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Community engagement as community development: Making the case for multilateral, collaborative, equity-focused campus-community partnerships

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ABSTRACT

In this essay, we offer a framework for a community development-focused, multilateral, sustainable justice-oriented service-learning and community engagement (SLCE); exploring what it is, why it is needed, how it looks different from other existing and emerging trends in SLCE, and how we believe it would transform the ways in which institutions of higher education (IHEs) think about and approach both community partnership-building and student learning in community contexts. To this end, we draw out the dimensions of a transformed practice of multilateral partnership and demonstrate how it would deeply challenge both foundational understandings and current models. Finally, we discuss how a transformed partnership framework would necessarily alter the way we conceptualize student learning – and the benefits of students' learning – in community contexts.

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Introduction: A call for collaborative, multilateral engagement

> *If there is human meaning to be made of the wood wide web, it is surely that what might save us as we move forward into precarious, unsettled centuries ahead is collaboration: mutualism, symbiosis, the inclusive human work of collective decision-making extended to more-than-human communities*. (MacFarlane, 2019)

In his recent book, *Underland*, Robert MacFarlane concludes with a discussion of the relationship between mycorrhizal fungi and plants which he characterizes as a "mutualism" network, or "wood wide web," that enables trees to communicate with each other, care for adjacent ones with disease or under attack from pests, etc. in ways scientists are just discovering. It exemplifies a social organization model that is horizontal, collaborative and mutually interdependent, with deep implications for how healthy communities develop and sustain themselves.

The closest approximation to this ecological relationality in the campus-community partnership literature is what Dostilio et al. (2012) called "generativity-oriented reciprocity," which emphasizes how partners working collaboratively across differences have the potential not only to benefit individually from the mutual exchange, but also to *produce* together something new (new value or systemic change) and *become* something new

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(through transformation in their ways of knowing and being due to their intersubjective relationships with one another). This enhanced understanding of the transformational nature and potential of collaboration across difference helps broaden our understanding of partnership from simply "what we *do* together" to "how we *are* together" (Dostilio et al., p. 25; see also, Keith, 2005; Santiago-Ortiz, 2019). We believe it is essential to consider such relational intricacies in devising strategies for how institutions of higher education (IHE) participate in community engagement and development.

In what follows we offer a framework for a *community development-focused, multilateral, collaborative, sustainable justice-oriented partnership SLCE practice*, exploring what it is, why it is needed, how it looks different from existing and emerging trends, and how we believe it would transform the ways in which institutions of higher education (IHEs) think about and approach both partnership-building and student learning in community contexts. To this end, we draw out the dimensions of a transformed practice of multilateral partnership and demonstrate how it would deeply challenge both foundational understandings and current models of SLCE. Finally, we discuss how a transformed partnership framework would necessarily alter the way we conceptualize student learning – and its benefits – in community contexts.

Re-imagining our work as equity-focused, collaborative community development

The call for a community development focus within higher education civic and community engagement is not new. Indeed, many if not most of the earliest pioneers of service-learning were strongly motivated to enter higher education to address issues of social inequality and educate students about them (Stanton, 1999). However, as SLCE programs have proliferated, our society has become more unequal economically and more polarized politically. Challenges such as persistent poverty and unemployment, racial injustice, urban displacement, homelessness, and climate change seem ever more intractable. While it would be over-reaching to assume a strong correlation between such trends and our programs' growth, we nevertheless should ask ourselves: To what extent are our collective efforts to grow and deepen SLCE actually designed to advance equity-centered community development goals rather than primarily to train students for individualistic, careerist models of social service delivery, program development, and voluntary action? In other words, are we committed to designing programs in accountable ways with community development and capacity-building outcomes strictly in mind, or are we largely content to assess our community impact by counting service hours and partnerships, surveying community partners' satisfaction, and measuring student outcomes? In what follows we suggest that we may never reach our lofty goals for students or community partners, much less for society, unless we as practitioners, programs, and institutions actually situate and commit ourselves and our programs to collaborative, equity-focused civic action and community development rather than just teach about it.

For clarity's sake, our perspective on the practice of community engagement and campus-community partnership as community development is one that strategically focuses on desired outcomes related to sustainable justice, which involves building the capacity of the communities with whom we partner to "define their own issues, gather the resources to address those issues, and go to work solving them (Stoecker, 2013, p. 49)." In this regard, we embrace and model the Community Development Society's "Principles of Good Practice:"[1]

In our view, a commitment to SLCE as community development requires that the core purpose of campus-community partnerships be active and sustained co-creation of agendas for engagement with communities, in all of their diversity, and explicit commitment and accountability to community capacity building and agreed-upon justice outcomes. In this sense, a community development approach to SLCE calls for the full range of community-engaged learning and research initiatives in which IHEs invest (inclusive of service-learning, community-based research [CBR], and ongoing co- and extra-curricular service programming) to be mobilized, aligned, and co-created with community collaborators through an interdependent process grounded in coordinated action and sustained through shared visioning, authority, and reflection on experience. This is markedly distinct (lip service notwithstanding) from what we believe continues to constitute the predominant form of SLCE partnership building, where partnerships are often the product of relatively isolated or serendipitous one-on-one pairings between SLCE centers and academic departments with nonprofit organizations, disconnected from any broader, intentional, comprehensive, or accountable shared-visioning process or long-term community-driven development agenda. Even growing commitments to place-based and anchor institutional practices, as we will consider later, while laudable often remain disjointed, niche-focused, and ungrounded in long-term shared visioning and authority.

The dangers of normative partnership practices in SLCE and the need for a new approach

Our interest in an alternative partnership model is based on what we see as significant deficiencies in how SLCE partnerships are typically brought to fruition and the resulting negative impact on the advancement of equity-based community development goals and outcomes. In this section, we explore and analyze predominant partnership practices in SLCE, outline their dangers and consequences, and build a case for why a corrective is so necessary.

In a typical SLCE partnership scenario, students enter and engage in communities through a set of discreet, time-bound activities, the intended purpose of which is to play some part (however small) in mitigating the effects of society's inequalities and advancing equity-based social change. The purpose of the partnership, from the perspective of IHEs, is often to provide labor, technical assistance, or advocacy support to a nonprofit organization in ways that help it fulfill its mission. At the same time, students may be encouraged to reflect critically on the intentions, achievements, and limitations that may lay behind the service work, both for themselves and the organizations with whom they are partnering. In such cases, students are commonly urged to consider these intentions and limitations in relation to a continuum of social change strategies that span from charity to social justice (e.g. Morton, 1995).

This approach to partnership-making, which emphasizes *individualized partner selection* and a primary curricular focus on *the intentions for and experience of doing service* (Boyle-Baise et al., 2006), assumes service intentions can be met, and outcomes reached, without an accompanying need to assess impacts on broader justice or community development goals. In fact, such predominant partnership practices are not conducive to making such connections, nor are they meant to. Sociologists Randy Stoecker (2016) and Louis Kidder & Michelle Fine (1986), in separate but complementary analyses, have provided important

critiques of such normative partnership-making approaches, suggesting that instead of being guided by serendipitous partnership opportunities and intentions to serve, we identify and more deeply interrogate the fundamental theories of social change that underlie the actual partnerships we choose to participate in, what the consequences of those choices are, and why our institutions may end up favoring some partnership choices much more regularly than others. This consideration is important because, regardless of the intentions with which representatives of IHEs may enter partnerships, the actual choice of partners can have serious restrictive effects on the ability to advance more systemic, equity-based, and community-responsive social change.

Leveraging seminal sociological literature on theories of social change, Stoecker and Fine & Weis elucidate foundational assumptions they believe underlie much of the campus-community partnership work undertaken in the name of "solving" social problems or advancing the public good. Specifically, they highlight key distinctions between *functionalist* and *conflict-of-interest* theories of social change and argue that the vast majority of service and social change partnerships that IHE's underwrite are aligned with a *functionalist* perspective. Functionalist-oriented partnerships, as they define them, are rooted in a presumption that equity and social justice are best pursued through *cooperative (and relatively conflict-free) philanthropic and social service activities* that offer those experiencing crisis or trauma the resources, care, or products that will allow them to (re-)integrate themselves, with improved fortunes, into existing society. Here, service and justice goals are believed to be best achieved through a professionalized social service system in which credentialed experts or trained professionals deliver goods and services to "clients" who are experiencing a problem. In many cases, these service-based activities take the form of remedial or compensatory programs designed to "level the playing field" for individuals and families who have "missed opportunities," so they can undertake challenging but rewarding work that will allow them to compete more fairly for social and economic rewards (Kidder & Fine, p. 50).

Against this normative and highly professionalized approach to achieving social equity, a *conflict-of-interest* perspective acknowledges and centers the existence of inherently conflicting interests in the competitive structures of capitalist society, which produce inequality and tensions between social classes and historically-constituted identity groups (in the case of the United States, constitutive historical forces include those of colonialism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, and white supremacy). This theory of social change, more likely to be reflected in the work of social justice cooperatives and bottom-up grassroots citizen groups, assumes that widespread inequality in society is rooted in material conflict and power differentials. From this perspective, effective change work must identify the social structures and institutional practices that deny those experiencing oppression their rights and fulfillment of their needs and focuses on creating a more equitable system in which a significant redistribution of resources and power is likely to be necessary. In other words, where a functionalist approach would more likely focus on serving "flawed individuals," who have "missed opportunities" in an otherwise reasonably-functional system (Kidder & Fine, p. 50), a conflict-of-interest approach would more likely focus on a "flawed system" and emphasize the essential need for capacity building and organizing among those who are oppressed and marginalized in order to mobilize themselves to define their own needs and solutions and, when necessary, collectively wage a fight (Stoecker, p. 80).

As Stoecker (2016) has noted, SLCE practitioners routinely talk about the importance of partnership work that is "done with" the community and is intended to "empower" those in need; however, he continues, if you go to their list of partners you will "with rare exception, find charity organizations doing things to people and for them, rather than with them" and "projects that subject recipients to programs designed, packaged, and delivered without any apparent influence by the recipients" (p. 56). We have found a similar preference for functionalist- oriented SLCE partnerships at the institutions in which we have worked, where the vast majority of partnerships with public or nonprofit organizations have supported the delivery of either expert/professional services or, increasingly, technocratic "solutions" to communities in crisis in ways that do primarily *for*, rather than essentially *with*, those experiencing the problem. This favoring of functionalist-oriented partnerships is perhaps unsurprising given many IHE's long-standing aims to utilize community experiences (e.g. practica, clinical rotations) to train and produce expert-professionals who are endowed with the requisite knowledge and skills to find gainful employment in functionalist, careerist modes of social change work in a postgraduate world. Moreover, universities have long leveraged campus-community partnerships to train students to become thoughtful and responsive social service providers–or more recently, social entrepreneurs–who see their roles as allocating resources to, or designing solutions for, others who are experiencing crises related to poverty, racism, and other systemic forms of marginalization and inequality.

Nevertheless, there is a growing critique among community practitioners and scholars that the pervasiveness of functionalist-oriented approaches to social change work may be doing more to undermine sustainable justice goals in distressed communities than to advance them (Smith, 2007; Rodríguez, 2007; Ostrander, 2007). This is particularly true in cases where dependence on expert-professionals leads to a failure to invest substantially in communities in ways that allow residents the means, experiences, and power to identify and address the problems themselves and to fight for systematic change on their own terms (Kival, 2007; McKnight, 2008). Perhaps more dangerous in the case of higher education community engagement is that the favoring of expert-professional models of social change may inadvertently reproduce colonial-like relations between higher education and distressed communities by assuming that social change and justice movements are best advanced when credentialed experts are viewed and understood as knowing and doing what is best for disadvantaged communities (Dyrness, 2008) and that communities need such experts to define their needs and solve their problems (bell hooks, 1989).

The impact of functionalist-oriented partnerships on student civic learning and leadership

Not only are functionalist assumptions deeply ingrained in how IHEs choose to partner with communities, they also play an influential role in the development and growth of new student civic and community engagement programs. The exponential growth of social entrepreneurialism as a lauded pathway for public service across a variety of higher education institutions, and within a diversity of disciplines and programs, is one clear example. IHE's increasingly embrace this "entrepreneurial, start-up mentality," accompanied by marketing language that emphasizes the desirability of being "job-makers," "innovators," "leaders," and "entrepreneurs" to inspire students to "pursue their passions"

by blazing their own path and starting their own (ad)venture (Blosser, 2016; Stanlick & Sell, 2016). In SLCE this entrepreneurial emphasis often translates as an implicit or explicit encouragement for students to make a difference by designing an innovative service, community-engaged research, or social enterprise project on their own rather than by joining an existing project or long-term partnership. In these cases, students may conceive of the design for their intervention with enthusiastic faculty support and minimal "consultation" with those whose lives they wish to improve, with the end result being that the product ends up sitting on a shelf un- or under-utilized. Here, SLCE experiences are glorified for their innovative design and are imagined primarily to be ground for students to test out their skills before they head to the job market, rather than to prepare students to be responsive agents of social change or social justice advocates.[2] As Stanlick & Sell point out, these messages, and the curricular and co-curricular activities through which they are conveyed, act to:

> . . . overemphasize a particular conception of leadership: one that assumes technocratic power centered on innovative individuals at the top of social hierarchies . . . [where] the role of follower or nurturer is implicitly or explicitly discouraged, and a power dynamic is thus created that elevates single individuals into the role of "hero." The value placed on that role is wrapped up in the ideal image of ourselves as helpers. This superhero mentality can lead to bold action, but it can also relegate others – often, community partners – to the role of sidekick, or worse, *recipient*. (p. 80)

This notion of student as superhero, and community partner as sidekick (and by implication, community residents as clients), finds deeper origins in long-existing conceptualizations of SLCE grounded in modernist, liberal, and radically individualistic notions of self, progress, knowledge and power (Butin (Sarofian-Butin), 2010). The notion that individual students, acting as autonomous change agents, can simply *will* positive change for others, is equal parts compelling and damaging because it offers a "win-win mantra (that) glosses over presumption of neutrality, privileging of whiteness, and imbalance of power relationships" in SLCE partnerships (Butin, p. 7; see, also Mitchell et al., 2012). Moreover, the notion that entrepreneurs are (or might believe themselves to be) the new incarnation of expert-professionals on whom marginalized communities can depend for social change to occur, with the private marketplace understood as the preferred venue for such change, functions to diminish and undermine the power and legitimacy of ordinary citizens to organize, demand public solutions to public problems, and engage in long-term, collaborative social justice work meant to build political will through a process that rests not only on ideation and product development but also "on social cooperation, political negotiation, and persistence" (McBride & Mlyn, 2015, para. 6; see also, Ganz et al., 2018).

By invoking powerful critiques of some of the predominant, functionalist approaches to campus community partnerships, we do not mean to suggest that professional, expert-driven service initiatives and social enterprises are inherently bad for marginalized communities; in fact, such services are often essential in efforts to mitigate crisis, resolve inequities in access, and improve the immediate health and economic conditions of individuals and families experiencing hardship, even as those hardships may be the outcomes of oppressive, systemic inequalities. However, when the overwhelming amount of philanthropic capital, as well as investments of IHEs in community engagement, is channeled to expert-driven services delivered to community "clients," there is reason to

be wary, as it sets up a situation whereby systems of well-intentioned service delivery may obfuscate, or even extend, structural injustices even as they provide high-quality "services." It also should be clear that the problems we identify here are not the consequence of simple individual or institutional malevolence; functionalist-oriented, expert-professional organization and social enterprises are filled with well-meaning people quick to bemoan their inability to engage in more focused, community capacity-building work. Nevertheless, lack of time, space, incentive, training, or reward structures militate against the more complex, collaborative, long-term, and relationship-based planning with communities that such work requires, particularly if it means educating to disrupt, or organize against, the negative consequences of more normative market forces (Taylor et al., 2018; Keith, 2005). So, regardless of intention, the ways in which structural oppression operates in communities experiencing poverty are rarely addressed, directly or systematically, in either social service or SLCE work, even when these systematic origins may be pointedly (and frustratingly) acknowledged.

SLCE partnership and practice through a community development lens

In light of these critiques and challenges, along with our strong desire to reshape SLCE practices to more capably advance community development outcomes, we propose a systemic shift in how we identify, build, and resource SLCE partnerships, shifting from more normative 1-on-1 pairings with individual nonprofit or community-based organizations to *place-based, multilateral partnerships*. In the broadest sense we call for IHEs to actively and intentionally commit to collaboratively participate, and sustainably invest over the long term, in networks of allies and advocates in a manner that draws together and maintains a diverse, *multilateral* and *cross-sectional coalition of stakeholders* from both higher education contexts (students, faculty, academic departments and programs, co-curricular units and initiatives) and the diverse entities within a larger, geographical-defined setting (including grassroots social movement leaders from marginalized social groups, public institutional representatives, nonprofit service providers, social justice collaboratives, philanthropic foundations, citizen organizations, and other public entities). This coalitional association would be willing to work interdependently, mutually accountably, and through an equity lens to develop the participation, leadership, and capacity of local citizens–including the most marginalized–that enable them to lead effective and lasting community-driven and equity-based solutions.

Here, accomplishing effective social transformation toward a more just and equitable society is understood to be dependent on *coordinated, sustained collective action* that is only possible through intentional, comprehensive, and sustained visioning along with a willingness to challenge status-quo relationships among and within both public and private sector organizations in ways that ensure accountability to the expressed needs, talents, and desires of citizens. Assuring accountability to such collaborative goals over time requires not a cache of community partner surveys, but a process of inclusive, multilateral reflection on the extent to which collaborative university-community partnership efforts can build community capacity and impact or transform systems, individuals, organizations, communities, and higher education institutions themselves.

The characteristics of such inclusive, multilateral, community development-focused partnerships are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Essential characteristics of inclusive, multilateral, place-engaged partnerships for community development.

- Are necessarily constituted by a *diverse, multilateral network of actor*s from the community (nonprofit service providers, community-based organizations, social justice collectives, foundations, citizen groups, public entities, etc.) and institution of higher education (faculty/staff, students, academic units/departments, co-curricular units and initiatives, etc.) working interdependently, mutually accountably, and through an equity lens;
- Are best grounded in a *place-engaged civic engagement commitment*, engaging a specific community as a partner rather than just a location (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton & Stanley, 2015);
- Sponsor a range of initiatives that are aligned and sustained through *shared visioning, authority, and experience*;
- Are *justice driven, follow the lead of marginalized groups, and do not shy away from conflict of confrontation* with people and institutions whose activities contribute to a reproduction of societal inequalities or forms of oppression;
- Are *essentially centered on developing the participation, leadership, and capacity of local citizens*, prioritizing those most marginalized and negatively affected by the problem, where the primary long-term goal is community capacity building to increase equity in control, power, and ownership of services rendered and the ability of those most negatively affected to fight for systemic change on their own terms;
- *Focus on organizing processes as well as outcomes* (deliberative democracy);
- Are *"cooperative, rights-based, and dialogue driven"* (Hussain & Wattles, 2017, p. 145) with "persistent commitment (from start to finish) to deep personal understanding" between partnership actors/stakeholders (p. 148) and engage in a continuous process of relationship development that positions all as co-learners, co-educators, and co-generators of knowledge;
- Are focused on producing effective and lasting *community-driven and equity-based* solutions;
- Are *accountable to social movements and provide room for social justice organizing* (i.e. they do not simply provide services or products to the exclusion of other forms of remediation);
- *Interrogate the fundamental theories of social change that underlie the organizations' working* together and assess the how this may affect the collective's overall capacity to advance more transformative, equity-based, and justice-focused outcomes (including collective reflection on why these limits exist and how they might be overcome via collective, coordinated, mutually accountable work);
- *Center questions of power, authority, and co-creation* in order to cultivate power dynamics within partnerships that are just, fair, and inclusive; this means that struggles over meanings and strategies of justice are central and pursued through iterative processes aimed at yielding an evolving and dynamic understanding of what it might take to move the needle on central issues;
- Require deep and intentional collective efforts *to develop a shared understanding of local-regional political economy and history, and how such developments over time have informed local patterns of privilege and inequalities* in access to resources, services, or institutions;
- Understand that the *end product of partnership may not be full or collective agreement* on all particular efforts to reach identified outcomes/goals, but the *development of new, network-wide understandings* of how partner participants may base future action, whether unilateral or collaborative;
- Are willing to *identify, challenge, and transform status quo relations (policies, practices, and attitudes) within their own organizations* and advocate the same for public and private sector organization in ways that ensure accountability to the needs, talents, and desires of those experiencing (or most negatively affected by) the problem;
- Engage in *continuous, multilateral reflection on decision-making and action* toward collaboratively-developed goals and outcomes.

To establish effective, multilateral SLCE partnerships of this kind would require critical attention to, and analysis of, the range of organizational identities and relationships likely to be brought together in such collaborations, and the relatively restricted roles that various partners might play in their ability to advance more transformative, justice-focused outcomes. For example, with some notable exceptions (e.g. University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, Seattle University, University of San Diego) the tendency of higher education institutions to prioritize faculty advancement and a particular set of academic and civic development outcomes for students has typically meant hesitance, if not opposition, to initiating and sustaining longer-term agendas focused on community development and sustainable justice goals (Stanton, Giles & Cruz, 1999; Hartman, 2015; McMillan & Stanton, 2014; Reardon & Forrester, 2016; Saltmarsh et al., 2015; Stanton, 1998; Stoecker, 2016). At the same time, many community-based service organizations and public agencies may be ill-positioned to focus on integrated, long-term community justice outcomes. All too often they are challenged with multiple, in-your-face calls for assistance and depend on

competitive funding structures which provide disincentives for cross-sector or inter-organizational collaboration. What is more, their organizations' identities, structures, and activities are shaped by politics, philanthropic traditions, power disparities, and market relations in manners that constrain their social change agendas and ability to advance justice-focused, community capacity-building work.

To navigate such challenges to equity-focused, multilateral partnership efforts, we advocate the creation of something in line with what Hussain and Wattles (2017) have called "community civic collaborations," that are imagined as "cooperative, rights-based, and dialogue driven" (p. 145), include an essential pledge to collaborative action and "retain a persistent commitment (from start to finish) to deep personal understanding between stakeholders" (p. 148). Such a commitment to partnership goes beyond a more typical "mutual responsibility" relationship between SLCE stakeholders–that is, where partners often work toward separate goals in a two-way exchange of value (e.g. community organizations get service hours and students achieve learning outcomes established by faculty). Instead, the partnership focuses on coordinated activities geared toward a collectively-negotiated, long-range set of social justice or community change goals, which may also include but not be limited to direct and indirect service assistance to those in need. Such a critical engagement partnership framework (Levine, 2011) stresses the importance of attending to organizing processes as well as outcomes; commits to thoughtful navigation of the incentives that drive stakeholders and their assets and limitations; weighs the benefits and costs of collaborative action on those who engage; and prioritizes accountability to both concrete community outcomes and broader structural-institutional reforms.

Such partnership restructuring is consistent with Saltmarsh et al.'s (2015) notion of "deep engagement," which requires that ethical and effective campus/community partnerships be predicated on a deliberate and ongoing process of relationship development that positions all as co-learners, co-educators, and co-generators of knowledge. Only partnerships carried out in this manner are capable of moving beyond transactional exchanges and toward transformative possibilities that "build the capacity of all partners to undertake [collaborative work] in high quality, contextualized, and continuously improving ways" (p. 123) and generate outcomes ranging from individual and organizational learning to community and systems level change. Such partnerships express MacFarlane's (2019) networked "mutualism" that surrounds us in the natural world, and the deep community development roots of early service-learning practice articulated by Sigmon (1979), Couto (1982) and others.

Augustin et al. (2017) have gone so far as to suggest that equity-focused, multilateral collaborations require a radical decentering of SLCE partnerships from the collegiate context (where partnerships are typically initiated by the higher education institution, with the goals of student learning foregrounded) to a re-centering around more exclusive partnerships with social justice collectives (SJCs) "led by people from marginalized groups and addressing systems of oppression most relevant to their own lives" in order to ensure that "each SLCE effort is firmly situated within a community-verified justice effort" [p. 170] and geared more successfully to the accomplishment of social justice-related goals.

While we have highlighted the dangers posed by predominantly functionalist, expert-professional models in both the nonprofit sector and SLCE partnerships, we do not believe that imagining transformative partnerships requires us to make stark "either/or" choices between expert-professional and social organizing models, or between working

inside or outside the system. Instead, we agree with Stanlick and Sell (2016) who argue that it is "the necessary tension between those two extremes where real change occurs, and it is within that tension that we as stakeholders, partners, and community members often undergo the most transformation" (p. 83). Our notion of transformational partnership restructuring does not view expert-led social service organizations as non- or anti-productive, but it does require that they be de-centered, and that any SLCE partnerships developed with such organizations be critically self-reflective about the limits and possible downsides of such an approach, remain essentially accountable to social movements, and engage in some level of social justice organizing if their efforts are to further, rather than impede, social justice.

Place-engaged, multilateral partnerships: Contemporary examples

Geographically place-based community engagement has arisen as a strong, growing form of SLCE in higher education during this century. As noted by Yamamura and Koth (2018), this interest was stimulated by the positive impact and reputation of the Harlem Children's Zone, which was designed to focus programming and support structures intensively on one geographic area, starting with just a few city blocks and "do[ing] everything possible to enable children and youth to succeed" (p. 14). With financial support from foundations and the Obama Administration, this concept of place-focused community development expanded throughout the country to enable the establishment of neighborhood-based efforts that draw on coordinated, interrelated strategies across relevant social sectors – education, health, housing, etc. – to achieve community improvement. With this expansion, higher education SLCE programs began to refocus many of their community engagement and service-learning efforts to focus on a single, adjacent community.

Yamamura and Koth define place-based community engagement, "as a long-term university-wide commitment to partner with local residents, organizations, and other leaders to focus equally on campus and community impact within a clearly identified area" (p. 18). *Equal impact emphasis* is a key concept, one they value, as is *long-term commitment*. Collaborative, community-driven effort to bring about positive social change is a slow process that rarely yields significant benefit instantaneously. Committing to work together over a long term enables the networked partners to engage in an experiential process reflecting on their achievements and failures, learning as they go how to undertake strategies that achieve their development goals for the community and educational goals for the academic partner(s). They also learn incrementally how to work together collaboratively and effectively. In addition, Yamamura and Koth advocate that placed-based community engagement draw on the concept of collective impact, "the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving specific a social problem, using a structured form of collaboration." (Kania and Kramer, 2011, p. 36). They note that this process, "can unite multiple campus and community offices, organizations, and stakeholders to pursue a common goal … present[ing] universities and community partners pursuing place-based partnerships with an organizing strategy and process to guide their planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts" (Yamamura & Koth, p. 21).

Yamamura and Koth identify and describe numerous institutions that have undertaken this work. Their own institution, Seattle University, is a leader. The Seattle University Youth Initiative, established in 2011 and housed in the University's Center for Community

Engagement, partners with the city of Seattle, the Seattle Housing Authority, Seattle Public Schools, dozens of community organizations, and hundreds of local residents to create a "cradle-to-career" pathway of support for 1,000 children and their families living in a 2-square-mile neighborhood immediately adjacent to campus. In mobilizing the campus to engage, the initiative also deepens the educational experiences of Seattle University students and enhances professional development opportunities for faculty and staff (Yamamura and Koth, p. 42). Interestingly, the five institutions' place-based community engagement initiatives profiled by Yamamura and Koth include three Catholic institutions (Loyola University Maryland, Seattle, and University of San Diego), two of which are Jesuit.[3] However, the other two profiled institutions are a private research university (Drexel) and a large public university (San Diego State), indicating that place-based engagement can be successfully undertaken in different institutional, geographical, and community contexts.

In recent years numerous practitioners and scholars have noted that successful institutionalization of SLCE in higher education has tended to prioritize benefits of these efforts for the campus, especially for students and their personal and academic development (Stanton, Giles & Cruz, 1999; Hartman, 2015; McMillan & Stanton, 2014; Reardon & Forrester, 2015; Saltmarsh et al., 2015; Stanton, 1998; Stoecker, 2016). As Yamamura and Koth note, "perhaps the most powerful aspect of utilizing a place-based community engagement strategy is how it can move the university to focus equally on campus and community impact," what they call the "50–50 proposition." (p. 129) Such initiatives more deeply benefit communities through long-term, iterative service and research projects that contribute intellectual, human and organizational capital to address significant community problems, increasing the communities' potential for identifying, implementing and assessing solutions. They also yield increased opportunities for students, "to learn and grow their civic leadership capacity." (p. 129) They can result in improved community relations and increased funding for both community partners and the institution.

Interrogating the "50/50 proposition"

These are impressive initiatives that model a path for other institutions to focus their off-campus work, expand the involvement of students and faculty, and yield learning outcomes for all partners not otherwise available. However, it is not clear from Yamamura and Koth that any of the partnerships profiled in their study undertook an explicitly articulated, social change agenda which seeks to address and overturn structural inequities that present the community problems that they seek to ameliorate. For example, does Seattle's education-focused partnership, while seeking to improve student achievement in Seattle schools in the targeted neighborhood, also seek to redress finance and other political systems in the city, which create the need for education assistance in the first place? Are they tracking community partners' development of capacity to meet their educational needs in ways less dependent on Seattle U. over time? We could offer similar questions related to the other place-based partnerships profiled by Yamamura and Koth. Our point is not to criticize their impressive work, but rather to use what they have achieved as a springboard to deeper consideration of how these innovative partnerships could express a deeper form of social justice-focused engagement.

We also wish to raise the possibility of pushing further than Seattle University's 50–50 SLCE impact goal. No doubt it is a goal we all should aim for. However, what if rather than seeking this kind of *balance* between two seemingly different outcome areas (community and student knowledge development), which we often conceive of as in competition with each other, we were to envision student and faculty knowledge development occurring *through* community development? We will close this article with an argument that rather than balancing the two–as is implied by this 50–50 proposition–institutions, departments, and/or programs can deepen students' academic and civic learning through a 100% focus on equity-focused, community development.

Achieving justice-oriented social change through collaborative, "deep engagement"

On its surface, the collaborative, multilateral SLCE partnerships model which we advocate would seem to find common ground with the model of collective impact (CI) that Yamamura and Koth (2018) affirm, which is currently enjoying popularity in social service and economic development sectors. Indeed, we endorse the key goals and processes advanced by the CI model[4] (Kania and Kramer, 2011, p. 39 – 40) and share the foundational belief with CI advocates that large scale social change work requires much broader cross-sectional coordination than is currently practiced. However, as critics of CI have more recently made clear, the model as imagined and practiced, adopts a top-down business consulting model rather than a sustainable justice or community development one (Wolff, 2016) and thus can tend to perpetuate what Vu Le () has called "trickle down community engagement" in which CI coalition efforts, by primarily engaging CEO-level social sector leaders, essentially "bypass the people who are most affected by the issues, engage and fund larger organizations to tackle these issues, and hope that miraculously the people most affected will help out in the effort, usually for free (para. 4)." As Tom Wolff has pointed out, when coalitions institute visions and create solutions for transformed community without strong grassroots leadership, it "reinforces the dominance of those with privilege and continues to support the existing non-profit 'helping' sector (para. 7)."

The shortfalls of CI as a model for SLCE partnerships highlights the importance of centering questions of power, authority, and co-creation so as to cultivate power dynamics within partnerships that are just, fair, and inclusive.[5] Within a broad and inclusive partnership configuration, struggles over meanings and strategies of justice should be central, pursued through iterative processes aimed at yielding an evolving and dynamic understanding of what it might take to move the needle on such issues as homelessness, racial disparities in criminal justice, affordable and sustainable housing, food security, and environmental justice. Such multilateral partnership building requires deep collective efforts to develop a shared understanding of local-regional political economy and history, and how such developments over time have informed local patterns of privilege and inequalities in access to resources, services, or institutions (High et al., 2015). It also necessitates a focus on capacitating all partners, including community members most affected by the issues, to research and understand these patterns, and (co-)create and carry out plans to address them.

Ultimately, the product of a transformational (deep), multilateral partnership may not be full or collective agreement on all shared efforts to reach identified outcomes or goals,

but rather the development of new, network-wide understandings of how partner participants may base future action, whether unilateral or collaborative. The pragmatic benefits of an approach that favors the generation of understanding over that of agreement are well-articulated by Frank Blechman (as cited in Forrester, 2012, p. 12) in the following outcome scenario:

> Parties came together, parties who were deeply divided, they joined in an analytical process, and they went away not having agreed about anything but having come to understand their own and the other's situation better. They acted unilaterally in the future in ways that were less conflictual, more constructive for each, and in fact often they might find that while they could not get within a shred of agreement on issue X, that they in fact had dozens of issues A, B, C, and J on which they could cooperate, many of which were in fact negotiable.

Reimagining partnerships as diverse, multilateral collectivities in which engaging tensions and negotiating power relations are core dimensions of the groups' commitment to working together calls us to interrogate some of the more conventional assumptions that underlie best practices in SLCE partnership building. For example, the architects of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification recently defined high-quality community-campus partnerships as "shaped by relationships between those in the institution and those outside the institution that are grounded in the *qualities of reciprocity, mutual respect, shared authority, and co-creation of goals and outcomes*" [our emphasis] (Carnegie Foundation, 2019). While we agree with the essential importance of these qualities, we wonder how they might look different when more complex configurations of power and inequality at play within *multilateral* partnerships are taken into account. What do these qualities look like when we attend not only to dynamics and relationships *between* higher education institutions and community(ies) with which they partner, but also *among* a diverse range of nonprofit organizations, public entities, and social enterprises that may be doing distinct, overlapping, or even conflicting work in the name of the "public good?"

In Table 2, we provide a summary of this process of rethinking assumptions and re-centering power as it relates to multilateral, equity-focus SLCE partnerships:

Table 2. Re-thinking assumptions of SLCE and higher education community engagement.

- **Move beyond "partnership pairs" aimed at improving social service provision or generating technical solutions** and toward *collective, sustained efforts among an intentionally-diverse, multilateral set of stakeholders* to develop a shared understanding of local history, patterns of inequality in access to resources and decision-making, and how to supporting capacity among community members (including the most marginalized) to research and understand patterns and to carry out plans to address them.
- **Move beyond "co-creation" understood as an equal role of all stakeholders in deciding how work is done** (and the terms under which it is done) and toward commitment to *community-directed decision making and a capacity-building orientation* aimed at supporting the participation and leadership of those marginalized or most affected by the problem.
- **Move beyond "reciprocity" understood as agreement and cooperation** and toward *the favoring of understanding over that of agreement*, where reciprocity depends not essentially on agreement/cooperation but on a process of collaboration rooted in thoughtful negotiation and compromise over potentially-conflicting approaches to change and justice in the name of trust-building and shared commitment to mutually envisioned long-term outcomes or goals. In this approach, engaging tensions and negotiating power relations within and between participating organizations are core dimensions of the group's commitment to work together.
- **Move beyond "shared authority" understood as equal influence by all autonomous stakeholders on how projects are designed and implemented** and *toward a commitment to center the perspectives and agency of those most often dismissed and left unheard* and who experience the problem most forcefully. In other words, IHE and their representatives play a role of "humbled responsiveness."
- **Move beyond "mutual responsibility" understood as a two-way exchange of value** and toward a *collectively-negotiated, long-range set of social justice or societal outcomes and associated actions* that move beyond providing "services" to people "in need."

Reciprocity, for example, can become a problematic term when it assumes agreement and cooperation between parties in a matter that can be achieved without struggle or conflict, rather than a longer-term process of arriving at understanding through compromise and negotiation, where struggle and direct confrontation with unequal distributions of power and resources are inherent. Of course, partnerships need to be collaborative, but shared work may lead to tension and compromise, rather than strict cooperation, and may potentially induce stress in bringing significant conflicts of interest to the fore. Hence, it would be important to redefine reciprocity as long-term collaboration rooted in thoughtful negotiation and compromise over potentially-conflicting approaches to social change, in the name of trust-building and shared commitment to a mutually-envisioned, longer-term outcomes or goals (Dostilio et al., 2012; Santiago-Ortiz, 2019). This kind of work within multilateral SLCE partnerships would require collective adherence to what John Forrester (2012) has called a "critical pragmatism," which he views as "a co-constructed, co-generated, or negotiated practice that attends to both processes and outcomes that is respectful of parties' initial 'frames' and … capacities to learn from, and about, each other … " (p. 13).

Similarly, a rethinking of the meaning of *shared authority* is warranted under the kind of civic collaborations we propose. Shared authority is often assumed to mean equal influence by all stakeholders in defining the work to be done, or the terms under which it is done. The problem with this conceptualization of shared power – similar to that of "reciprocity" – is that it demands as a starting point what should be understood as a desired (but yet unfulfilled) partnership outcome. In collaborative, multilateral SLCE partnerships, often there will be a need to compensate for existing power differentials – particularly when power is already skewed toward more heavily-funded or highly-esteemed expert-professional organizations or institutions (including IHEs). There is a need to re-balance power relations, which may mean centering the perspectives and agency of those who are often dismissed or left unheard. Our ways of imagining shared authority in multilateral SLCE partnerships, as Eric Hartman (2015) has noted, also require reflective attention to, and explicitness about, the economic models embedded within the organizations which participate in the partnership and how particular partners' hands may be tied when it comes to practicing a full range of social change strategies, given that entities funding their work may restrict their full ability to collaborate in efforts necessary to push toward a serious reconfiguration of, or effectively challenge, institutional or systemic forces responsible for generating inequities in access to resources and decision making.

For IHEs and their representatives, we suggest "shared authority" means starting from a place of humbled responsiveness, which may require that some partners give up some decision-making power from the get-go with the desired, longer-term outcome being one of reciprocity and collaborative power-sharing in setting the partnership's agenda and activities (rather than assuming it already should be so from the beginning). While it is a noble desire for universities to want to "help" the community with problems they experience, they must examine their motivations when entering a partnership, especially one in which the power dynamic has traditionally been skewed to their side. As Hartman has noted (quoting Crabtree, 2008), "we need more than an ethos of reciprocity as a guide; we need to learn the … on-the-ground strategies that are more likely to produce mutuality" (Crabtree, p. 26), with the goal of collective empowerment at the forefront. This

means an intention to not only *make space for* marginalized community knowledge, perspectives, and voices *but to center them*, and consequently "to decenter dominant perspectives and to explore social locations in relation to inequalities" (Hartman, p. 68).

Finally, the SLCE partnership configuration we propose suggests that we *begin not with the assumption of strict co-creation*, but rather a commitment to ensure that *decision making be community driven and have a strong community capacity building orientation aimed at engaging and supporting as leaders those who are experiencing the problem directly*. Why? Because too often when favoring technocratic approaches, it is possible to claim success in producing positive outcomes and documentable partnership "success stories" over the short run, but it may come at the expense of marginalizing community knowledge, or even displacing community leadership over the long term, in ways that subvert sustainable justice goals of enhancing marginalized groups' autonomy to control their own means and future.

Networked community-campus development partnerships: What could they look like?

There are numerous, varied models for development-focused community-campus SLCE initiatives existing and that can be imagined. Figure 1 shows the multiple organizational and development activities that can comprise these partnerships. Many contain a number of community organizations, often from diverse sectors (e.g. nonprofits, government agencies, school districts, civic organizations) joined with a sponsoring campus office, a center for community engagement, an academic department, a vice-president for community relations, etc. As noted by Yamaura and Koth (2018), such networks may be convened by the campus partner(s) while others arise out of the community and/or with encouragement and funding from a foundation.

Figure 1. Networked, Campus-Community Development-focused SLCE Model.

A community-campus partnership can also exist successfully between one campus department or office and one community-based organization that is part of a larger, networked partnership. However sponsored and structured, the important criteria for us in these partnerships is that they be envisioned and sustained long-term, be driven by the targeted community's issues and needs as understood by local residents and community-based organizations, and that they function democratically with respect for the needs, interests, commitments and capabilities of all partners.

Since we advocate a social justice, "deep engagement" approach to this work, an important criterion is that the partnership itself have a collective identity and structure that exists outside its member partners, that they in effect be networked members of it. This was an explicit objective of the Hewlett Foundation in the 1990s that undertook an effort to stimulate, organize and fund three "comprehensive community development" initiatives in the San Francisco Bay Area designed to empower residents to drive their development agenda with support of organizational partners inside and outside of the targeted communities. One of the outside partners was an academic institution, Stanford University, represented by its Haas Center for Public Service, which contributed to the initiative in East Palo Alto (Brown & Fiester, 2007).

Many such collaboratives exist in local and regional communities. One example is People Acting in Community Together (PACT), a collaborative of nonprofit organizations including church groups founded in 1985 that "provides leadership training and experience to community members of many different ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds" and "work[s] for racial and economic justice and to collectively address issues impacting our communities." (https://www.pactsj.org/en/mission-and-vision). A networked, community-campus development-focused, SLCE collaborative that fully addressed goals for social justice through "deep engagement" would best function on the grass-roots, community organizing and capacity building side of development work, though we hope it would contain a strong community-based research element to support public policy change as well. A network of campus-based departments and initiatives would be linked to it directly or through a campus center for community engagement.

In the community, the collaborative would engage in a range of strategically planned activities – service, research and advocacy-based, aimed at understanding and addressing a critical problem or issue of prime concern to residents, with the intention of capacitating them with knowledge, skills and allies to solve or at least mitigate the problem. The campus departments would "accompany" the community-based partners and residents in activities that cover the full spectrum of the collaborative's activities. Students in co-curricular volunteer programs could provide requested, direct service. Students in academic service-learning courses could engage in a diverse array of activities, the learning and skill building from which could be integrated with course goals and objectives. Students and faculty members could engage in community-based research that is requested by the collaborative, involves them, and builds knowledge in students' personal and/or academic interest areas. University staff members and community engagement professionals could be involved in all of these sorts of activities and also serve in consulting roles as needed and requested by the collaborative (e.g. assistance in setting up a data management system). Campus procurement policies could be reformed to prioritize economic activity in the targeted neighborhood. The list could go on.

What's critical here is that the networked, social change partnership envisioned in the community is matched with a similarly networked, coordinated effort on campus among a campus community engagement center and involved and engaged faculty, departments and programs.

As portrayed in Figure 2, the campus initiative should seek to engage all relevant departments and programs, academic, student affairs, and administrative units (e.g. human resources to coordinate staff volunteers and/or procurement to direct purchasing to businesses in the collaborative partners' communities). All of this engagement could be coordinated through a campus CE center, though some could take place through direct relationships between campus units and the collaborative as indicated by the figure's red and black lines. This campus-wide, coordinated approach is important because, as mentioned earlier, even when simpler 1–1 partnerships are established through SLCE best-practices and yield significant reciprocal benefits, the outcomes often remain limited and possibly problematic for community members.

As Saltmarsh, Janke, & Clayton explain:

> It is possible for an institution to have high quality SLCE wherein community-university partnerships are asset-based, co-created, and mutually beneficial (deep) and practiced within many academic departments and co-curricular units (pervasive) without the various practitioners being aware of one another, let alone working intentionally together as collaborators in a broader, institution-level strategy for engagement. Deep and pervasive do not, on their own, insist on replacing otherwise hierarchical schisms between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, among disciplines, and among teaching and research and service with collaborations that value all contributions across campus as critical; and they may not necessarily link SLCE intentionally and strategically to the full range of institutional priorities. Working incidentally and coincidentally results in lost opportunities to share ideas, build and strengthen relationships and networks, leverage resources, and, in numerous forms and fashions, coalesce around culture change. (p. 124)

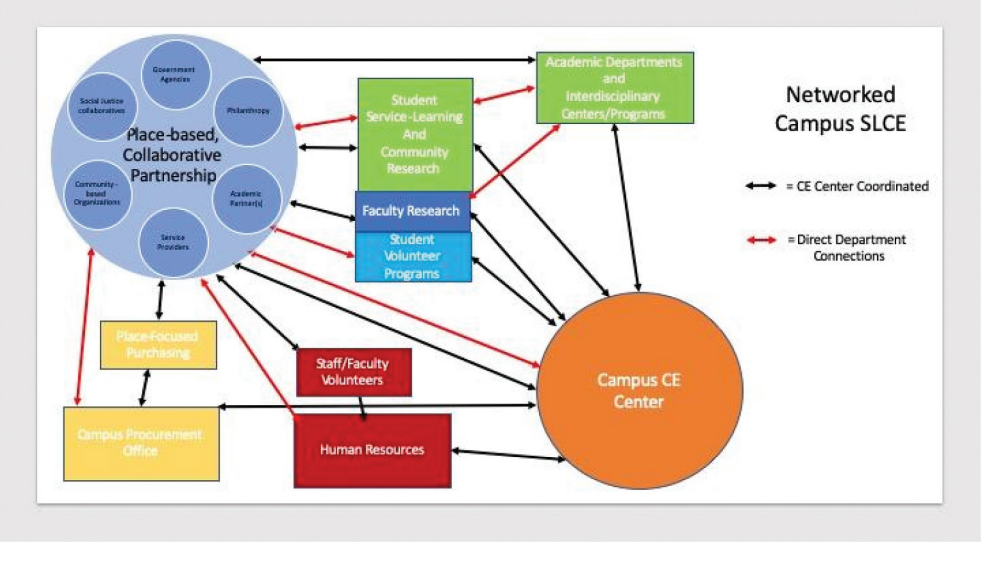

Figure 2. Networked, Multilateral, Community Development-focused SLCE Model.

Re-imagining student learning in light of reconfigured SLCE partnerships

In light of this proposed reconfiguration of SLCE campus/community partnership, what might the implications be for how we understand and design student learning and leadership development through SLCE experiences? We believe strongly in the need to move away from more functionalist-informed learning approaches that promote a distinctly careerist and expert-professional model of social change, particularly in light of the aforementioned critiques that even "good" work in this vein may have the effect of limiting, policing, or even redirecting campaigns for advancing sustainable justice.

To participate as effective social change agents in the kind of multilateral, sustainable justice-oriented SLCE partnerships we outline calls not for "superheroes" hawking products or "innovations" but rather for individuals capable of collaborating with humility with other essential agents for social change, including neighborhood residents, community advocates, organizers, popular educators, etc., through a process that often will require reconciling very different approaches to social change and community recovery, and likely involves facing recurring conflicts and instances of having to consider tradeoffs between stakeholders' values and goals (Reardon & Forrester, 2016, p. 190). Yet students are generally unprepared to engage with conflict in community work, largely because they receive neither a knowledge base nor skill set to do so. While their scholarly training may help them develop an understanding that they live within what Harry Boyte (1992) has described as "a diverse, turbulent public world made up of multiple and fractured communities … and characterized by a diverse, pluralist, and heterogeneous set of interests and viewpoints" (p. 4), students are only rarely prepared to identify and make sense of the ways in which communities are "power-laden geographical contexts with a complex history of contentious class and race politics, oppression, and inequality" (Reardon and Forrester, p. 70). Nor are they typically assisted in building the skills necessary to actively and effectively navigate such complexities.

In the multilateral SLCE partnerships we propose, deep engagement with (rather than avoidance of) politics and power struggles – including those related to racial oppression, class inequality, and health inequities – is something to be embraced (Mitchell, 2008). As (Forrester, 2012) points out, effective change-oriented practitioners are those who are able to "face complex, multi-party 'problems' characterized by distrust, anger, strategic behavior, poor information and inequalities of power" (p. 5) not as superheroes but as "skillful, sensitive and probing intermediaries working in the face of public disputes," (p. 6) who are committed to and capable of helping communities resolve their own conflicts. Through such an orientation to community experiences, students have the chance to participate in deliberative democratic encounters where "people do not merely advocate and negotiate interests; they also discuss values and thereby form ideas about who they are, what they want, and what is right" (Levine, 2011). Such an approach to partnership shifts students' role from expert-professional/service provider-in-training to citizen-participant in "public work," which Boyte (1992) defined as "common action on significant public problems" that requires "the ability to work pragmatically with a variety of others, whether one likes them or not." (p. 6).

What would a reconfigured SLCE pedagogy look like?

Reimagining SLCE as community development has significant implications for how we on campus practice and promote our work. As advocated by Yamamura and Koth (2018), it suggests that we select and partner with organizations and communities with a development agenda that we and they embrace long-term. Rather than viewing partner organizations primarily as placement sites where students can develop and display their charitable commitments and entrepreneurial skills, we partner to engage in community improvement, development, and ultimately attainment of economic, social and political equity over the long-term, which we and our partners mutually embrace. In addition, while students come and go through these partnerships, the nature of an institution's relationship to the partners should be explicit, transparent and long-term, with students coming to understand that their participation in the partnership is part of something larger in scope and duration than what they contribute during their short time with it. They become part of a program's, a department's, maybe even an institution's commitment to economic, social, and political equity in surrounding communities. In long-term partnership work, students' modest single-term projects can build on each other over time yielding considerably more value and impact.

This re-imagined partnership model suggests that students do not necessarily pick and choose where and how they will serve, which is often the case in SLCE programs. Rather, their role becomes one of assisting the identified partners or partnerships in allied roles that are largely determined by the partners, carrying out the partners' missions as the partners understand them. The service assigned will be their priority and not necessarily the students'. Students accompany the partners as allies rather than saviors. This approach to service will yield for them new experience, knowledge and skills, and it certainly does not preclude them from thinking creatively or acting in an entrepreneurial manner. But the explicit goal is assistance to the partnership and to its equity goals. In this way students come to realize that a commitment to "joining the struggle" with humility is as important as endeavoring to "solve the problem" with an innovative vision or app.

From the perspective of the academic partner, this approach to networked, social change partnerships presents the opportunity to develop a rich, transdisciplinary curriculum designed to support the work and learning of engaged students and provide new knowledge and skills not otherwise available. It may mean developing a sequence of courses through a collective conversation among variously-positioned partners and faculty members rather than just around disciplinary concerns–that could be clustered around particular themes (for example, housing justice, health care, arts, climate change, and empowerment) and would focus on coordinated and responsive action, over the long term, to advance collaboratively identified, sustainable justice goals. This would include attention throughout to the processes of how power can be built by those most affected by problems, so they have control over how current and future resources are allocated and how solutions/innovations are developed and instituted. A key role of the partnership collective, and therefore the curriculum, would be to engage the tensions that may exist among varied approaches to development and community problem-solving of stakeholders/partners, through the utilization of a critical equity lens "to assess power dynamics within and outside of the campus-community partnership on an on-going basis" (Augustin et al., 2017, p. 171). In other words, there is need to provide a reflective

space for students (and all partners really) to directly and consistently confront contradictions, conflict and disagreement about these issues in order to know how to move forward on a common goal together, and when necessary, to be willing to significantly shift the activities and collaborations within and between partners, as a result. A campus seminar can provide a safe and critical environment for examining and reflecting on these issues as they play out in the partnership experience and connect with students' values around equity and social justice. A community-based seminar for those partners, or a joint community-campus seminar, may also be desirable.

Academically, we envision as core to this curriculum a reflective, service-learning-type seminar for all involved students that focuses explicitly on these issues, social change-focused community development more generally, and the university's role within such a collaborative – its history, development, practice and possible futures. The seminar would enable students to interrogate and examine their experience of development assistance and civic action in the partnership in the context of related theoretical literature and other academic resources. As in typical service-learning courses, the students would pursue a curriculum that would progress through this material over the course of an academic term, integrating and critically reflecting on their experience as part of the partnership in ways that can be integrated with their study, with theory-testing practice and vice versa. Their SLCE would thus become both service assistance and a primary "text to be read" and analyzed for its impact on the partners, partnership, and themselves, as civic actors developing values and commitments. Ideally, all students participating in the collaborative would take this seminar (engaged faculty and staff might wish to have something similar), which would become a core course in civic action and social change. Students could also take an additional department-based service-learning course, for example, in education, to support work with a school district partner, if that were their assignment. Students engaging in research would take the core seminar in addition to mentoring or participation in a research seminar designed to support their collaborative, inquiry work.

This approach to SLCE pedagogy, especially as expressed in the core seminar described above, offers the opportunity for campus partners to develop a 100% academic focus on community development and equitable social change, rather than 50–50 balancing of learning versus service and community impact, enabling the creation of a unified, rather than dual outcomes, vision. In more conventional SLCE, we tend to look through separate lenses for our student and community development goals. Rather than balancing our two views of partnership work – the goals we have for students and (sometimes versus) those for the community, we bring them together in one unified view focused on the partnership's development, social change aims, and experiences, which then drive everything we do, yielding community impact and deep (and currently largely unaddressed) critical student learning and development. By implication, this then changes the role of SLCE practitioner from one of a tight-rope walker, trying not to lean over too far to either side of the service and learning divide, to one of a focused, allied, campus-based, development practitioner and collaborator.[6]

Andy Furco (2011) and others suggest that it is the clarity and specificity of intention of community-based activity – its goals and purposes – rather than the actual activities themselves, that distinguishes community-engaged practices. Thus, if we are to embrace community development in our work as described above, our goals, focus and principles –

our intentions in partnership development, student placement, service delivered and students' knowledge and skills development *and how we carry this out* – must be explicitly collaborative, multi-lateral and development-focused.

Conclusion

Community development work is a long, slow, complicated and often messy process. It depends on trusting, mutually beneficial relationships among all involved, trust that collaborative work requires and builds in all partners – on campus and in the community. Students and partners can learn to develop relationships across difference (social, political, disciplinary, etc.); to listen and speak well with respect; to understand and reflectively practice power, compromise and solidarity; to hold others (and themselves) accountable for their actions and responsibilities, all capacities similar to Harry Boyte's notion of the "democratic arts." In addition to deep learning for students and faculty members, this kind of sustained, multipronged alliance between a knowledge development institution and its community development partners can accomplish much more effective and successful development work than any of the partners, or any sector of the community, can achieve working alone.

What could result for the campus is an embrace of an institutional development agenda that could be expressed through all of its functions and traditional goals for teaching, research and service. If over time the collaborative is successful in meeting its goals in the community, the institution's community relations should improve measurably. The surrounding community improvement would make it more attractive to students, faculty and staff, which would serve goals related to admissions, faculty/staff recruitment, and wider interactions with local and regional governments. Care would need to be taken, and perhaps initiatives undertaken, to ensure that existing residents are not priced out of the community as it improves, hence the need to ensure that the residents have strong influence on all activities.

The vision we have for multi-faceted, community-campus development partnerships provides such an opportunity. Establishing initiatives of this kind will not be quick or easy on either side of the community-campus divide. Seattle University, according to Koth, took three years to get their collaborative up and running. But as demonstrated by Seattle and many other institutions, it can be done.

Notes

1. http://www.comm-dev.org/latest/item/86-principles-of-good-practice
2. Beyond limiting students' perspectives, this emphasis on "heroic" innovation can lead to community partners being left high and dry. For example, Stanton recently heard a presentation on one such "social E"-style service-learning project where students in an academic course were encouraged to come up with a design for low-cost heating/AC units that could be easily installed and cheaply operated in high-rise apartments housing low-income families lacking centralized AC. The students came up with what the instructor praised as a highly-creative design that could, at very low cost, "solve this problem." When asked when the units might be manufactured and widely installed, he replied, "Well, the students' design did not meet local safety codes related to materials utilized in the designed units." The students received "A" grades and the project was praised on the campus.

However, nothing useful was provided to anyone in the community, and a great amount of local residents' and agency staff's time was used up in the process!

3. Their philosophical/theological orientations, and social justice-oriented mission statements derived from them, provide a strong foundation on which to justify and build externally focused, social change and social justice commitments that serve their education goals.
4. The specific goals and processes to which we refer include (a) the need of a structured, collective process for establishing a common agenda, (b) shared goals to pursue over the longer term; (c) a commitment to ongoing relationship building between organizations through continuous communication and trust building; (d) the establishment of shared measurements and means of assessing progress toward collectively-agreed upon goals, and (e) the expectation of mutually-reinforcing activities that allow specific organizations to exercise their strengths while intentionally coordinating their work with that of others.
5. Some exemplary practical approaches for negotiating these dynamics have been developed by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. Their publications and resources on equitable collaboration can be accessed at https://www.wilder.org/collaboration
6. For an example of how this approach to SLCE can be pursued effectively see, McMillan and Stanton's (2014) description of a "sustained partnership, learning-service" model of service-learning and community-based partnership research, which they established in Stanford University Overseas Studies Programme in Cape Town, South Africa.

Disclosure statement

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