

Innovations in Community Engagement: A Proposed Framework

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Abstract: The directive to develop an institutionalized community engagement framework has been a concern for higher educational institutions. This mandate was heavily influenced by a number of internal and external factors which have been validated to be relevant as we bridge the gap between the conceptual formation in the academe and actual immersion in the workplace. Since the modern workplace is characterized by daily innovations that cater to discriminating preferences of stakeholders, the academe must also take an upper hand and be challenged to innovate the conduct of its community engagement undertakings. This research study focuses on innovating the previous community engagement framework the researcher developed for Ramon V. del Rosario College of Business (RVR COB) in 2012 by incorporating business continuity and the principles for responsible management education (PRME). The addition of business continuity component is in response to the recent effects of climate change as characterized by unusual flooding not only in Metro Manila but also in urbanized rural areas in other regions of the Philippines. Moreover, the inclusion of the six principles for responsible management education, is in response to De La Salle University's (DLSU), through RVR COB, being signatory to PRME, a United Nations-backed initiative. To do this, the researcher conducted a literature review on business continuity planning and investigating how this informational technology framework has evolved into a business framework which can be applicable in strengthening community engagement frameworks. Similarly, the researcher conducted a review of available PRME documents and organized a PRME Regional Forum Asia, as one of its core organizers. From this, the previous community engagement framework which was anchored on the service-learning framework of Vickers et al. (2004) and community connectedness framework by Brown and Keast (2003) with two of the key dimensions of TQM (continuous improvement and competitive benchmarking), has become more robust, comprehensive, inclusive, and relevant. Similar to the previous framework, at the core of this new community engagement framework is the community engagement framework adapted from De La Salle University. This new community engagement framework will be helpful to educational institutions that are one with DLSU in its belief that the academe can play a significant role in nation-building.

Key Words: business continuity planning; community engagement; innovations; principles for responsible management education (PRME); service-learning

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The academe is believed to be one of the potent shapers of a country. Business and government leaders, professionals, workers all started as students before getting into where they are right now. Recognizing this, if we want to see

change in the society, as the society is being influenced by current leaders, professionals, and students, who were once students, it is just proper to consider a paradigm shift in our approach in effecting change in the country. Having said this, the researcher is a strong believer that educational institutions are a way to strategically and peacefully obtain the positive change that everyone long aspires for.

Moreover, the academe is also in the best position to impact the society by making its very existence relevant and significant. To explain further, let us take a look at highly developed countries. The United States and Japan, for instance, are among the countries where academe has a strong support in terms of influencing economic and political decisions. Higher educational institutions are being perceived as partners, and not only producers of leaders, professionals, and workers, in ensuring that sound decisions are made. They heavily banked on research to validate what is happening in the world outside the academe. On a similar note, they also treat the community as an important stakeholder where they develop programs to make their immediate community a better place to live in. They have invested huge amount of resources through partnering with the industry in making programs that aim to empower marginalized sectors such as women and youth. Likewise, they also focus on ensuring that the triple bottom-line is observed by the businesses. How did the academe do this? By leveraging on their networks of likeminded people trained to give back to the community. For them, their existence should influence in making their community and the next immediate communities become better one day at a time.

This research paper is therefore working around two motivations: (1) recognizing the huge role of the academe in forming the enablers of the country; and (2) taking on the opportunity to position the academe as directly creating an impact to the society.

As such, the mandate on community engagement has become more of a tall order for most of the higher educational institutions. This mandate was heavily influenced by a number of internal and external factors. These factors include the holistic approach to forming students into enabled citizens who will contribute to nation building, the recognition of the pivotal role of the academe in shaping the community to where it directly belongs, and the heightened consciousness on international accreditations which include community engagement as an important ingredient.

Given such considerations, it is just high time for the academe to re-examine its community engagement commitment, revisit its overall framework, identify opportunities for innovations, and come up with a framework on how to put together business continuity planning (BCP) and the principles for responsible management education (PRME) in coming up with a more solid framework, where all academe-based community engagement projects will be anchored.

1.2 Statement of the problem

How can universally acceptable BCP and PRME frameworks be utilized to strengthen the previous community engagement framework made for Ramon V. del Rosario College of Business De La Salle University?

1.3 Objectives of the study

In line with the main problem identified, this study also seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is business continuity planning in the light of community engagement?
2. What are the six principles of responsible management education?
3. What community engagement policies may be adopted by the academe in view of the new community engagement framework?
4. What specific projects can be implemented using a community engagement framework that has been beefed up by BCP and PRME?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This literature review focuses on business continuity planning and the six principles of responsible management education, the two additional frameworks explored to reinforce the 2012 framework. It is to be noted that literatures in the research study of Tugas (2012) on DLSU community engagement framework, service-learning framework of Vickers et al. (2004), community connectedness framework by Brown and Keast (2003), and total quality management were used as reference discussion points since this study aims to strengthen the community engagement framework developed by the researcher in 2012.

2.1 DLSU community engagement framework

As cited by Tugas (2012), last November of 2011, DLSU issued its most recent Community Engagement Framework. As presented in Figure 1, this framework “espouses that all community engagement interventions by DLSU are anchored on a social reality or a combination thereof such as social disintegration, poverty and ecological degradation. Community engagement interventions, under this premise, are guided by the option for the poor lens. The process for these interventions should ideally follow the suggested progression phases from awareness and partnership building to actual community engagement and then to the personal and structural transformation (Primer on the DLSU Community Engagement Framework, 2011).

2.2 Service-learning component framework

One of the many frameworks used to concretize community engagement in educational institutions is the framework of service learning. According to McCarthy (2003), service learning has become increasingly popular among educational institutions in many countries, including Asia over the last two decades. As cited by Vickers, Harris, and McCarthy (2004), among its many advocates, it is variously perceived as a means of energizing classroom curricula (Battistoni, 1995; Hesser, 1995; Rama et al., 2000), re-engaging students in their own learning, and prompting forms of social and civic development (Markus et al., 1993; Parker-Gwin, 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Frederickson, 2000; Roschelle et al., 2000) or establishing linkages among universities and schools with their local community agencies

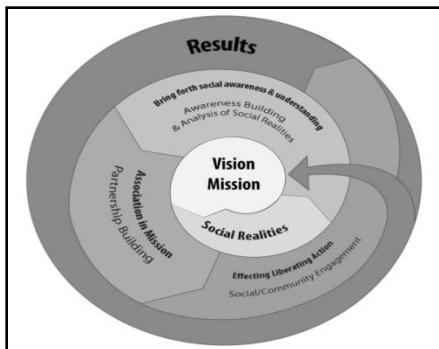


Fig 1. The DLSU community engagement framework

(Gardner, 1997; Hollander & Saltmarsh, 2000; Benson et al., 2000; Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Evenbeck & Kahn, 2001). As such, it was posited by McCarthy (2002) that service learning links academic instruction with community service guided by reflection. As depicted in Figure 2, reflection is considered the critical piece in service learning as without it student's involvement in service remains as some form of volunteering or a "feel-good" exercise without linking students' experiences with curriculum content, or with more considered analysis of the social conditions giving rise to service needs in the first place (Artz, 2001 as cited by Vickers et al., 2004).

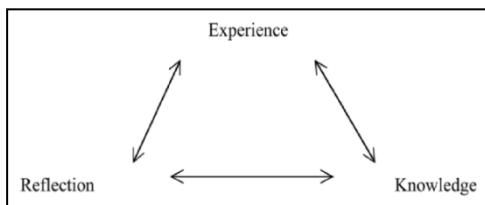


Fig 2. Basic components of service learning

2.3 Community connectedness framework

A number of literature discussing integration structures and integration relationships have been available over the last five decades. Different authors have used different terms or categories to denote the types of relationships that can occur between organizations. As cited by Brown and Keast (2003), among which are Hogue (1994), Cigler (2001), Leutz (1999), and Szilom et al. (2002) who set out five categories or levels of integration. These are informal, cooperative, coordinative, collaborative, and integrative. Out of these, Brown and Keast (2003) just chose three most common horizontal relationship categories as a mean of distillation and simplification. These three categories are cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

2.4 Business continuity planning

The concept of business continuity planning originated with information technology. According Romney and Steinbart (2012), reliable information systems have the following characteristics: security, confidentiality, privacy, processing integrity, and availability. Under availability, an information system is expected to meet operational and contractual obligations in the right format, to right person, at the right time. As such, interruptions to business processes due to unavailability of systems or information should be managed,

if not prevented. Along with the concept of business continuity planning is fault tolerance. As defined by Romney and Steinbart (2012), fault tolerance is the ability of the system to continue functioning in the event that a particular component fails. It is under this premise that a good community engagement framework is that that can withstand adversity and unfavorable conditions.

An integral part of business continuity planning is the recovery and resumption of normal operations. The sooner it gets back to normal operation, the better is the plan. Under this are the concepts of recovery point objective and recovery time objective. Almost a mirror, these two concepts complement each other. Recovery point objective represents the maximum amount of data that the organization is willing to potentially lose while recovery time objective represents the length of time that the organization is willing to attempt to function without its information system (Romney & Steinbart, 2012). Applied to community engagement framework, an effective community engagement project is a project that is anchored on a framework that includes business continuity as an important component. As community engagement project should be evaluated using small successes, the role business continuity planning plays will be huge especially that most community engagement projects may not result in what is expected or sometimes take several iterations before a change is achieved. This, the researcher believes, to be the best armor to be not taken over by disappointments.

Romney and Steinbart (2012) disaster recovery plan is an important component of business continuity plan. For them, disaster recovery plan should outline the procedures to restore an organization's information technology (IT) function in the event that its data center is destroyed by a natural disaster or act of terrorism. This concept is applicable to doing project preparing the community if something fails or natural calamities hit an area being covered by the project. On a broader scale, business continuity plan specifies how to resume not only IT operations, but all business processes, including relocating to new offices and hiring temporary replacements, in the event that a major calamity destroys not only an organization's data center but also its main headquarters (Romney & Steinbart, 2012).

Just like any plan, a disaster and business continuity plan will be useless if it is not documented and tested. Documentation is vital in ensuring continuity of the plan even if the original implementers may not be available. Failure to do so can create substantial costs and delays in implementing the recovery process. Moreover, copies of documentation should be stored both on-site and off-site so that it is available when needed and a copy still is intact in the event of widespread disaster. As regards testing, it is the most important component of an effective business continuity plan. In spite of a well thought of and written plan if it lacks periodic testing through drills, the effectiveness of such remains unknown, making the plan useless in the event of actual disaster. This component must be covered to ensure continuity of any community engagement project. Perhaps, not only backup plan, but also back out plan, when necessary.

2.5 Principles for responsible management education

The mission of PRME initiative is to inspire and champion responsible management education, research and

thought leadership globally. The PRME are inspired by internationally accepted values such as the principles of the United Nations Global Compact. In the current academic environment, corporate responsibility and sustainability have entered but not yet become embedded in the mainstream of business-related education. The PRME are therefore a timely global call for business schools and universities worldwide to gradually adapt their curricula, research, teaching methodologies and institutional strategies to the new business challenges and opportunities (taken from www.4thunprmeasiaforum.com).

The six principles of PRME are: purpose, values, method, research, partnership, and dialogue. The purpose principle seeks to develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy. The values principle seeks to incorporate into academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact. The method principle seeks to create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership. The research principle seeks to engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value. The partnership principle seeks to interact with managers of business corporations to extend the knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges. Lastly, the dialogue principle seeks to facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability (United Nations Global Compact, 2000).

These six principles can reinforce the effectiveness of community engagement projects in the academe. Almost ensuring all stakeholders are covered, PRME is a strong addition to the previous community engagement framework the researcher proposed in 2012.

3. METHOD

3.1 Research design

This research study is both exploratory and qualitative in context and in design. It is exploratory in the sense that the researcher found no published literature concerning community engagement with business continuity planning and principles for responsible management education framework with touch points on operational feasibility and implementation in the Philippines. More so, it is a qualitative research in the sense that it aims to gather an in-depth understanding of community engagement vis-à-vis business continuity planning and PRME frameworks that have gained universal acceptance to facilitate total quality management against the previous community engagement framework developed by the researcher for RVRCOB in 2012.

3.2 Research procedures

For this research study, the following procedures were performed: (1) identified and reviewed the existing community engagement frameworks that are used internationally; (2) reviewed the existing community engagement framework of DLSU; (3) reviewed the community engagement framework the researcher developed in 2012; (4) reviewed the business continuity planning framework; (5) reviewed the principles for responsible management education; (6) identified specific projects that can be implemented using the new community engagement framework; and (7) drafted community engagement policies anchored on the new community engagement framework.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTING FRAMEWORK

The analysis of this research study focuses only on how BCP and PRME frameworks can reinforce the 2012 community engagement framework. Similar to the review of related literature, the analysis of this study partly refer to the analysis made by the researcher in 2012.

Business continuity planning. This framework can be applicable to community engagement framework in terms of: (1) ensuring continuity of community engagement projects of the educational institution; and (2) incorporating business continuity consciousness, in the form of disaster risk reduction management trainings, among residents of communities that are recipients of community engagement projects. These trainings should cater to preparedness, rescue, relief, and recovery and rehabilitation, the four-throng areas of disaster management (taken from National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan, 2010). To substantiate the first application further, community engagement projects should have evaluations anchored not primarily on immediate results but on small successes that are built up as time passes by. Looking at immediate results may bring undue disappointments that shoo away misinformed organizers and even first-time participants. In such an event, business continuity plan should spell out the difference whether a certain project will be continued or not. It is also important to list alternative plans should the original plan or the original plan veered away significantly from what is expected. On a similar note, if plan does not work as expected and after giving it ample time to settle, an effective business continuity plan should also include back out plan. A back out plan should include management (diversion) of resources to similar projects but of more calculated risks. People involved should also be briefed as to why the original plan is not being pushed through. This action will reduce anxieties among organizers and participants to future projects that may be undertaken by the same group. On the other hand, immediate one-time successes should not be viewed as victory just the same because sustainability of project is more important than one-time big-time results. Both favorable and unfavorable variances (results deviating from plan) should be objectively investigated. Learning out of this investigation should be carried forward to future community engagement projects. To substantiate the second application further, considering disaster risk reduction and management training as a required training module for residents of the adopted community will enable them to face proactively the potential adverse effects of climate change. The adverse repercussions of the unusual flooding and abnormal storm surge that was experienced in early November

2013 could have been toned down had the residents and local government been more prepared to face situations such as those.

Principles for responsible management education.

The principles for responsible management education (PRME) framework, by itself, is a strong addition to the community engagement framework the researcher proposed in 2012. The application of PRME to community engagement can be both strategic and pervasive. It can be strategic in the sense that by becoming a signatory to PRME, the educational institution will be opened and have access to vast and rich network of likeminded academic institutions, doing similar things about community engagement and prioritizing almost similar set of stakeholders. Moreover, it can be pervasive in the sense that community engagement projects of the signatory-institution will become manifestations of how focused the direction is of the academic institution, meaning projects of the academic departments are all anchored on PRME, be that community engagement or academic or research. An important principle also of PRME is dialogue and partnership which are very community-based in nature. These principles presuppose immersion and active participation in the activities of marginalized sector and this ensures much clearer understanding on what these sectors really need and much more appropriate interventions to alleviate and better their situations.

Proposed improvement to the community engagement framework developed for RVR COB in 2012.

This research study made use of the blended approach to community engagement. After reviewing and analyzing the identified applicable community engagement frameworks, business continuity planning framework, and principles for responsible management education, the researcher proposes an improvement in the 2012 community engagement framework for RVR COB as depicted in Figure 3. The innovation in this new framework is the inclusion of principles for responsible management education as the overarching ceiling and business continuity planning as the base of the framework. The PRME framework is positioned that way not to displace DLSU community engagement framework but to reinforce and validate DLSU's community engagement framework as a framework that is consistent to a universally accepted and UN-backed framework. The business continuity planning is at the base to create a solid stance that when something not according to what is expected happens, there is a ready alternative to it. Moreover, the base also presupposes the importance of disaster risk reduction and management training to all community engagement project stakeholders.

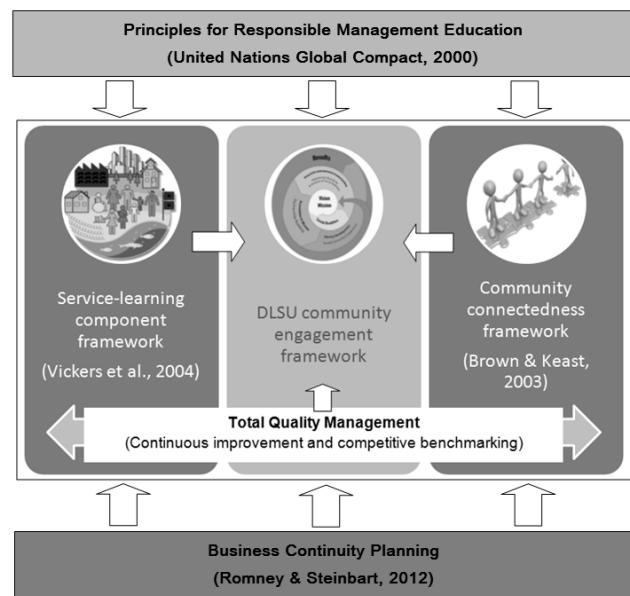


Fig 3. Proposed community engagement framework

Using the researcher's discussion in his previous community engagement framework, at the core of this framework is the DLSU community engagement framework. It is being strengthened by the service-learning component framework by Vickers et al. (2004). All community engagement projects of an educational institution and its academic departments must ensure observance of the interplay among experience, knowledge, and reflection. All community engagement projects must emanate from the college or department expertise. The Lasallian reflection framework shall be used in the reflection process. On the other side, complementing this is the community connectedness framework by Brown and Keast (2003). This shall serve as a compass to ascertain the level of involvement which can contribute to the degree of impact. As much as possible, at least one project with collaboration functionality will be ventured by the academic institution every year. For the academic departments, their projects may range between cooperation and coordination but majority shall be with coordination functionality. This does not prevent them from venturing into projects that employ collaboration functionality. All projects must be anchored to the expertise of each academic department. To ensure quality, consistency, and manageability of projects, the continuous improvement and competitive benchmarking elements of TQM, must be comprehensively applied all throughout the articulation of the framework.

Draft of community engagement policies anchored on the new community engagement framework. The researcher wrote a policy paper related to this and intended for the use of De La Salle University. It considered the existing policy of the University through University Mission Committee Guidelines on Fund Use and Center for Social Concern and Action (COSCA) Community Engagement Process for Students.

Specific projects that can be implemented using the proposed community engagement framework. More

specifically, consistent to the proposed community engagement framework, the researcher also recommends the plan of action format in Table 1. As an example, the first few items were already filled out.

Table 1. Proposed plan of action

College-wide: Community engagement project	Expertise	PRME Principles	Business Continuity Planning	NDRRM Training
SEED in Bagac, Bataan	Business development, product marketing, product registration, business management, business research	Partnership, Dialogue	Plan documented and tested	To be conducted through COSCA
Social entrepreneurship in Angat, Bulacan	Process and product registration, business management, business research	Purpose, Research	Plan documented and tested	To be conducted through COSCA
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Academic departments: Department and Community engagement project	Expertise	PRME Principles	Business Continuity Planning	NDRRM Training
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