Service-Learning in India: A modality for Community University Engagement (CUE) & Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

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About UNESCO Chair

• Partnership between UVic & PRIA since 2012

• Created in the aftermath of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} UNESCO Conference on Higher Education (2009)

• Supports North-South-South and South-South partnerships, building and enhancing ‘knowledge democracy’

• Strengthens engagement between communities, civil society & academia

• Advocates mainstreaming of Community University Engagement in academic curriculum

• Promotes discourse on ‘Social Responsibility in Higher Education’
Context

- Social dilemmas: Co-existence of prosperity amidst poverty
- UN SDGs 2030 Agenda recognizes the critical role of knowledge in bringing about social change
- Need for critical societal actors to step forward; challenge for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- HEIs gauged in terms of their social responsibilities; challenged to develop partnerships & co-create knowledge for addressing social problems
- Necessitates re-emphasis of principles of service-learning & community engagement
Service-learning

- Reflective pedagogy; combines community service with learning opportunities
- Mutually-beneficial approach to teaching & learning
- Experiential education; enhances skills of critical thinking, collective activity, community building etc.
- Powerful pedagogy; links service, teaching & academic learning

Source: Transition US, 2013
CUE & CBPR

CUE
- Mutually beneficial relationships between universities & communities
- Participative & committed to creation, sharing of knowledge

CBPR
- Collaborative & systematic approach to enquiry
- Stresses on co-learning, capacity building, commitment
SL: Synergies with CUE & CBPR

- CUE's focus on mutuality & creation of learning opportunities in sync with SL principles
- CBPR feeds into SL objectives by way of being reciprocal, community focused & learning-based
Best practices

SL & CUE
- MM College, Haryana
- IIT-Guwahati, Assam

SL & CBPR
- North Bengal University, Siliguri
- Ambedkar University, Delhi
Third party role

- Effective SL calls for connecting with different kinds of knowledge
- CSOs can bring in practical knowledge from the field; play a bridging role between universities & communities
- PRIA has been playing a leading role in enabling such partnerships
- Government contributes by way of favorable academic policies
- MHRD, UGC, NAAC have been engaged in promoting SL, CUE & CBPR in different capacities

Source: ACU, 2013
Ways forward

- Need to move beyond traditional approaches to teaching & learning
- Service Learning (SL), as a mode of Community-Based Research and Practice (CUE & CBPR) must be used to contribute to UN SDGs
- Action partnerships between HEIs & CSOs needed for co-generation of ‘new knowledge’
- UNESCO Chair’s Knowledge for Change (K4C) initiative provides an exciting opportunity
- PRIA offers a number of SL opportunities by way of internships

Source: IARSLCE
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