

Chapter 12

A Citizenship Approach to Learning and Engagement in Moroccan Higher Education



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Abstract This chapter aims to shed light on community service and the importance of its implementation in the Moroccan public higher education system. Community service and service-learning are part and parcel of some educational systems worldwide, and have demonstrated their efficiency in student engagement, personal and professional development. In Morocco, the only higher education institution that integrates community service in its curriculum is Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane. Community service has proved to be a crucial learning experience in terms of citizenship values and skills, and has shown that it can yield a lot of benefits for all the stakeholders involved in community service: the institution providing service, students performing service, hosting institutions and beneficiaries, partners, and the community at large.

Keywords Citizenship · Community service · Service-learning · Student engagement

12.1 Background: Community Service at Ben M'sik

Unlike other public higher education institutions, the Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Ben M'sik has adopted community service as part of its extracurricular activities and as a component of two courses within the framework of the English Department: Applied Linguistics and Citizenship in Education since 2010. The former is taught to semester 5 students, whereas the latter is taught to semester 6 students. Both courses are part of the Applied Language Studies stream within the Department of English Studies. Thanks to a partnership with Bowling Green State University, Ohio (BGSU) with whom we ran a university Civic Education Partnership Initiative (CEPI) between 2007 and 2010, community service was introduced to the Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Department of English Studies, Ben M'sik, Casablanca, Morocco.

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Since 2013, we implemented community service as a prerequisite for the obtention of BA degree in Language Studies. This is done in two phases: The first phase starts in the Fall semester when students attend their Applied Linguistics course. In this phase, students get acquainted with aspects such as learning versus acquisition, teaching methods, learning styles and strategies, coursebook use, the four language skills, technology in the classroom, testing, to name but a few examples. At this stage, we place small groups of students of 6–8 semester 5 students in neighboring secondary and high schools with whom our institution has partnerships. Our students need to serve for 8 weeks. The school principals play an important role by getting heavily involved with our students and us since they prepare specific timetables for their ninth graders and high school students who need support classes in English. The timetables usually fit our students' schedules and do not overlap with their university classes nor with their private study time. The second phase of community service begins in the Spring semester. During this semester, our students have a course entitled Citizenship in Education in which community service is a component in its own right. Furthermore, they have to perform a 24-hour or 12-week community service. This, of course, goes along with the 8-week English support classes our students do in semester 5 as mentioned earlier.

So, all in all, our students perform a total of 20 weeks or the equivalent of 40 h in both semesters 5 and 6. They teach English in the form of support classes to ninth graders and high school students. Their teaching sessions include basic English to ninth graders (since it is their first encounter with English), revision of previous lessons and preparation for the beneficiaries' final examinations; namely, secondary school certificate, first-year baccalaureate regional exam, and second-year baccalaureate national exam. This of course is done through a close coordination between our students' supervisor, our students, and the secondary and high schools teachers whose students benefit from community service.

Going back to the Citizenship in Education semester 6 course, our students cover aspects such as the role of citizenship in society and education, digital citizenship, environmental citizenship, citizenship in the curriculum, global citizenship, rights and duties, human rights, NGO's, and promoting engagement and empowerment. During the course, we organize visits to non-government associations, orphanages, and elderly homes so that our students meet experts in the field and have hands-on experience regarding community service and engagement. Consequently, there are students who wish to perform their community service by volunteering in noneducational institutions such as orphanages, NGOs, and youth clubs in the neighborhood. This has always been facilitated by our institution, the Faculty of Letters and Humanities Ben M'sik, which spares no effort in helping our students have access to our partners by providing the necessary administrative paperwork regarding insurance and fieldwork administrative authorizations that our students need to perform their community service.

Because the number of students is usually between 40 and 50 students a year, it is relatively easy and smooth to follow up their community service activities (attendance, teaching, learning, preparing lessons, activities and exercises, and testing).

There are weekly meetings with the supervisor to discuss their progress and any problems or difficulties that may arise. In addition, the supervisor provides the students with guidance and always liaises with the hosting institutions where community service is performed. After community service is over, usually toward the end of May, our students are required to submit reports in which they give details of how their community service has been performed. They describe what they have done, the problems they may have encountered, and what they have learned. The community service reports are in a way an opportunity for our students to reflect on their personal and professional growth, and how they see themselves as agents of change who are paving their way for their careers on one hand, and for bettering their community, society, and country on the other. The reports are corrected and marked as part of community service evaluation, which counts 25% of the end of term examination.

12.2 Community Service

The labels used to refer to this type of learning differs from one author to another; some use community service, others use service-learning or community-based learning (Cress et al. 2005). According to Iacovino and Nootens (2011, p. 225) cited in Kane et al (2016), community

is presented as an abstract entity that requires a kind of toolkit based on ethical individualism in order for students to situate themselves within its boundaries. Citizenship is akin to a vocation, something you learn to do, not as a member of a particular nation or culture, not through the lens of conflicting national identities, but as an individual endowed with faculties associated with critical thought.

University students engage in community service activities with intentional academic and learning goals and opportunities for reflection that connect to their academic disciplines. The activities in question are meant to meet community needs. Service-learning is defined as:

[...] an educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility (Bringle and Hatcher, 1995).

Bowling Green State University defines community service as, “a class based, credit-bearing educational experience which integrates academic material, relevant community-based engagement and/or service activities, and critical reflection based on a reciprocal partnership that engage students, faculty/staff, and community members in achievement of academic and disciplinary learning objectives and civic outcomes to advance public purposes.”(<https://www.bgsu.edu/>). In this respect, students learn how they can actively contribute more effectively to their society. This learning can take different forms; for instance, recognizing how a particular academic discipline can meet important needs of society; fulfilling civic responsibility through

community effort; or developing skills or understanding that will enhance students' contributions as responsible citizens and community members.

12.3 The Case of Moroccan Higher Education

Unlike the USA, where colleges and universities are increasingly including in their educational mission the preparation of graduates as future citizens, Moroccan universities, which already need further improvements in their teaching of traditional disciplines, do not fully implement a reform before they embark on another. In Morocco, it is the Higher Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research, described as an independent, consultative body of good governance, sustainable development, and participatory democracy, which serves as a think tank for strategic reflection on issues of education, training, and scientific research on issues related to education, training, and scientific research. European Union (2017). After introducing the Moroccan Ministry of National Education (1999) in the university system about a decade ago, the ministry of higher education introduced what is called the "Emergency Plan" (2009–2012). Then, another reform was adapted in 2014. However, in the absence of such a vision nationwide, some local initiatives are worth implementing. A starting point lies in attempting to adapt community service programs, and others thereof, to fit in the Moroccan higher education system, and by extension in the society as a whole.

The implementation of community service in Moroccan universities is timely. It invites students to use the know-how they have acquired beyond the classroom walls, and thus creates bridges between academic knowledge and real life. It is an excellent opportunity to prepare them for the real world and to instill in them the values which will make them better citizens of their country and of the world. This goes in compliance with the National Charter for Education and Training introduced in 1999 and the Strategic Vision for Reform (2015–2030). They both highlight the importance of including in the curriculum citizenship-related topics like democracy, human rights, community involvement, and civic engagement. As a result, citizenship education components were officially and explicitly introduced in the Moroccan textbooks, especially from grade 4 to grade 9. At high school level, citizenship education is taught implicitly as a component, a topic, or a theme in the curriculum and through extracurricular activities organized by school clubs.

Furthermore, the *English Language Guidelines for Secondary Education* (2007) issued by the Moroccan Ministry of Education insist that the teaching of English should address five areas:

1. **Communication:** Learners will communicate in both oral and written forms, interpret both oral and written messages, show cultural understanding and present oral and written information to various audiences for a variety of purposes. Three modes of communication are involved here: the *interpersonal*, *interpretive*, and *presentational* communication.

2. **Cultures:** Learners will gain a deeper understanding of their culture(s) and other cultures in terms of their **perspectives** (e.g., values, ideas, attitudes, etc.), **practices** (pattern of social interactions), and **products** (e.g., books, laws, music, etc.).
3. **Connections:** Learners will make connections with other subject areas and acquire information and use them through English for their own purposes.
4. **Comparisons:** Learners will gain awareness of cross-cultural similarities and differences (in terms of both language(s) and culture).
5. **Communities:** Learners will extend their learning experiences from the EFL classroom to the outside world through activities such as the use of the Internet. They will therefore be made aware that we live in a global world (Ministry of Education, 2007:5)

In order for this to be attained, teachers should help learners (among others) to foster their connections with their community by

- being cognizant of their **responsibilities and rights as citizens** and acting accordingly;
- being willing to work hard and being long-life learners;
- **contributing to the aesthetic and cultural life of their community** in any way they can;
- **viewing themselves and their community within the city/town, country, and the world at large;**
- contributing and adapting to change—be it scientific or technological. (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 6)

Community service develops civic-mindedness, which goes beyond the scope of what students know (Delano-Oriaran, 2018, p. 292). It combines what students do with what they know. Universities and institutions of higher education are generally producing individuals who know without doing. Importantly, what a country like ours needs is to increase in our students the capacity to apply their knowledge and skills to civic issues. For this purpose, community service is just a crucial learning element in the equation of having engaged and mindful citizens who deliberately choose to better serve their community and country.

12.4 University and Community-Based Partnerships

The Moroccan Ministry of National Education (1999) and the subsequent university reforms along with decision-makers' official discourse have been calling for the Moroccan university's openness on its socioeconomic environment. Our institution, the Faculty of Letters and Humanities Ben M'sik, has been a pioneer in this respect. We have built partnerships with different parties, be they educational, governmental, non-governmental, professional, or artistic. University and community partnerships

tend to create contexts for civic learning and contribution to community life. Kari and Skelton in McLlrath and Mac Labhram (2007, p. 175) argue that

The partnership with the University is not a formal or legal contract. It is, however, a serious covenant in which the community has agreed to contribute its 'place', knowledge, questions and talents to a learning relationship with people from the university, who in turn agree to contribute their knowledge, questions, and talents. It is through this reciprocal agreement, and the work associated with it, that an authentic learning community forms. When this happens, new knowledge, new practice, new ways of organizing are created.

Community partnerships refer to "... a range of initiatives based at an institution of higher education, designed to enhance local neighborhoods through some working relationship with residents and institutions in those areas" (Maurrasse, 2001, p. 9).

In this respect, the Faculty of Letters Ben M'sik at Hassan II University in Casablanca built partnerships with neighborhood institutions. These include the local education authority or the Provincial Directorate of Moulay Rachid. This has allowed our students to serve in over 20 secondary and high schools under the supervision of the Directorate. We have also partnerships with associations operating in different areas such as single mothers, orphans, special needs, etc. Recently, we have partnered with an international organization called Handicap International. This organization supports people with disabilities and people in precarious situations. It also assists people suffering from conflicts and disasters. Thanks to this partnership, a group of professors from our institution have developed Social Worker's professional B.A. It is a two-year program training leading to a Bachelor's degree in social work. So far, the scope of our community partnerships has outgrown our expectations. We have two types of partnerships:

1. State institutions like the Provincial Directorate of Moulay Rachid, or the educational local authority. ANAPEC (national employment agency) is another partnering institution, which is involved in the training and job placements (part-time and full-time) of our students.
2. Civil society and associations. Our students are encouraged to be affiliated to associations of their choice, as this will bring them plenty of benefits. Our partners in this area include: The Alumni Association of Ben M'sik English Department (AABED), Idmaj (neighborhood Moroccan–American volunteering association), Handicap International, and most recently Assalam Foundation for Social Development (a local association specialized in assisting single mothers in difficult situations, widows, and their orphaned children). The foundation offers professional training programs to the single mothers and widows to start their own income-generating small businesses. Our students volunteer by helping the children in their schooling i.e., English, revision, exam preparation, extracurricular activities, and homework, etc.

Universities around the world have been weaving ties with their communities in order to offer their students opportunities to explore their immediate environment and become responsible citizens. Each university reaches out to its community based on its mission statement, its speciality, and the inclination of its faculty members to

collaborate with their community. Studies in the US, Canada, and Australia (Maurrasse, 2001; Jacoby et al., 2003; Miller & Hafner, 2008; Bok, 2015) have shown that university–community partnerships have thrived in the last two to three decades. These partnerships can be categorized as follows:

- International partnerships
- Education partnerships
- Community partnerships
- Business partnerships.

Our institution’s partnerships are mainly community based, educational, and international. Following is a list of our main partners:

- (1) With local authorities, city council and region, our partners help us by providing us with buses, theater for free, gardening, cleaning services, and so forth. We, in turn, provide training for the elected councilors and civil servants.

We launched a project to set up an itinerant community museum for each municipality. We have also provided communication training for local authorities’ civil servants.

- (2) With the ministry of education provincial directorates. Our first partnership started informally with a neighboring middle school, Cadi Ayad, in 2009. Ultimately, “partnerships start with and are built upon personal relationships” (Jacoby et al., 2003). So did our first educational partnership. We realized there was a need for serving our poor neighborhood by sending our students to give support classes, revision, and exam preparation for eighth and ninth graders. In the following years, more middle and high schools approached our department for English support classes. In 2015, due to growing demand for our students’ help and the growing number of institutions who voiced their need for such support, our institution signed an official partnership with Moulay Rachid Provincial Directorate (Ministry of Education local authority). The directorate caters for 23 middle schools and 12 high schools. Subsequently, about 50 Semesters 5 and 6 students from the Department of English Studies perform community service in the middle schools and high schools. Our department students serve in those institutions partly because of the partnership and partly because they are doing research in Applied linguistics and Citizenship in education courses in S5 and S6, respectively. So, over the last 10 years, over five hundred students have performed community service in Ben M’sik Moulay Rachid neighborhood, about a hundred research projects were conducted on civic engagement and community service.
- (3) Dar Taliba (girls’ campus) Hay Salama is a girl’s boarding house run by an NGO and the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH). This partnership has been running for three years. About half a dozen students from the Department of English Studies serve at Dar Taliba through teaching English, tutoring, and coaching. The beneficiaries are teenage girls who are either orphans or from underprivileged families.

- (4) With the private sector, our partnership takes many forms: support for the two festivals our institution takes pride in organizing every year for the last thirty years. We are referring to Ben M'sik International University Theater (FITUC) and the International Video Art Festival (FIAV). Our private sector partners, for example, take care of our visiting artists and partially cover hotel, and printing expenses. They put at our disposal their premises such as Studio of the Living Arts Theater. As for us, we use their logos in our media communication.
- (5) NGOs are other partners we have been working since 2014–15. Our main association partner is Assalam Foundation for Social Development. It is a non-profit organization that provides educational, financial, and medical assistance to orphans and their mothers. It also organizes workshops and training for single mothers and widows to sustain themselves and their families. Our students volunteer throughout the year by helping the kids in their schooling, and the mothers in their income-generating small businesses. They also help organize activities during religious holidays, raise funds, and organize sports events, creativity competitions such as painting, singing, and acting. IDMAJ is another NGO which has been our partner for over a decade. Our students volunteer at IDMAJ and they receive training and internships thanks to Mr. Mazouz's efforts.
- (6) We have also been partners with ANAPEC (National Employment Agency). They have been helpful in providing orientation and training sessions for our graduates. They have also been crucial in offering internships for a good number of our students. Lately, ANAPEC has been involved in a mass recruitment initiative in the private education sector. Every year, they visit our campus to raise our students' awareness about the requirements of the job market.
- (7) Dar America is one of our long-lasting partners whose help has been invaluable for over two decades. Our students use Dar America's library for their research. They also use their online databases. In addition to that, our students watch American movies and documentaries, attend roundtables, workshops, shows including musicals and dance groups. They also benefit from the video conferences and discussion groups organized by Dar America. They also improve their English through guest speakers, teacher training workshops, "Open Mic" night, and public speaking events.
- (8) Besides the national partners mentioned above, we have one outstanding international partnership with Kennesaw State University, KSU. We have just celebrated the 12th anniversary of our partnership. The partnership has resulted in faculty and student exchange, Ben M'sik community Museum, Moroccan American Studies Association, four international conferences, the last of which: Year of Morocco March 2019 at KSU.
- (9) As for the media, we have good relations with national radio and TV stations, newspapers, both paper and electronic, in addition to websites. They help us with press releases, coverage of our activities, press conferences, publication of articles and reports on our events. To evaluate our partnership with the socio-economic environment, we can say that it is classic and archaic based on personal relationships. The university does not attract partners. They are not yet aware of

the importance of partnership with the university, especially with the Schools of Humanities.

What makes this experience interesting is that our students share their stories with each other and pass them on to students who have never done community service. They do it either face to face or through social media. This has played a major role in motivating and encouraging more students to take part in community service. The current academic year (2018–2019), for example, has witnessed a record number of students wishing to volunteer in neighboring secondary schools. For this reason and thanks to our partnership with Moulay Rachid Provincial Directory, over 50 English Studies students are serving in different secondary and high schools under the management of the Moulay Rachid Provincial Directory (Ministry of Education local authority).

12.5 Impact of Community Service

Our common objective is to rehabilitate the Moroccan state school in order to restore confidence in this institution, whose aim is to inculcate the values of citizenship in the community and a commitment to establishing the principle of equality of opportunity in the community (Speech from the Throne, July 30, 2008).

It has become increasingly clear that university–community partnerships have a beneficial and sustainable impact on the three actors of the equation: community, university, and students.

As far as the community is concerned, there are educational courses that the university offers that promote knowledge, teach languages and skills to participating community members. The universities are also involved in recreational and cultural events from which the community benefits. For example, in Ben M'sik's case, there are two major international events namely, FIAV and FITUC as mentioned earlier. Every year the BenM'sik community participates and enjoys the workshops, video projections, plays, master classes in drama, and video art. This definitely strengthens the bond between the university and its community to contribute to the making of homegrown engaged citizens. By forging partnerships with the community, the university benefits at all levels. First of all, these partnerships empower the university and enhance its reputation both locally and internationally. Second, thanks to this reputation, the university becomes more attractive both in terms of student enrollment and potential sponsorship. Last but not least, university–community partnerships will trigger more research for university professors who will gain expertise in their fields.

The impact that university–community partnerships have on the students is far reaching. In addition to high sense of citizenship, students benefit a great deal from university–community partnerships. They develop personally as they acquire work experience and essential soft skills. They receive benefits which they cannot have access to through the traditional lectures and courses they attend. In fact, when our

students serve the community, they discover that they have undergone a metamorphosis. In addition to participatory, intellectual, and interpersonal skills, students achieve a great deal during and after their service is over. To give just a few examples of what students can get out of community partnerships, we can mention personal development, communication skills, fieldwork skills, life and career skills in general, networking skills, and negotiating skills. We should not forget that in the context of teaching, they can develop leadership skills, decision-making skills, and teamwork skills.

On a different level, students involved in university–community partnerships will have an in-depth knowledge of their community and the world surrounding them. They have hands-on experience with the real world as they operate with people (pupils and partners) inside the community. This fact definitely strengthens their understanding of the relevance of learning regarding real-world situations. Moreover, they develop their self-awareness as true agents of change, a fact which will enable them to pay more attention to the concept of “the common good” and consequently act as engaged citizens who believe in what they do. Finally, community partnerships remain a golden opportunity for students to promote their lifelong commitment to civic engagement and responsibility.

12.6 Why Adopt Community Service as an Integral Entity?

As mentioned earlier in this paper, there have been several educational reforms, especially at the university level. Most of these university reforms have proved their failures because of a combination of factors. The Higher Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research put forward what is referred to as the National Strategic Vision (2015–2030). This vision aims to establish a new school, the foundations of which are equity, equal opportunities, and quality for all. Adopting community service as an integral part or entity of the Moroccan educational system would be compatible with the precepts of the policy-makers’ strategic vision.

It is for this reason that the strategic vision proposed by the Council emphasizes the need to perpetuate and reinforce the constants, the religious and national values of our country, and promote its plural identity and its cultural diversity. It also confirms the importance of rooting the values of democracy, citizenship and civic behavior (Ministry of Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education, and Scientific Research, 2015, p. 22).

In addition, one of the main objectives of the vision is to develop “good citizens.” This cannot be fulfilled without adopting an innovative pedagogy based on developing critical thinking, personal development, learning foreign languages, acquiring civic and citizenship values, and information technology skills (Ministry of Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education, and Scientific Research, 2015, p. 6).

Community service offers a win-win situation for the parties involved in the implementation of its components; i.e., the students, the institution, and the community. Put clearly, the benefits are threefold:

1. Students will benefit from their service by enhancing their academic learning and skills. They will have hands-on experience with the real world as they will be dealing with people and community issues. Raising their interests beyond their classrooms will definitely strengthen their understanding of the relevance of learning regarding real-world situations. By attempting to solve community problems such as giving support classes to high school students, they will have to resort to different skills they learn through such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills that will help them approach complex problems. Moreover, they will develop their self-awareness and will thus clarify and observe how they apply values, beliefs, and ethics in their daily practices. In addition, they will improve their interpersonal skills and team spirit as they will most probably be working in pairs or small groups. Finally, community service is a golden opportunity for university students to promote their lifelong commitment to civic engagement and responsibility.
2. Institutions, through community service, will gain reputation locally, nationally, and even internationally. They will enable their students to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of social issues and eventually impact their community, both at local and wider levels. By doing so, they will earn the respect and trust of the community, other institutions, and partners alike. They will also widen their scope of openness as a result of community service during which students acquire building partnership skills. The trained students represent their institution, and depending on their service projects, they will likely build partnerships with local authorities, the private sector, NGOs, etc. These partnerships will strengthen the position of the institution and will consequently be conducive to more partnerships with different types of organizations. In parallel with this, the institution contributes to its students' career development and improvements of their work skills, thus preparing them for the after graduation life.

The staff and faculty members have their share, too. Their involvement in community service projects and training will have a positive impact that motivates their students to see the relevance of academic results. Some of their input can serve as a basis for fieldwork and off-campus activities. Such contribution will definitely yield interesting results that will reinforce their effectiveness and therefore will boost their credibility as well as that of their institution. Above all, both the faculty members and the institution will earn not only a viable reputation that will earn them the recognition of community and other stakeholders by providing services that will contribute to social development. Furthermore, the accumulation of successful stories and experiences within the institution over time is conducive to conducting research. The promising niches for research vary from evaluation of projects to experimenting new ideas that will have impact on students and, by extension, on their communities. The different publications emanating from this type of research and the involvement of research labs and the Doctoral Centre in such programs will reinforce both the mission of the institution and the credibility of its structures. Much of this research will be empirical and will thus equip the students with enough knowledge and skills that will prepare them to become future leaders and researchers.

3. Last but not least are the benefits for the community. Like the institution, the community benefits from the students' service. Building partnerships with higher education institutions enables it to benefit from high-quality services. In the long run, it will benefit from its members who are the students in the institution as it will consist of a potential-educated human capital that will help with its development. After graduation, the students will become active citizens in their communities. The interaction between university and community fosters mutually ethical and civic participation for the benefit of students and community members alike.

12.7 Learning Outcomes

Finally, thanks to our community service throughout the last decade, our students have received benefits which they cannot have access to through the traditional lectures and courses they attend. Every year our students impress us by the maturity, experience, wisdom, self-confidence, and humility they demonstrate through their end of service reports.

The change we are aspiring to make resides in our students building this capacity of awareness and responsibility toward their community. Not only do our students give support classes but also they share values with the ninth graders and high school students. They share civic values that fight all forms of school violence and radicalization, which has become a threat that is haunting the whole world.

Through our community service experience, our students help high school students to develop their English skills and prepare them for their end of year examinations. However, the students use activities such as public speaking and debating which encourage the high school population to engage in activities whose objective is to sensitize them to the dangers of radicalization and all forms of violence and common values of freedom, tolerance, nondiscrimination, and intercultural dialogue that our country defends and our religion is based on.

Finally, community service remains a golden opportunity for students to promote their lifelong commitment to civic engagement and responsibility. This is, of course, the essence of community service. Community service can be seen as a kind of education in the community and civic engagement. Longo (2007) advocates that education is the function of communities and that education is not about tests and knowledge. He argues "it is also about more than preparing people to be part of the system 'as it is.' That is, people in general and students in particular as community servants, and as agents of change, work towards changing their communities for the better in socio-political terms." (p. x).

12.8 Conclusion and Recommendations

Butin (2010) emphasizes the advantages of service-learning both as a pedagogy and practice as follows:

Service learning is a highly flexible and adaptable practice that works across an immense variety of institutions, faculty, disciplines, and students. It can accommodate differing and divergent goals and it is manifest in manifold instructional and institutional strategies....[its] ability to function and spread across the panoply of higher education is of course part of what makes it such an appealing pedagogical and philosophical model. (p. 144)

The last two decades have seen attempts to reconnect the university with the community. This reconnection can be achieved through strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation (Maurasse, 2001). At the level of planning, university–community partnerships as a new cultural concept should be taken into consideration by the national education policy-makers i.e., top-level institutional involvement. Although the National Charter for Education, Training, and Scientific Research calls for university openness to its socioeconomic environment in this respect, not much has been materialized since 2001.

What does planning involve? Planning in this sense involves considering citizenship education/community service as a university course in its own right. This way, it will be legitimized and will definitely engage the university (administration staff, faculty, and students) in the community. Planning will also target populations to be served, and potential partners. Decision-makers should recommend reduplication of successful partnerships. University should play a vital role in the level of implementation. Besides designing courses that would introduce civic culture at university level (citizenship is taught at Middle school), and university should introduce a practical component as a requirement for course completion. This practical component could be a module of community service all university students should perform prior to their graduation. To attain lasting and sustainable university–community partnerships, regular evaluation of processes and outcomes should be made to see where the partnerships stand. The evaluation should take into account all the stakeholders of the partnership, namely university, students, and community (partners and beneficiaries). The evaluation here is not to determine whether the partnerships pass or fail. Rather, evaluation is to ensure that success is attained. The success of the partnerships will depend on the positive outcomes and benefits for all the parties involved and their satisfaction.

Community service should not be a process rather than a one-shot event over a weekend activity. The journey toward becoming an engaged community member and citizen requires, among other things, skills, commitment, a willingness to be open to new ideas, and perseverance. It does not begin and end with a single community service course, assignment, or activity. This journey is an ongoing, lifelong process. The students' participation in community service raises their consciousness about community issues and contributes to their personal and academic development. According to Soria and Mitchell (2016), the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

added an elective classification of “community engagement”, which requires that teaching, learning, and scholarship engage faculty, students, and community in mutually beneficial collaborations that address community-identified needs, deepen students’ civic and academic learning, contribute to the well-being of the community, and enrich scholarship. (p. 6)

Community service helps students evolve from understanding themselves as individual students in a class, motivated by self-actualization and their tutors’, classmates’, and communities’ recognition. In a famous quote, Mahatma Gandhi challenges people to live the values that underlie community service, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

In the community service journey, students discover that community service develops their skills and teaches them insight, patience, courage, compassion, fortitude, commitment, and many other ways of being. For this purpose, civic engagement should be rooted in the Moroccan university life, in courses, in research so that our universities model a mode of civic involvement that occurs at the heart of the university and its environment. By the time our students graduate, the university will have already done its part of the job in terms of having prepared students as engaged community servants and good citizens who are able to lead others to a brighter future.

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