

Community Extension and Citizenship Education of San Beda University

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Abstract

The critical roles of the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) towards the achievement of sustainable development signifies the need to implement Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Opportunities in applying ESD can be accomplished in different divisions of the school to pursue the worldwide acceptance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This formed a question for San Beda University (SBU) to describe its practices and programs towards the achievement of ESD. In this study, the community extension and citizenship education of San Beda University were specifically examined in its Community Engagement Center (CEC) and National Service Training Program (NSTP). The study employed a framework on the Priority Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of SBU and selected key features and strategies of ESD. After a critical assessment of the procedures, teaching methods, documents, and interviews, the results of the study identified the practices and programs including specific teaching activities. The results illustrate the level by which SBU utilizes SDGs towards sustainability. The conclusion provided recommendations to encourage increasing the commitment of SBU in integrating SDGs in instruction, research and extension. The study is significant in providing

with SDGs acknowledging the benefits and impact that their educative role will have ha

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is an approach of teaching (or learning process) based on the principles and concepts of sustainable development that prepare people of all walks of life to plan for, cope with, and find solutions for issues that threaten the sustainability of our planet (UNESCO, 2005, p. 7). Under the SDG, the principle also involves extensive learning and teaching activities covered in the undergraduate level, online learning, and executive/professional/adult education including the graduate school level. ESD also applies to learning activities of student clubs and societies and curricular tasks. As SDG grows in scale and importance, ESD is closely tied into the international discussions of universities.

The vital role of education in promoting and supporting SDGs implementation is attributed to the following principle (SDSN, 2017, p. 14):

with people, develop opinions and worldview and values sensitivity. The students can directly witness the community environment and experience the challenges in hands-on applications of SDGs. These experiences allow them to integrate with other people who may facilitate a change that will make them become more civic conscious and socially responsible citizens (Labuguen et al, 2019, p. 12). The students, then, acquire academic learnings on civic responsibility and people skills. The service-learning programs are distinguished from other service programs by their intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service, as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service and the learning that is occurring (AlbaredaTiana, 2018, p. 475).

While there is ample literature on ESD, there is a pressing concern on how HEIs including SBU must be directly engaged with the SDGs. Thus, it is necessary to dwell on the question of how SBU could transform and bring the principles of sustainability and its related themes to the students and other stakeholders.

SBU needs to align with the global agenda and explore mechanisms to help our nation achieve the SDGs. One interesting agenda of SBU is the learning opportunities of the students and the concern for underprivileged or poor citizens of the community. This leads to the questions on how does SBU implement its (1) extension services towards community partners in the Community Extension Center (CEC), and (2) academic function that focuses on civic and values formation education in its National Service Training Program (NSTP)? Furthermore, what are the types of academic engagement taking place, and are they really addressing all SDGs or just a few?

Although SBU is capable of developing its SDG engagements with the community and students, it is necessary to first conduct a self-assessment of its capacities and efforts to address the preparedness and weaknesses and thus effectively implement its endeavors towards SDG. This research addresses the disparity in the integration of the SDGs in the context of a university.
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explicitly, the research problem is, as follows:

What are the practices and programs implemented by the Community Extension Center (CEC) and National Service Training Program (NSTP) of SBU towards the achievement of the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)?

This question forms the direction of this research study and supports the central aim of exploring how SBU embraces SDGs so that the practices, activities, projects, and programs in CEC and TFS can be benchmarked with other academic functions.

which model the SURFHVVHV WRZDUGV « DSSURDFK L learners work together to acquire knowledge and play a role in shaping the environment, (5) Participatory decisionmaking: learners participate in decisions on how they are to learn, (6) Locally relevant addressing local as well as global issues, and using the language(s) which learners most commonly use (UNESCO, 2005, p.18). ESD is holistic and transformational education where the HEI should address the learning content and outcome pedagogy and the learning environment towards the implementation of sustainable development (UNESCO, 2017, p. 7).

This paper is also guided by the six (6) Priority SDGs that are DUWLFXODWHG LQ WKH 6%8¶V SDG4: Quality Education, SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG10: Inequalities Reduced, SDG13: Climate Action, SDG16: Peace Justice Strong Institutions, SDG17: Partnership for the Goals. The 6 Priority SDGs ZHUH VHOHFWHG DQG IRUPDOLJHG LQ DFFR resources and commitment to university projects and activities. In this study, the Priority SDGs served as a guide structure in determining the SDG practices, activities, projects, and programs.

Also, the practices were assessed based on selected ESD Strategy namely: (1) Advocacy and vision building, (2) Consultation and ownership, (3) Partnership and networks, (4) Capacity building and training, (5) Research and innovation, (6) Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and (7) Monitoring and evaluation (UNESCO, 2005, p.229).

ESD does not only integrate contents such as climate change, poverty and sustainable consumption into the curriculum; it also creates interactive, learner-centered teaching and learning settings. What ESD requires is a shift from teaching to learning. It asks for an action-oriented, transformative pedagogy which supports selected learning, participation and collaboration, problem orientation, inter and transdisciplinary and the linking of formal and informal learning. (UNESCO, 2017, p. 7). Only such appropriate pedagogical approaches of HEIs will enable them to advance their key competencies for promoting and implementing SDGs.

Operational Framework

To attain the research objectives, we identified the ESD practices, services, programs and curriculum integration of SBU that contribute to the attainment of SD. As shown in Figure 1, we focused only on assessing (1) the university extension functions through CEC and (2) academic programs citizenship/values formation through NSTP. Each SDG indicated observations both for CES and NSTP as academic functional areas of SBU.

Figure 1.

Operational Framework

Table 1.

ESD Practices and Programs Matrix

Community Extension Center (CEC)	National Service Training Program (NSTP)
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Table 1 shows the matrix tool for systematic identification of the said ESD practices and programs. This tool establishes the framework for the required methodology and approaches of this study that enable data gathering across the domain of CES and NSTP anchored on key characteristics and strategy of ESD shown in the conceptual framework of this research.

Proposition

CEC and NSTP have moderate level of practices and programs towards ESD.

Methodology

We performed descriptive analysis of ESD practices and programs in the Community Extension Center (CEC) and the National Service Training Program (NSTP) of SBU using Table 1 as reference matrix tool. We apply documentary analysis by scrutinizing the office operation manuals, course catalog, reports, syllabus, electronic files books and other teaching materials. The semi-structured online interviews with faculty were also employed in order to gather primary data on teaching techniques of professors. This analysis was accomplished by classifying the practices in accordance with ESD characteristics and for simplicity in applying the Priority SDG of SBU. For a clear presentation, we divided the ESD practices and programs into two separate tables. The research study started last December 2020 during the pandemic period. Face-to-face interviews and field visits were not conducted to students and community partners due to prevailing lockdowns, restrictions, and safety protocol from COVID19 transmission. In assessing the benefits of the community partners, only the fundamental output based on faculty interview their observations were considered due to the limitation of field interview.

This research included assessment of school in-class and field activities, extension projects and teaching techniques/tools to address the involvement in sustainable development based on how it was taught and demonstrated with the aim of economic growth, environmental awareness, and manifestation of ecological modernization. As two research authors of this paper, our background and teaching experience in NSTP course

subjects and active participation CEC, helped us in accomplishing

3. Legal and Paralegal Services (Priority SDG16: Peace Justice Strong Institutions) These are free consultation on legal counseling, legal advice, and court representation of senior law students under the guidance of their law mentor.
4. Health and Environment(Priority SDG13: Climate Action): These pertain to medical missions, blood donations and related projects in collaboration with local government units and concerned institutions. Environmental concerns involve collaboration of all the SBU stakeholders (colleges, student organizations, service personnel, alumni, faculty, monks, and administrators).
5. Spiritual Life, Morals and Values(All Priority SDGs): These are engagement in the work of apostolate and evangelization of SBU. Partner communities undergo spiritual exercises which include participation in Sto. Nino Procession, Eucharistic masses and recollections.
6. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management and Gift Giving (Priority SDG10: Inequalities Reduced) These are initiatives that render immediate services to victims of typhoons and calamities. They bring SBU stakeholders together to help affected individuals to secure their basic needs. Trainings to reduce the risks of disaster are also being conducted in Bedan community and partner communities. Gift giving activities are done whenever possible where various colleges and student organizations are giving their shares and tokens to the service personnel and members of the partner communities, institutions, and the less privileged citizens.

The six services and programs also serve as learning avenues for the students, faculty and administrators in their academic undertakings including SDG engagement. To answer Objective #2 of this study, we observed that the residents of the Community partners have benefited from the major programs and services of CEC. Essential assessment based on observation of the faculty on key benefits include the following: adoption of alternative livelihoods and acquisition of other related business skills, empowerment and other learnings from justice, spirituality and wellness activities provided by CEC.

Table 2

SDG Practices and Programs Matrix of CEC

SDG	OCEC Practices and Programs
SDG4: Quality Education	<p data-bbox="420 382 1151 506">Donation of IT facilities to public school teachers, army reservists and youth that promote and encourage inclusivity in learning; Partnerships with public school such as Balatong Elementary School in Pulilan Bulacan and V. Mapa High School in Manila</p> <p data-bbox="420 535 1151 753">Lakbay aral of CEC staff and active SBU faculty to social enterprises, specialty stores and organic shops in different provinces to benchmark the practices; Learnings are applied to current and future projects livelihood projects for the community (Examples are visits to mushroom growers in Silang Cavite, Gawad Kalinga Enchanted Farm in Bulacan, Little Shepherds Baguio).</p> <p data-bbox="420 782 1151 934">Collaboration and support in the educational programs of Sar Beda College Benedictine Educational Foundation Inc. (SBCBEFI) on providing scholarship grants and educational assistance to deserving youths in the partner communities, employees, SBU students and other partners.</p> <p data-bbox="420 963 1151 1182">Training sessions on Business Clinic Program (BCP) and Health Environment, Advocacy Literacy Spirituality (HEALS) of CAS which aim to enhance and develop literacy and education of community members in the partner communities. These include seminars and trainings on livelihood development, financial literacy, bookkeeping, computer literacy, water survival, spirituality, environment, etc.</p>

Table 2

Continued



Table 2

Continued

SDG	CEC Practices and Programs
SDG17: Partnership for the Goals	

ESD is being implemented in CEC (see Table 3). In the CEC projects and activities, multi pedagogical methods are identified that promote participatory learning towards SD. For CEC activities being conducted in an open space environment like Manila Coastal Clean Up and Blood Donation, the concept of ESD is still indirectly integrated through educational methods of live demonstration or showcasing of advocacy which create the conditions for learning among SBU students and other stakeholders.

During our semistructured interviews of CEC staff and faculties involved, they mentioned the fairly good implementation of ESD as described in the presence and documentation of practices aligned to Priority SDGs. However, the active faculty expressed their concerns that effective monitoring and evaluation of ESD implementation in CEC needs improvement. The use of ICTs for communication purposes of the CEC projects and activities are needed in order to fully communicate the SDG concerns.

National Service Training Program (NSTP)

NSTP of SBU was institutionalized in 2002 in compliance with the Republic Act 9163 that aims at enhancing civic consciousness and defense preparedness in the youth by developing the ethics of service and patriotism (Labuguen et al, 2012). All baccalaureate degree programs in SBU include NSTP for two semesters as part of the graduation requirement. Objectives of NSTP are directly associated with SD as this course subject aims to develop student consciousness and commitment to social change and nation building (SBU, 2014, p. 215).

The citizenship education in SBU is an instrumental platform for teaching SDG since NSTP of SBU focuses on Civic Welfare Training Service (CWTS) (SBU, 2019, p. 1). Among the important topics under CWTS are education, entrepreneurship, health, environment, safety and other activities contributing to the general welfare of the society and the better life of community members.

Integrated ESD in the NSTP curricula

The NSTP syllabus conforms to ESD concepts which include lessons, learning methods, and learning outcomes including development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values (SBU, 2019). The NSTP

subjects use various mixed content ~~the~~ they contain more applied instructions as compared to pure theoretical teaching. The subjects designed to raise awareness on social and reflexive thinking on civic consciousness.

education and civic consciousness. The lesson explains the core values of NSTP that matches alignment Priority SDGs of SBU: The core values of NSTP is values-driven which is a feature of ESD. The lesson includes explanations and immediate real-world examples and the role of youth in nation building. It also aims to enable students to make a positive relationship with society at large, health, natural environments and promoting their sustainable use.

The details of identified practices and programs under NSTP are reflected in Table 4.

Table 4.

SDG Practices and Programs Matrix

SDG	NSTP Practices and Programs
SDG4: Quality Education	<p>Book Donation Drive</p> <p>Literacy seminars managed by students conducted in the communities during immersion. Common topics include livelihood, health, and personal hygiene.</p> <p>Discussion of illiteracy as one of the social issues in class</p> <p>Faculty meetings, project monitoring and feedback gathering CEC staff and NSTP faculties for coordination with community partners for immersion projects under NSTP2</p> <p>Training seminar of NSTP faculties on Lau Dato Si</p> <p>Tutorial services provided by students specific for the children the community during immersion. Topics include basic math arithmetic, reading proficiency, etc.</p>

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Table 4.

Continued

SDG	NSTP Practices and Programs
SDG17: Partnership for the Goals	

Written assignments and group projects were intended as assessment of student learning per objective of NSTP. We have taken note that group activities and other learning methods are aimed to engage students in discussions that allow reflection, imagination and critical thinking on issues and paradoxes that characterize the larger scope of sustainable development.

Answer to the Proposition

Based on the identified SD practices and programs of CEC and NSTP of SBU based in each priority SDG, we have observed the high level of integrated SDG teachings and demonstration beyond the moderate level that we stated in our proposition.

Conclusion

Based on the descriptive assessment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) involvement, we found that San Beda University (SBU) has high engagement in the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) endeavor. We observed the essential role of community extension through the Community Extension Center (CEC) and citizenship education through the National Service Training Program (NSTP) in implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) practices, activities, projects, and programs which are aligned to the priority SDGs of SBU. This study responds to the pressing concern on whether SBU has started contributing towards and/or teaching SDGs, although several faculty members expressed their concern on other improvements needed.

This research is a preliminary study regarding the level of implementation on how SBU seriously works on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) assessment of SBU is a vital driving force, a source for specifying ways to improve and to identify for future changes in the management of CEC and NSTP. Also, this research hopes for the continuous implementation of ESD and to improve the SDG performance of SBU and other HEIs. This study contributes to the current state of knowledge by

We recommend for SBU to further engage in incorporating the SDGs not just in extension services and citizenship education, but also in all academic programs and school operations whenever possible. This future move will entail capacity building and training, administrator commitment in cross-curricular, and multidisciplinary practices of the entire institution. Field visits to community partners are also recommended for extensive analysis of the impact of CEC and NSTP projects.

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