

Extension framework: A guide for program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation for private Catholic HEIs in Davao City

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Structured abstract

Background: Extension is a core function of private higher education institutions (HEIs) alongside research and instruction, serving as a vital link to local communities. However, some HEIs lack systematic mechanisms to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate these programs, which often results in fragmented or unsustainable initiatives.

Purpose: The study aimed to identify the mechanisms and goals of HEIs regarding extension programs and to develop a comprehensive framework to guide the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of these activities for private HEIs.

Setting: The research focused on private Catholic HEIs in Davao City, Philippines, specifically those that are members of the Davao Association of Catholic Schools.

Participants: The study involved 13 key individuals: seven interviewees (six extension heads and one research and planning officer) and six focus group discussion (FGD) participants, including representatives from extension units, former students, and an experienced teacher.

Research design: The study employed a qualitative research approach through content analysis to develop an extension framework from systematically gathered data.

Data collection and analysis: Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews and FGDs, while secondary data were gathered from Commission on Higher Education (CHED) memorandums and institutional documents. The researcher utilized document analysis, thematic content analysis, and framework analysis (coding both priori and emergent issues) to synthesize the information.

Findings: The participating HEIs select partner communities based on community needs, HEI acceptability, and the institution's capability to address those needs. Meanwhile, program design is influenced by external stakeholders, such as CHED and accrediting bodies, and internal factors, including the institution's vision, mission, and goals, Catholic identity, and academic course offerings. The proposed framework consists of three phases: (1) planning (needs assessment and design), (2) implementation (delivery and monitoring), and (3) turnover (evaluation and sustainability). Sustainability was identified as a major challenge, often due to a "one-shot" approach to activities or administrative bureaucracy.

Recommendations: The study recommends the adoption of a three-phase framework that integrates research components—assessment, monitoring, and evaluation—at every stage to ensure program sustainability. The ultimate measure of an extension program's success is the felt impact on the community and the ability of the partner community to take full ownership and sustain the initiative independently.

Keywords

Extension services, community engagement, outreach program, community extension, capacity building

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Introduction

Extension is one of the three critical functions of private HEIs, along with research and instruction. Fletcher (2006) said it is a prime university link to local communities. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED, 2010)

defined it as communicating and transferring knowledge and technology to specific sectors and target clientele. Dilao and Maghamil (2011) mentioned that part of the mandate of an educational system is to reach out to educationally deprived communities to provide meaningful

reality to their membership in a national society.

Although several higher education institutions (HEIs) have systems for implementing extension activities, some HEIs encounter challenges. Among these is the lack of support from the school administration. Madriaga (2015) found out that some HEIs do not have an extension office and identified the following reasons for such: most HEIs started as primary education institutions, most HEIs focused on instruction, administrators gave little attention to extension in the past, and institutionalization of extension came after CHED required a functional extension program. It was also the least prioritized (Mojares, 2015). Mojares (2015) added that the lack of support from the administration influenced the direction and the lack of extension programs and identified weak support for extension programs and organizational culture, structure, and policies. A poor organization which leads to poor coordination also causes the failure of extension activity (Rubio et al., 2016), which can be attributed to the lack of personnel (Mojares, 2015). A pool of skilled personnel serving various specialized extension programs is necessary (Madriaga, 2015).

Another pressing concern in extension activities is insufficient financial resources (Swanson et al., 1997). Budget and funds are some of the issues in implementing extension activities (Madriaga, 2015; Rubio et al., 2016). These are needed in addressing the needs of partner communities. Some of the most common beneficiaries of outreach activities are children and urban and rural poor community members (Mojares, 2015). Implementing an extension program has challenges like finding a suitable schedule (Mojares, 2015) and ensuring attendance of participants in the activities (Rubio et al., 2016).

In the Philippines, HEIs recognize the contributions of extension not only to its partner communities but to the institution as well. This is evident in the recommendations made by different accrediting bodies when visiting private HEIs. Accreditors investigate their extension programs and outreach activities. Common problems encountered as shared by the schools interviewed in this paper are the mechanism of implementing extension and ensuring its sustainability as insufficient personnel, budget, and community commitment constrain them.

Statement of the problem

This paper aims to discuss the problems encountered and present a framework that can aid in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating different extension activities of private HEIs. Mainly, the study aims to answer these research questions.

1. What mechanisms do HEIs that are members of the Davao Association of Catholic Schools (DACS) have in place for selecting partner communities and for the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation

of their extension programs?

2. What goals do the DACS-member HEIs have in designing and implementing extension programs?
3. What framework can be developed to guide DACS-member HEIs in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of their extension programs?

Methods

The study used a qualitative research approach as it aims to provide insights into the problem or help develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research (Wyse, 2011). Specifically, this study employed grounded theory design through content analysis of information and documents acquired by the researcher. The grounded theory design is an inductive method (Neuman, 2007) that focuses on developing a theory grounded on the data in the field (Gabales, 2015; Neuman, 2007). The approach attempts to develop a theory from systematically gathered and analyzed data (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The researcher gathered relevant information from different participating HEIs with established extension units to design an extension framework. The study mainly considered private HEIs in Davao City that are DACS members; eight of these participated in the study. The data collected allowed the researcher to discover similar approaches used by the different HEIs to develop the extension framework.

Primary data was collected from different key informants and participants of a focus group discussion (FGD). Secondary data was from CHED memorandum orders (CMO) and documents provided by participating institutions.

The researcher used purposive, non-random sampling to ensure that participating individuals in the study are knowledgeable about extension and are involved in the extension initiatives of their respective HEIs to share meaningful insights. Data was collected through interviews and FGD. Interviewers framed questions spontaneously, probed for information, and took notes, which were elaborated on later (USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, 1996). An FGD is an excellent way to gather people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. The group of participants was guided by a moderator or group facilitator, who introduced the topics for discussion and helped the group participate in a lively and natural discussion amongst themselves (ODI Global, 2009).

There were seven interviewees: six extension heads and one research and planning officer. The interviewees were selected for their first-hand knowledge of extension. There were six FGD participants, composed of one extension head, a few representatives from different extension units, former students, and a teacher experienced in community extension. Groenewald (2004)

indicated that two to ten participants are sufficient to achieve saturation of the study participants.

Ethical considerations were made in gathering the information needed for this study. The researcher sought the permission of the different HEIs before doing the interview and conducting the FGD. The interviewer and the facilitators also gave an overview of the study before the interview and the FGD. It was explained that the interviews and the discussion can be stopped at any time. The interviewees and the participants signed informed consent forms. The researcher used codes in results and discussion to maintain the anonymity of the interviewees and participants. The interviewees were presented as Interviewee 1 to Interviewee 7, while the FGD participants were identified as Participant 1 to Participant 6.

Among the documents given to the researcher were memorandums of agreement (MOA), memorandums of understanding, survey questionnaires, evaluation sheets, office structures, linkages, visions of the community extension services, general objectives, balances scorecard summative evaluations, institutional program evaluation instruments, customer satisfaction forms, project evaluation reports, strategic plans, school community extension programs, and implementation plans. Only the researcher had direct access to all recordings and files given. The recordings were deleted a year after the university accepted her dissertation. The files were also kept by the researcher and were shredded at around the same time the recordings were deleted.

The researcher used documents, thematic content, and framework analysis to make sense of the information collected. The documents' motivation, intent, and purpose were analyzed within a particular historical context (Australian National University, 2016). The researcher reviewed the documents after analyzing the results of the interviews and the FGD. Similarities were noted and used to support the sharing between the key informants and the FGD participants.

Thematic content analysis is a technique for gathering and analyzing text content. The content refers to words, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated. The text is anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication (Neuman, 2007). The interviews, discussions, and documents were analyzed. The researcher identified common patterns of ideas and practices and carefully noted them. The researcher also did framework analysis by transcribing and reading the generated information, and identifying a thematic framework by coding both priori and emergent issues (Nigatu, 2009). To develop the extension framework, the researcher referred to the different concepts and themes that emerged. The framework was designed by establishing the relationships between these concepts.

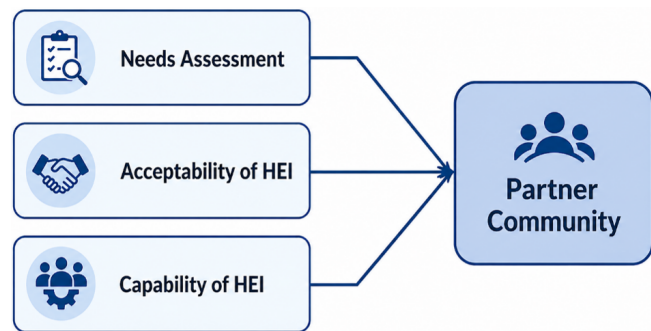


Figure 1. Choosing a partner community

Results and discussion

Existing mechanisms for designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating extension programs

There were observed similarities in how the participating private HEIs choose their partner communities and design, implement, monitor, and evaluate their extension programs.

Choosing a partner community

Partner communities are essential stakeholders of community extension. No programs and activities will be implemented without them. In selecting a partner community, the HEI considers the community's needs, the HEI's acceptability to the community, and the capability of the HEI to address the community's needs. Figure 1 shows this.

It was noted that the extension unit conducts a needs assessment. This allows the key informants to see if they have suitable programs or if they have the capacity to develop a program that will address the community's needs, supporting the claims of Dilao and Maghamil (2011) that a needs assessment is necessary to identify appropriate programs for the partner clientele. Mojares (2015) also argued that the goal of extension is to help people recognize their own problems and work out their solutions through education.

The next consideration is the HEI acceptability. Although the extension unit has identified the community's needs, they cannot just enter the community and present their programs. The community needs to welcome them and their programs. The key informants reiterate that they encourage the community to participate, ensuring sustainability. This is vital since participatory approaches involve a mechanism for consultation (Buenviaje, 2006) and that consultation only takes place when there is acceptance on the part of the community.

Finally, there is the HEI capability. This includes the resources and expertise or knowledge that the institutions possess. According to the key informants, they cannot address all the community's needs. They sometimes refuse a community because the skills and knowledge

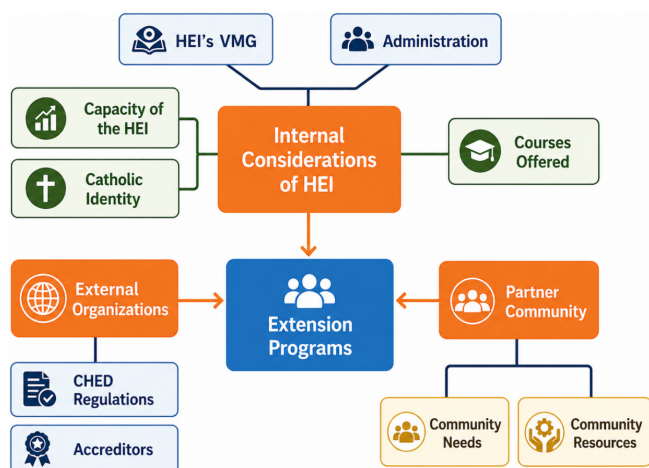


Figure 2. Factors considered in designing extension programs

of the HEI do not match the identified community needs and/or resources are insufficient.

Designing and implementing extension programs

Three considerations were identified in designing and implementing extension programs: the external stakeholders, the institution, and the partner community (Pagong, 2023). External stakeholders include CHED and accrediting bodies. Internally, the institution aligns extension initiatives with its Catholic identity, its capacity to deliver services, its vision, mission, and goals (VMG), its administrative priorities, and its program offerings. Partner communities are also central; extension programs are designed based on their identified needs, available resources, and level of commitment. Figure 2 shows this.

External stakeholders. CHED is a consideration because it regulates the HEIs. CHED (2010, CMO no. 8) provides five components of extension programs: (1) training programs, (2) technical assistance and advisory services, (3) communication/information services, (4) community outreach activities, and (5) technology transfer and utilization. CHED (2012, CMO no. 46) provides expectations for the schools' outreach activities depending on their typology. Table 1 summarizes the typology and the expected terms of engagement.

Only one school in this study, School 3, is categorized as a university; the other seven HEIs classified themselves as professional institutions. As professional institutions, the HEIs must be involved in social development experiences that allow them to develop the service orientation of their profession. This is evident in how the HEIs help their partner communities. School 3, on the other hand, applied new knowledge to address specific social development problems. They developed technology that would respond to the immediate needs

Table 1. Typology and expected terms of community engagement

Typology	Terms of community engagement
Professional institution	Outreach programs involving all students in social-development oriented experiences that allow them to develop the service orientation in their profession.
Colleges	Outreach programs involving students in social-development oriented experiences that allow them to contextualize their knowledge within actual social and human experiences.
Universities	Outreach activities that allow the students, faculty, and research staff to apply the new knowledge they generate to address specific social development problems, broadly defined.

of families hit by calamities for three days. During the FGD, the representative from School 3 also confirmed that they conduct research before designing a program to ensure that they address the community needs.

The schools also consider the accreditors. The interviews with the key informants reveal that they value the inputs and recommendations of the accreditors. Educational institutions undergo accreditation for quality assurance. The informants shared that accreditors often require proper documentation of the extension and outreach activities.

Institutional considerations. The HEIs also have internal considerations: their Catholic identity, their capacity, their VMG, their administration, and their academic programs or courses offered.

Catholic identity emerged as an important consideration. Since the participating HEIs are Catholic schools, they also emphasize value formation and ensuring that their mission as Catholic institutions is carried out. This includes the active involvement of the school in various parish activities and the emphasis on the character building of the students through community extension. Interviewee 7 stated that Catholic institutions do not focus only on theories but also on building morals and values. This was supported by Interviewee 4, who said that education is not solely for literacy but also for value formation. It was further reiterated during the FGD. One participant shared that evangelization is part of their outreach activities—educating the community about the Catholic faith. It was also evident in the document provided by School 6, which includes the moral and spiritual aspects of the seven components of their extension unit, and adds that part of their mission is to address the communities' need for lay evangelizers.

Part of their internal consideration is their capacity. The key informants shared that after the needs assessment, the school needs to assess whether the institution can address the needs identified. Interviewee 3 shared that School 3 can only do so much. They do their best by identifying the needs and prioritizing those they can effectively address. Similarly, Interviewee 2 mentioned that they have refused to partner with a community because they did not have the capacity or expertise to address their needs. This was also found in School 2's mission statement, indicating that the school should be responsive to the needs of the community considering the capacity and the resources of their areas of the discipline. Interviewee 6 agrees with this, citing that there is a limitation regarding what the school can share. Interviewee 4 also explained that one of the reasons they conduct community assessments is to identify the best way to address the community's needs, which is most viable and practical for both parties.

Another consideration is the HEI's VMG. Interviewee 1 said the programs should be anchored on the institution's VMG, while Interviewee 3 explained that the extension plans should contribute to the strategic plan of the entire institution. This was affirmed by Participant 4, who shared that the school's programs depend on its charism. This is also evident in the document presented by School 5, showing that the goals of the extension unit are aligned with the institution's VMG.

The administration also plays a vital role in designing and implementing the programs of the extension unit of the institution. The key informants report to the vice president or the president. The extension personnel do not make the final decisions for the extension programs. The implementation of their proposed programs depend on the administration's approval. Interviewee 3 explained that the dynamics of their university are temporary. After three years, there could be a change in the administration, which is a change of priorities, adding that if the new president orders to stop all activities, they have no choice but to do so. The administration's involvement is also evident in the document provided by School 2. The extension unit of the institution has a board—composed of the school director, the college dean, the grade school and the high school principals, and the community extension officer—that decide on the activities to be pursued by the institution.

Another consideration identified in designing and implementing extension programs and activities is the courses offered by the institution. This is attributed to the fact that extension is a transfer of technology and knowledge. According to Interviewee 2, one of the reasons why they conduct a needs assessment is to identify the appropriate course offering that will handle the program. In his explanation, Interviewee 3 mentioned that helping the community is also a way of maximiz-

ing their academic function. Community extension can apply what the students have learned in class, utilizing their learnings to help the partner community. Interviewee 4 also said that it is part of her task to ensure that the different courses have contributed to addressing the community's needs. Similarly, Interviewee 6 shared that the programs and activities conducted by the different courses are related to their field of studies; for example, the education course handles literacy programs while the business administration course handles the livelihood programs. This is also evident in the documents given by Schools 2 and 5. One document shows the links of the extension unit of School 2 with the different courses offered by the school. Among the signatories of the MOA provided by School 5 is the representative from the implementing program.

Partner community. Finally, the HEI considers the partner community in designing and implementing extension programs and activities. It thinks about both the community's needs and the institution's resources. The key informants shared that it is essential to understand the needs of the partner community to ensure that the extension programs are responsive to those needs. Interviewee 3 emphasized that the needs should be assessed and not assumed by the institution. Determining the needs from the community's perspective allows the institution to develop a responsive extension program. This was confirmed by Interviewees 4 and 6, and Participant 1. An assessment is done to learn how they can help the community and to decide whether they have the capacity to address the needs. School 6 pointed out in their extension program philosophy that their programs and activities shall respond to the needs of the community they serve. This is like a line in the mission statement of School 2, stating that the project to be implemented should be responsive to the community's needs. Identifying the community's needs is essential because extension programs should be based on empirical information. Its refinements are need-based, the verification is localized, it has a community-driven and centered nature, and it empowers the partner communities to make informed decisions (Juanillo, n.d.).

Another critical consideration is the availability of community resources. Across Interviewees 1 to 5 and the FGD participants, there was strong convergence on the requirement for a community counterpart as a standard protocol in extension initiatives. This counterpart typically takes the form of locally available resources or tangible contributions from the community.

The informants consistently emphasized that extension is not a dole-out but a reciprocal partnership. Interviewees 2 and 3 noted that providing everything to the community is counterproductive; instead, efforts should focus on capacitating beneficiaries. This perspective was reinforced during the FGD, where participants high-

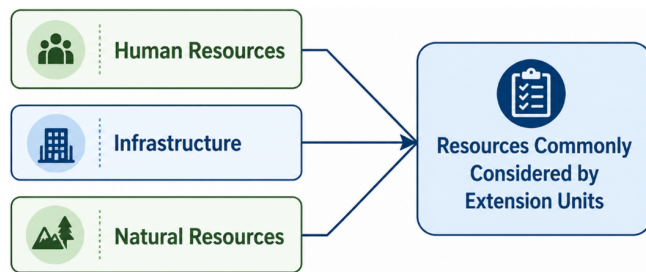


Figure 3. Common resources considered by extension units

lighted the importance of enabling communities to sustain gains beyond the project period. Participants 3 and 4 further stressed that communities must recognize their role as active partners and that interventions should leave lasting, functional benefits.

Moreover, Interviewees 3, 4, and 5 underscored that requiring a counterpart fosters responsibility, strengthens commitment, and enhances program sustainability. Collectively, the responses indicate that the community counterpart serves as a concrete expression of ownership—encouraging active participation and increasing the likelihood of long-term success.

The key informants further explained that this is also why the extension units conduct the community assessment and resource mapping. This helps them determine the potential resources that the partner communities can commit. Interviewee 7 mentioned that the community typically gives what they can to sustain the program. This means that the community sees the value of the extension program and wants to be part of it.

Interviewee 7 noted that the people in partner communities do not always realize the resources available to them. Through resource mapping, they can identify what they have. Interviewee 3 said they usually look at the community's demographics, topography, terrain, and environmental information. The common resources considered by the key informants are shown in Figure 3: human resources, infrastructure, and natural resources.

Human resources emerged as one of the most significant resources considered by the key informants. Interviewee 3 said that they would check if there were professionals in the community like lawyers or engineers. Interviewees 4 and 6 also expressed that people's willingness to make the program happen is essential. They said that the first thing they need is the support of the people in the community. Interviewee 7 reiterated the importance of human resources; he said that the people in the partner community are vital to making the extension program successful, especially when the extension unit has minimal personnel.

The key informants also identified infrastructure as a valuable community resource. Community facilities

like covered courts, halls, and roads, aid them in implementing extension programs. Interviewees 3 and 4 mentioned that they often use the gymnasiums in barangays as training venues.

The informants also find value in the natural resources found in the partner communities. Interviewee 7 shared that in the beginning, they did not have any infrastructure for a school in the community. It started as a mobile school where they gathered children to teach. Eventually, the community decided to look for a place conducive to learning, and everyone helped look for materials for building a make-shift school. They used nipa and other materials found in their surroundings, and the community helped put up the structure. Materials to implement extension activities are often limited. The natural resources, resourcefulness, and commitment of the people in the community can significantly augment these.

Designing and implementing an extension program is based on various factors. There are external and internal factors, and there is also the community. External factors must be considered to ensure that the HEI abides with the rules, policy guidelines, standards, and mandates set by the regulating agency. Considering the recommendation of the accreditors is needed to ensure that they are at par with other HEIs. It is also important that the internal factors are considered. After all, the extension unit is a part of the institution and should contribute to the attainment of the institution's overarching goals. Finally, the design and implementation of an extension program should be responsive to the community's needs. This can only be achieved if the community accepts the HEIs and is willing to commit to the program.

Monitoring and evaluation of extension programs

Monitoring and evaluation are essential aspects of extension. Regular monitoring is needed to ensure success and proactive implementation (Mojares, 2015). These activities provide the implementing unit with crucial information to know whether the programs were implemented according to plan. They also provide details of the progress of the program. The key informants agree that monitoring and evaluation are needed for extension. Figure 4 shows the suggested mechanism for monitoring and evaluation based on the inputs of the informants.

The information gathered revealed that the monitoring process of HEIs involved visiting their partner communities. Some extension units use existing monitoring tools, while others require documentation and reports. Interviewee 1 explained that they visit the community to verify the implementation of the extension program. Interviewee 4 shared that they go back to the community to see if the training was effective. Regular monitoring is conducted; School 5 does it quarterly, while School 6 does it annually. Reports are also required. They provide a paper trail for the activities and the records used as

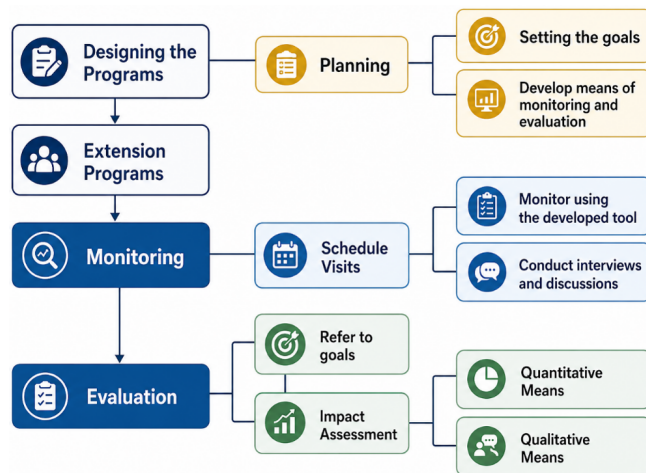


Figure 4. Means of monitoring and evaluation

evidence and verification during accreditation and CHED monitoring.

Although existing tools are used, there are still some concerns regarding monitoring the different programs. Interviewee 3 said that while presenting the plan to the various offices, he solicits suggestions for adequately monitoring and evaluating the program. As seen in Figure 4, it is recommended to include the means for monitoring and evaluation during the planning stage. This is important as this will measure the success or failure of the program.

Meanwhile, the MOA from School 2 specified that the extension unit should monitor the program in coordination with their partner community. A similar clause was also seen in the sample MOAs from Schools 5 and 6.

Finally, evaluation emerged as an essential aspect of extension. Program evaluation allows the extension unit to see whether the program is effective or not. The evaluation processes of the different HEIs were similar and are closely linked with their monitoring processes. Informants shared that the first thing the extension unit does to evaluate the program is to go back to the objectives of the program. Some institutions do this with an existing tool, while others conduct interviews and FGD on learning about the impact of their program. Although Interviewee 3 typically uses indicators to evaluate the program, he underscored the importance of speaking to people in the community to discover and understand the effect of the programs. He added that the actual proof of success is when the partner community takes ownership of the project, and that the community can stand on its own even without the help of the HEI.

School 2 provided a copy of a tool they used to evaluate their programs. Part of its focus is determining whether the activities' objectives were achieved. School 5 shared its project evaluation report. It has a qualitative component that focuses on the program's impact on the

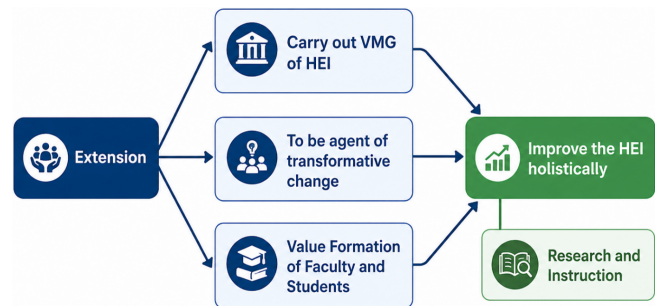


Figure 5. Extension goals of DACS-member HEIs

community and the implementing unit. There were also questions about the accomplishments of the program. School 6 presented a copy of its implementation plan with a schedule for evaluating the program.

Although quantitative measures of monitoring and evaluating the extension programs are essential, it is also important to listen to the narratives of the community's members—the qualitative approach. Interviewees 3 and 7 agree that it will give a deeper understanding of how the program affected the community. More importantly, monitoring and evaluation are needed to ensure that the program is successfully implemented, and its goals and objectives are achieved.

Goals of extension programs

Goals set the direction of the extension efforts. Among the themes that emerged for goals of extension programs were (1) to carry out the VMG of the HEI, (2) to bring transformative change to the partner community, and (3) to help improve the character of the HEI's faculty and students, which will eventually (4) improve the HEI holistically. These goals are presented in Figure 5.

One of the goals of the extension units of the HEIs is to carry out their VMG. As reiterated by Interviewees 1 and 7, the goal of the extension unit is anchored on the institution's VMG. As shared, School 7 did its best to connect all aspects of the institution to the VMG of the school. This was affirmed during the FGD. Participant 3 expressed that the programs implemented were based on the institution's vision. Participant 1 also made a similar claim stating that their programs and activities are based on the key result area of the university's strategic plan. This can be seen in the balanced scorecard provided by School 2. It reflected the school's objectives, including those linked with community extension, with specific targets. School 5 also manifested in their strategic framework that the extension unit considered the organizational goals. Living the school's vision is also evident in the document presented by School 6. Part of their extension unit's philosophy is to focus on their partner communities' spiritual and moral components. The different extension units understand that they are part



Figure 6. Holistic improvement of HEI

of an institution and that although their unit has its own sets of plans, goals, and objectives, it should contribute to the attainment of the institution's VMG.

Another emergent theme is to be an agent of transformative change. Interviewee 4 expressed that social service is the primary goal of extension, which translates to improving the lives of the people in the community. She added that the improved lives of the people are measures of the program's success. Interviewee 6 said that part of their goal was to uplift morale and empower the people in the partner community so that they could choose their own leaders and stand on their own. This was also identified as one of the reasons why schools share knowledge. Sharing knowledge can impact and improve the lives of those who were able to acquire it, addressing the community's felt needs and ensuring that the intervention brought about positive change in their lives. As expressed by the interviewees, among the measures of success of the program is the impact of the change felt by the community.

The third theme is the value formation of the faculty and staff. Interviewee 7 said that the primary goal of the extension activities is not just helping the community; it is about the lessons learned from the experience of helping the community, adding that extension is an additional form of education. This supports the findings of Rubio et al. (2016), which state that the students' experience impacts them; it can help students develop leadership skills, self-confidence, and public speaking. Inasmuch as helping the community, implementing extension programs also build the character of the individuals involved in its implementation.

Finally, it is the extension program's goal to improve

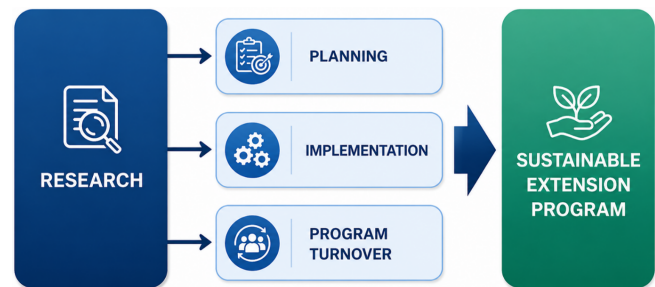


Figure 7. Phases of extension

the HEI holistically. Interviewee 3 explained that the HEI benefits from its engagement and recognized that it is not just about the HEI extending help to the partner community but also gaining something worthwhile from them. Students can apply what they have learned inside the classroom to actual scenarios. Additionally, it helps improve the research agenda of the institution.

Figure 6 shows that the extension program improves research and instruction, while improved research and instruction improve extension. This continuous cycle of the three main functions of private HEIs helped enhance the institution.

Framework for extension program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation

Extension for the participating HEIs is associated with community service. This is evident in how the different HEIs design their extension programs where the needs and the resources of the community are considered. Moreover, the identified goals of the extension of the HEIs include bringing transformative changes to the partner communities. However, this cannot be done in isolation as the HEI considers other factors in developing an extension program.

The framework for designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the extension program is grounded on the inputs of the interviewees, participants, and gathered documents. Three phases emerged: planning, implementation, and program turnover. Each phase included a research component identified as essential for the extension program's sustainability. Figure 7 presents these phases.

The first phase of extension is planning. As earlier identified, this is among the main functions of the extension unit. Planning considers both internal factors and external factors. Among the internal factors are the institution's VMG, academic programs, students and workforce, and capacity. The external factors include the CHED guidelines, the accreditors' recommendation, and the community. The community's needs and resources will be used to design the program that the HEI can implement, considering their capacity to carry out the program.

After choosing a partner community, it is presented



Figure 8. Planning phase of extension



Figure 9. Implementation phase of extension



Figure 10. Project turnover phase of extension

to the implementing units in the institution, who coordinate with the extension heads to develop responsive programs. The information from the needs assessment will be used to set goals. Then, a proposal is submitted for approval. During this phase, the indicators are also identified, the monitoring tool is developed, and the monitoring schedule is set. This is shown in Figure 8.

The plan should be implemented systematically to ensure success. Most of the coordinating function takes place during the implementation phase. According to the key informants, the program's implementation should be appropriately scheduled because of the many activities in the school. Many stakeholders are involved, including the partner communities, local government officials, and the HEI's implementing unit. Actual monitoring happens during this phase following the schedule established and using the success indicators identified in the planning phase. Commitment from both the partner community and the HEI is expected at this phase. Figure 9 summa-

rizes the implementation phase.

The program's implementation involves signing an MOA, making the agreement legally binding. Both parties are aware of their roles and responsibilities. A community counterpart is identified and utilized during this phase. Systematic program implementation is accompanied by proper monitoring to help ensure program success.

One of the goals of extension is to capacitate its partner community and help them to stand on their own. At some point, the institution must turn over the program, and the community must take full ownership of it. The decision to turn over the program is made after its evaluation. Program turnover means that the community has taken full ownership of the program. As explained by the key informants, the ability of the partner community to sustain the program is the best measure of its success. Figure 10 summarizes the program turnover phase.

One pressing issue that surfaced during the inter-

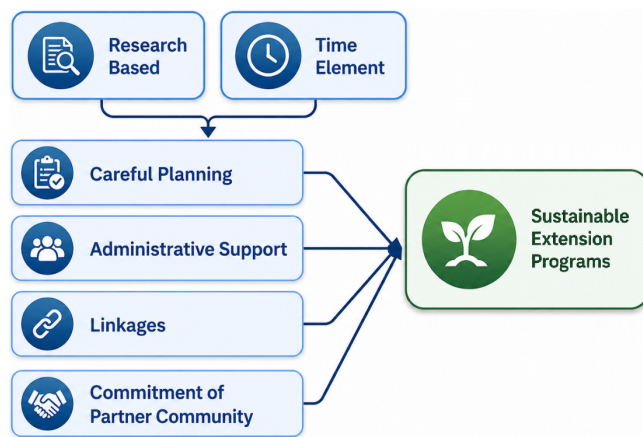


Figure 11. Recommendations for sustainable extension programs

views and the FGD is sustainability. Any extension program's goal is for the community to sustain the program even without the HEI. This has remained a challenge for the key informants. Interviewee 5 said that their program on providing water in one partner community was not sustained after the program was turned over to the partner community. Interviewee 7 experienced the same thing in one of their livelihood programs, where the capital for the project was not repaid because the program was not sustained. The issue of sustainability also surfaced during the FGD. Participant 2 claimed that most activities are "one shot" deals. They go there, conduct the activity, then leave, making the impact of the activity short-lived and temporary.

The key informants provided some ways to address the issue of sustainability. Figure 11 provides an overview of these suggestions. This includes proper planning, which entails the involvement of research and the indication of a timeline for the project. The extension heads are aware that it is essential to have research-based plans in extension. Other emerging considerations were the administration's support, its linkages with other organizations, and the commitment of the partner community.

The key informants and the FGD participants recognized the importance of research in planning and designing extension programs. During the FGD, the participants expressed the need for programs anchored on research results. School 5, through its strategic framework, revealed that its programs were research based. One line from the document states that the research findings helped the different departments of the school develop their individual strategic goals. Research plays a vital role in identifying programs that will be responsive to the community's needs. According to Interviewee 7, their research unit and extension unit work together. Figure 12 shows the role of research during the extension's planning, implementation, and culminating stages. (There is

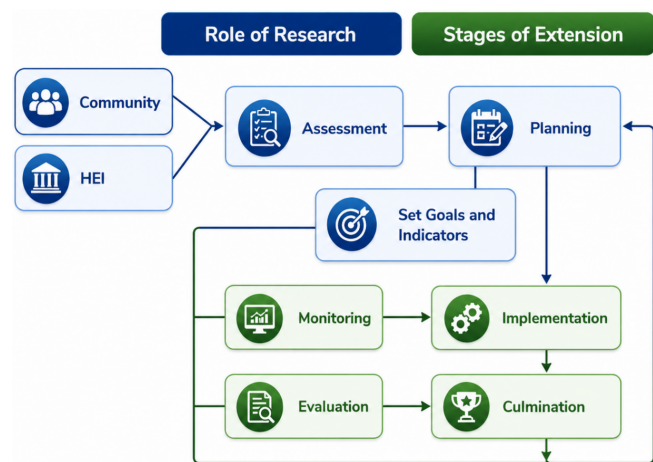


Figure 12. The role of research in extension

an arrow looping back to the planning phase because the information gathered during monitoring and evaluation will be used to improve the planning of other extension programs further.)

The planning phase is essential in any extension activity or program. In the case of extension programs, planning involves learning more about the community, what it needs and what it already has. It also determines the institution's capacity to address the needs of the partner community. Assessing the needs and resources of both the partner community and the institution's capacity was mentioned several times during the interview. This was confirmed during the FGD. One participant said that research-based plans provide direction for what the extension unit should do next. Proper planning entails all the needed information being available. As mentioned by the extension heads, community assessment allows them to identify what they can and cannot do.

Research activity is also done during the implementation phase. It is mainly linked with monitoring processes using the success indicators identified during the planning phase. As the program is implemented, progress is monitored, thus gathering essential data to check if the plan was adequately carried out. The actual milestones of the program are checked against the indicators earlier identified. Interviewee 3 shared that they have indicators to monitor the program for the next three years. Interviewee 4 shared that they have the same practice. They monitor the program to ensure its continuity. Interviewee 5 agreed that monitoring helps ensure the goals are gradually achieved.

Research activity through evaluation is done to aid the decision to turn over the project to the community or not. This helps the extension units know whether they have or have not realized their goal. The evaluation conducted by the different HEIs involves typically quantitative and qualitative approaches. They often go back to

their objectives to see whether they have accomplished their goals. According to Interviewee 3, they look at the indicators they have identified before implementing the program. They also use a tool for evaluation. Schools 2 and 5 provided a copy of the tool they use during evaluation. Although the HEIs agree that the quantitative approach allows them to measure if they have reached their target, they also agree that it is still better to have a more qualitative approach in measuring whether the programs made a difference. An in-depth understanding of their impact is achieved better through qualitative techniques. The information collected and lessons learned during this phase help develop plans for future programs. Interviewee 3 mentioned that the community engagement is successful once the partner community can stand independently. The other key informants share this sentiment.

When asked how long they should stay with the partner community, the informants mentioned there is no definite time frame since programs and goals vary. The key informants expressed that setting the timeline for the program is regular practice. However, they are also aware of the uncertainties in partnering with communities. Setting the timeframe may be essential, but the extension heads also welcome flexibility.

Administrative support also emerged as an essential factor that will help ensure sustainability. Interviewee 7 shared that they get support from the nuns that managed their school because their programs are also part of the apostolate and mission of the nuns. Administration support was also raised during the FGD. Participant 1 shared that bureaucracy is one of the significant concerns in implementing the plans, adding that all planning efforts are often not realized because of bureaucracy. The administration influences the direction of the extension unit, especially if the institution is highly centralized. Mojares (2015) identified two problems experienced by one university: (1) the weak support for extension programs and (2) organizational culture, structure, and policies. The lack of support by the administration is a concern encountered by many HEIs, and many HEIs do not even have an extension office (Madriaga, 2015).

Another recommendation to ensure sustainability is linking with external organizations. Interviewee 3 shared that their school encourages partnership with other organizations, whether local, international, or government entities. Interviewee 4's school also had the same practice, stating that they partnered with non-government organizations for some of their programs. This is the same with the experience of Interviewees 5 and 6. They shared that they have worked with NGOs and are open to partnering with them for future projects. This is confirmed in the documents provided by the different HEIs. In its strategic framework, School 5 shared that one of its goals is to build partnerships and linkages. Also, School

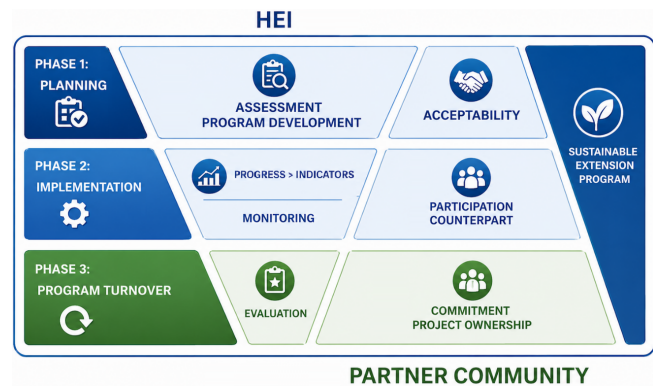


Figure 13. Involvement of HEI and partner community in every phase of extension

2's MOA reveals its collaboration with a parish in Davao.

Another critical component that ensures sustainability is the commitment of the partner community. Without commitment and participation, the program will not succeed. The extension heads expressed that a community counterpart and continued participation of the beneficiaries from partner communities are ways to show commitment. The key informants explained that having a counterpart makes the community feel more invested in the program. It was also pointed out during the FGD that the communities should own the program to sustain it. This is consistent with the claim of Baker et al. (1999) explaining that one of the principles of community partnership is acknowledging the community input and active community involvement. The leading players in program implementation are the HEI and the partner community. However, it is apparent in the sharing made by the extension heads that the involvement of these parties varies depending on the extension phase. Figure 13 shows an overview of the participation of these players. Greater involvement is expected from the HEI during the planning phase. Here, the HEI conducts a community assessment and proposes a program to address the community's needs. The involvement of the HEI reduces as the implementation progresses. This prepares the partner community for the program turnover.

Figure 14 presents how assessment, monitoring, and evaluation are at the core of planning, implementation, and program turnover to achieve sustainable extension programs. This shows how the lessons learned in previous programs can be used to improve future extension programs. This integration is further explained in Figure 15, which shows the extension framework proposed by the researcher.

Figure 15 shows the phases of the proposed framework. There are three phases: planning, implementation, and program turnover. The input used in planning is from the community assessment. Here, the needs and resources of the partner community and the capacity of



Figure 14. Extension program cycle

the HEI are identified. Other considerations like CHED regulations and the internal considerations of the HEIs are also made. After the assessment, designing the extension program follows. This includes the identification of the success indicators, the development of the monitoring tool, and the scheduling of visits for monitoring. The goals, objectives, targets, and the time frame for the program are also determined.

The implementation phase begins after the MOA signing. Both HEI and the partner community take active participation during this phase. This is where the actual transfer of knowledge or technology happens. Careful monitoring of the different objectives and targets using the different success indicators and the tools developed is done. Necessary interventions are also applied when needed. The goals and the targets must be accomplished to consider program turnover.

The HEI needs to evaluate the program before turning it over. The evaluation can be quantitative or qualitative, or both. Most key informants agree that both approaches help identify the impact of extension. It should include investigating the community's capability to continue the program. Program turnover is possible when the partner community takes ownership of the program.

Conclusion

Extension is one of the functions of private HEIs. The HEIs that participated in the study are mostly professional institutions tasked with delivering outreach programs involving all students in social-development-oriented experiences that allow them to develop the service orientation in their profession as per CHED (2012, CMO no. 46). The framework developed recommends

three phases: planning, program implementation, and program turnover. At each phase, a form of research is conducted: assessment is done before planning, monitoring of actual accomplishment versus goals is done during implementation, and evaluation of the program is done before turning over the program to the partner community.

In designing an extension program, the HEI considers internal and external factors. The internal factors include their VMG, capability, and course offerings. The external factors include CHED, the accrediting body, and the partner community. For HEIs, it is essential to consider their capacity because of their limited resources; they experience a shortage in personnel, and their funds are limited. Further, the HEI needs to work with a community that will accept them and their program. These partner communities must present their needs and show their commitment to the program through a counterpart. The monitoring and evaluation of the program should also be established during the planning phase. This means that indicators were established and means of verification identified. Finally, before the program is turned over to the community, it should be evaluated against its goals. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are used during the evaluation. The true measure of the program's success is the felt impact of the program. This translates to the partner community owning and sustaining it even without the intervention of the HEI.

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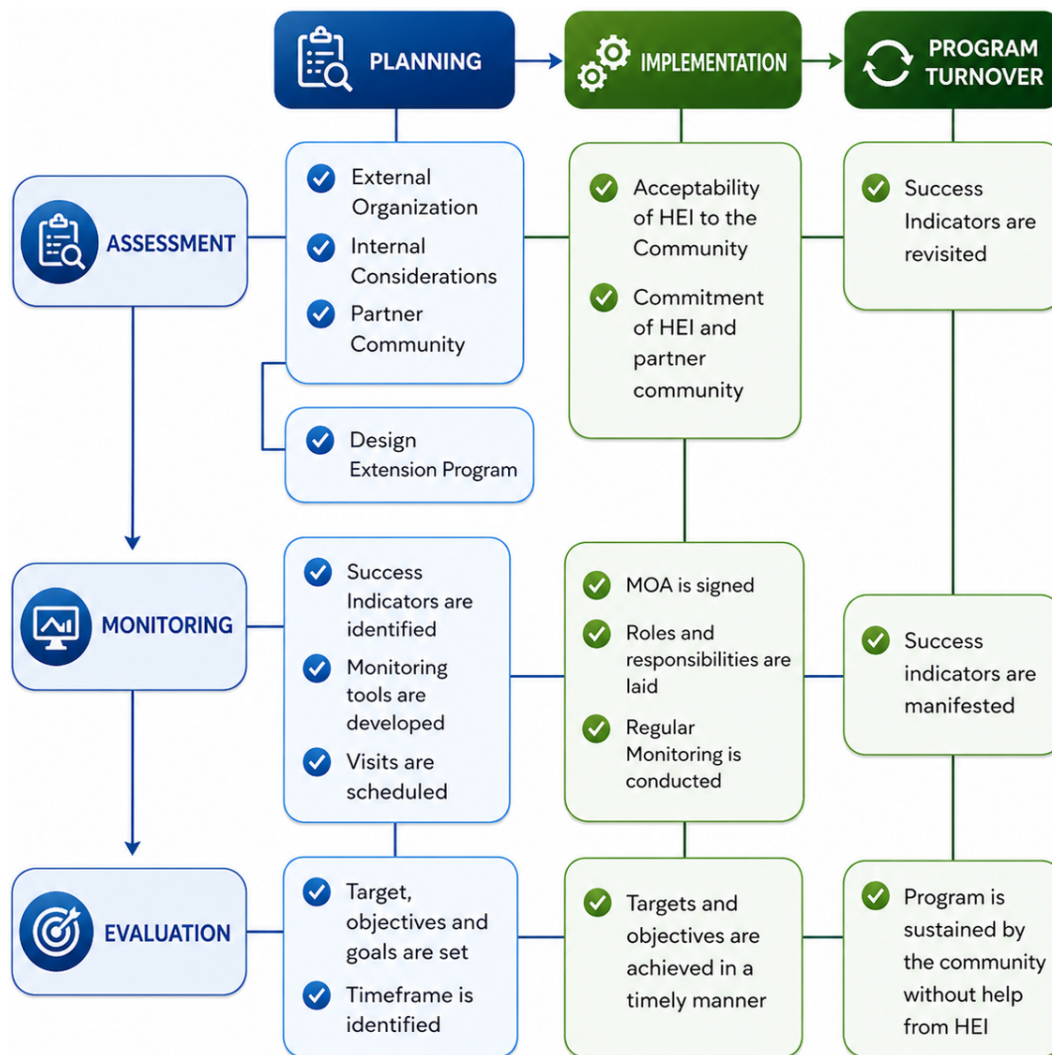


Figure 15. Proposed extension framework for DACS-member HEIs

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