

Reflection On Extension Work Initiatives: Success Or Mess?

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	<p>When selecting communities and beneficiaries for work initiatives, it is imperative to prioritize those who are most in need and part of a marginalized society with the hope of having a silver lining, take Barangay Tinajero in Bacolor, Pampanga, for instance. Don Honorio Ventura State University (DHVSU) extensionists have executed various initiatives in the past, prompting the researcher to investigate the outcomes and answer the following questions: 1. What is the status of the extension work initiatives in Barangay Tinajero? 2. What factors contributed to the outcome of the Extension Work Initiatives in Barangay Tinajero? The Filipino language was utilized to communicate with the leaders and citizens of Barangay Tinajero, ensuring better understanding. This approach will also enable them to reflect on the results and use them as a basis for future community programs. The study used Qualitative Method and Phenomenological Study in interviewing barangay heads, beneficiaries of various extension work initiatives, and the extensionists who implemented the programs. Data collection, analysis, and observations revealed unsuccessful results in work initiatives, stemming from the following reasons: 1. Beneficiaries were unyielding to new ideas and reluctant to adapt to new circumstances; 2. They demand rapid and effortless progress; 3. Lack of supervision by extensionists and barangay heads; 4. Beneficiaries have diverse interests and 5. Illiteracy. Future extensionists must consider the following before offering initiatives: beneficiaries' willingness to accept new ideas and participate in the project; program objectives must be presented to them clearly; barangay heads and extensionists should consistently have joint monitoring efforts and strategies to encourage beneficiaries to willingly participate in extension work initiatives.</p> <p>Keywords: initiated extension activities; marginalized society; community program; culture, social and behavioral sciences</p>

Introduction

Program implementation is just the start of extension work. To achieve success, beneficiaries must benefit from the program. Llenares and Deocarias (2018) emphasized the importance of citizens' enthusiastic participation in determining the program's outcome. Active involvement demonstrates lifelong learning commitment and a desire to improve living conditions. Citizen participation also strengthens relationships with society. Research shows that citizen participation has numerous positive effects, including improved quality of life, greater satisfaction, and stronger social connections (Perkins and Long, 2002).

Active participation from the beneficiaries is paramount for the success of extension works. Their involvement is crucial, and they should be made aware that extensionists are readily available and willing to offer assistance to improve their quality of life. It is imperative that beneficiaries are fully cognizant of the opportunities available to them, and they are encouraged to actively engage with the extensionists for maximum benefit.

The Extension Work Initiative is praiseworthy for its efforts in assisting the underprivileged and individuals in need. Don Honorio Ventura State University's Extension Services Management programs demonstrate sincere dedication to enhancing the lives of its citizens, which is essential. Universities must prioritize initiatives that benefit society as a whole, and it is pleasing to witness such a strong commitment to this cause.

Barangay Tinajero is a popular location for extensionists because of the significant number of citizens who need assistance. Extensionists from the university have made it a priority to concentrate on the barangays in Bacolor that require the most attention, including Tinajero, which unfortunately continues to be one of the poorest areas in the region. According to a study conducted in 2012 by Del Rosario and Maceda, despite three years of effort, there was minimal progress in improving the overall health of the citizens. Only a small percentage of individuals experienced any health benefits during the study period.

Despite the university's numerous extension work initiatives, the researcher found that the outcomes were largely unsuccessful. This realization fueled the need for further studies to identify the program's strengths and weaknesses. As a university extensionist, it is imperative to identify these factors to effectively plan and execute future activities.

As confirmed by Aslo et al. (2022), educational institutions hold the responsibility to forecast extension activities to societies, as they deserve to witness the positive impact of their projects on the beneficiaries and society they serve”.

To ensure an effective evaluation of the extensionists at Don Honorio Ventura State University, it's crucial to address the following questions:

1. What are the results of the Extension Work Initiatives implemented in Barangay Tinajero??
2. What factors influenced the outcome of Extension Work Initiatives?

This study aimed to attain the following objectives at the end of the study:

1. To evaluate the impact of Initiative Activities on Barangay Tinajero.
2. To determine contributing factors to program success or failure.
3. To share study results with barangay leaders for reflection and basis for future initiatives.
4. To use study findings as groundwork for future Extension Work Initiatives.

Methodology / Strategies of Implementation

The study used qualitative methods such as interviews, focus group discussion and observations to understand the participants' perspectives on initiative outcomes

Study participants include beneficiaries of extension work initiatives, proponents, barangay officials, and extensionists involved in the undertaken initiatives.

The researcher crafted interview questions to assess the effectiveness of implemented initiatives in meeting learning objectives.

Results and Conclusion

After gathering interview notes from program beneficiaries, proponents, barangay officials, and extensionists, discussions and the presentation of results will follow.

Despite the fact that a few beneficiaries benefited financially, extension work initiatives were largely unsuccessful.

A barangay councilor observed some beneficiaries selling the goods that had been given to them. He discovered that some of those given livelihood equipment sold it to buy rice and other necessities for their families.

When extensionists visited the beneficiaries, they discovered that the majority of them did not use the skills they were taught because they were preoccupied with other matters.

The majority of beneficiaries acknowledged that they chose to find alternative sources of income to support their families rather than employing the skills they had learned. Even the notion that it is a waste of time for a dressmaker to wait for customers to arrive was made. Better alternatives to meet their immediate needs include applying for house help, selling random items, and doing someone else's laundry.

Collated interview responses reveal unsuccessful extension work initiative outcomes.

Factors that Influenced the Outcome of Extension Work Initiatives

The following factors are said to have led to the program's failure:

The majority of recipients are not completely receptive and adaptable to new circumstances, which is the primary reason for the ambiguity of the implemented programs. Most citizens, according to some barangay leaders, have always been content with their daily lives as long as their family's basic needs are met for the time being. This mindset is often reinforced by civic organizations' frequent handouts. As a result, as long as the handouts keep coming, they will have plenty of time to rest and stop working.

Moreover, the beneficiaries' lack of interest was evident in their frequent absences and frequent excuses to participate, according to the extensionists. They also emphasized that it was the beneficiaries who provided the learning schedule, claiming that it was the most convenient time for them.

Second, they are generally drawn to the idea of quick and easy progress. This is not surprising given that it is human nature to seek the shortest path to success (Mela, 2022). The majority of the recipients desired to gain something that required little effort from them right away.

For example, barangay officials have observed that many beneficiaries frequently participate in small-town lotteries in the hopes of quickly winning money and changing their lives. Their desires eventually turn into obsessions, driving them to gamble more and become penniless.

In essence, they prefer to seek alternative sources of income rather than wait for customers to come to them. The long hours of waiting hold nothing but uncertainty for them. Doing someone's laundry or cleaning someone's house ensures a steady income for the day.

Third, the lack of supervision from extensionists and barangay leaders contributed to the program's poor implementation. The extensionists admitted that it was difficult for them to make regular visits for a variety of reasons, including: 1. being overburdened with numerous extension programs. 2. They must also assist other agencies and barangays in need of their expertise. 3. All extensionists are full-time teachers with academic responsibilities (teaching load, university accreditation documents, and so on).

Barangay officials, on the other hand, may have had easy access to the recipients' progress. However, because they are also dealing with other pressing community issues, they cannot strictly monitor them.

Fourth, the extensionists failed to consider the fact that recipients have a wide range of interests. Their desire to share their knowledge and skills was evident. However, conducting the required survey was overlooked during the process. Dressmaking and beauty care programs were provided because they were aligned with the skills of many extensionists. Apart from that, a non-governmental organization (NGO) that supports university programs provided sewing machines and nail care kits. Hence, they settled for the said programs.

Interviews with the recipients revealed a wide range of interests, including cooking, baking, drawing, hairdressing and so on. Because the program did not match their interests and skill sets, they were unmotivated to apply what they had learned.

Finally, illiteracy is a far more serious issue. Poor education causes many people to become ill. Because the majority of parents only completed primary school, they do not understand the fundamentals of keeping the family healthy. As a result, they are unable to teach their children anything (Del Rosario and Maceda, 2012). The research came to the same conclusion. More than half of the people in the Barangay never finished high school. It hampered their attempts to improve. They are content with their daily wages. Aside from that, they completely rely on the numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that visit the site every month for relief goods and financial assistance.

Following the presentation of the research findings, it is possible to conclude that the initiated activities were not completed because of the following reasons:

1. Beneficiaries were resistant to new ideas and hesitant to adjust to changing conditions.
2. They expect quick and easy progress
3. Inadequate oversight by extensionists and barangay officials
4. Beneficiaries have a wide range of interests.
5. Illiteracy

The following variables are said to have contributed to the program's failure: Future extensionists should examine the following criteria when presenting initiatives

1. The willingness of the recipients to embrace new ideas and engage in the initiative.
2. The program's objectives should be well understood by all participants.
3. Barangay leaders and extensionists should maintain ongoing collaborative monitoring efforts and tactics to encourage beneficiaries to participate freely in extension work programs

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