

An organizational sustainability model on the practices of the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization

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ABSTRACT

The Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) serves as the only accredited environmental organization for students' actions and movement toward safeguarding, protecting, and conserving the environment which also targets the 'Makakalikasan' core value in department of education (DepEd) schools. A qualitative study involving interviews and focus group discussions directed the gathering and analysis of the practices of the YES-O program in secondary schools. The study develops an organizational sustainability model highlighting: context and relevance; resource availability; stewardship and team building; flexibility; and monitoring and evaluation which are important areas to provide support and assistance to the schools in the smooth, effective, and efficient implementation of the YES-O program. Furthermore, evaluators stated that the model captures the purpose of strengthening the YES-O in DepEd schools and provides clear direction and guidance on the projects, programs, and activities to be implemented that will surely raise environmental education awareness. Future researchers may conduct a similar study on the implementation of the YES-O to further elicit results and findings that will support the developed model if there is an emerging component that needs to be included.

Keywords: organizational sustainability model, practices, Youth for Environment in Schools Organization

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INTRODUCTION

Environmental education today is very relevant due to the escalating environmental problems that require immediate attention. Hence, many educators have tried to strive to improve both the environment and the field of education (Ardoin et al., 2017). However, the study conducted by Treagust et al. (2016) revealed that environmental education is still at an inadequate level in terms of curriculum presence, consistency, depth, and impact. Therefore, there is still a need to educate the community on environmental issues so that appropriate and necessary action to minimize damage to the environment can be then promoted.

Various studies described environmental education in many ways. Environmental education does not only happen in science classrooms and is more than just information about the environment—it happens every day in non-formal and informal educational settings and interactions, driven by others or by oneself. In formal Environmental Education, the learning process starts from primary up to the tertiary level. Various approaches can be done to be able to practice and experience environmental education such as classroom teaching, out-of-school approach, and informal education. While formal educators have powerful opportunities to use environmental education to teach every student who comes through their school doors, the value of

learning from other sources by experiencing the natural world through critical thinking and self-reflection is of equal importance. Since the school is the formal venue for environmental education, teachers are challenged with several problems. They are tested by time constraints, heavy workload, poor teaching aids, unavailability of manual/handbook, and the lack of support from the school administrators (Rahman et al., 2018).

In non-formal settings, activities such as symposia, workshops, seminars, exhibitions, radio, and television shows (viewing documentary films), competitions (eco-schools/green schools), clean-up campaigns, camping, and tree planting activities are carried out every year. Other experiences may also involve activities related to reading environmental magazines, media exposure, and outdoor programs. The students should be involved with the activity regarding environmental awareness to develop an attitude of love and concern towards their school and the surroundings. Non-formal teaching using workshop activities, even without direct experience of nature, also resulted in an increased interest in nature conservation, though, with less impact on the level of environmental awareness of students (medium level of participation). Activities lacking direct natural environment contact also had an impact on students. This suggests that approaches lacking on-site activities should be encouraged in situations where practical experiences with nature are not feasible, providing that

they include the active involvement of the participants in the learning process (Nunes et al., 2017).

Issues concerning environmental sustainability are now one of the research goals in the Philippines and abroad (Robles, 2012). Robles (2012) found that sustainability programs on environmental education in public elementary and secondary schools were moderately implemented. She also added that countless reports have been written on environmental sustainability, but few have approached specifically from an outlook that strengthens institutions and human participation is still lacking.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Environmental Education in the Philippine K to 12 Basic Education

The K to 12 science curriculum in the Philippines envisions the development of scientifically, technologically, and environmentally literate and productive members of society. Concepts and skills in sciences are presented with increasing levels of complexity from one grade level to another in a spiral progression, thus paving the way to a deeper understanding of core concepts. It can be observed also that the topics related to environmental awareness and consciousness are also integrated across science topics and other disciplines which in turn lead to a meaningful understanding of concepts and their application to real-life situations. The K to 12 learners should exhibit scientific attitudes and values to solve problems critically, innovate beneficial products, protect the environment, conserve resources, enhance the integrity and wellness of people, make informed decisions, and engage in discussions of relevant issues that involve science, technology, and environment (Department of Education [DepEd], 2016). DepEd has played an important role through its efforts to develop a curriculum for environmental education and promote various teaching and learning strategies. The department of environment and natural resources (DENR)–environmental management bureau and DepEd's the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) have involved themselves in implementing environmental education for the students and the public at large. There are various environmental programs and launched activities such as symposia, workshops, seminars, exhibitions, radio and television shows (viewing documentary films), competitions (eco-schools/green schools), clean-up campaigns, camping, and tree planting activities have been carried out and done every year. Other experiences may also involve activities related to reading environmental magazines; media exposure; and outdoor programs. The students should be involved with the activity regarding environmental education awareness such as in the YES-O to develop an attitude of love and concern towards their school and the surroundings. Every student should have an awareness of and responsibility towards the environment. On the other hand, they also mentioned that the element of environmental awareness is not sufficient without knowledge, understanding, a change of attitude, and physical participation.

The Youth for Environment in Schools Organization

The establishment of YES-O in 2003 as a school-based curricular organization serves as a significant venue for students' actions and movement toward safeguarding, protecting, and conserving the environment for future generations. In Philippine public schools, the only accredited club organization that is mandated to promote

environmental education in schools is YES-O. It is also the premiere student organization in the Philippines that is concerned with environmental welfare. This organization consolidates all other environment-related clubs in schools and is separated from the Science Club which is primarily focused on science and technology (DepEd, 2003). Like any other environmental organization, YES-O has the goal to create awareness about the environmental condition of the country among Filipino students, establish doable and specific projects for environmental wellness, and promote environmental advocacies among schools (Demeterio, 2014). The world faces unprecedented challenges of sustainability and in the Philippines, the burden is magnified because of its demographic, economic, and environmental situation (Galang, 2010). Issues concerning environmental sustainability are now one of the research goals in the Philippines and abroad (Robles, 2012). In her study, Robles (2012) found that sustainability programs on environmental education in public elementary and secondary schools were moderately implemented. She also added that countless reports have been written on environmental sustainability, but few have approached specifically from an outlook that strengthens institutions and human participation is still lacking.

Issues and Concerns in Implementing Environmental Education Programs

Many existing environmental education programs, which occur across a range of settings and in various configurations, have positive outcomes in terms of environmental knowledge, attitudes, dispositions, and skills for this audience (Ardoin et al., 2017). However, research findings show that the environmental consciousness of students does not develop and change as per the target in the curriculum because both the teaching and learning process methods are unclear and not concrete (Pantongkam et al., 2017). Moreover, the learning process does not explicitly reflect the development of an environmental consciousness. The learning step focuses on only content too much and lacks integration of the community context or places to be a part of learning and students are not engaged in solving problems. Then, students are not aware of the environmental problems around them, the impacts of the problem on the real community, and the importance of themselves in solving environmental problems (Khaikaew, 2014). Moreover, studies also revealed that secondary school students have low to moderate levels of understanding of environmental issues, and low levels of knowledge and attitude (Meerah et al., 2010), and low environmental awareness levels (Ali et al., 2017). It can be said that more emphasis should be given to environmental education inside as well as outside the classroom. Piyapong Janmaimool (2017) also stated that though people have the capability, good attitude, and active intention, they may be reluctant to act environmentally because of a lack of motivation. The right to a healthy environment of the Philippine environment policy clearly articulated that the government recognizes the right of the people to a healthful environment. Moreover, it shall be the duty and responsibility of everyone to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the Philippine environment (Presidential Decree No. 1151, Sec. 3). However, the Philippines is lagging other nations when it comes to its environmental performance Index in 2015, manifested by the country's overall ranking at 114th among 178 countries which is based on a nation's performance to address high-priority environmental issues—the protection of human health from environmental hazards and ecosystems protection (Garcia & Cobar-Garcia, 2016).

Teachers are the implementers of the curriculum on environmental education in the school. They are also the facilitators of many activities related to environmental education in the school to promote environmental awareness and environmental knowledge for the students. They serve as the agent of change in the behavior of the students relative to their beliefs, attitudes, and values toward environmental education experiences. However, teachers may also hinder the achievement of the goal of environmental education in the school due to a lack of skills and knowledge in implementing the curriculum as well as in the implementation of various programs on environmental education. Evidence suggests that teachers possess narrow mental models of the environment (Mosely et al., 2010) and lack a background in environmental issues (Forbes & Zint, 2011). Teachers also must be seriously committed to implementing the environmental education curriculum.

Other issues and concerns were identified in the study by Perez (2019) like weak monitoring and evaluation, time constraints in the conduct of activities, lack of funds for training, and uncoordinated and overlapping projects by different youth organizations.

Participation of Community Stakeholders in Environmental Education

Society needs government leaders with a transformed perspective towards environmental sustainability since they have important responsibilities in promoting environmental education as one of the key agents to achieve sustainable development (Robles, 2012). It would be worth understanding the implementation of a learning environment and what roles different stakeholders could play to help put this into practice (Cheang et al., 2017). Labog (2017) also reiterated that the school together with the teachers must not only focus on learning and practicing the concepts and theories within the school community. Strengthening the established link to other agencies is also a vital part of the equation to achieve sustainability. He also added that extending sustainable practices is a collaborative effort of the students, schools, outside communities, LGUs, and other related government and non-government agencies. Such interaction can improve the quality and coverage of sustainable practices not only in school but in the whole community. Marasigan (2017) highly suggests in her study that collaboration within and between national and local stakeholders is necessary as the most appropriate approach to learning environmental pedagogies wherein these stakeholders take charge of environment-related activities could help them understand how economy, culture, and politics are linked to education for environment sustainability. Community leaders are expected to provide good examples while teachers and school administrators lead capacity-building programs for the learners by giving opportunities for environmental activities.

Aside from teachers, environmental education advocacies and activities in schools and communities should seek the support of stakeholders. The support in various ways will align students' thinking and actions towards environmental consciousness and would also lead to increasing their academic performance. The environmental awareness of the students was associated with their academic performance. As the environmental awareness of the students developed and increased, their academic performance was likewise increased and enhanced. It means that if the students are environmentally aware, it also leads to enhancement or increase in their academic performance. Moreover, other factors such as the age, socio-economic status, guidance records of the students, upbringing, and

environmental awareness background of the family could affect the environmental awareness of the students (De Regla, 2015).

Students who had a higher degree of participation in environmental education activities or were involved in the preparation of the workshop were more sensitized and showed greater interest in biodiversity conservation. It also showed the importance of the extent of knowledge in awakening an interest in conservation, and that contact with the natural environment is a key part of the success of environmental education and biodiversity conservation programs. Extension projects should be implemented by the schools in the community as a practical tool for contact with nature and as an effective way to integrate knowledge and consolidation of environmental education in schools (Nunes et al., 2017).

School administrators should also play an active role in implementing awareness programs in school and in consistently promoting environmental conservation programs and practices (such as recycling, voluntary work, replanting trees, composting waste materials, and trash-picking period before the academic session commences). Administrators must also set aside financial allocations for environmental awareness programs in school, including taking students on field trips to increase students' knowledge about environmental issues such as visiting disposal landfills, recycling centers, zoos, and environmental museums and participating in environmental camps (Rahman et al., 2018). Moreover, school administrators can motivate teachers to attend seminars/training programs on environmental education and hold environmental seminars for the school community. Finally, they should initiate campus/school activities, whether academic or non-academic that would develop the students' concepts of sensitivity to the environment (Delos Santos, 2020). The support of school administrators is fundamental to project success. They have access to resources that are not always available to teachers. Therefore, it is important these leaders are engaged in, and enthusiastically support, the planning, development, and implementation of environmental projects. The school principal can facilitate interactions about the project with community leaders, parents, and other members of the community. Robles (2012) also mentioned that school principals should consider an evaluation to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of environmental programs implemented regularly. It is then the duty of everyone at schools—teachers, researchers, students, administrators, and the community—to develop action plans to ensure that education supports the development of environmental awareness and sustainability (Robles, 2012).

Based on the statements, it is hoped that this study will enable the DepEd officials, school administrators, students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in the community to become more responsive to the current needs of the changing society. This study believes that sustaining the practices of the YES-O as one of the vehicles in strengthening environmental education in schools can help to successfully achieve the target objectives mandated in DepEd provisions on the YES-O in the implementation of timely and relevant environmental education programs. This study attempts to develop an organizational sustainability model that could support and sustain the successful implementation of the YES-O programs.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a qualitative research design employing semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. This was done to collect responses from the key informants or focal persons, who were the 18 student officers, four facilitators/teacher-advisers, and three school principals, who were selected purposively, relative to the implementation of the YES-O program in three schools in the schools division of Manila, Marikina, and Quezon City of National Capital Region, Philippines. The purpose of the purposive sampling technique is to select respondents who are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information. Moreover, this non-probability sampling technique was used to better match the sample to the aims and objectives of the research, thus improving the rigor of the study and the trustworthiness of the data and results (Campbell et al., 2020). The key informants of each participating school were asked about their practices of the YES-O programs in the aspect of the DepEd-mandated provisions. The researcher facilitated the semi-structured interview using open-ended questions on the practices of the YES-O program implementation in their respective schools. The participants were allowed open share and answer the questions during the online sessions. The interview session lasted for 75 to 90 minutes while the FGD was done for about 45-60 minutes per session. The sessions were recorded using Google Meet conferencing. The qualitative data analysis used the responses of the participants from the interviews and FGDs. The whole process of initial to selective coding used the verbatim transcript based on the transcribed responses from the recorded interviews and focus discussions. The statements in Filipino were translated into English during the writing of the results and findings. The responses of the participants in the open-ended questions in the survey questionnaires were in English; thus, translation was not needed anymore. Moreover, the results of the qualitative data from the open-ended survey questionnaires were used to support the interpretation of the data to answer the first research question. The analysis of the qualitative data was performed using a QDA Miner Software Package for content analysis through coding of the transcribed data. The software offers the ability to code and retrieve text and store files in an internal database (LaPan, 2013). In this study, the steps in conducting thematic analysis as a qualitative data analysis method from the research of Lester et al. (2020) were adopted. Moreover, thematic analysis was used to produce broad descriptive statements that reflect the overall understanding of the data and in response to given research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Organizational Sustainability Model visually represents the successful implementation of the YES-O program. The model intends to guide the schools on the smooth, effective, and efficient implementation of the mandated programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) to achieve the VMGOs of the YES-O. The results and findings from this study were translated into useful, appropriate, and applicable concepts anchored on the performance of the schools with successful YES-O implementation, the perceptions of the YES-O facilitators/teacher-advisers, and student officers on their practices of the schools while implementing the program. The developed model will serve as a guide to the other schools in enhancing the implementation of the YES-O program while addressing the identified

gaps, issues, and concerns based on the key elements included in the model.

The focus of the model is on the major key elements which include:

- (a) context and relevance,
- (b) resource availability,
- (c) stewardship and team building,
- (d) flexibility, and
- (e) monitoring and evaluation.

To relate the concept in the developed model, YES-O set the right direction as the schools implement the mandated PPAs. The model aspires to enhance and improve the implementation of the YES-O program in such a way that it can provide useful projects and activities for the teachers, learners, parents, and community stakeholders. The illustrative concepts of the model can give the schools the opportunities to benchmark the successful implementation of the YES-O from the other schools.

Figure 1 presents the Organizational Sustainability Model for the YES-O.

Context and Relevance

The PPAs of the YES-O are being translated in the context of the schools, with the help of the school administrators, teachers, and important community stakeholders, the students would become more participative in following the policies concerning environmental education of their respective schools towards environmental management because they are well-informed about it. The YES-O program would bring a meaningful path in environmental improvement not only in the schools but also in the local community while creating positive impact on their lives and on the lives of their families, the school itself and the local authorities as well. The content is more effectively conveyed when embedded in a local context, giving the learners a chance to explore and experience what's around them as they observe their environment. Through this, the teacher has to adapt the teaching and learning processes to encourage students to be a part of knowing and solving environmental problems with people in the community by using context or place in community. Environmental education can enhance the integration of knowledge presenting real problems that can be studied or simulated and provides topics and problems that can be adjusted to the developmental levels of students because they are aware of their context.

The success of the YES-O program implementation does not just depend on the use of resources and number of PPAs conducted and implemented but also the YES-O considers the relevance of the PPAs. The relevance is evident in the PPAs of the YES-O program to the school or to the mandated objectives of the organization. Likewise, it is important to note also that the PPAs should be relevant to the target beneficiaries and should be meaningful to their everyday lives. In this sense, timely and relevant PPAs based on the need of present situations and in the context of the community most likely increases public awareness and knowledge of environmental issues. Therefore, it is easy for the YES-O to encourage the public and engage them to be part of the actions for environmental conservation and protection because the facilitators and student officers with the support of the school leaders have a strong personal advocacy and commitment to achieve the primary purpose of having the program in the school.

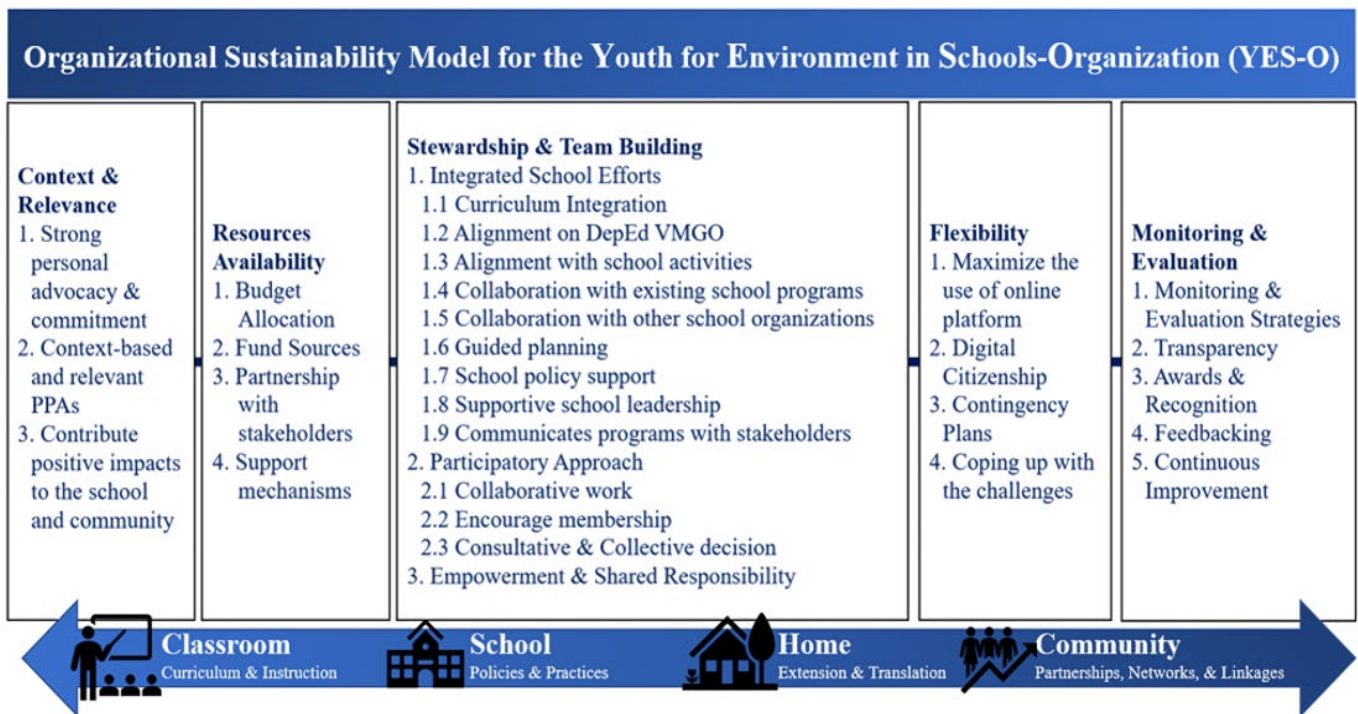


Figure 1. The organizational sustainability model for the YES-O (the authors' own work)

Resource Availability

The implementation of the context-based and relevant PPAs of the YES-O often demands financial, material, and human resources. The YES-O can be able to manage its resources from the allocation of budget and funding requirements as reflected in the calendar of annual proposed activities (CAPA). The leadership of the school principal plays a very important role in the management of resources. The provision or allocation of budget reflected in the Annual Improvement Plan intended for the implementation of the projects and activities of the YES-O and in collaboration with the other organizations in the school would strengthen the confidence among the facilitators and student officers because they can feel the strong support of their school leaders. Another source of funds is through donations and income-generating activities. Moreover, establishing a strong partnership with the stakeholders such as the community, businesses, industries, NGOs, and LGUs, can strengthen the resources since everyone is involved. The presence of both internal and external stakeholders in the implementation of the PPAs of the YES-O reflects the successful practices in terms of sustaining effective school governance in managing the resources. Moreover, being open to various support mechanisms can give better opportunities for the YES-O to accomplish its target projects and activities.

Stewardship and Team Building

This key element evolved from the integrated school efforts, participatory approach in implementing the program, and sense of empowerment and shared responsibility among the facilitators, student officers, school leaders, and other internal stakeholders. The YES-O program built strong positive relationships among student officers and members with the supervision of their teacher-advisers. Such relationships involving the various types of activities used to enhance social relations and define roles within teams is a kind of interaction that can improve the quality and coverage of sustainable practices not only in school but in the whole community of practice within the YES-

O. The results and findings revealed that the student officers helped each other to organize the PPAs of the YES-O. Helping each other made the tasks easy for them to accomplish and finish on time-based on their CAPA. To work collaboratively, students collaborate, listen, and exchange ideas to plan and implement their YES-O programs. The student officers and teacher-advisers of the YES-Organization were bound with shared common goals. In a team, they were engaged to work together to encourage environmental awareness and consciousness, reinforce expected outputs, and build motivation around their initiatives for environmental education while sustaining the organization.

The YES-O program allows everyone in the school, home, and community to be empowered with the environmental skills that can help to prevent and address environmental issues because they have a sense of personal and civic responsibility. Moreover, empowering the individuals involved in the YES-O program implementation will engage them to explore environmental issues, engage in problem-solving, and take actions to improve the environment. As a result, the individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the environmental skills to make informed and responsible decisions.

When everyone in an organization is empowered, it reflects that they are allowed to share their thoughts and ideas and show a sense of shared responsibility which is an element of stewardship. The YES-O student officers were given assigned duties and responsibilities wherein there's a clear task also given to them in the performance of their functions mandated to them. The YES-O officers were motivated to perform the tasks because of the trust of their colleagues and being guided by the YES-O facilitators. There was a high recognition of their contributions to the success of the YES-O program implementation. Stewardship can also be observed in the manner of high engagement of student officers in participating in the activities facilitated by the YES-O. These were manifested in their environmental attitudes and

behaviors that they are practicing what they promote to their schoolmates. Likewise, the YES-O teacher-advisers served as a role model to their colleagues when it came to taking the lead in conserving and protecting the environment which was manifested in their attitudes and behaviors.

Flexibility

The role of online platforms in advocating the PPAs plays a significant role in strengthening the purpose of the YES-O program implementation. The traditional way of giving announcements in terms of publicity materials through the school's bulletin board turns digital. The students can be able to develop digital posters and videos to become more interactive and attractive to individuals in the community. Moreover, it can also be able to inform the stakeholders about the upcoming events of the YES-O as well as showcase the accomplishments of the program. The official Facebook Page of the YES-O serves as the online platform wherein the school can share updates and important reminders about the projects and activities involving all stakeholders, especially the learners. Through this kind of practice, digital citizenship is being promoted as a skill that could help learners to collaborate and communicate digitally and safely access and assess online information which is a vital element of Education 4.0 and Education 5.0. The challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic wherein the PPAs of the YES-O can be converted into activities that are still applicable even online and offline because of blended learning as a distance learning delivery modality.

The YES-O can still be able to manage the conduct of the target projects and activities despite the challenges and difficulties because there is a provision of contingency plans that they can use to address the projected problems. The YES-O has alternative ways of ensuring that the PPAs should be accomplished with some adjustments while still achieving the purpose and objectives. It is because the targeted PPAs are suitable to their contexts, that is why the student officers must become resourceful, creative, and innovative to be able to push through the projects and activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This important area propels and drives forward the implementation of the YES-O program toward sustainability. There is a need for monitoring and evaluation of the implemented activities to assess the effective implementation of the program. The results of the monitoring and evaluation help the monitoring and evaluation team to provide technical assistance to schools. Likewise, the implementing schools should conduct their own monitoring and evaluation strategies in the context of their implementation of the mandated PPAs. These areas should be considered for the successful implementation of the YES-O as evident in the school's performance. Monitoring and evaluation should be properly and regularly conducted to ensure that the guidelines relative to the implementation of the program are followed. The guidelines provided were stated in DO No. 72, s. 2003, DO No. 93, s. 2011, and DO No. 52, s. 2011 as the existing DepEd issuances. To ensure quality assurance as to the implementation of the program, there is a need for thorough monitoring and program evaluation. A tool in evaluating the performance of the YES-O program implementation can be used by the school on their self-assessed initiative before the conduct of the M & E by the division office and/or of the regional office through the school governance and operations division. The conduct of monitoring and evaluation is integral in

identifying the issues and concerns that might hamper the success of the program. The result of the regular conduct of M & E will provide the chance for the YES-O to provide the right action to address the identified issues and concerns. The monitoring and evaluation should involve all aspects of the YES-O implementation from the certification of the YES-O, election of a new set of officers, planning of the CAPA, implementation of PPAs, and preparation of the annual accomplishment report (AAR). There should be regular updates on the accomplishments. The provision of technical assistance is necessary in this respect so that the schools will have the right direction in doing the M & E. The conduct of M & E has established transparency concerning the conduct of the PPAs. To recognize the role of facilitators and student officers in the implementation of the YES-O in the school, the school should continue to give awards and recognitions to them as a motivation for their exemplary service in doing good actions for the environment. Likewise, the division office, regional offices, and central office of DepEd may sustain their activity in terms of recognizing the role of the YES-O in strengthening environmental education in schools.

The inclusion of continuous improvement (CI) utilizing the results of the monitoring and evaluation is crucial in the YES-O program implementation. Pre-identified areas related to the planning and implementation of the mandated PPAs of the YES-O should be considered to improve the processes and systems being practiced by the organization. The YES-Organization has encountered various challenges in the implementation of the PPAs. That is the reason why CI is part of the school's practice to improve the performance of the organization. In the context of the YES-O, the performance of the organization is being evaluated in terms of the five mandated objectives.

The monitoring and evaluation contribute to the overall performance of the YES-O program. The YES-O must get feedback from the stakeholders which can be used to improve the delivery of the projects and activities. This is also an important component of being transparent and being accountable as leaders of the YES-O. The YES-O focuses on achieving the PPAs effectively and efficiently and considering the needs of the future conduct of PPAs. One of the practices of the schools was the adaptation of the previous PPAs conducted by previous officers and were being implemented by the present YES-O student officers. Regular submission of the AAR is very important so that this document will become part of the important files of the YES-O. It is also very important to note that a good M & E report will also be the basis of a certain project and/or activity related to the mandated PPAs should be continued or need to stop. This kind of approach illustrates good management of resources, both human and non-human resources (financial and material).

The model also includes four other important enablers that represent the important role of the YES-O in promoting public awareness and environmental consciousness relative to conservation and protection in the classroom, school, home, and in the community.

In the classroom, the integration of the learning competencies relative to the promotion of environmental education is highly encouraged as part of the curriculum implementation and instructional delivery. Here, there should be practices of intensifying lessons regarding the environment in all science subjects and they can be also integrated across all learning areas. However, it is reiterated that in the science curriculum framework, it is the role of the science teachers to lead in the promotion of school projects and activities related to

environmental education. The YES-O facilitator/teacher-adviser is a science teacher. Moreover, environmental concerns can also be used as instructional tools for classroom drills, discussions and activities and can be taught and be integrated in the related learning areas. Furthermore, the teachers can use various instructional materials such as books, visual aids, teaching guides, and materials to make the learners aware of the concerns and issues on the environment which in turn highlights the promotion and encourages the students' participation in environmental activities and advocacies and instill in their minds the need to preserve and protect the environment. The teaching and learning process must focus on cultivating a good sense of conserving nature and environment, and promote understanding about management, maintenance, and sustainable use of natural resources.

In the school, the strong support of the school principal is highly evident if he/she's able to issue school policies to engage everyone to participate in the YES-O program, projects, and activities spearheaded by the YES-O facilitators and student officers. Based on the findings in this study, the leadership of the school principals in advocating the protection and conservation of the environment is evident in terms of provision of financial support to the PPAs of the YES-O which are included in the school's school improvement plan and annual implementation plan. The budget may be used in terms of encouraging the teachers to attend lecture seminars, workshops, conferences, and other forums relating to environmental education as a curricular support for learners in the school. The school-based issuance of policies, either school-initiated and/or adapted from the community is evidence of the effective leadership of the school principal in the smooth implementation of the YES-O program. Furthermore, the school-based policies mentioned in the study as practices of the schools with successful YES-O implementation became part of the school's practice in promoting environmental consciousness among internal stakeholders of the school.

While the school is the formal venue for environmental education, it can be also argued that each household of the learners and teachers is the extension of what they learned and practiced in the school. At their homes, individuals can be able to translate what the school has provided to them relative to the integration of environmental learning competencies in the curriculum and instruction. The experiences of the learners by attending symposia, environmental camps, eco-tours, solid waste management practice in the school, and other mandated PPAs should be sustained at home in such a way that all these things became part of their attitudes and behavior after strengthening the environmental knowledge and skills among them.

The effective implementation of the YES-O program also lies in the active engagement and participation of community stakeholders. The findings revealed that strong partnerships, networks, and linkages between the YES-O and the school's organization, Local Government Units including the barangays, government agencies such as the DENR, NGOs, academic institutions, business, and industry sectors can work together to have a shared common goal for the environment. The findings revealed that there are a lot of opportunities for the schools to collaborate with these partners and agencies to carry over and achieve the VMGOs of the YES-O. Effective environmental education programs involve active engagement and participation of stakeholders in all phases of the program, from the development of the program up to its evaluation.

Sustainability in the context of this model pertains to the manner of implementing the YES-O program in selected secondary schools relative to the processes and mechanisms employed by the YES-O to sustain the organization. The representation using an arrow shows the right direction in which the YES-Organization should be given the successful implementation of the program. Effective environmental education programs are evaluated with appropriate and suitable tools considering the context of the community being assessed.

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

The practices of the schools with successful implementation of the YES-O program were documented to determine and describe the emerging themes that are relevant to the effective implementation of the program. The results and findings were the basis of the Organizational Sustainability Model developed intended for the YES-O for the implementing schools to sustain the mandated objectives of the program and continue the projects and activities of the organization. The practices of the schools with the successful implementation of the YES-O program based on the emerging themes offer a wide opportunity for a strong foundation in achieving the mandated objectives of the YES-O which are merely applicable up to the present time. The participating schools have established effective approaches and practices while implementing the program that benefited the schools in various aspects. Moreover, the overall goal of establishing the YES-O program in the schools was achieved because of strengthened environmental education contributed by various support mechanisms. The *'Makakalikasan'* core value of the DepEd is very eminent and observed in the implementation of the YES-O in the participating schools. The Organizational Sustainability Model is a novel and innovative approach that can serve as a guide for the enhancement and sustainable implementation of the YES-O program in schools. The YES-O program in the schools can sustain their PPAs to achieve the mandated YES-O objectives through a strong partnership with the stakeholders wherein they can outsource funds. Monitoring and evaluation have a critical role to play in ensuring that the PPAs are well-achieved and accomplished. The checklist developed supported the model can be used for the school evaluation of the YES-O program implementation and can be used to conduct a school-based assessment on the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of the PPAs of the YES-O which anchored on the DepEd-mandated objectives of the YES-O.

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Ethics declaration: This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the Philippine Normal University on 20 April 2022 with approval number 042022-022. Proper informed consent to the school principals and YES-O facilitators/teacher-advisers and school principals and informed assent to the student officers relative to their participation in this study were also ensured. The permission of the YES-O facilitators/teacher-advisers was sought relative to the signing of the informed assent to the learners and to be signed by the parents/guardian. The content of the consents was stated in the online surveys before proceeding with the content of the survey questionnaires. Likewise, the key informants and FGD participants provided their consents and stated their intention to participate. They were given a brief orientation about their

participation in the study. The responses of the key informants from the three schools were kept with utmost confidentiality and safety. Since the participants were aware of their participation in this study, their roles in the conduct of the research were fully disclosed and the main purpose of this study was explained to them.

Declaration of interest: Authors declare no competing interest.

Data availability: Data generated or analyzed during this study are available from the authors on request.

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