

Challenges of community partners as service-learning hosts: A view from 'Bengaluru' [Paper Presentation Presentation]

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1. Introduction

Service-learning is an emerging pedagogy amongst higher educational institutions in 'India' and more particularly in the city of Bengaluru. The concept of service-learning is in pre-nascent phase and needs supreme advocacy for the concerned stakeholders in the city of 'Bengaluru' to understand, accept and practice service-learning. The whole process of introducing service-learning from the planning and orientation stage can be accelerated by the academic institutions willing to introduce service-learning into the curriculum. It's important to consider the community partner/ practitioner's point of view in deliberating and executing service-learning at the community level, therefore the role of community partner and their challenges in anchoring service-learning practice becomes critical. Community partners often face challenges with conceptual clarity on service-learning, its framework, objectives, learning outcomes and supervision. It's an attempt to shed light on certain challengers and few opportunities for community partners to engage in service-learning in its pre-nascent phase.

As community partners play a vital role during service-learning and other community engagement practice in the student's education and they are viewed as co-educators. The paper emphasizes on the need for an opportunity for community partners to participate in an educational partnership and the challengers dealt by them in service-learning during pre-nascent phase in the local context of 'Benagluru' City India.

2. Theoretical framework/literature review

Community partners/practitioners have a unique opportunity to supervise students as co-educator about the larger social, cultural and political issues and context of the local community that make up the world around them. Community partners share responsibility to provide students with the knowledge and understanding of the local population they are working with and the service they render to their beneficiaries. However, it's critical to understand the role of community partners during any initial phase of any community engagement practice with an educational institution. "Curriculum development is a process and rests in part on the status of the community-campus partnership. As the needs of the community become more clear, and the experience of the faculty and students evolves, the curriculum will be greatly enhanced (Goodrow, B. et al, 2001)." The challenges arise in meeting and framing the common learning objectives, partnership outcomes, supervision and resource allocation for effective engagement practices. The narrative of the

discussion revolves around establishment of strong foundation between the community partners and academia.

3. Methods/analysis

A foundation can be laid out on ‘Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) Principles of Partnership’, through well-positioned partnership the focus on the pre-planning and planning strategies can be achieved for the development of service-learning and other community engagement practices. CCPH can affect and encourage the institutionalization, growth, and sustainability of both the partnership and the service-learning curriculum for local and international students. It’s imperative to study and analyze various Community-Campus engagements by higher educational institutions across local and international context. The analysis will substantiate the keystone role by the community partners in service-learning practice.

4. Results and Discussion

It will be interesting to learn various other ‘principles of partnership’ in different socio-cultural and geographical settings. The question on whether common sets of partnership principles, framework, ethical standards and supervision guidelines is followed elsewhere and everywhere? The need for local understanding and standardization of service-learning and community engagement practice can be reviewed specially when certain protocols of planning, preparation and orientations are not fulfilling.

5. Conclusions and contributions to theory and practice

Community partners are keystone or primary stakeholders of service-learning or any other community engagement practices such as community service, volunteering, community research and internships etc. Community partners can be regarded as “Change Agents” equipped with skills and knowledge on transformational change or development. In short, they are providers of simple solution to complex problems of community or society at large. The rich resource of community partners must be understood and tapped for effective and sustainable networking opportunities. The knowledge of local issues, developmental agendas and solution providing ability make them representatives of community and at the same time they possess skills of supervision and management which make them co-educators for students learning in the community settings. The role of community partners during the initial phase of service-learning practice in cosmopolitan cities like Bengaluru, needs better focus to overcome varied challenges to achieve desired outcomes. It’s an attempt to shed light on certain challengers and few opportunities for community partners to engage in service-learning during pre-nascent phase.

Keywords: Community Partners, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, Bengaluru

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