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International Service in Higher Education Conference
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Does international service in higher education... promote student learning and development, intercultural skills, global understanding, civic engagement, and also contribute to mutual well-being?¹

... or does it reinforce existing global inequalities?²

¹ Cushner & Mahon 2002, Braskamp 2008

What are the impacts of international service in higher education?

1. Present a conceptual model for service impact research
2. Review existing evidence
3. Explore how outcomes vary depending on
   (a) individual (student) capacity
   (b) institutional (university) capacity
   (c) the nature of international service action
4. Propose research designs, methodological approaches, and agenda
5. Discuss initial program and policy directions
Conceptual model of service impacts

Student attributes → Individual capacity → International service action → Host community outcomes

University attributes → Institutional capacity → International service action → Student outcomes

International service action → University outcomes
Individual and institutional factors shape outcomes

Individual attributes and capacity
   Student SES, age, gender, ethnicity, motivation, knowledge and skills, prior service, language, time, etc

Institutional attributes and capacity
   University mission and goals, funding;
   Program access and inclusion, training and support, internationality, reciprocity mutuality, safety, sponsorship, accountability, etc.

International service action
   Service activity, group/individual placement, immersion and cross-cultural contact, guided reflection
Conceptual model of service impacts: Program and policy implications

- Student attributes
- University attributes
- Individual capacity
- Institutional capacity
- International service action
- Host community outcomes
- Student outcomes
- University outcomes
Impact on students

- Academic & intellectual development
- Personal development
- Professional skills
- Intercultural competence and language ability
- International knowledge & understanding
- Civic & global engagement
Impact on host community

- Resource utilization
- Host organization capacity
- Intercultural knowledge & skills
- International knowledge & understanding
- Global engagement
- Voice and participation
- Tangible value of service
Impact on university

- Intercultural competence
- International/global knowledge and understanding
- International engagement
- International partnerships
Some initial findings

- Students’ personal development and career enhancement predominate in research on international service.
- We have limited research, especially on host community and university impacts, and on central ideas of reciprocity and mutual transformation.
- Wealthy people and nations are the main beneficiaries of service opportunities.
Implications for research

Impact research requires experimental or quasi-experimental design

Comparative

- Matching the target of change (student or university) with a similar target that does **not** engage in service, but is comparable on key measures
- Measured across multiple programs that differ on key variables (e.g., reciprocity, access, training, duration, immersion, guided reflection)

Longitudinal

- compares outcomes before service (pre-test) with outcomes after service (post-test)
Use mixed methods

- Quantitative evidence determines prevalence, rates, amounts, trends
  - Tests for coherence, validity, and reliability\(^1\)

- Qualitative evidence clarifies, identifies new issues, gives meaning, explores motivations
  - Case studies, focus groups, and in-depth interviews

- Use both qualitative and quantitative methods, or methods such as concept mapping that integrate the two approaches\(^2\)

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1. Lough et al., 2009
2. Poole & Davis, 2006
Implications for policy and program

Develop inclusive opportunities to serve

1. Inclusive multinational and multilateral models of service?

Aim for mutual transformation among partners

2. Involve host community partners in planning and operations?
3. Opportunities for students to apply new skills upon re-entry?

Build global competence and responsibility for building the global common good

5. Address asymmetrical power globally and locally?

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1 Sherraden et al. 2006, McBride & Lough 2010
3 Battistoni et al. 2009
4 Schattle 2009, Nolan 2009
References


Illich, I (1968). To hell with good intentions. *Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects (CIASP), Cuernavaca, Mexico, April 20.*


