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Empowering Higher Education Extension Workers for Community Engagement: The Case of a Certificate Course Offered by a Comprehensive University in Manila

Mark Anthony D. Abenir, Abigail Martha S. Abelardo,
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Abstract

Even though community engagement is an important function of higher educational institutions (HEIs), many HEI personnel across the world are in need of training in this area. In the extant literature, trainings for community engagement in an HEI context are well studied in countries of the Global North. However, there seems to be a dearth of literature about this field in the Philippines. Our research addresses this gap by delving into the certificate course on community engagement and organizing offered by the University of Santo Tomas (UST) in Manila. Specifically, this study describes the content and conduct of the course, presents the satisfaction evaluation results of course participants, and examines their learnings and insights. This study contributes to the literature by documenting efforts made by HEIs in the Philippines in mainstreaming community engagement in the fabric of academic life.

Keywords: community engagement, public service, engaged scholarship, extension service, Phillipines



The term “community engagement,” in the context of higher educational institutions (HEIs), refers to the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity (Driscoll, 2009). Usually it comes in three forms: (1) public service and outreach (focuses on the service domain where faculty members, students, and academic institutions lend their expertise to address community-based issues); (2) service-learning (S-L; focuses on the teaching domain and involves a commitment to working with a community in ways that benefit the community, the faculty member, and students’ learning); and (3) engaged scholarship (encompasses the research domain whereby faculty members

and students incorporate a community orientation in their research agenda; Moore & Ward, 2010, p. 44). Among the three forms of community engagement, S-L is further subdivided into four service types: (1) direct service (person-to-person, face-to-face service projects in which the students’ service directly impacts individuals who receive the service), (2) indirect service (students are tasked with achieving some deliverable for the target community but do not necessarily engage with the service recipients directly), (3) advocacy service (students educate others about topics of public interest, aiming to create awareness and action on some issue that impacts the community), and (4) research-based service (students engage in some sort of research project aimed at meeting the research needs of the community partner; University of Central Arkansas, 2020).

However, when it comes to implementation

and valuing of community engagement in HEIs, appreciation varies because faculty members' understanding of community engagement differs across disciplines due to the different "cultural" identities of the faculty and their respective range of disciplines, which can include the social sciences, health professions, business and accounting, science and technology, arts and humanities, and vocational/technology programs (Buzinski et al., 2013). Conflicts among faculty members in such varied fields usually stem from disagreements on how to carry out tasks and often lead to complicated executions of their engagement in the community (Selmer et al., 2013). In addition, most faculty members remain unaware of the nuances of the different forms of community engagement, such as the difference between public service and outreach, service-learning, and engaged scholarship (Holland, 2016). Thus faculty members often are unable to appreciate the essence of performing community engagement, especially when there is no institutional support, no faculty development program, and a lack of promotion/recognition for performing community engagement work (Abes et al., 2002; Lunsford & Omae, 2011).

In overcoming the mentioned challenges, Moore and Ward (2010) suggested that faculty members should be trained in community engagement that is aligned to their HEI's vision and mission so that they are able to expand their scholarly work and reconceptualize their contributions as educators to the surrounding or partner communities of their HEIs. Studies have shown that when faculty members are well trained in community engagement, they become more sensitive to social issues and develop passion in addressing social problems (Vogel & Seifer, 2011), and, at the same time, they are able to advance their engaged scholarship as it systematizes their way of conceptualizing, documenting, and communicating with communities (Doberneck et al., 2010; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2016; Sherman, 2013).

Studies abound in the Global North addressing faculty development for advancing community engagement in higher education, as evidenced by the systematic review of 28 journal articles by Welch and Plaxton-Moore (2017). Tools have also been developed to measure the competency of faculty members under this area, famous among which is Blanchard et al.'s (2009) compe-

tencies required for successful practice of community-engaged teaching and scholarship. However, few if any researchers have explored this topic in the Philippines, where mostly the focus of faculty development is on helping faculty members acquire higher academic degrees (Somera, 2009; Tindugan, 2013) and increase their competencies in the areas of teaching (Bongalos et al., 2006; Gallos et al., 2005) and research (Dela Cruz, 2013; Gutierrez & Kim, 2017). Even though community engagement is considered a third pillar in Philippine higher education, it is often seen only as a sporadic endeavor, the most common forms of which are emergency services to communities struck by calamities and other community outreach activities like coastal clean-up, blood donation, and tree planting (Mojares, 2015). The community engagement function is thus not well infused into the intentional educational formation of students and the professional development of faculty members in most Philippine HEIs (Lero, 2010). One of the reasons for this seeming absence of faculty development programs for community engagement in the Philippines is the predominant view that community engagement is extension service, that is, mere dissemination of the fruits of scientific knowledge and best practices for the benefit of the public (Lero, 2010). Thus, it is only seen as a by-product of teaching and research, and the only requirement needed is compassion, that is, a heart that is willing to give and serve. But as Eby (1998) argued, when service is performed without appropriate training, orientation, and reflection, it can support ineffective and sometimes even harmful kinds of service.

The aforementioned lack of interest in professionalizing community engagement in Philippine HEIs, and the resulting absence of published studies about it, gave the authors of this study an impetus to address this knowledge gap by looking into the effectiveness of a faculty development program for community engagement offered by the University of Santo Tomas (UST) in Manila during School Year 2018–2019. This faculty development program is a 64-hour certificate course on community engagement and organizing offered by the UST Simbahayan Community Development Office (UST SIMBAHAYAN), in partnership with the UST Center for Continuing Professional Education and Development (CCPED). The course is considered the first and only certification program in the

Philippines funded by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). As its description indicates, the certificate course aims to train faculty extension workers (i.e., faculty members involved in HEI community engagement programs) to turn their HEIs' extension service recipients into true partners for development. Thus, in addition to learning how to effectively institutionalize community engagement in their respective academic institutions, participants also learn about the basics of community organizing. By this we mean equipping faculty extension workers to build powerful and well coordinated community partners that can sustain and own externally initiated development projects, initiate their own development interventions, and become not only receivers but also producers of knowledge and resources that enrich their respective HEI partners.

Given the general aim of this study, this research delves into the effectiveness of the certificate course by (1) describing its content and explaining how it was conducted, (2) presenting the satisfaction evaluation results of the course participants, and (3) extracting learnings and insights gained by the course participants in relation to their community engagement work in their respective HEIs. We hope to enrich the literature by sharing this study about efforts in Philippine HEIs to mainstream community engagement into the fabric of academic life through building the capabilities of faculty members in this area.

Theoretical Considerations for Faculty Development in Community Engagement

The certificate course on community engagement and organizing used three theoretical frameworks for effective learning. The first one is on outcomes-based education (OBE), an educational theory that focuses and organizes everything in an educational system around goals or what is essential for learners to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences (Spady, 1994). This requires starting with a clear picture of what is important for learners to be able to do, then organizing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment to reflect the achievement of higher order learning and mastery rather than the accumulation of course inputs or credits (Limon & Castillo Vallente, 2016; Spady, 1988). In

the certificate course, OBE was used when course participants were tasked to (1) make use of their sociological imagination in order to connect their personal history with that of the community engagement mission of their academic institution and the thrust of community engagement toward mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources between HEIs and their community partners, (2) assess the level of community engagement institutionalization of their respective academic institutions based on evidence, (3) make use of participatory tools and processes to analyze social structures in urban and rural communities, (4) design a leadership and organizational development program to facilitate the self-reliance and empowerment of their partner communities, and (5) create their own academic perspective infused with the knowledge base and objectives of the course and apply it to their fieldwork immersion experience. The successful performance of these tasks served as the basis to measure participants' proficiency in achieving the intended learning outcomes of the course.

The second theory used in the certificate course was the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm. According to Oliver (1981), this theory states that if a product performance or service exceeds expectations, users will be positively disconfirmed, whereas if a product performance or service fails to meet expectations, consumers will be negatively disconfirmed. Positive disconfirmation leads to increased satisfaction, and negative disconfirmation has the opposite effect. Zero disconfirmation, on the other hand, occurs when performance matches expectations (no effect on satisfaction). Applying this theory, the certificate course is seen as a product subject to participant satisfaction evaluation in which participants determine if their experience in the certificate course is better than expected, within expectations, or below expectations. Their expectations are formed on the basis of their experiences of previous training sessions in other areas coupled with statements made by friends, associates, or others about the course. Thus, guided by the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm, each session delivered in the certificate course is evaluated by the course participants in the areas of quality of resource persons, learning environment, courseware, learning effectiveness, job impact, business results, and return on investment.

Finally, the third and last theory used in informing the design of the course is Kolb's (2015) experiential learning cycle. This theory states that learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the cyclical transformation of experience that occurs in four stages (Kolb, 2015): (1) concrete experience (the learner actively experiences an activity such as fieldwork), (2) reflective observation (the learner consciously reflects back on the concrete experience), (3) abstract conceptualization (the learner attempts to conceptualize a theory or model based on the reflective observation), and (4) active experimentation (the learner tries to think of ways to apply the model or theory brought about by the abstract conceptualization in a forthcoming experience). Applying this theory, the certificate course made use of experiential learning where the course participants underwent a 24-hour (excluding rest and sleep time) community fieldwork and immersion experience in one of the partner communities of UST. In this activity, course participants were tasked with applying theories and concepts they learned in the course and, at the same time, validating and improving upon them using Kolb's (2015) experiential learning cycle.

Methods

This research is a mixed-methods case study of participants from the certificate course on community engagement and organizing offered by the University of Santo Tomas during the first and second semester of School Year 2018–2019. This study included a total of 60 course participants representing 28 HEIs included in this study, with 24 participants (representing 13 HEIs) in cohorts from the first semester and the remaining 36 participants (representing 15 HEIs) in cohorts from the second semester. The course participants received a competitive CHED scholarship with financial assistance for travel, board, and lodging, which enabled them to participate in the 64-hour certificate course for free. They got information about the course and its scholarship opportunities through the marketing efforts of UST SIMBAHAYAN and CCPED, which sent invitation letters and brochures, both through email and couriers, to the offices of campus presidents and heads of community engagement offices (when existing) of public and private HEIs all over the Philippines. To be accepted for the course, participants had to

meet the following criteria: (1) they were current academic or administrative staff involved in the program management and/or implementation of the community engagement program of their school for the past 2 years, (2) they were favorably endorsed by their respective school president or immediate superior, (3) they signed a commitment to finish and fulfill the requirements of the course (with the approval of their respective school president), and (4) they consented to serve as research respondents for the research part of the course, which was embedded in the course requirements. This study complies with the ethical guidelines of the UST Office of the Vice Rector for Research and Innovation, through its Research Center for Social Sciences and Education, and course participants were asked for their written informed consent. Data-gathering methods used in this study were process documentation, satisfaction evaluation surveys, and guided reflection papers using Gibbs's (1988) reflective cycle. Qualitative data drawn from this study were subjected to process analysis (for process documentation) and thematic analysis (for reflection papers) using the Text Analysis Markup System (TAMS) Analyzer. On the other hand, quantitative data drawn from the evaluation surveys were subjected to descriptive analysis and independent samples *t*-test using SPSS. In order to protect the privacy of the course participants, their identity has been anonymized in the presentation of findings.

Results

Table 1 shows the sociodemographic profile of the course participants. Females (52%) slightly outnumbered males (48%), almost three fourths (72%) were 31–50 years old, and a little more than half (53%) had a master's degree. The top three academic disciplines represented were (1) teacher education (23%), (2) applied sciences such as social work, agriculture, and engineering (22%), and (3) social sciences (20%). Most of the course participants were working in private HEIs (92%), and many were from sectarian schools (88%) owned by religious organizations. Finally, 80% were heads or directors of their community engagement departments or offices, and 77% formed part of the teaching staff of their respective HEIs.

Table 1. Sociodemographic Profile of Course Participants

Indicators		N	%	Indicators		N	%
Sex				School Type			
	Male	29	48		Private	55	92
	Female	31	52		Public	5	8
	Total	60	100		Total	60	100
Age Group				School Orientation			
	22–30 years old	10	17		Sectarian	53	88
	31–50 years old	43	72		Secular	7	12
	51–65 years old	7	11		Total	60	100
	Total	60	100				
Education Level				Job Position			
	College	17	28		Head/Director	48	80
	Master	32	53		Support staff	12	20
	Doctor	11	19		Total	60	100
	Total	60	100				
Academic Discipline				Nature of Work			
	Arts and humanities	10	17		Academic staff (teaching)	46	77
	Social sciences	12	20		Administrative staff (nonteaching)	14	23
	Natural sciences	2	3		Total	60	100
	Formal sciences	2	3				
	Health sciences	7	12	Study Cohort (Program Cycle)			
	Applied sciences	13	22		1st Semester/Cycle	24	40
	Teacher education	14	23		2nd Semester/Cycle	36	60
	Total	60	100		Total	60	100

Content and Conduct of the Certificate Course

The certificate course consists of four modules and requires attendance in 40 hours of classroom-based activities held in UST and 24 hours of fieldwork immersion in a partner community of UST. The four modules are on (1) the foundations and principles of community engagement, (2) analyzing social structures in communities, (3) processes and procedures in community organizing, and (4) designing a community engagement model. Table 2 presents the topics covered, number of hours, intended learning outcomes, and expected output from course participants for each module in the course.

The first three modules for the first pro-

gram cycle of the certificate course used an intensive schedule, that is, class sessions were facilitated over five Saturdays (October 6, 13, 20, 27, and November 10, 2018). Then, the fourth module (fieldwork immersion) was held within 3 days and 2 nights (November 16–18, 2018) at a rural barangay in Nueva Ecija. In the second program cycle, the first three modules were facilitated in three consecutive days (March 29–31, 2019) and then another two consecutive days (April 6–7, 2019). The fourth module was held within 4 days and 3 nights (April 12–15, 2019) at a rural barangay in Laguna. The second program cycle had a compressed schedule to lessen the travel expenses of the course participants coming from very long-distance areas, such as Northern and Southern Luzon and Visayas regions.

Table 2. Course Design of the Certificate Course on Community Engagement and Organizing

Modules	No. of Hours	Topics	Intended Learning Outcomes	Expected Output
1. Foundations and Principles of Community Engagement	12	a. Overview of Philippine history and Philippine communities	Make use of sociological imagination in connecting one's personal history with that of the community engagement mission of one's academic institution and the thrust of community engagement toward mutual beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources between HEIs and their community partners	Narrative essay of one's personal history and involvement in the community engagement program of one's academic institution
		b. History of community engagement in Philippine higher education		
		c. The basics of community engagement		
		d. Levels and modalities of community engagement		
		e. Principles of community engagement		
2. Analyzing Social Structures in Communities	16	a. Preliminary investigation	Make use of participatory tools and processes to analyze social structures in urban and rural communities	Book review of <i>PARILES: The UST-CCMF Tondo Youth Community Development Program Participatory Action Research Experience</i> by Abenir et al. (2009)
		b. Community situational analysis		
		c. Participatory research methods		
		d. Rapid appraisal methods		
Community profile of a partner community of UST using participatory rapid appraisal methods				

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Table 2. Course Design of the Certificate Course on Community Engagement and Organizing (cont'd)

Modules	No. of Hours	Topics	Intended Learning Outcomes	Expected Output
3. Processes and Procedures in Community Organizing	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Community entry and immersion b. Community conscientization and mobilization c. Core group building & leadership development d. Organizational development 	Design a leadership and organizational development program to facilitate the self-reliance and empowerment of one's partner communities	One-year community organizing operational plan consisting of community leadership and organizational development
4. Designing a Community Engagement Model	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Community fieldwork immersion b. Community fieldwork synthesis and action reflection 	Provide research-based service to the community	Present updated community profile to members of the community where the fieldwork immersion is held
			Create one's own academic perspective infused with the knowledge base and objectives of the course and apply it to the fieldwork immersion experience	Filled-out guided reflection essay using Gibbs's (1988) reflective cycle

Classroom-based sessions for the first three modules were conducted through interactive lectures and discussions, group sharing and discussion of reading and viewing materials, dramatizations, and group presentations of assigned reports. Retrieval learning methods used in the modules were think-pair-shares, brain dumps, summarizing of previous topics, and collective mapping-out of key lessons and comparing them to other groups. The fieldwork immersion, which falls under Module 4, was composed of a series of data-gathering activities using participatory research and rapid appraisal techniques, consolidation of reports, group discussions and reflections, and group presentations. Each of the course participants was housed in a particular home in the community so they could live with the people and better understand the community's way of life and culture. A culminating activity was held for each program cycle, commencing on January 19, 2019, and June 1, 2019, respectively. The culminating activity enabled course participants to synthesize their reflective learning about their entire experience of the course and served as an avenue to show them the quantitative results of their evaluation of the course, have them provide feedback on how the course could be further improved, and give them their course grade based on the submission of their course expected outputs, which were assessed using rubrics.

All the course participants from the first and second program cycles were able to comply with the required 88% classroom-based attendance and 100% fieldwork immersion participation. Following the grading system of the UST Graduate School, since the certificate course is under its Center for Continuing Professional Education and Development (CCPED), the highest grade given was 1.00, which is equivalent to an

excellent rating, while the lowest grade given was 2.00, which is equivalent to a novice rating. Table 3 shows the combined final grade profile of the course participants from the first and second program cycles. It can be seen in Table 3 that more than half (59%) of the course participants gained an excellent rating, with the apprentice rating and novice rating each applying to only one student. The rest, about 37%, fell into either highly or fairly proficient level of mastery. This means that almost all of the course participants (96%) were able to have an average to high mastery level in fulfilling the intended learning outcomes of the course. Such a level of mastery is indicated in one of the reflections provided by the course participants:

This course was like entering a new phase in my life, there were many things I did not know. Yet its teaching strategies and learning processes has helped me cope, and I felt more empowered after every session. (Course Participant 9)

However, it should be noted that 4% of the course participants ($n = 2$) were only able to achieve a low level of mastery. These course participants faced extraordinary difficulties in their family life at the time they were taking the course. Their loved ones were suffering from a critical health condition that greatly divided their time and attention, a situation that negatively affected their performance in accomplishing their course requirements. We believe that, given more favorable circumstances, they would have acquired a higher mastery level in the course.

Table 3. Final Grade Profile of Course Participants

Final Grade		N	%
Numeric Equivalence	Mastery Equivalence		
1	Excellent	35	59
1.25	Highly proficient	14	22
1.5	Fairly proficient	9	15
1.75	Apprentice	1	2
2	Novice	1	2
Total		60	100

Course Participant Satisfaction Evaluation Results

Table 4 shows the satisfaction evaluation results of course participants from the first and second cycles for Modules 1 to 3 of the certificate course. As shown in Table 4, the course participants gave Modules 1 to 3 an overall outstanding satisfaction rating ($\bar{x} = 3.88$), covering the dimensions of resource persons, learning environment, courseware, learning effectiveness, job impact, business results, and return on investment. They also reported that Modules 1 to 3 gave them an 84% significant increase in knowledge and skills, and they also claimed that 85–86% of what they learned was very critical and very applicable to their community engagement work in their respective academic institutions. However, results of the independent samples *t*-test for Modules 1 to 3 show that the total average of mean scores of those trained under the first program cycle ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.05$), when compared to the second ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.03$), indicated significantly higher satisfaction evaluation results, $t(32) = 2.64$, $p = .01$. Further, Cohen's effect size value ($d = .83$) suggests a large significant difference.

On the other hand, Table 5 shows the satisfaction evaluation results of course participants from the first and second program cycles for Module 4 of the certificate course. As shown in Table 5, the course participants gave Module 4 an overall outstanding satisfaction rating ($\bar{x} = 3.82$), covering the dimensions of fieldwork facilitators, fieldwork area, courseware, learning effectiveness, and impact to community engagement practice. They also reported that Module 4 gave them an 86% significant increase in knowledge and skills, and they also claimed that 86–87% of what they learned was very critical and very applicable to their community engagement work in their respective academic institutions. However, results of the independent samples *t*-test for Module 4 show that the total average of mean scores of those trained under the second program cycle ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.08$), when compared to the first ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.20$), indicated significantly higher satisfaction evaluation results, $t(42) = 3.04$, $p = .00$. Further, Cohen's effect size value ($d = .84$) suggests a large significant difference.

Combining the satisfaction evaluation results for the four modules, it can be surmised that the course participants from both

program cycles found the entire certificate course outstanding. To be more descriptive about why they rated the course outstanding, one of the participants has written this in the culminating activity of the course:

All my expectations were met, even more. It was a re-education for me, re-learning, a refresher course, and a re-awakening of my sleeping consciousness. I was reminded that I had a lot of things to do. I did my best to do my part and contribute to the best of my knowledge and ability. I guess everybody is doing well and contributes a lot. Even the course facilitators are very successful in rekindling the overwhelming initiative, camaraderie, and voluntary effort of each participant. (Course Participant 7)

Course participants also reported that they learned a lot about the topics covered in the course, which they found to be very critical and very applicable in improving their job performance regarding the management of the community engagement program of their respective academic institutions. In the comments section of the satisfaction evaluation survey, more than half of the course participants ($n = 34$) even claimed that the course had helped them reawaken their passion and zeal for community engagement, after so many years of feeling numb already because of the seemingly monotonous task of doing community engagement for the purpose of just meeting accreditation requirements. As one course participant commented in the satisfaction survey:

This course has blessed me a lot. I was already "woke" before but eventually learned to close my eyes. But because of this, my eyes have been opened again! Now that I have been re-awakened; it will now be a sin to ever close my eyes again! (Course Participant 30)

Learnings and Insights of Course Participants

Thematic analysis of learnings and insights gained by participants in their experience about the course yields four themes: (1) academic (knowledge, critical thinking, and reflective practice developed by learners), (2) personal (self-awareness and individual

Table 4. Satisfaction Evaluation Results of Course Participants for Modules 1 to 3

Evaluation Dimensions	Total Mean Score of Modules 1 to 3 (Classroom-based)			Interpretation
	1st Cycle (n = 24)	2nd Cycle (n = 36)	Combined (N = 60)	
Resource Persons				
1. The resource person was knowledgeable about the subject.	3.97	3.92	3.95	Outstanding
2. The resource person was prepared and organized for the module.	3.96	3.88	3.92	Outstanding
3. The resource person was responsive to the participant's needs and questions.	3.94	3.91	3.93	Outstanding
4. Participants were encouraged to take part in module discussions.	3.97	3.91	3.94	Outstanding
5. The resource person's energy and enthusiasm kept the participants actively engaged.	3.96	3.78	3.87	Outstanding
6. On-the-job application of each objective was discussed during the module.	3.90	3.88	3.89	Outstanding
Subtotal	3.95	3.88	3.92	Outstanding
Environment				
1. The physical environment was conducive to learning.	3.83	3.88	3.86	Outstanding
2. The refreshments and food served were of good quality.	3.89	3.91	3.90	Outstanding
Subtotal	3.86	3.89	3.88	Outstanding

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Table 4. Satisfaction Evaluation Results of Course Participants for Modules 1 to 3 (cont'd)

Evaluation Dimensions	Total Mean Score of Modules 1 to 3 (Classroom-based)			Interpretation
	1st Cycle (n = 24)	2nd Cycle (n = 36)	Combined (N = 60)	
Courseware				
1. The scope of the materials was appropriate to meet my need.	3.89	3.86	3.88	Outstanding
2. The materials were organized logically.	3.89	3.83	3.86	Outstanding
3. The examples presented helped me understand the content.	3.89	3.86	3.88	Outstanding
4. The participant materials (manual, presentation handouts, etc.) will be useful on the job.	4.00	3.82	3.91	Outstanding
	3.94	3.84	3.89	Outstanding
Learning Effectiveness				
1. I have learned new knowledge/skills from this module.	3.91	3.86	3.89	Outstanding
2. Rate your INCREASE in skill level or knowledge of this content before versus after the module: 0% is NO INCREASE and a 100% is EXTREMELY SIGNIFICANT INCREASE.	84%	84%	84%	Very significant increase
Job Impact				
1. I will be able to apply the knowledge and skills learned in this module to my job.	3.82	3.81	3.82	Outstanding
2. On scale of 0% (NOT AT ALL) to 100% (EXTREMELY CRITICAL), how critical is applying the content of this module to your job success?	87%	83%	85%	Very critical
3. What percentage of new knowledge and skills did you learn from this module you think you can directly apply to your job?	87%	85%	86%	Very applicable

Table continued on next page

Table 4. Satisfaction Evaluation Results of Course Participants for Modules 1 to 3 (cont'd)

Evaluation Dimensions	Total Mean Score of Modules 1 to 3 (Classroom-based)			Interpretation
	1st Cycle (n = 24)	2nd Cycle (n = 36)	Combined (N = 60)	
Business Results				
1. This module will improve my job and productivity.	3.90	3.85	3.88	Outstanding
Return on Investment				
1. This module was a worthwhile investment in my career development.	3.85	3.91	3.88	Outstanding
2. This module was a worthwhile investment for my employer.	3.87	3.86	3.87	Outstanding
Subtotal	3.86	3.88	3.87	Outstanding
Overall Total	3.90	3.86	3.88	Outstanding

Table 5. Satisfaction Evaluation Results of Course Participants for Module 4

Evaluation Dimensions	Total Mean Score for Module 4 (Fieldwork Immersion)			Interpretation
	1st Cycle (n = 24)	2nd Cycle (n = 36)	Combined (N = 60)	
Fieldwork Facilitators				
1. The fieldwork facilitators were knowledgeable about fieldwork.	3.94	3.89	3.92	Outstanding
2. The fieldwork facilitators were prepared and organized.	3.94	3.74	3.84	Outstanding
3. Participants were encouraged to take part in the fieldwork activities.	3.88	3.91	3.90	Outstanding
4. The fieldwork facilitators were responsive to the participants' needs and questions.	3.94	3.79	3.87	Outstanding
5. The fieldwork facilitators' energy and enthusiasm kept the participants actively engaged.	3.65	3.80	3.73	Outstanding
6. The expectations of the participants from the fieldwork facilitators were met.	3.82	3.86	3.84	Outstanding
Subtotal	3.86	3.83	3.85	Outstanding
Fieldwork Area				
1. The fieldwork area was conducive to learning.	3.88	3.91	3.90	Outstanding
2. The community members were receptive, cooperative, hospitable, and instrumental to make learning possible.	4.00	3.97	3.99	Outstanding
3. The expectations of the participants from the fieldwork area were met.	3.94	3.86	3.90	Outstanding
Subtotal	3.94	3.91	3.93	Outstanding

Table continued on next page

Table 5. Satisfaction Evaluation Results of Course Participants for Module 4 (cont'd)

Evaluation Dimensions	Total Mean Score for Module 4 (Fieldwork Immersion)			Interpretation
	1st Cycle (n = 24)	2nd Cycle (n = 36)	Combined (N = 60)	
Courseware				
1. The materials provided were appropriate to meet my needs.	3.82	3.83	3.83	Outstanding
2. The resources provided for food were sufficient and appropriate.	3.71	3.97	3.84	Outstanding
Subtotal	3.77	3.90	3.84	Outstanding
Learning Effectiveness				
1. The fieldwork orientation provided prepared me well for the actual fieldwork immersion.	3.35	3.79	3.57	Outstanding
2. I learned how to conduct rapid rural appraisal (RRA):				
A. Preparation of a research plan/RRA Plan	3.59	3.82	3.71	Outstanding
B. Data-gathering method	3.59	3.94	3.77	Outstanding
C. Processing of data/preparation of research results	3.35	3.76	3.56	Outstanding
D. Presentation of research results	3.65	3.82	3.74	Outstanding
E. Formulation and finalization of RRA report	3.35	3.68	3.52	Outstanding
F. Working with a group	3.71	3.94	3.83	Outstanding
3. I learned new knowledge/skills from this fieldwork.	3.47	3.97	3.72	Outstanding
4. Rate the improvement in your skill or knowledge because of your fieldwork experience. A 0% is NO IMPROVEMENT and a 100% is an EXTREMELY SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT.	86%	86%	86%	Very significant
Subtotal	3.51	3.84	3.66	Outstanding

Table continued on next page

Table 5. Satisfaction Evaluation Results of Course Participants for Module 4 (cont'd)

Evaluation Dimensions	Total Mean Score for Module 4 (Fieldwork Immersion)			Interpretation
	1st Cycle (n = 24)	2nd Cycle (n = 36)	Combined (N = 60)	
Impact to Community Engagement Practice				
1. I will be able to apply the knowledge and skills learned in this fieldwork immersion to my community engagement practice.	3.71	3.88	3.80	Outstanding
2. On scale of 0% (NOT AT ALL) to 100% (EXTREMELY CRITICAL), how critical is content application of this fieldwork to your engagement practice?	89%	83%	86%	Very critical
3. Whats is your estimate in percentage of new knowledge and skills you learned from this fieldwork which you will directly apply to your community engagement practice?	87%	87%	87%	Very applicable
4. This fieldwork will improve my community engagement practice and productivity.	3.76	3.88	3.82	Outstanding
5. This fieldwork was a worthwhile resource for the institution I am working for.	3.76	3.91	3.84	Outstanding
Subtotal	3.75	3.89	3.82	Outstanding
Overall Total	3.72	3.86	3.82	Outstanding

abilities developed by learners), (3) social (people skills developed by learners), and (4) civic outcomes (citizenship and socio-political skills developed by learners).

First, regarding academic outcomes, course participants were unanimous in saying that the community fieldwork and immersion was the most effective experiential learning they had. Around 90% claimed it was their first time to have a learning experience that helped them better understand, apply, and practice topics discussed during class sessions. As one course participant claimed:

My fieldwork experience is great and it was my first time. I learned a lot because I was able to connect it with the concepts I learned in the course. Because of this I can say that the people in the community have the potential and capabilities when they are allowed to participate through collective action. This fieldwork experience has shown me that community development is about promoting people's wellbeing and the welfare of everybody. (Course Participant 36)

Course participants also emphasized that their fieldwork experience gave them the opportunity to demonstrate what they had learned in terms of the foundations and principles of community engagement, the processes involved in community organizing for community development, and participatory research through the use of rapid rural appraisal (RRA). Some even realized that because of what they had learned in the course, they were able to understand why their development interventions in their partner communities seemed ineffective and the corrective actions that they needed to take. As one course participant wrote in his reflection paper:

I came to realize the reason why projects in our partner community did/do not prosper. Why after all of those livelihood projects we have implemented in our partner community, their living condition is still the same. Now I know that we have to start with the people. We have to organize the community first and involve them in diagnosing their own community, assessing their present condition and planning for the upliftment of their

living conditions. They should be the one to start thinking of what they need because they know better for themselves. We will just guide them and help them implement and achieve the goals of the community and the College as well. (Course Participant 53)

Second, for personal outcomes, the majority of the course participants expressed that the course helped them further develop their self-esteem, personal efficacy, and personal identity in the context of community engagement. They felt more confident about their role as managers, coordinators, or officers of the community engagement program of their school. They also claimed to have realized that they now had an intensified role to play in their respective institutions and the bigger society, where they feel a need to share and act upon what they had learned from the course. As one course participant expressed:

I started my work as a community development officer, and I felt that I am not qualified because I had no confidence that I can do the job well. Prior to the course, there were times that I was losing faith in myself and thinking that I am not an efficient or effective in what I do. However, completing the course excited me. I am now willing to learn more about community development and willing to improve myself further to help my institution and our community partners. (Course Participant 42)

In addition to the development of their self-esteem, personal efficacy, and a much clearer personal identity in the context of community engagement, the course participants also highlighted that their moral and spiritual values were formed in the course. This means that they not only experienced an increase in knowledge and skills, they also learned about the heart and spirit of community engagement. As one course participant explained in her reflection paper:

I learned that acceptance, respect, and love are the key ingredients of a successful community engagement—Accept the differences of every person, respect their ideas and insights, and love working with them and in executing the role

given to you. (Course Participant 38)

Third, in terms of social outcomes, course participants claimed that the course has allowed them to extensively make use of their interpersonal and collaboration skills in order to solve problems, overcome challenges, and accomplish tasks. The majority of them stated that their interpersonal skills were improved, they found it essential to be a team player, and they highly appreciated how working in a transdisciplinary team could accomplish a lot and provide complementary perspectives. As two of the course participants reflected on their experience in producing a community profile during their fieldwork immersion:

My classmates' performance was likewise admirable. We come from different institutions with different disciplinary cultures and backgrounds, yet we managed to become one as a team to help one another, and at the same time assist the community through our gathered data and presentation of results and analysis. In this way, we were able to show the purity of our intentions to be of help to others. (Course Participant 25)

The things that transpired to me in the course was that I was able to learn the importance of group work, that two heads are better than one. As we work together to do our job, we need to professionally come up with one whole and connected pictures of ideas. (Course Participant 29)

Aside from being able to further develop their interpersonal and collaboration skills, course participants also claimed that they were able to practice empathy and provide encouragement to boost each other's morale. They found this very useful since it made the course much lighter and more enjoyable, considering that they found the course requirements quite challenging. As one respondent mentioned:

I served as facilitator during workshops and of course, the solidarity night from which I actively joined the games, group presentation and community dance. Also, giving a chance for others to report during

plenary was very fulfilling. Being able to motivate groupmates to speak on behalf of the group was something to be proud of. And I am truly happy that one even communicated by thanking me for giving her the opportunity to represent our group during the sessions. It is very important to realize how each one can contribute and can help in the development and improvement of one another. (Course Participant 48)

Finally, regarding civic outcomes, course participants realized that community engagement requires them to elicit the participation of people in their partner communities for all phases of development initiatives. They must also have the voices of their community partners heard in decision making for development programs. Furthermore, many realized that messianic and charity-based approaches will not result in a genuine development of their community partners but will only lead to the development of a dole-out mentality. As one course participant explained:

Before taking this course, I have the attitude and/or practice of serving the community in a wrong way. I just realized that I was so manipulative before. I taught the community in becoming so dependent on what we can do, and what we can give to them. Now I have learned the importance of inculcating in their minds the importance of participation and ownership in all projects and programs we have for them. (Course Participant 6)

Moreover, participants also highlighted that the course has inspired them or has reawakened their desire to be an active member of society and active citizen of the country. However, they are aware that they cannot do this alone, hence they emphasize the need to influence others, especially their students, colleagues, and community partners. As one course participant wrote:

It is about time to rekindle the passion and involvement of students in community engagement. It should start with an in-depth discussion with the department chairperson, coordinators, and student-leaders about their future plans with our

community partners. We need to fully exhaust our capacity in community building. We need to tap community members who are able and interested in their own development, for these people would play a key role in community development. We need to do this not only because of its promising contributions in the community, but for the country as well. (Course Participant 17)

Discussion

On the Results of the Sociodemographic Profile of Course Participants

The sociodemographic profile of the course participants indicates that the number of female participants ($n = 31$) exceeds the number of males ($n = 29$) by 4%. If such difference is to be considered relevant, then this might mirror the observation of other studies that women are found more likely to be involved or assigned in the community engagement programs of their schools (Demb & Wade, 2012). This likelihood reflects traditional gender roles where caring and service work are more often than not assigned to women (Hochschild, 2003; Nussbaum, 1997). However, if the small difference is interpreted as an almost equal representation, this may reflect the same level of involvement of males and females in the field of community engagement in Philippine HEIs, signaling that there is no gender divide. Interestingly, a further look at the power dynamics between male and female course participants reveals something else. Out of the 48 who served as heads or directors of community engagement programs of their respective HEIs, only 42% are females ($n = 20$) and 58% are males ($n = 28$). This difference might reflect the observation that gender inequality still persists in leadership positions, with males favored over females (Gipson et al., 2017).

When it comes to age, findings reveal that 72% of the course participants were 31–50 years old. Further analysis of their age shows that their mean age is 39 years old, and 72% of those aged 31–50 years old ($n = 31$) are heads or directors of their respective community engagement departments. This means that the course participants are considered to be at their prime age and, at their age, are expected to handle

middle to senior managerial tasks (Oude Mulders et al., 2017; von Bonsdorff et al., 2018). Also worth mentioning is that 72% of the course participants have postgraduate degrees beyond the bachelor's ($n = 43$), which may suggest their compliance with the CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 40, s. 2008. This CMO requires all faculty members in HEIs to have at least a master's degree. It can also be noticed that 77% of the course participants ($n = 46$) were faculty members, whereas the remaining 23% were nonteaching or administrative staff ($n = 23$). This conveys that the responsibility for community engagement is not automatically the domain of faculty members. However, since the majority of participants were faculty members, this may indicate that community engagement is indeed a function expected of them, aside from teaching and research.

Also, findings reveal that 65% of the course participants ($n = 39$) come from the fields of teacher education ($n = 14$), applied sciences ($n = 13$), and the social sciences ($n = 12$). This finding reflects the findings of Demb and Wade (2012) that individuals in such disciplines, which are often community-centered and require community or field exposure (e.g., education, the health professions, social sciences, social work, agriculture), are the most likely to participate in community service or engagement. Also, a majority of the course participants came from private HEIs (92%) that were sectarian or owned by religious organizations (88%). This could reflect three things. First, it is a function of demographics since out of the total of 2,353 HEIs in the country, 89% (2,094) are privately owned, whereas only 11% (259) are publicly owned (CHED, 2018). Second, faculty members in Catholic or religious HEIs are known to have higher levels of community engagement participation compared to those at public and secular universities (Demb & Wade, 2012). Third, through the culminating feedback activity held at the end of the course, course participants from public HEIs informed trainers that the lack of representation from state-owned universities and colleges in the course may be a function of their unfamiliarity with the term “community engagement.” Public HEIs officially and normatively use the term “community extension services,” making “community engagement” not a regular part of their vocabulary. The marketing strategies of UST SIMBAHAYAN and UST CCPED failed

to mention community extension services in their letters of invitation and course brochures, which might have resulted in the poor participation rate of public HEIs.

On the Results of the Content and Conduct of the Certificate Course

The certificate course offers unique topics sensitive to the needs of community engagement personnel in Philippine HEIs. These topics are the overview of Philippine history and Philippine communities, and the history of community engagement in Philippine higher education. These topics help course participants contextualize their work toward the goal of building a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources between HEIs and their community partners and, at the same time, help them understand the unique position and contribution of HEIs in achieving the said goal. Aside from these, the course also has topics in common with other faculty development programs for community engagement in other countries in the Global North. Using the study of Welch and Plaxton-Moore (2017) as a basis for reference, topics shared by or resembling those of other faculty development programs for community engagement are (1) the foundations and principles of community engagement; (2) establishing and maintaining partnerships; (3) community-based research, which includes conducting community assessments and participatory research; (4) community organizing steps and processes; and (5) field immersion. The topics covered in the course are thus in keeping with those practiced in other HEIs abroad that take community engagement seriously. However, Welch and Plaxton-Moore (2017) also pointed out that the most widely used faculty development interventions for community engagement are 1–2 hour sessions of one-on-one consultations and workshops. They also emphasized that only a few HEIs implement more robust faculty development cohort or fellows models, and the duration of these programs ranged from 5 hours to over 20 hours. Given this current practice, the certificate course on community engagement and organizing offered by the University of Santo Tomas stands as unique in its own right since it requires a duration of 64 hours to complete the course using OBE and experiential learning at the core of its pedagogy. This ensures that course participants are better prepared and trained in the area of community engagement in the context of

HEIs as reflected in their satisfaction evaluation results.

On the Results of the Satisfaction Evaluation Survey

Findings reveal, based on the satisfaction evaluation results, that the entire conduct of the certificate course, from Module 1 to Module 4, was rated outstanding by the course participants from both program cycles. They also reported that the certificate course provided them with knowledge and skills that they found to be very critical and very applicable in improving their job performance in community engagement work at their respective academic institutions. Many even claimed that the course has helped them reawaken their passion and zeal for community engagement. Such outstanding rating for the certificate course by the participants may reflect their fulfilled need for a comprehensive and thorough training in community engagement. As noted earlier, faculty development programs in Philippine HEIs are mostly focused on helping faculty members acquire higher academic degrees (Somera, 2009; Tindugan, 2013) or increase their competencies in teaching (Bongalos et al., 2006; Gallos et al., 2005) and in research (Dela Cruz, 2013; Gutierrez & Kim, 2017). But O'Meara and Jaeger (2016) and Moore and Ward (2010) claimed that faculty members often want to engage in work that has a positive impact on the broader society and work that has personal significance for them. However, they found that epistemologies and frameworks around the process, products, and locations of scholarship development programs in HEIs are focused on producing specialized researchers or even teachers who are not aware of the importance of connecting their disciplinary work to public purposes. Thus, they claim that the design of these programs leaves many academic and administrative personnel working in HEIs at a disadvantage regarding community engagement. This certificate course may have offered a breath of fresh air for course participants because it rekindled their desire to engage in work that has a positive impact on a broader society. At the same time, the course gave them the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills that are very critical and very applicable in their present job assignments.

In addition, individual sample t-tests also revealed that for Modules 1 to 3, which use

learning sessions in the classroom, the first program cycle participants significantly and largely gave a higher satisfaction rating of the course than those under the second program cycle. The reverse occurred under Module 4, the fieldwork immersion, where the second program cycle participants significantly and largely gave a higher rating of the course than those under the first program cycle. These differences in satisfaction rating probably reflect the different classroom schedules for the two program cycles. For the first program cycle, classroom-based learning was equally spaced into five 8-hour learning sessions with a 1-week break between sessions to allow ample time for performing class assignments. On the other hand, second program cycle course participants experienced a compressed schedule, where the first three sessions of their classroom-based learning occurred in three successive days, after which they had only a 1-week break before they completed the last two sessions in two successive days. This schedule also obliged them to rush in completing their class assignments. It can be surmised that the course participants who were not rushed in their learning and had ample time to rest and complete their assignments had a more enjoyable experience. This result is supported by studies concerning spacing effect where, for a given amount of study time, well-spaced presentations and intensive class schedules (classes held only once or twice a week) yield substantially better learning and more satisfactory learning experiences among learners than do massed presentations and compressed class schedules (Dempster, 1988; Rayburn & Rayburn, 1999; Trout, 2018). On the other hand, the difference in satisfaction results for the fieldwork immersion may reflect the travel time and amount of actual time spent in the field. The first program cycle participants had to spend a total of 12–14 hours going to and from the designated fieldwork area in Nueva Ecija, which took time away from their 24-hour field immersion experience that amounted to a total of 3 days and 2 nights' stay in the community. On the other hand, the second program cycle course participants had to experience only a total of 6–8 hours of going to and from their designated fieldwork area in Laguna. Also, learning from the first program cycle experience, the course facilitators excluded the travel time from the 24-hour field immersion experience, which resulted in a total of 4 days and 3 nights' stay in the com-

munity. The second program cycle course participants thus spent more time in the field. The authors conjecture that that lesser travel time and longer time spent in actual field immersion contributed to a higher satisfaction rating by the course participants. This finding is supported by the study of Harper (2018), who found that well-planned travels for field immersions and emphasis on ample time spent in the field by learners contributed to a deeper understanding of place and more time to engage meaningfully with the local population.

On the Results of the Learnings and Insights of Course Participants

Research findings show that the course participants achieved four learning outcomes after completing the course. These learning outcomes are classified into academic, personal, social, and civic. For academic outcomes, they were able to successfully gain knowledge, skills, and abilities in terms of the foundations and principles of community engagement, the processes involved in community organizing for community development, and participatory research through the use of rapid rural appraisal (RRA). For personal outcomes, they were able to develop their self-esteem, personal efficacy, and personal identity, and deepen their moral and spiritual values in relation to community engagement. For social outcomes, they were able to practice and hone their interpersonal and collaboration skills within the context of transdisciplinary teamwork. Also, they were able to further develop their ability to empathize and to encourage people. Finally, for civic outcomes, course participants were able to strengthen their commitment to the value of community participation and ownership in development programs and projects. They also appreciated that the course inspired them to become active citizens who should consciously influence others to work toward community development and building of a robust democratic society. These learnings and insights gained by the course participants indicate that the course has really been successful in reawakening or even transforming their desire to effect positive change in their lives, in the academic institutions they work for, in the communities they partner with, and in the larger society.

The rich learnings and insights gained by the course participants were made possible through the effective use of the educational

theories of OBE and experiential learning. Studies on OBE show that students feel empowered and experience deep learning in this approach since they are being evaluated on their ability to perform and accomplish tasks rather than their ability to pass traditional pencil-and-paper exams (Kaliannan & Chandran, 2012; Tshai et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2011). These benefits may account for course participants' claims that their expectations were met and that they felt empowered after every session since they were able to accomplish tasks that deepened their learning about the topics covered in the course. Also, experiential learning proved to be very powerful. All course participants pointed out that their community fieldwork experience was a game changer, since it helped them directly apply what they learned in the course in a real-world setting. A majority of participants reported that it was their first time to undergo experiential learning for community engagement. Studies have shown that experiential learning helps students acquire needed technical skills related to the course they are taking, provides deeper learning, enhances personal growth, and helps develop social skills when performed in a group setting (Hill, 2017; Mu et al., 2016; Szeto et al., 2016). In addition, since the community fieldwork immersion included a service component in which results of participatory RRA were presented to community members, course participants developed a social change orientation wherein they wanted to be of better service to their community partners and to influence their colleagues and students to contribute to the community, larger society, and the country as a whole. The kind of service the course participants rendered to their fieldwork site can be considered a form of research-based service-learning (S-L). Thus, the civic outcome developed by course participants confirms studies indicating that S-L is an effective strategy to help students develop their civic consciousness through a commitment to social action, active citizenship, and democratic decision-making (Celio et al., 2011; Moely & Ilustre, 2014; Weiler et al., 2013). Such outcomes can also be expected since, as Deans (1999) claimed, the experiential learning that students undergo through S-L closely follows the hallmarks of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy or liberation education. The centrality of experience and systematic reflection afforded in S-L thus often results in the abiding hope for social change among learners that propels them to

commit to community action (Deans, 1999).

Conclusion

This research explored how the certificate course on community engagement and organizing offered by UST impacted 60 teaching and nonteaching extension workers of 28 higher educational institutions in the Philippines. Based on the evaluation results, the course exceeded the participants' expectations as they appraised several dimensions, including resource persons, learning effectiveness, job impact, and return on investment, among others. Course participants also reported that they gained significant knowledge and skills that they found to be very critical and very applicable to their present job assignments. Aside from undergoing a 64-hour course, the use of OBE and the community fieldwork immersion proved to be the most effective teaching and learning strategies for course participants. Through these strategies, they felt empowered by their new knowledge and skills, and most of them were able to have a firsthand experience of deeply engaging in a partner community. This experience was very meaningful even though most participants were in charge of the community engagement programs in their respective schools. However, it must be noted that course participants who experienced an intensive schedule (once a week classroom-based learning) and had more ample time spent on their field immersion and lesser travel time to and from their fieldwork area were the ones who gave the course a higher satisfaction rating. Recognizing the source of this higher level of satisfaction can inform improved class scheduling, travel time planning, and actual time spent in field immersion in the future program cycles of the certificate course.

Further, participants' learnings and insights about the topics covered in the course and their community fieldwork immersion experience led them to achieve four important learning outcomes, reflecting their academic, personal, social, and civic development in relation to community engagement. In the end, the course led the participants to become more conscious about relating with their communities as coequals and partners for development, in addition to gaining a heightened sense of social change orientation and an enhanced need to influence others toward community development and building of a robust democratic society.

Although the entire course was evaluated as outstanding by the participants, other topics can still be developed as a basis for offering advanced courses on community engagement and organizing in the future. Course participants have mentioned in their course evaluation that they want to learn more about community leadership development, participatory project management, cultural and emotional sensitivity to marginalized sectors, social advocacy work, teaching through service-learning, and participatory research and documentation. Also, since participants who greatly benefited from the course mainly came from Luzon with a few from Visayas (unfortunately none from Mindanao), it would be helpful to make it more accessible to others so a greater number of HEI community engagement workers can benefit. Such wider benefits may be achieved through any or a combination of the following: online distance learning, blended learning, offering the course as a regular semestral certificate course with scholarship grants in the UST Graduate School, or directly conducting the course in the different academic regional hubs in the Philippines, including Mindanao. Also,

marketing strategies for the course should include the term “community extension services” in order to attract more eligible participants from public HEIs. The overall goal of all of these strategies is to make faculty/extension workers’ development programs for community engagement/community extension service a regular staple in the country.

In the future, following Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick’s (2007) training evaluation model, the certificate course should be investigated in terms of impact on behavior and results. Here “behavior” means how well the course participants applied what they learned in their actual community engagement work and “results” reflect the impact of the training on the community engagement institutionalization of the course participants’ respective HEIs and empowerment of their respective community partners. This investigation can be performed at least a year and a maximum of 3 years after completion of the certificate course.



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