

Community Engagement (CE)

UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research & Social Responsibility in Higher Education

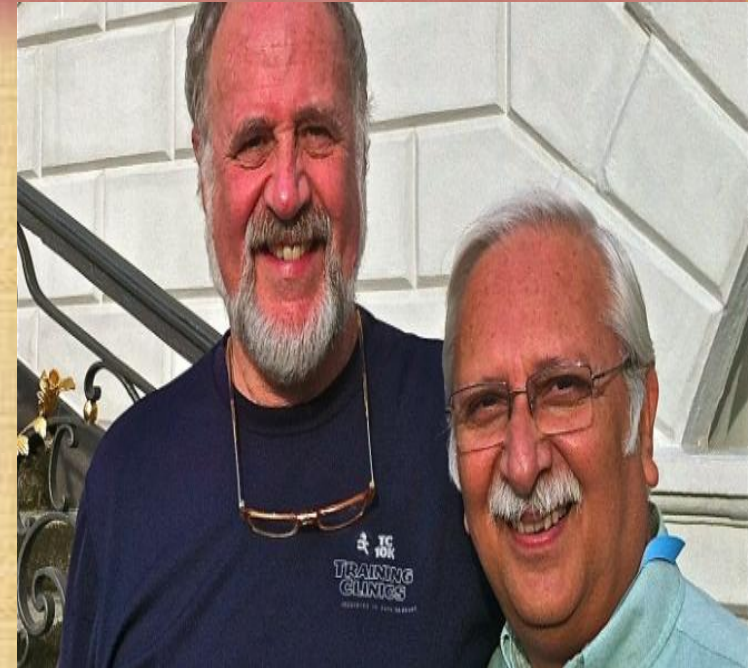


Dr Rajesh Tandon
(@RTandon_PRIA)

Rural Community Engagement, Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan & Social Responsibility
NCRI, Hyderabad
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About UNESCO Chair

- Created in 2012, in the aftermath of the 2nd UNESCO Conference on Higher Education (2009)
- Supported North-South-South and South-South partnerships, building and enhancing 'knowledge democracy'
- Worked towards strengthening engagement between communities, civil society & academia
- Advocated mainstreaming of Community University Engagement in academic curriculum.
- Promoted the discourse on 'Social Responsibility in Higher Education'



Programs & Initiatives

- Research & knowledge production
- Policy advocacy
- Training & capacity enhancement



‘Engaging’ NSS students with the ‘community’

- Need to move beyond the ‘charitable mode of service’
- Invest in ‘service-learning’
- Modify present engagements to bring about mutual benefits
- Opportunity to emerge as good citizens, and not merely a good workforce
- Realize & fulfill ‘social responsibilities’



NSS Objectives: Clear call for CE

- Identify the needs and problems of the community; involve them in problem solving process
- Develop a sense of social/civic responsibility
- Utilize knowledge for finding practical solutions to individual/community problems
- Gain skills in mobilizing community participation

UGC Scheme on CFSRCE

Highlights

- Establishment of Centre for Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement (CFSRCE)
- Aims to promote community university partnerships

Broad objectives

- Providing roadmap for CE plans of the university
- Promoting practical learning among students
- Creation of platform for sharing innovative practices

Salient features

- Applicable to all NAAC accredited central universities
- Focus on certain 'key' essentials of engagement; ranges from joint research to devising new courses etc.

Tenets for successful CE

Curriculum

- CE mainstreamed in the core academic mission; provision of credit
- Locally relevant curriculum; Capacity building in CBPR

Partnerships

- Mutually beneficial partnerships with CBOs, local institutions
- Learning in partnership with communities

Flexibility & Innovation

- Simultaneous focus on knowledge, awareness & skills
- Research: Knowledge in everyday life

Action points for NSS Co-ordinators

Designing Programs

- Match student's abilities & community needs
- Design mutually beneficial activities

Resource Mobilization

- Leverage internal resources: Use teaching expertise of faculties to enhance knowledge and skills of students
- Mobilize external resources: governmental schemes, welfare agencies, etc.

Action points for NSS Co-ordinators

Building partnerships

- Channelize suitable institutional partnerships
- Figure out ways in which partner institutions can hold stake in academic discourse (funding, involving practitioners as teachers, block placements, etc.)

Ensuring sustainability

- Having communities work hand-in-hand with the students
- Ensuring research reports feeds into academic curriculum for next batch of students

Examples of CE

Service Learning

- NSS students of MM College, Haryana (in association with PRIA) engaged in a survey to understand births/deaths registrations in Fatehabad Municipal Council
- Rural Tech Action Group (RUTAG) at IIT-G provides R&D solutions to upgrade rural infrastructure; done by engaging local artisans and communities

Examples of CE

Social Innovation

- Community radio station RadioActive launched by students of Jain university, Karnataka; medium for community groups to participate, discuss and find solutions to problems
- In collaboration with CBOs, students of Ambedkar University, Delhi engaged in documenting oral rural histories, for integrating community knowledge with academic knowledge

Examples of CE

Co-conduction of research

- Village adoption programs undertaken at University of Pune include GIS mapping of resources, soil/water testing, soft skills development, etc. by students from respective disciplines.
- Students @CSUIR, BPSMV tap indigenous knowledge of rural women in herbs/medicines (as part of field work under course on folk medicine); document it as academic literature

Examples of CE

Knowledge sharing

- Students at NBU, West Bengal engage with local, rural communities for knowledge exchange and dissemination of best practices in the agricultural sector
- Students from many law schools conduct legal aid clinics in villages, for raising legal awareness among village communities, under faculty supervision

NSS & CE: A win-win situation!

For NSS Volunteer

Enhancement of personal skill sets: communication, leadership, inter-personal relations etc.

Practical hand-on experience

Opportunity to 'serve' while 'learning'

Addition to 'Employment quotient'

For the community

Opportunity to participate in problem solving

Sense of 'ownership, empowerment'

Capacity enhancement

Altering social inequities