Local Government-Academe Partnership:
Touching and Inspiring Students in Environmental Monitoring

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Introduction

• Educational partnerships is important in service-learning: among schools and with community, non-government organizations and the local government units

• Placement of students for community service

• Partnership between Bayawan City and Silliman University in Dumaguete City in Negros Oriental, Philippines. Bayawan
Local Government and Academe Partnership for Safe Environment

Bayawan City: created only in 2000; committed to maintaining a safe environment before urbanization takes over; 100 km from Silliman University

Silliman University: century-old (109), committed to the enhancement of the spiritual, social and environmental well-being of people in communities within its reach
National Mandates:
Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (Republic Act 9003)
Clean Water Act of 2004 (Republic Act 9275)

Local Response:
Waste Management and Ecology Center; in an upland barangay; about 10 kilometers away
Sanitary landfill, composting plant, material recovery facility, septage treatment facility and wastewater treatment facility
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

• Bayawan City provided transportation, accommodation, and meals during fieldwork, chemicals or reagents for water analysis, laboratory facilities and equipment

• Silliman University offered for free the services of its faculty and students

• City Environment and Natural Resources Office-Urban Environment Management

• Biology, Chemistry and Anthropology
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Environmental Anthropology

Bayawan City

Urban Environment Management (UEM)

Waste Management Facility

Silliman University

Department of Chemistry

Chemical Analysis

Department of Chemistry

Biological Analysis

Department of Sociology & Anthropology

Social & Health Survey

Environmental Anthropology
Local Government-Academe Partnership
Environmental Anthropology class:

- 2 graduate students (Filipino and Tibetan)
- 8 undergraduate students (1 was American)
- directly interacting with local residents
- surveyed all 53 households in the community
- processed data and presented results to concerned city officials
- showed that quality of time in service-learning is also vital, not always the amount
Service-Learning in Confronting and Appreciating Realities

It provides opportunities for confronting various forms of realities

confronting: how students tackle assigned tasks and accomplish them for the benefit of other the people

appreciating: the understanding and valuing of experiences which ranges from being grateful to being frustrated
Related Studies: Two Sides

emotional impact: inspires to do better and value things often overlooked and took for granted.

more compassion and social sensitivity, improved understanding and ability to solve social problems, and greater efficacy to make the world better

frustrations: did not sense the positive impact of services rendered

not motivated or excited: felt being obligated as course requirement
Areas of the experiences as measures of impact:

1. what knowledge and skills the students were able to learn or enhance
2. how the realities they discovered in the field affected them emotionally
3. what plans they have thought of in response to these realities
4. what they wished for the community to have which it should acquire or be provided
Environmental Anthropology and Fieldwork

Not a general education course, offered only to major students

Focus: examines relationships between humans and environments in order to address practical environmental questions, problems and concerns

Goal: to enhance analytical ability by exposing students to different conceptual approaches of studying human-interaction interactions and case studies in different environmental conditions
Classroom preparation
theoretically and psychologically equipped for doing the interviews and understanding the data

Field activities
• middle of the semester when they were already
• interviewed conditions and certain issues socioeconomic, health and sanitation relative to the presence of the waste management center
• reflection session night after first day
• more prepared and adjusted the next day
Post fieldwork

- Filipino graduate student assumed major role
- data processing, analysis and implications
- orally presented the data to officials

Use of the data

- baseline for monitoring the conditions of these households
- bases for mitigating negative conditions
Knowledge and Skills Learned and Enhanced

Major issues bothering households

- drinking water not safe, poorly developed sources
- bad sanitation practices
- fears of potential contamination

Observations

- limited knowledge about the waste management center, its operations to mitigate potential negative effects
Table 1. Sources of Water for Drinking and Ownership of Toilets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Information</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sources of Water for Drinking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open dug-well</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped spring</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shallow well (hand pumped)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring box</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal faucet from spring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ownership of Toilet</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without toilet</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>54.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With own toilet</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Skills

• to observe and hear people in actual situations
• importance of working with locals
• the kind of work that they may go
• ability to interact with a diversity of people
• to appear simple in fieldwork
• time management, working with professionals
• waste segregation and recycling
• potential threats to the potable water
Emotional Impact and Point of Realization

Undergraduate students:
- learned the “other side of life”
- felt sorry to hear their sad stories
- appreciated their being nice and hospitable
- awed by their being helpful, honest and compassionate
- felt the strong will of families to survive
- disturbed that school age children were out of school
- felt more blessed relative to the community
Graduate students:

• impressed by the democratic atmosphere of the process during data presentation
• appreciated the freedom of expressing ideas
• felt being valued even as students
• motivated to commit time and knowledge to community works
• developed burning desire to continue working for the community
Inspired Planned Actions

Suggestions for the city to do

1. community be made more aware and informed:
   a. benefits and operations of the center
   b. importance of safe sources of potable water

2. adoption of progressive preventive measures and minimize the presence of flies

Immediate response

Mayor expressed to send health personnel to check the status of the health and potable water supply of the community

Environmental Anthropology
Local Government-Academe Partnership
Personal matters to do

1. continue doing volunteer works
2. go back and pay a visit
3. become better persons
4. not to take for granted the luxuries and opportunities currently enjoyed
5. thank the Lord for all the blessings
6. to finish a degree and promised to study hard
7. teach at Silliman University, adopt service-learning as pedagogy (graduate student)
Quality of Life for the Community

• stable sources of income
• quality education for their children
• to quality health care and services which the government has to provide
• well-equipped and functional health center
• secured sources of potable water
• informed to improve their sanitation practices
• permanent place to live
• fewer children which they can afford to raise
What a graduate student said:

- demands active involvement of the residents since it is not something that will simply be provided to them
- active representation in the different local special bodies of the city government
- sustained working relationship with Silliman University, especially with its Service-Learning Program
Facilitating and Retarding Factors

Facilitating

• provision of critical lens to analyze and interpret generated data and observations
• partnership forged between an academe and a government unit or non-government organization

Retarding

• time needed for serious community work
• requirements of other courses
Possible strategies for longer service-learning

• employ during summer term
• have three complimentary subjects enrolled by a student (40 students in all)
• either under one teacher or two teachers
• introductory sessions have to be in the campus
• assigned students to certain households or a dormitory provided by partner government or NGO
• two communities may be covered
• attached to the Extension Program
Conclusion

• may be brief, but is concise and specific to a particular purpose
• surveyed the social, economic and health conditions of households nearby the waste management center
• channels of the community in relaying their situation and sentiments to the city
• providers of information to the city for mitigating whatever unintended consequences of the center
Experiences of students validated the findings of other studies (Shannon, 2007; Bernacki & Jaeger, 2008; Oracion, 2009, 2010)

• improved understanding of social problems
• enhanced their compassion for others in need
• stimulated their sensibility to appreciate and value what they have and what the community should have

Service-learning makes teaching more effective and grounded with reality if time and resources
Thank You

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