Glocal Solutions: A cross-disciplinary approach to nurture service leadership beyond the borders of Hong Kong

Jessie CHOW
Samson TSE
Outline of the presentation

• The rationale of the project
• The program & the learning process
• The learning outcomes & students’ sharing
RATIONAL OF THE PROJECT
WHY EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING APPROACH
• Transformative learning transmits leadership attributes to create change agents (Sandhu et al, 2015)

• Students critically examine learned theories in the process and address to the needs of our society (Sims-Muhammad, 2012)

• Authentic collaborations develop students’ team skills and conflict resolution skills (Beatty, 2010)
WHY BEYOND THE BORDER OF HK
Students benefit academically, socially and culturally through overseas experiential learning opportunities (Hanson, 2010)

**HKU Educational Aims & Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO):**

- Pursuit of academic/professional excellence, critical intellectual enquiry & life-long learning
- Tackling novel situations and ill-defined problems
- Critical self-reflection, greater understanding of others, and upholding personal and professional ethics
- **Intercultural understanding and global citizenship**
- Communication and collaboration
- Leadership and advocacy for the improvement of the human condition (http://tl.hku.hk/reform)
WHY CROSS-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH
• Cross-disciplinary collaboration is a key to pressing global issues & the synergy creates insights and novel solutions to complex problems (Knapp et al, 2015)
• Work in the society is increasingly accomplished by interdependent disciplinary specialists (Nicolini, 2012)
THE PROGRAM &
THE LEARNING PROCESS
The program

- Credit-bearing
- 1 week training in HK; 7 week experiential learning at Hung Yen, Hanoi
- Local community partner: the World Vision Vietnam
Two important components

Two communes (Trung Dung & Le Xa)
- a) the child injury problem; b) malnutrition of children under five; c) early childhood care development; and d) the water, sanitation, and hygiene situation

Stakeholders: government officials, teachers, principals, parents and children

Needs Assessment

Small-scale Construction
- Worked alongside a local construction team
- Built a sanitation facility for a secondary school
- Acted as assistant resident engineers to monitor and record the construction
- Completed part of the construction work
Deliverables

- Reflective journal
- Integrated essay/ training report
- Needs analysis report & presentation
- Final on-site presentation
The logistics

- 16 students (8 from each discipline) formed into 4 cross-disciplinary teams with one interpreter attached
- Teaching staff flied in at different timeframe
- Project manager from WVV as supervisor
PUTTING IT IN THE CONTEXT...
THE LEARNING OUTCOME & STUDENTS SHARING
The learning outcome

- **Assessment for learning:**
  - Overall performance evaluated by the CP
  - Academic deliverables assessed by the AT
  - Peer evaluation (Final presentation)

- **Program evaluation**
  - End of program self-evaluation from students
  - On-site evaluation meeting with different stakeholders
  - Pre- and post-program evaluation
Self evaluation data (response rate 62.5%)
Pre- and post-program evaluation
Pre-program:
  ◦ What do you expect to learn?

Post-program:
  ◦ What have you learnt?
Cross-disciplinary collaboration

- ‘Doing the job with the social sciences students makes me understand that engineer always think about the result directly while the social sciences students will think it step by step’
- ‘I learnt to cooperate with people with different educational background and cultural background. The cooperation and communication with civil engineering students and local interpreters were interesting and inspiring. I know my strengths and shortcomings better, understanding how to work with others to achieve the group goal’
Needs Analysis

- ‘the importance of conducting needs analysis before making decision to start a project’
- ‘I have learnt how to do research and gather primary sources about basic infrastructure building and development in underdeveloped area’
- ‘How research is important, particularly in writing suggestions for needs analysis’
Skills development

• ‘We learn about the workmanship and the real situation in construction site. During the supervising time, we have used critical thinking and analytical skills to deal with and understand the difficulty of construction progress’

• ‘To be independent, to learn how to cooperate and to understand the importance of teamwork’

• ‘I also learnt how to integrate academic knowledge with practical experience. I really love this program in that it provided us an opportunity to learn actively by ourselves’
Self-awareness

- ‘I find that I am a person who can bring new perspectives and idea to others, and this makes me more confident about my personal relationship and future career’
- ‘sometimes I become very solution-focused especially when I am the leader of a group of people’
- ‘I knew myself is actually a straight-forward person, always want to find an exact answer for a question, but it is actually different from the reality’
STUDENTS’ VOICE
CROSS-CULTURAL COLLABORATION
Different Places and Situation,
Different Practices and Standard
Interactive methods

Engage local stakeholders
Global Solutions
Local Wisdom
CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION
Cross-disciplinary team

Different disciplines work as a team
‘If you can, try something new or even not related to your disciplines when you are still young and free.’ -- By a Chartered Civil Engineer I know.
PERSONAL GROWTH & SELF-AWARENESS
Pace of Vietnam (space for introspection)
What’s more for raising awareness?

Does it end with just a washroom? What is our AIM?
References