

THEME: Leadership and Management in Higher Education for Sustainable Mindset

THEME FOCUS: Building linkages between institutions and communities/enterprises

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONS: SYNERGY IN ACTION

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ABSTRACT

One of the objectives of higher education institutions is to create vibrant cohort among its practitioners who will pursue innovative activities, forge beneficial research alliances, embark on meaningful community undertakings and explore groundbreaking teaching and instruction paradigms to enrich the classroom and the overall practice of education. In the Philippines, one such academic association is the Entrepreneurship Educators' Association of the Philippines, Inc. A signatory of the ASEAN Entrepreneurship Consortium, the academic affiliate of the Young Entrepreneurs Society-Philippines and the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Educators Network, ENEDA is now poised to fuse a strong partnership in various fronts. From among its institutional members, its individual faculty members, its practitioner affiliates and the student entrepreneurs, ENEDA aims to underscore its greater relevance in curricular improvement, instructional development, training delivery, event creation and networking and linkages. Truly, to initiate any HEI transformation, academicians have very important roles to play and there is a need for them to possess a greater sense of innovation and creativity, both as individuals and as members of a professional academic organization. This synergy is the right balance in HEI and individual academic transformation.

Keywords: *Academicians, Innovation, Academic Organizations*

1 Introduction

An organization must stay dynamic if it seeks to stay abreast with the changing trends and demands of any teaching and learning environment. The rising tide of professional and workplace competition meant that products and services must be better, initiatives must be faster to execute, activities are more innovative than ever before and creative endeavours must stay cost-effective. Technologies, processes, regulations, institutional expectations and client demands create an added pressure to organizations. Changes in the environment cause organizations and its people to continuously reinvent themselves oftentimes drastically. The task of reinventing organizations begins with the modification of individual paradigm and motivations. This individual paradigm shift has a lot to do with individual perspectives on leadership and condition of the thinking process.

Academic-organization partnership is the future. Communication, trust and mutually beneficial collaborative undertaking create strong partnerships. There is a new framework created when educational institutions and professional academic organizations put together their mind and energies. This new framework underscores the capacities of universities to become progressive in thinking, creative in initiatives, collaborative in approach and dynamic in implementation. The seamless integration of a professional organization's purpose and role to the university's direction of teaching enhancement, curriculum development, research capacity building and community involvement is truly a step in the ideal direction.

The most successful collaborations are long-term and strategic. These characteristics hold the key for sustained interest on the part of the key players. As all partnerships require the use of resources it is imperative that benefits simply outweigh the costs of partnership. In the same manner, only those partnerships that stood the test of time can be considered beneficial and ultimately worth keeping. This paper explores the fourteen-year journey of ENEDA, Inc., the challenges it continue to face and its prospects as an organization and as a partner of educational institutions in the country.

History of ENEDA, Inc

The ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (ENEDA) is a non-stock, professional non-government, non-profit association registered at the Securities and Exchange Commission in the Philippines on November 22, 2002, CN200260725, as a professional association among College Educators in Entrepreneurship. It was founded by Dr. Narciso N. Garciso, in Laguna, Philippines. Its establishment was originally for the purpose of a) advancing the professional growth and development of entrepreneurship educators; b) serve as a pool of resources in terms of faculty and student manpower as well as research, teaching methodology and educational materials; c) provide a link with entrepreneurs in the Philippines and abroad for the advancement of the Entrepreneurship curricula and the development of Entrepreneurship students; d) address and /or attend whenever feasible to issues and concerns relative to entrepreneurship as an educational course as well as a major means of livelihood; and to e) organize regional and provincial chapters nationwide. Consequently, a student counterpart was created in 2004 and was called Young Entrepreneurs Society (YES).

ENEDA Philippines was an affiliate of various agencies when it started and is continuously forging active relationships with other entities in view of its pro-active and progressive posture to stay relevant. It is un-relentless in building networks with both local and foreign institutions to enrich the entrepreneurship program in the country's higher education realm, creating the impetus for greater youth interest in pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours. The program for educators and students gave life to the organization and strengthened its position as a potent professional academic organization in the area of Entrepreneurship.

Created for the purpose of enhancing teaching and learning experiences for the advancement of Entrepreneurship education, the areas of enhancement was mainly in the areas of organizational management, development of effective teaching models and programs; action-based policy recommendations; research and training; expert resource pooling and extension services; active involvement with the business practitioners, good governance, networking,

collaboration and sustainability. The University of the Philippines-Institute of Small Scale Industries remains as ENEDA's partner institution and home under an active MOU which began in 2011 and is renewable thereafter. ENEDA is one of the founding member institution of the ASEAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION CONSORTIUM (AEEC) organized by MASMED Malaysia in November May 6, 2012 held in Malaysia and the official education partner in the Philippines of the UNESCO Entrepreneurship educators' network based in Bangkok, Thailand.

Succinctly articulated by the former ENEDA President, ENEDA's key tenets on partnership (Gatchalian, 2009) are as follows:

1. Organizational leadership is critical
2. Sustainable but flexible partnership is crucial
3. Identification of a vision and mission is vital
4. Getting the right people on board is essential
5. Passion for excellence is central

SYNERGY IN ACTION 1: Faculty Collaboration

Faculty collaboration is the primary purpose of the organization. Hence, it vigorously pursues the expansion of its membership boundaries through the creation of learning meetings, research and community co-creation and national and international conferences. In its over fourteen years of existence, ENEDA has already sponsored and hosted annual national networking sessions held in various areas in the Philippines and recently organized and hosted its first international conference.

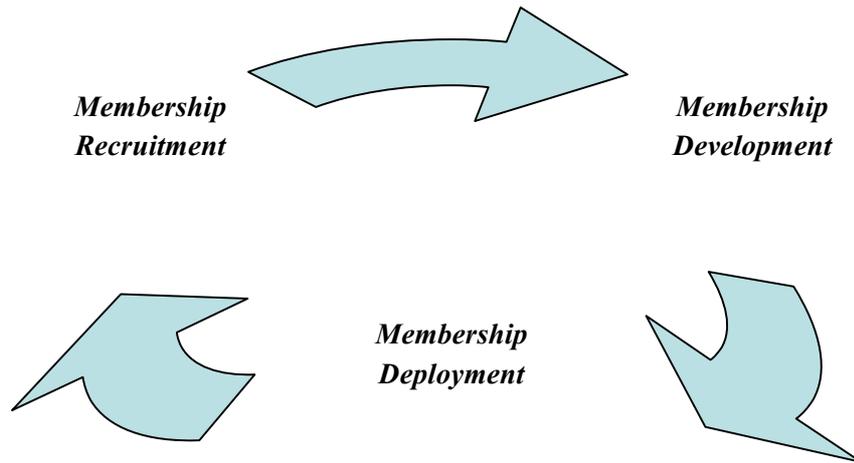


Figure 1: Synergy in Action 1

Arguably, the first step in organizational representation is the enlargement of membership. Not only is membership in professional organizations needed in faculty rank and promotion requirements, it is also a tool to develop the skills and knowledge of the faculty members while enlarging their social and professional network. Once membership has been made official the organization begins to embark on a faculty development program. Training, workshops and various learning sessions concretize this plan. When faculty members are ready, they are sent to various areas to transfer their knowledge where teacher training is scarce due to resource insufficiency.

SYNERGY IN ACTION 2: Student Engagement

Student engagement is part of the multi-task of the organization. Although meant to be the organization of educators, the need to assist the students not only in curricular areas but also in extra-curricular engagements became too strong to ignore. The establishment of the national student organization was aimed to embed the praxis of the discipline in all student activities. School organizations were formed while the others revitalized. In effect, students get to interact with their counterparts from other schools and get to enjoy the prospect of meeting like-minded individuals with whom they share the passion to be entrepreneurial.

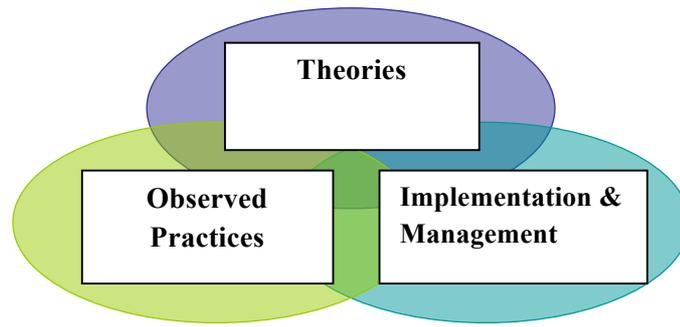


Figure 2: Synergy in Action 2

SYNERGY IN ACTION 3: Business Practitioner – Academe Co-learning

Educators need to update their classroom take on the discipline and this could be done through the continuous interaction with real practitioners of business and entrepreneurship. The organization affiliated with the Yong Entrepreneurs Society, a global network of young business leaders. This partnership resulted in a healthy co-learning of both groups, which allowed the educators to learn the new developments in global entrepreneurship education and start-up practices.

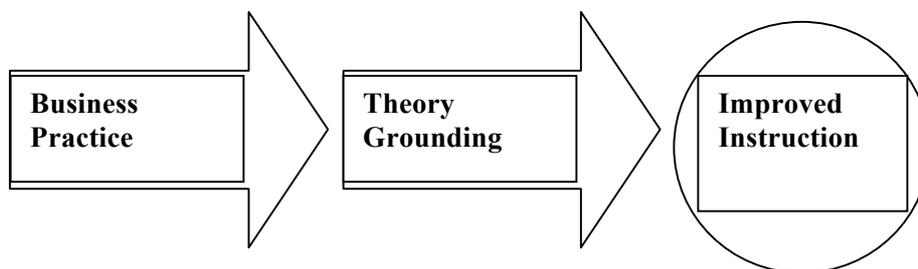


Figure 3: Synergy in Action 3

SYNERGY IN ACTION 4: Institutional Partnership

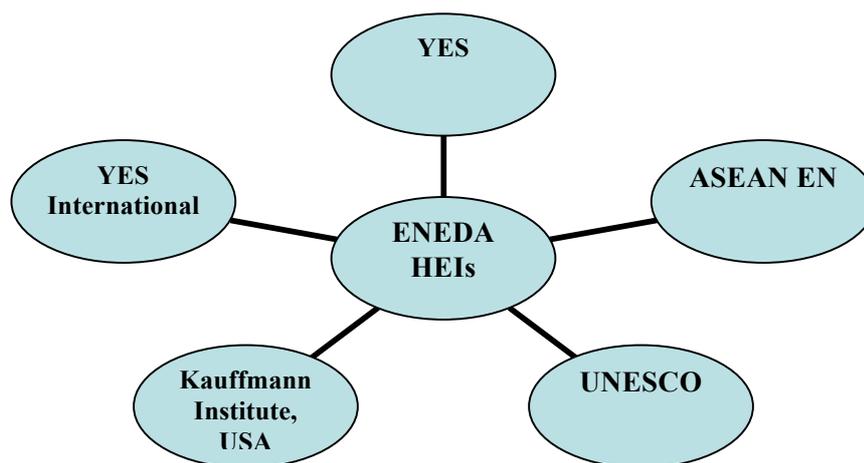


Figure 4: Synergy in Action 4

The fourth type of synergy in action happens when the local organization begins to expand its reach and acts as the conduit for the international exposure of its member educators, the students and the educational institution that hosts them. The identity and value of the organization is enhanced when the members involve themselves beyond the purpose of an attendance but to become involved in activities that have far-reaching effects personally and professionally for them. The partnership that begins with the institutions where the members are employed go far to include other national and international entities. The partnership may be in the form of learning avenues, joint researches, competition training and judging, training camps, master, development programs and roving academies, master certification and project funding.

Indeed, the possibilities for an organization to grow are limitless. The right purpose and single-minded vision are keys, but these will not be possible without the commitment of the members and their boundless energy to bring the organization into performing high impact initiatives. The challenge remains to be in the exercise of leadership and the presence of a collaborative and inclusive mind set. The life of any organization will be dependent on the new air that continues to permeate into it. This air is one of vibrancy, commitment, sustainability and a sense of purpose.