

## *Original Paper*

# Impact of the Wesleyan University-Philippines Community Extension Program among Selected Residents of *Purok* *Manggahan, Barangay Pangatian, Cabanatuan City*

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### ***Abstract***

*This study assessed the impact of the Wesleyan University-Philippines Community Extension Program among selected residents of Purok Manggahan, Barangay Pangatian, Cabanatuan City. The research used a descriptive quantitative method; the data were collected using a survey instrument adapted from Borbon and Ylagan (2021) and Dilao and Maghamil (2011). The result showed that most of the respondents were young adults, female, married, and high school graduates; most were housekeepers, had no specific role in the barangay, and mostly belonged to the Roman Catholic denomination.*

*The respondents strongly agreed upon the perceived impact of the livelihood skills and training programs on economic status and values.*

*Meanwhile, the respondents strongly agreed upon the perceived effectiveness of the community extension programs to educational and literacy programs, health-related programs, and environmental protection programs.*

*The respondents perceived that the extension program contributed significantly to their daily lives. At the same time, the most notable weaknesses identified by the beneficiaries were the irregular visits, the short time for teaching the children, and the disruption of the extension activities due to the pandemic.*

## **Keywords**

*impact study, community extension programs, economic status, education, and literacy programs*

## **1. Introduction**

Being an institution for higher learning conveys an innate social responsibility towards developing communities, people empowerment, and social justice, leading to transformed lives. This is achieved through an integrated approach among all academic units, colleges, and stakeholders. Such results in promoting the lives of the individuals who may one or another have been ignored, left out, or need the necessary tools to bring change to their lives for the better. It has been found that programs with an integrated extension approach have a higher impact on the target communities (Dilao & Maghamil, 2011).

The Wesleyan University-Philippines (WUP) started with such a role and responsibility, having been founded by Filipino and American Methodist lay people to provide quality education to poor residents in the province who did not have the means to study in more popular universities in Manila. This included other forms of outreach services which uplifted the lives of the people living within the vicinity of the school and nearby barangays. Such was integrated into the university's unique trifocal function of instruction, research and extension. This meant adopting vulnerable or marginalized communities to be beneficiaries of the university's unique, holistic and life-changing community development approach. One such adopted community is *Purok Manggahan* in the city of Cabanatuan.

In the study of Mamaclay et al. (2020), they found out that the earnings of the people of *Purok Manggahan* were not sufficient to provide all their basic needs and that though most have entrepreneurial skills, there were no sources of investment, materials, and opportunities for them to utilize them. Most of their children were studying but sometimes dropped out due to sickness. Moreover, they have limited facilities and resources for learning. Therefore, the university implemented an integrated community development plan targeting specific areas of concern, including livelihood training programs, capability building and skills development, health and sanitation, literacy, spirituality, and values formation programs.

The WUP, through its Office for Extension Programs, formulated a unified approach to addressing the needs of *Purok Manggahan* in *Barangay Pangatian* that was implemented intensively during the Academic Year 2017-2020, before the imposed lockdown and heightened health and economic restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At this time, specific programs and measures targeting the identified socio-economic needs were robustly provided based on the findings of the needs assessment conducted by the university's research office.

Therefore, this study assessed the impact of the community extension program of the residents of *Purok Manggahan, Barangay Pangatian* in the City of Cabanatuan during the period of the academic year 2017-2020. Specifically, it sought to achieve the following:

1. To describe the socio-demographic profile of the respondents as to their:
  - 1.1 age
  - 1.2 sex
  - 1.3 civil status
  - 1.4 highest educational attainment
  - 1.5 occupation
  - 1.6 role in the community; *and*
  - 1.7 religion
2. To describe the perceived impact of the livelihood and skills training program in terms of their:
  - 2.1 economic status; *and*
  - 2.2 values
3. To describe the perceived effectiveness of the community extension programs, namely:
  - 3.1 education and literacy programs
  - 3.2 health-related programs; *and*
  - 3.3 values formation and environment protection programs
4. To determine the observed strengths and weaknesses of the extension programs and activities.
5. To describe the highlight the perceived areas for improvement of the implemented projects.

## **2. Methodology**

### *2.1 Research Design*

The study utilized a descriptive quantitative method, specifically the impact evaluation design, in exploring the impact of the different extension programs implemented by the WUP Office for Extension Programs in the identified target community. This evaluation study learned some of the accomplishments and obstacles that extension implementers confront to guide future programs better. According to Peersman (2014), impact evaluations provide information about the intended and unintended long-term effects produced by programs or policies. Furthermore, such impact evaluation may be commissioned to help with decisions such as whether to continue, terminate, replicate, or scale up a program or policy.

### *2.2 Study Locale*

The study was conducted in the adopted community, particularly at the *Purok Manggahan*, located in Cabanatuan. *Purok Manggahan* is one of the seven “*purok*” zones marking divisions within the barangay of *Pangatian*. The said mini community has been the beneficiary of the university’s social development programs for the past few years.

### *2.3 Sampling and Respondents of the Study*

The study’s respondents were residents of *Purok Manggahan*. They were beneficiaries of various community extension and outreach programs implemented by the different colleges and departments of Wesleyan University-Philippines-Cushman campus. Convenience sampling was used in selecting the

participants of the study. Convenience sampling is nonprobability or non-random sampling in which members of the target population meet specific practical requirements (Etikan et al., 2016). Criteria included ease of access, being physically near the study site, and willingness to participate (Krupnikov et al., 2021). A total of thirty-two (32) beneficiary-respondents participated in the study.

#### *2.4 Instrument*

The survey instrument was adapted from Borbon and Ylagan (2021) and Dilao and Maghamil (2011) and was the primary data gathering tool for this study. The self-administered, 4-point Likert scale questionnaire (1, 'strongly disagree' to 4, 'strongly agree') comprises three parts. Part 1 is for the socio-demographic profile of the respondent-beneficiaries. Part 2 elicited the perceived effectiveness of the extension programs with regards to livelihood and skills training, education and literacy programs, health-related programs and values, and environmental protection programs. Part 3 is composed of open-ended questions to determine the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the activities, as well as recommendations to help improve future extension programs. The instrument was written in the vernacular with a corresponding English translation.

#### *2.5 Data Gathering and Analysis*

The researchers sought approval from the university research office and barangay officials before the conduct of the study. Likewise, informed consent was obtained from the respondents before distributing the survey tool. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the respondents during the last week of November 2021. All health protocols were observed during data gathering and were conducted when the province of Nueva Ecija was placed on Alert Level 2 (Gita-Carlos, 2021). This meant that respondents' travel within and from areas or localities was permitted, subject to the appropriate age and comorbidity limits (Official Gazette, n.d.). The researcher used descriptive statistics to describe the impact of extension programs and activities on the residents of *Purok Manggahan, Barangay Pangatian*, like frequency, percentage, and weighted mean. Confidentiality and anonymity were observed at all times.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### *3.1 Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents*

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profile of the respondents of *Purok Manggahan, Barangay Pangatian* in the city of Cabanatuan. Based on the results, most of the respondents were female with 23 or 71.88 percent and the majority belonged to the 30-37 age bracket, 10 (31.25%), followed by those from the 38-44 age group with 6 (18.75%) and 52-58 age bracket with 5 (15.63%).

**Table 1. Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents**

<b>Age</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
23 - 29	3	9.38
30 - 37	10	31.25
38 - 44	6	18.75
45 - 51	4	12.50
52 - 58	5	15.63
59 - 65	3	9.38
66 - 72	0	0.00
73 - above	1	3.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Sex</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	9	28.13
Female	23	71.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Civil Status</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Married	29	90.63
Live in	2	6.25
Widow	1	3.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Highest educational attainment</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Elementary undergraduate	1	3.13
Elementary graduate	10	31.25
High school undergraduate	3	9.38
High school graduate	12	37.50
College undergraduate	4	12.50
College Graduate	2	6.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Driver	1	3.13
Farmer	6	18.75
Sewer	1	3.13
Operator	1	3.13
Sari-sari store	2	6.25
Security Guard	1	3.13
Vendor	3	9.38

Worker	1	3.13
Housekeeping	16	50.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Role in the Community</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Barangay Worker	1	3.13
None	31	96.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Religion</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Roman Catholic	32	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Most of the respondents were married 29 (90.63%) and were high school graduates with 12 (37.50%). Regarding occupation, about half were housekeepers with 16 or 50 percent, followed by farmers with 6 or 18.75 percent and vendors with 3 or 9.38 percent respectively. Except for one barangay worker, most did not have any significant role in the barangay. All of the respondents were Roman Catholics.

### 3.2 Effectiveness of Livelihood Of Skills Training Program to the Extension Programs

**Table 2. Effectiveness of the Livelihood and Skills Training Programs as to the Economic Status**

Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
The livelihood program helped provide needs for my family	3.75	Strongly Agree
My skills and knowledge increase as a result of the livelihood training	3.72	Strongly Agree
The program helped improve our quality of life.	3.78	Strongly Agree
The programs helped me manage my finances wisely	3.81	Strongly Agree
The livelihood training and programs helped increase my income	3.69	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall weighted mean</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

*Legend: 3.25 - 4.00 Strongly Agree, 2.50 - 3.24 Agree, 1.75 - 2.49 Disagree, 1.00 - 1.74 Strongly Disagree*

Table 2 shows the impact of the livelihood and skills training programs on the beneficiaries' economic status. The weighted mean of 3.75 indicated that most beneficiaries believed the programs were effective. The item "programs helped them manage their finances wisely" got the highest weighted mean of 3.81, followed by the items "improved their quality of life" with a weighted mean of 3.78 and "helped provide needs for their family" with a weighted mean of 3.75. The item "it helped increase my income" got the lowest weighted mean of 3.69.

To the respondents, knowing how to manage their finances adequately improved their way of living. The livelihood and financial literacy training helped the residents learn about other ways to earn, such as home-based small businesses using their available resources. This gave the community empowerment and autonomy, which helped uplift their lives. The findings agreed with the study by Llenares and Deocariz (2018), wherein beneficiaries attending the livelihood training seemed to have a more optimistic attitude toward life. Interviewed participants who regularly participated in the activities also spoke about how their lives have dramatically improved.

**Table 3. Effectiveness of the Livelihood and Skills Training Programs as to Values**

Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
The livelihood training helped promote collaboration and communication among community people	3.59	Strongly Agree
The livelihood training programs helped build up my confidence	3.72	Strongly Agree
The livelihood training programs helped develop my creativity	3.72	Strongly Agree
The programs made me become a responsible citizen	3.78	Strongly Agree
Gave me a chance to be productive	3.78	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

*Legend: 3.25 - 4.00 Strongly Agree, 2.50 - 3.24 Agree, 1.75 - 2.49 Disagree, 1.00 - 1.74 Strongly Disagree*

Table 3 presents the effectiveness of the livelihood and skills training programs as to the beneficiaries' values. Most respondents strongly agreed with the beneficiaries' values, with a weighted mean of 3.72. The community residents overwhelmingly felt that the livelihood training and financial literacy programs "made them become responsible citizens" and "gave a chance for them to be productive," with both having a weighted mean of 3.78. The results agreed with the study by Dilao and Maghamil (2012); the people of barangay Catadman-Manabay confirmed that the community extension service of La Salle University helped the community, with the residents of barangay Catadman-Manabay affirming that their skills were improved. The livelihood programs increased the families' income.

The livelihood programs were implemented by the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, College of Engineering and Computer Technology, and the College of Business and Accountancy, which focused on livelihood trainings and entrepreneurial skills development, further strengthening the conduct and outcome of programs. Capability building, on the other hand, was conducted by the College of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School.

### *3.3 Perceived Effectiveness of the Community Extension Programs*

Table 4 shows the effectiveness of the education and literacy programs. Beneficiaries viewed these activities positively, with an overall weighted mean of 3.73. The findings showed that literacy programs

helped prepare children in the community for school entrance and inspired children who stopped attending school to continue their primary education. The items “the programs helped to begin school-age children to better prepare for school entrance”, “the literacy program helped provide clear goals and life’s purpose for the beneficiaries,” and “the literacy program promoted social equity and equal opportunities” were ranked first with a weighted mean of 3.78. The respondents also noted that the reading and writing programs and character building implemented by the College of Education and Basic Education Department were the most effective extension strategies. Support was provided by the Library department in the form of book reading activities and donations of children’s books.

**Table 4. Effectiveness of Education and Literacy Programs**

Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
Literacy programs helped improve the educational status of slow learners, those unable to read and write, and out-of-school youth	3.66	Strongly Agree
The programs helped beginning school-age children to better prepare for school entrance.	3.78	Strongly Agree
The literacy program helped provide clear goals and life’s purpose for the beneficiaries	3.78	Strongly Agree
Helped the beneficiaries to aspire to finish their studies.	3.72	Strongly Agree
The literacy program promoted social equity and equal opportunities	3.78	Strongly Agree
Learners improved their school performance after the outreach reinforcement and remedial programs.	3.66	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

*Legend: 3.25 - 4.00 Strongly Agree, 2.50 - 3.24 Agree, 1.75 - 2.49 Disagree, 1.00 - 1.74 Strongly Disagree*

Balinas et al. (2017) revealed that the literacy program conducted in their community extension program positively influenced participants’ reading ability. However, there was a lack of a substantial change in the number of errors made and reading speed which might be ascribed to the program’s short duration and tutees’ absence. Some of the respondent beneficiaries of *Purok Manggahan* mentioned the schedule of the literacy programs, the short span of teaching sessions, and the irregular intervals in the teachers’ and students’ visits to the community as areas to be addressed.



**Table 5. Effectiveness of Health-related Programs**

Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
The program provided consideration to the health of the community	3.78	Strongly Agree
Helped me improve my health due to the information received and learned.	3.69	Strongly Agree
Helped me develop a healthy lifestyle and habits	3.72	Strongly Agree
Helped me avoid actions that can be detrimental to my health	3.63	Strongly Agree
Gained knowledge about diseases, illnesses, and how to prevent them.	3.59	Strongly Agree
Acquired skills in first aid and what to do in emergencies	3.72	Strongly Agree
Applied proper nutrition	3.81	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

*Legend: 3.25 - 4.00 Strongly Agree, 2.50 - 3.24 Agree, 1.75 - 2.49 Disagree, 1.00 - 1.74 Strongly Disagree*

Table 5 presents the effectiveness of the implemented health-related programs in the community. Most respondents strongly agree that the health-related programs were effective, with an overall weighted mean of 3.71. Furthermore, activities promoting proper nutrition were described as having the most significant impact on the respondents, with a weighted mean of 3.81. The various programs focused on addressing malnutrition through targeted feeding for underweight children, teaching mothers proper and sanitary food preparations, and promoting healthy food choices. The College of Nursing and Allied Medical Sciences and the University Medical and Dental Clinic collaborated to promote wellness and a healthy lifestyle.

The result concurred with the results of Araña et al. (n.d.), of which the nutrition feeding program had the highest awareness among the residents of Purok Manuang, Tubod, Iligan City. Identical findings were also similar in the studies of Llenares and Deocar (2018) and Salazar (2020), having notable positive feedback on health programs and health education topics such as family planning, nutrition, first aid, and sanitation.

**Table 6. Values Formation and Environmental Protection Programs**

Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
The program helped save and preserve the environment.	3.69	Strongly Agree
The program promotes sanitation and cleanliness	3.78	Strongly Agree
The program aims to conserve the environment	3.75	Strongly Agree
I learned the right waste segregation procedures	3.75	Strongly Agree
I became educated on how to recycle the garbage found within our area	3.56	Strongly Agree
I participate in extension activities such as community beautification projects, organic farming, and tree planting	3.72	Strongly Agree

I gained a better understanding of God, the Bible, and things about spirituality	3.66	Strongly Agree
I felt closer to God because of the outreach activities on spirituality	3.78	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

*Legend: 3.25 - 4.00 Strongly Agree, 2.50 - 3.24 Agree, 1.75 - 2.49 Disagree, 1.00 - 1.74 Strongly Disagree*

Table 6 presents the effectiveness of the values formation and environmental protection programs rendered in the adopted community. Findings showed that beneficiaries recognize the impact of the values and spiritual formation programs on them, and the environmental programs of Wesleyan University-Philippines have an overall weighted mean of 3.71, which was verbally described as strongly agree.

The respondents explained that the various values formation programs by the Chaplains Office, such as bible studies and other religious services, helped them to get closer to God and elevate their spirituality. The bible studies, prayer meetings, and other spiritual activities helped the beneficiaries better understand the Bible and God and helped them develop a positive outlook. The respondents also added that they became regular churchgoers due to the spiritual enrichment programs.

According to Lariza and Lariza (2016), academic institutions' outreach efforts impact people's lives in communities because the programs and projects directly affect their lives. When an outreach effort is approached holistically, it has a more significant and lasting impact. They learned to cherish their humanity, gain self-confidence, and have a better outlook on life by first reconnecting with their faith. Having such re-invigorated faith leads to better stewardship of the environment.

Such were the environmental programs of the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice, College of Arts and Sciences, and NSTP students that promoted environmental protection, which resulted in changes in the knowledge, behavior, and practices of the people leading to a greater awareness by the community of their responsibility towards the environment being God's stewards and keeper of His creation. The respondents claim to actively participate in clean and green activities such as beautification and tree planting projects. The residents were also taught skills like organic backyard farming and given free vegetable seedlings for them to plant. Proper waste disposal was also promoted. The study of Codamon-Dugyon supported this finding (2016), wherein the extension programs of Ifugao State University helped their adopted barangays promote the conservation and preservation of natural resources.

#### *3.4 Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of the Extension Programs*

According to the respondents, having helped the community and uplifting the lives of the beneficiaries of *Purok Manggahan* was the greatest strength of the Wesleyan University-Philippines extension programs. They agreed that the extension activities effectively improved the community and the individual families. The results also revealed that the families benefited from the programs and contributed significantly to their daily lives.

Furthermore, the impact of the spirituality and literacy programs on the community, especially the young children, was also noted to be another strength of the WUP extension programs. Through the programs, the children and the youth gained knowledge about the Bible while the community achieved a deeper relationship with God. One of the respondents claimed that residents seldom or neglected attending spiritual gatherings in the past, but because of the extension programs, people have started attending church gatherings again. Another strength was the literacy program for the children who were about to enter school and those who stopped attending. Other strengths were promoting cooperation and unity, the annual Christmas gift-giving, and the regular nutritional feeding programs.

On the other hand, the most notable weaknesses identified by the beneficiaries were the irregular visits, the short time for teaching the children, and the disruption of the extension activities due to the pandemic. From the standpoint of the respondents, the 2 to 3 hours allotted for the teaching activities were too short, considering that the faculty and students do not visit regularly.

In the study by Narine and Meier (2020), the number and nature of extension activities completed in response to COVID-19 were related to the university's outreach capacity. Since most student activities were a mix of online and offline activities, the lack of internet accessibility in the adopted community became a challenge for meaningful outreach programs.

### *3.5 Perceived Areas for Improvement for the Extension Program*

For the perceived areas for improvement, the respondents agreed that the literacy programs should be continued, specifically educational programs for children who begin attending school. They proposed regular weekly sessions and long hours of teaching since the pandemic affected children's education due to the suspension of face-to-face classes and the shift to a modular way of instruction. They also suggested a program to help them access the internet for educational purposes.

Furthermore, according to the respondents, values and spiritual formation activities such as bible studies, good manners and proper conduct, and spiritual enrichment should be strengthened and sustained. They claimed that a Methodist minister used to visit them and hold regular church services and bible studies, a part of the values formation programs implemented by the university. However, religious activities were discontinued after the church worker was infected with COVID-19.

Lastly, livelihood programs should be continued even after the pandemic, as many of them were affected by the economic and movement restrictions. The community beneficiaries gained much from the livelihood and skills training based on the findings. However, because of the pandemic, they suggested additional measures such as providing start-up capital which they can pay on an installment basis to augment their sources of income. A study by Albao and Rubi (2019) revealed that grassroots community members are involved in various entrepreneurial endeavors; however, most of the projects were sari-sari stores. Despite this, they continue to request for and get loans from lending organizations despite their lack of entrepreneurship knowledge.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

1. The WUP's community extension activities have aided and shaped the lives of the residents of *Purok Manggahan, Barangay Pangatian*, in Cabanatuan. The extension services made a positive impact on residents' knowledge and skills, particularly in livelihood programs, which capacitated and empowered them to be self-reliant citizens; promoting health and wellness among residents; and uplifting the spirituality of the community's youth and parents, making them more responsible and conscientious individuals.
2. The Wesleyan University-Philippine's extension programs still require refinement and improvement to reach out and make a difference in the lives of individuals in the community to a more considerable extent and impact, as well as to respond to residents' needs.

#### 5. Recommendations

From the results and the conclusions of the study, it is therefore recommended:

1. A re-assessment survey must be conducted to analyze the pandemic's impact on the people of *Purok Manggahan, Barangay Pangatian*.
2. Appropriate monitoring and evaluation of extended projects and activities of each institution and department must be carried out to identify strengths and flaws and their influence on the communities.
3. Explore the possibility of a microfinancing program for deserving beneficiaries after training and capability building.
4. Further research-based extension programs should be conducted in the adopted community to materialize sustainable gains.

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