhance skills, establish bonds within the communities and work toward a more sustainable future. Further, through the program, the participants are connected to support services from the partners, which include NGOs, CSOs, and private institutions to increase community participation and social responsibility.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) released the Department Order No. 239 Series of 2023 or the Guidelines of the Department of Labor and Employment Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (DILEEP). The program aims to offer emergency employment, entrepreneurship, and skills training in the initiative to reduce the vulnerability of disadvantaged workers. The guideline emphasizes the importance of providing emergency employment opportunities to individuals affected by disasters and other crises. The DILEEP has two components. The DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP) provides funding to individuals and groups for formation, enhancement, or restoration of livelihood projects. This initiative aims to support indigenous people, parents of child laborers, Technological Education and Skill Development Authority (TESDA) graduates, microe-stablishments, micro-entrepreneur and labor organizations and workers. Additionally, it offers employment and vocational training to enhance

beneficiaries' earning potential and reduce their vulnerability. Meanwhile, the Emergency Employment Program (EEP), also known as Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD), offers temporary employment to vulnerable, marginalized, and displaced workers for a minimum of 10 days and up to 90 days or continuous depending on the nature of work (DOLE, 2023).

Likewise, the Livelihood Project of Parañaque City spearheaded by the City Mayor, Hon. Eric Olivarez seeks to build and create livelihood for the masses. This broad plan helps the residents to become entrepreneurs by providing P10,000 no-interest and no- collateral loans to individuals who have finished training provided by the Parañaque Livelihood Resource Management Office (PLRMO) or Parañaque Skills Training Center. In this connection, the project aims at enhancing the economic stability required by the residents whereby constant financial support together with adequate training enhances the city's development. Both these programs show the capacity of livelihood programs in raising the socio-economic status and in supporting sustainability in the society.

The Las Piñas city government has been offering a livelihood skills training program in the Kalipunan ng Liping Pilipina (KALIPI) to address poverty and promote economic development among marginalized communities in the city. Participants in this program will receive practical skills in various fields, such as food processing, sewing, and handicraft making, with the aim of enabling them to start their own small businesses or find employment.

Community extension programs are relevant as they aim to address the problems being encountered by learners, their households, and communities. By providing community extension services such as sustainable livelihoods, health awareness, skill development, and social advocacy. Extension program delivery is one of the major functions of higher education institutions in the Philippines, as part of their commitment to contributing to the achievement of the country's development goals (Morales, et.al 2022). According to Salazar, T. B., (2020), these programs need to be continued and even improved to empower communities, to make them productive, to produce an educated workforce that is also meaningful within the economy.

The Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) , extension services are highly valued in line with its duties in the Philippines. Through its dedication to knowledge and skills empowerment, PUP has fulfilled its promise of contributing to community development. As the largest state university in terms of enrollment, PUP is committed to providing education for every student and at the same time providing quality education recognized globally. Through its dedication to knowledge and skills empowerment, PUP has fulfilled its promise of contributing to community development.

There are several absences in the current state of community engagement in the Philippines. One significant issue is the lack of effective communication and implementation strategies between beneficiaries and implementing organizations, such as universities, which impedes the development of genuine community participation. Additionally, there is a noticeable lack of awareness regarding appropriate community engagement approaches for different contexts, leading to unsuccessful interventions. Compounding these issues are flaws in implementation, limited accessibility, inadequate funding, insufficiently qualified officials, and poor supervision, all contributing to low levels of community involvement. Furthermore, the absence of specific engagement methods and proposals hinders the success of community projects. Addressing these gaps is crucial to improving community participation in the development process.

Problem Statement

In any university extension program, communication is essential and must be done well and in a sustainable manner. It is critical to recognize the patterns of stakeholders' participation as well as the opportunities and challenges associated with communication channels to build the sustainable community engagement successfully.

Specifically the authors would answer the following question:

1. Who are the key stakeholders involved in sustainable communication initiatives in the University extension program?
2. What are the existing communication channels and networks used by different stakeholders?
3. What are the factors preventing sustainable projects from being effectively implemented and engaging communities?

METHODS

To meet the goals of this study researchers adhered to three main steps (figure 1): gathering data, reviewing data, and analyzing data.
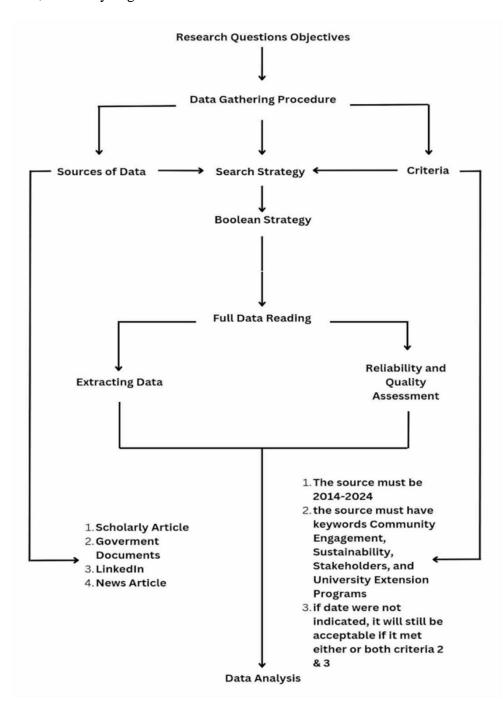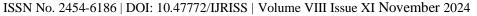

Fig. 1. Data Collection and Preparation

Source: (Delmo et al., 2023)

Data that researchers collect from articles, news articles, government documents, and LinkedIn posts will undergo a full data-reading to validate the document to ensure certain rules, such as having a publication date between 2014 and 2024, including the keywords Community Engagement, Sustainability, Stakeholders, and University Extension Programs. In revising the documents and steps, the content will be checked for accuracy and reliability, and until the last step, researchers will use participatory methods, which involve working together with stakeholders to better understand their needs, challenges, and insights. These methods will assist in identifying challenges to involve the community, the function of universities and the effects of successful programs which are already in existence. The study also shows how other cities are responding to similar issues to give a recommendation that will fit the regional cities around in the Philippines. It also identifies unknown or underserved audiences, evaluates communication channels, and discusses issues relating to sustained engagement in communities, making suggestions for enhancing regarding-and-deciding processes and boosting the take-up of University opportunities. (Koch, E., 2004).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Category	Methods	Description
Inform/Outreach	Communication channels include ads, media, print, infographics, videos, streams, exhibits, and websites.	These methods focus on disseminating information to a broad audience, raising awareness about a particular issue or project.
Consult	Methods include site visits, social media, meetings, interviews, focus groups, feedback, citizen science, surveys, and polls.	These methods involve gathering feedback and perspectives from stakeholders, enabling dialogue and understanding different viewpoints.
Involve	Participatory monitoring and evaluation, Placemaking/Design charrette, Community mapping, System dynamics	These methods engage participants in the process of monitoring, evaluating, and shaping projects or initiatives, fostering ownership and accountability.
Collaborate	Participatory budgeting, Asset-based community development, Community indicator projects, Visioning, Gathering expertise and scientific knowledge, Workshop/Open space events, Knowledge/document co-creation	These methods promote collaborative decision-making, leveraging the collective knowledge and expertise of community members to develop solutions and strategies.
Empower/Leadership in Decision-Making	Participatory asset management, bring deliberation and public participation into public policy decisions, citizen juries, Citizen committees, Expert panels/Working groups	These methods empower communities to take ownership of their development, influencing decision-making processes and shaping their future.

Source: processed by authors

The various levels of public participation, agencies employ different methods to engage with communities. At the "inform" level, agencies disseminate essential information through printed materials, websites, and public meetings, although these efforts typically result in one-way communication, often without integrating community feedback into decision-making processes. Moving to the "consult" level, agencies seek public input via surveys, polls, focus groups, and citizen science initiatives to gather diverse perspectives on proposed plans or issues, yet final decisions rest with the agencies, potentially overlooking consensus or significant public influence. At the "involve" level, participatory approaches like idea mapping and co-creation tools are utilized to understand community needs and generate design ideas. Methods such as community mapping and

system dynamics, including simulation modeling like causal loop diagrams, capture stakeholder perspectives on complex systems. These approaches, often employed in workshops and design charrettes, aim to foster collaboration and community involvement in urban development processes. Moving further to the "collaborate" level, agencies partner with the public to develop alternatives and identify preferred solutions, incorporating public advice and recommendations extensively. Despite this collaborative effort through methods such as workshops and knowledge co-creation, final decisions remain under the purview of development organizations. At the highest level, "empower," communities are empowered with decision-making authority in urban development, facilitated by methods such as citizen committees, visioning exercises, and community indicator projects. These approaches leverage ground-level data and community strengths, aiming for sustainable development while promoting community leadership and engagement (Kang, Park, & Kim, 2021).

The latter present information on the basic concepts of participatory research and other levels of community participation which agencies use. Thus, the main characteristics of participatory research are the emphasis on inclusive participation and the recognition of local knowledge, priority for stakeholder ownership and achieving positive social change as the purpose of generating knowledge and evidence. At the 'Inform' level, the techniques applied are one way and these include announcements of information and at the 'Consult' level, agencies employ forms of consultation such as polls and surveys to capture the views of the people. At the last level of 'Innovate', agencies utilize tools such as idea mapping and community mapping in an endeavor to identify the needs of the community and come up with new ideas. The "collaborate" level is characterized by a lot of participation of the public in the development of the solutions but the final decision is that of the agency. Then at the 'empower' level the most, the communities are empowered by granting decision making powers through such techniques as citizens' committees and visions, with the perception of utilizing bottom up data as well as strengths of the community in promoting sustainable development as well as leadership.

CONCLUSIONS

With reference to this study aimed to identify the stakeholders, their requirements, and what they could provide in order to promote engagement in community activities in the Philippines specifically those related to educational institutions so as to ensure that the extension programs of the university would have sufficient communication plans that would support the participatory extension services.

The research named the specific stakeholder groups they are: members of the communities that would potentially use the interventions, organizations implementing the interventions, and university extension programs that develop and deliver interventions. Printed materials, digital media, public meetings and people's participation were identified as major communication strategies for narrowing the gap between the stakeholders and receiving feedback from the communities.

Yet it also recognised barriers to sustainability as lack of funds, problems in implementing the policy, a question of access, and political will. In order to overcome these difficulties the researchers suggested the creation of broader communication plans, increased capacity, sufficient funding, adequate facilities and political focus on gaining the support and involvement of communities.

The participatory approach employed in this research places much emphasis on empowerment of the community members by supporting education institutions and implementing organizations whereby decisions for improving institution's performance and bettering the lives of the people are made.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on the findings, the following strategies could be suggested to improve the level of stakeholders' involvement in community activities concerning educational institutions of the Philippines. First, the creation of detailed communication strategies that encompass printed materials, digital media, and public meetings will help ensure balanced communication, allowing both the organization and the community to effectively share

and respond to information. The need to continuously seek more support to fund the campaign and taint from local government units, NGOs and private supporters must read. Training members of the community empowers them to participate in decision making processes to ensure they own the processes and therefore enables their participation in the different programs as provided for in this paper. Importantly, enhancing community and organization's capacity through the executing of targeted capacity development interventions will enhance engagement skills. Another strategy to strengthen teaching in extension programs is to organize leaders and community representatives to gain extra political support, ensuring key decision-makers are involved.

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