

University's Catalytic Effect in Engendering Local Development Drives: Insight into the Instrumentality of Community-Based Service Learning

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Abstract

The context of this paper is Africa, where communities have historically looked up to universities within their locality to maximize their intellectual capital and knowledge creation to foster regional development. How well these universities are actively responding to the demands of economic and social development require attention. This paper reports an instrumental case study involving in-depth interviews and focus groups within a bounded locality in Cameroon to address what universities can do to enhance their contribution to local development. Findings suggest that whilst a university's community-based service learning (CBSL) scheme can be ascertained as an instrument that can engender local development, this requires the fostering of relevant education for informed participation of different stakeholders in the framing but also firming up of CBSL objectives and processes. Furthermore, in order to optimize the prospect for local development instigated by CBSL activities, relevant stakeholders should go beyond short-term planning and adopt futuristic sustainable strategies. There is need to promote deeper dissemination, as well as follow-up on field findings for sustained implementation and outcomes.

Keywords: community-based service learning, local development, community engagement, higher education, Cameroon

1. Introduction

Historically, African universities have been associated with a mission to enhance the development of their countries (Eisemon and Salmi 1993; Fongwa and Wangenge-Ouma 2015; Mosha 1986; Sawyerr 2004; Teferra and Albatch 2004). Although the place of universities in societal advancement of the 21st century is debatable (Cabedo et al. 2018), African universities are still under scrutiny to respond adequately and sustainably to the continent's development targets (Mbah 2014, 2015). Amongst prominent voices that have uttered this challenge in the past is Kofi Annan, a former UN Secretary General, who asserts that "the university must be a primary tool for Africa's development in the new century" (cited in Bloom, Canning and Chan 2006, 2). Julius Nyerere (erstwhile president of Tanzania) insisted for linkages between African universities and local communities (cited in Preece et al. 2012, 6). Although many African universities have demonstrated the potential to steer regional development, the framework of community engagement is not well developed and entrenched within their operational strata (Preece et al. 2012). This deficiency calls for a consideration of an engagement model that would act as a catalyst to boost African universities' contribution towards local development drives.

It can be maintained that universities are now increasingly involved not only in education but also in the functions of research, outreach, enterprise, community engagement and development initiatives (Barnett 2011; Bernardo, Butcher and Howard 2012; Collini 2012; Fongwa and Wangenge-Ouma 2015; Inman and Schuetze 2010; Shephard, Brown and Guiney, 2017; Mbah 2019; Watson 2007). Whilst the idea of a university's community engagement can be framed in multiple ways (Hall 2009), this paper highlights community-based service learning (CBSL) and its integral element of internship as an ideal premise that can engender economic and social development, especially within a developing world context.

2. Conceptual Framework

Drawing on the work of some authors such as Kurt Lewin's conceptualization of action research (Lewin 1946), John Dewey's philosophy of experimentalism (Dewey 1938) and Ernest Boyer's notion of the engaged scholarship (Boyer 1996), the general consensus underneath service learning put forth by many authors suggests an inseparable link between action oriented service and learning (Wade 1997; Jacoby 1999). Broadly, service learning is termed a philosophy, a pedagogy, an experience and a programme (Mendel-Reyes 1998; Gronski and Pigg 2000; Bringle and Hatcher 2009; Hall 2009). Unlike community service and volunteerism which may not have an accompanying learning component with a credit value, service learning is often laden with action projects and practices in local communities which are accompanied by academic credit points to be earned by the learner (Hall 2009; Stoecker, Tryon and Hilgendorf 2009). Although Dewey in his theory of experimentalism suggests that experience enhances learning, he also argued that not all experiences were educative (Tagoe 2012). Accordingly, experience can be termed educative when reflective and critical thinking processes create new meanings, leading to informed decisions and transformations. Whilst the idea of service learning can be operationalized in multiple contexts, CBSL can be considered as an overarching platform for students to learn and develop their skills and sense of civic responsibility in structured, course based, credit laden and time bound activities, situated in local communities (Bringle and Hatcher 2007; Hall 2009; Stoecker, Tryon and Hilgendorf 2009). It incorporates different activities such community-based action projects (Chun et al. 2012) and internships (McKinney et al. 2008). CBSL activities provide a framework whereby the cognitive relates to the practical (Butin 2005) and specific community needs can be met (Jacoby 1999). Whilst previous studies on CBSL have articulated the benefits of the scheme in providing a pedagogical intervention that can support the civic growth of students and provide community outcomes (Binder et al. 2015; Bringle and Steinberg 2010; Harkavy and Hartley 2010; Reeb et al. 2010), there is very limited research that captures and analyses critical perceptions of the concept. Although Rosing et al. (2010) presented some of the criticisms levied against CBSL from the students' perspective; their study did not capture the views of community stakeholders from multifaceted viewpoints. This paper addresses this gap, highlighting the concerns articulated by research participants, and proffers a template for modelling CBSL for student learning and community development.

In this regard, CBSL activities intended to contribute meaningfully in the fostering of local development drives must capture and incorporate community voices. This implicitly addresses the underlining subjects of inclusion, belonging and social justice (Mertens 2009, 2011). Fundamentally, there is need to give voice to the voiceless (Ashby 2011) and for communication to involve all interested persons without a centrally dominating influence are considered pivotal for development outcomes. This is consistent with Habermas' (1984) theory of Communicative Action, where meaningful and lasting social change can start to occur within a context of equal participation in critical debates and engagement with people who may carry opposing views. However, tensions may arise when unequal power relations (for instance between a university and its surrounding community) infiltrates a context that addresses intransigent social problems (Greene 2007, Mertens 2009) such as poverty and the need for targeted social development. Therefore, it can be argued that effective capturing of community voices to inform development processes and social change is predicated on democratic values, respect of human rights and power amelioration. This has the potential to remove the marked distinction between "the oppressed" and "the oppressor". The ensuing result would be constructive dialogues, and these can instigate the emergence of shared ideas, aspiration and a common outcome for synergistic social development.

3. Methodology and Contextual Background

In order to illustrate the broad subject of CBSL and its potential to engender local development, an instrumental case study (Stake 1994; Yin 2013) was adopted. This approach was considered most useful in providing an insight into the intersection between community-based service learning and local development. It does so by capturing and drawing meanings from the views of university and community participants within a bounded system. The site of the research was the Buea municipality in the English-Speaking region of Cameroon consisting of eighty-five villages, spread across a surface area of 870 Sq.km, with a total estimated population of 200,000 inhabitants. The municipality has a blend of urban, semi-urban, rural and traditional settings which provided an opportunity to collect data from wide-ranging sources. Within the municipality is a State-owned university with a population of about 18,000 at the time the study was conducted. The university emerged from Cameroon's Higher Education reforms of 1993 (Njeuma et al. 1993) with a mission to contribute to national development amongst others.

It can be asserted that the researcher approached the research setting as an insider, that is, there was privileged access to the research context. Furthermore, it was easy to relate with some of the ideas participants articulated or muttered in the course of the enquiry process (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). However, as an insider, the

researcher had to take steps to make the familiar strange (Delamont 2003). In the process, the investigator had to be careful not to articulate participants' voices on their behalf or conclude their utterances or ascribe meanings too soon to their responses but allowed them to emerge naturally from the data.

Given the complexities encountered during field work, a range of sampling methods were adopted to recruitment participants. These include purposive sample (Merrill and West 2009), opportunistic sample (Holliday 2007) and snow ball (Langdrige and Hagger-Johnson 2009).

In total, thirty-one participants drawn from different segments of the university and the local community participated in the study (see Table 1). Of the thirty-one participants, twenty participated in semi-structured interviews and eleven in two focus group discussions over an intensive and consecutive 10 weeks of fieldwork, spanning March to June 2013. Whereas the semi-structured interview approach (Yin 2009) allows the interviewer opportunities for probing beyond the structured predetermined questions and flexible collection of rich qualitative data, the focus group discussions provided an enabling environment for members to have a conversation around different lines of enquiry (Bryman 2012).

Table 1. Research participants

No	Participant	Sex	Age range	Occupation	Village
1	Martha	Female	31-40	Business	Molyko
2	Paul	Male	21-30	Student	Molyko
3	Joseph	Male	31-40	Lecturer	Bomaka
4	Marcus	Male	31-40	Admin Staff	Bakweri town
5	Agnes	Female	51-60	Business	Bokwai
6	Stephen	Male	41-50	Lecturer	Bonduma
7	Pauline	Female	21-30	Student	Bowango
8	Catherine	Female	21-30	Student	Molyko
9	Susan	Female	21-30	Student	Molyko
10	Gregory	Male	21-30	Student	Molyko
11	Lucas	Male	21-30	Student	Molyko
12	John	Male	41-50	Lecturer	GRA
13	Eric	Male	41-50	Lecturer	Bokwango
14	Clement	Male	51-60	Lecturer	Clerk's quarter
15	Philemon	Male	41-50	Admin Staff	Bolifamba
16	Sophie	Female	21-30	Student	Molyko
17	Joan	Female	51-60	NGO	Bulu
18	Margaret	Female	41-50	Medical Scientist	Bolifamba
19	Martin	Male	31-40	Farming	Molyko
20	Cornelius	Male	51-60	NGO	Molyko
21	Gregory	Male	51-60	Civil Servant	Wokoko
22	Docas	Female	31-40	Farming	Bokuva
23	Elizabeth	Female	41-50	Development technician	Bokuva
24	Loveline	Female	51-60	Farming	Bokuva
25	Grace	Female	51-60	Farming	Bokuva
26	Alain	Male	41-50	Farming	Bokuva
27	Elvis	Male	51-60	Farming	Bokuva
28	Helen	Female	51-60	Farming	Bokwai - New Layout
29	Alfred	Male	51-60	Clergy	Great soppo
30	Sherley	Female	51-60	Farming	Bonakanda
31	Peter	Male	71-80	Retired	Bokwai

Participants generally responded to questions on the wider role of the university and the potential of CBSL to promote local development. Captured voices were transcribed and analyzed thematically (Ryan 2003; Aronson 1994). Whilst the process of thematic analysis includes coding, cataloguing codes into themes and building arguments, it was data driven (Wolcott 1994). Being data driven implies that the transcripts were not subjected to a predetermined theory. In subsequent sections, direct quotations from participants' responses have been used to support some of the findings and where this is the case, the quotations have been followed by the participants' name (pseudonym), gender, age range, and village of residence.

4. Findings

Following the thematic analysis of the transcribed audio recordings, key findings centred on participants' field experiences of CBSL and the concerns they have with the scheme.

4.1 Participants' Field Experiences of CBSL

Findings from the research data depict that for many of the participants, CBSL activities represent the centrality of the university's presence within their community. Given its multifaceted nature, the various types of CBSL activities articulated by participants consisted largely of student internships and community-based action projects. As an illustration, the following quotes exemplify participants' experiences of CBSL activities within their own community:

Perception from an academic:

'In the department of Law, we have this project during which we send our students to various law firms, for pupillage and internship. This has been done in the last four to five years and is ongoing. The students are received by law firms, but I think that the objective and the way the programme is structured is such that the students go there to pick up skills' (John, male, 41-50, GRA)

Perception from a local resident:

I have experienced internship in the community because I also did my own internship. Many students from the Faculty of Science go out to the community to do internship. We also have the Faculty of Education that also sends out students for internship in primary schools (Margaret, female, 41-50, Bolifamba).

Perception from a student:

'Internship is a very important part of our studies because it is the only opportunity, we have to blend theory with the practical part of it. We are learning here to go out and integrate in the community. It is the only time when we get to see what we have learnt and what is actually taking place out there' (Catherine, female, 21-30, Molyko)

In addition to acknowledging the existence of CBSL activities in the community such as internships, participants also described what they felt were the key benefits. These could be broadly understood under: a) potential for facilitating knowledge exchange, b) enhancing productivity through increasing workforce and c) fostering graduate employment prospects. The interaction between students and members of the community was central to CBSL activities, providing varied opportunities for knowledge exchange. Speaking of this, a participant who had worked with rural women explains:

'When the students come, they want to know details about the village and as we give them the details, we also learn from them, even from the questions they asked us – such questions open our eyes and cause us to think. Student nurses also come here and carry out their internships and in the course of their stay here; they educate us on health and hygiene' (Elizabeth, female, 41-50, Bokuva).

As well as referring positively to what we may term the 'knowledge exchange' possibilities, an integral aspect of CBSL, this participant also touched on how internships can potentially facilitate civic education. Civic education can involve an intentional effort to integrate and apply different forms of knowledge – be it technical/scientific knowledge from the university or rural/indigenous knowledge from the community (Campbell and Feenstra 2005). Sequel to this perspective, one could argue there is further scope for the university and community to play a more active role in facilitating CBSL in order to create strategic opportunities for integrating different forms of indigenous knowledge (Mbah 2019) for mutual benefit.

During the research, interviews were also conducted with two participants from the local community who had unique experience of hosting student interns. Both interviewees explained in some detail how they felt the

interns had added to the capacity of their specific organizations in terms of increasing their workforce temporarily. Given the financial costs in recruiting employees, particularly for organizations with very limited financial resources, working with student interns who do not require a fixed salary can bring significant benefits to small employers. A female community member who operated an NGO explains the benefit of internships to her local community: ‘the students who came here for internships did a lot of work on the farms and that was reflected in my report because they were human resources I never paid for’ (Joan, female, 51-60, Bulu). In addition to deriving benefits from unpaid internships, one community member also referred to how time consuming it can be to train and prepare student interns for productive services:

‘The interns bring us a work force when they come in. To have ten students to increase your work force is beneficial somehow, though from the beginning it is very stressful in that they are spoiling things, they are not doing things rightly and we have to teach them over and over again on what to do. But at the end of the day, before they go out, we can relax. Some of our staff can sit back and watch them do things and they will do them well’ (Cornelius, male, 51-60, Molyko)

Whilst this narrative depicts that interns can make valuable contribution to the community, there can also be setbacks (Bringle and Steinberg 2010). Questions around training and the ability of interns to acquire the skills necessary to make a meaningful contribution to the worth of a host organization abound. However, supervisors of student interns must maintain a healthy balance between their ability to enhance the efficacy of their host organisations and ensuring the learning experiences are positive and productive (Clark 2003; Furco 1996; McKinney et al. 2008).

Research data suggests internships provide an enabling environment for interns to be equipped with the necessary skills to go on to make valuable contributions to existing services in the local community. It can also act as a gateway to securing employment with the organizations interns had previously worked for. One community member (Cornelius, male, 51-60), who had hosted many interns over the years stated that some were eventually recruited as staff of his organization on a permanent basis. Similarly, Fliers (2015, 23) avers that “many employers consider recruiting candidates who have proven their abilities during a work placement” and this can be one of many reliable ways of employing graduates. Irrespective of these benefits associated with CBSL, unveiled by participants, they also expressed some concerns.

4.2 Participants’ Concerns with CBSL

Many of the concerns expressed by research participants with CBSL centred on what was perceived as limited information sharing and practices that restrict the potential of the scheme contributing to local transformation. These concerns include a) students carrying out an aspect of CBSL such as internship solely to secure academic credits; b) the scheme being underlined by unethical practices; c) limited dialogue between the university and the community; d) lack of follow-up on students’ CBSL evaluation reports and e) inadequate time.

Proponents of CBSL underscore how the scheme has the potential to address learning and service objectives (Bringle and Hatcher 2007; Butin 2005; Furco 1996). However, research data suggests that many students who engaged in internship (an integral facet of CBSL) were motivated by the desire to earn academic credits than to address specific community needs. A female student captured this concern: ‘students who go out for internships go out there ignorantly and all they are trying to do is earn marks. It should not be all about earning marks but also about the impact that this thing has on the society’ (Sophie, female, 21-30, Molyko). Similarly, another participant explains:

‘Students of the university carry out internships in some offices around the place or in some organisations. That is because they want to write their report and defend it. Just going around and doing some research to be able to write your papers and defend it, in an attempt to complete your course will not suffice for community development’ (Gregory, male, 51-60, Wokoko)

Although CBSL is structured as part of an academic programme in many universities (Bringle and Hatcher 2007; Hall 2009; Jacoby 1999; Stoecker, Tryon and Hilgendorf 2009), it becomes problematic when student motivations are weighted disproportionately towards acquiring an academic credit at the expense of gaining civic growth and attempting solutions to community problems. Some participants were also concerned about the experience of internships being underlined with unethical practices in an attempt by some students to gain an academic credit. A female student participant elaborates:

‘You would find some students right up to July when we are expected to be finishing our

exams who have not had somewhere to do internship. As a consequent, some students have furnished the university with internship reports resulting from an internship they never did' (Catherine, female, 21-30, Molyko)

Such unethical practice was in part attributed to lack of effective monitoring or field supervision of internships, as well as very limited direction for principled considerations associated with CBSL. This helped to create a climate whereby it was more feasible for some students to report back to the university with fictitious reports on CBSL activities which never actually took place. However, when students themselves value internships, particularly because they have been informed of their benefits such as enabling them to understand their own life choices, acquisition of transferable skills and readiness for employment (Binder et al. 2015; Bullock et al. 2009; Hayward 2014), they would most likely treasure the experience.

Additionally, participants mentioned the lack of a collaborative and guiding framework for CBSL between the university and the local community. This was particularly noted in departments where students were given the responsibility to go out to the field and look for host organisations without an advanced memorandum of understanding between the university and the internship provider, streamlining responsibilities between the two parties. This lack of dialogue between the university and the community, demarcating roles and responsibilities can lead to one party exploiting the other. This in turn lead to lack of mutual benefits and a mismanagement of time and resources. Regarding the need to maximize time, CBSL activities are traditionally time bound and some do last for a couple of months. As a result of the limited time span, there are obvious constraints on the longer-term impact they can realistically be expected to have (Stoecker Tryon and Hilgendorf 2009). One community member was realistic about the time restriction of CBSL:

'Students have a limited time for their fieldwork. They can only do little within the limited time and should they stay on the field longer than expected, their time will run out against other programmes at the university and the completion of their studies' (Martha, female, 31-40, Molyko)

Similarly, in a study conducted by Rosing et al. (2010), it was identified that students were more likely to complain about the scheduling of a CBSL activity. Whilst timing is a recurrent theme in CBSL, it can best be addressed by harmonizing the timescales, operational budgets and requirements of the university, student and internship provider.

Still, some respondents expressed concern with the lack of follow-up on students' CBSL evaluation reports which contain findings from the field (Chun et al. 2012). During the empirical phase of the research, it was found that at the end of an internship period, students who have been on internship are required to submit a report to the relevant university department and this is subsequently graded. Students are expected to highlight in these reports issues of concern to the community or the host organization in addition to lessons they have learnt during the internship. The concerns captured in an internship report can provide an obvious opportunity for university and local stakeholders to explore avenues for addressing community challenges.

Instead of acting on internship reports, a male student participant noted that the university 'shelves them'. He explains: 'When students carry out their research or projects and make recommendations in their reports which are submitted to the university, they are read and shelved and no action is taken' (Lucas, male, 21-30, Molyko). Another community participant corroborates: 'They come here, collect data and then go and passed their examination and that is it. We do not hear from them anymore' (Alfred, male, 51-60, Great Soppo). Although it may not be feasible to follow up on all reports from CBSL projects, there are potentially missed opportunities here and a lack of follow-up action on internship or project reports may inhibit the generation of information that can help local development. Irrespective of the issues articulated, participants' narratives also highlighted ways by which CBSL can be modelled to boost local development.

5. Discussion: Modelling CBSL Activities to Engender Local Development

Drawing on the concept of the ecological university that seeks to address its own interests alongside those of the community (Barnett 2011) and findings from research data, this article proposes a model by which CBSL can be structured to boost local development. The model (see Figure 1) captures an interface between four complementary phases and these include the need for: 1) an inclusive service-learning education, b) community involvement, c) going beyond short termism and d) dissemination, as well as follow-up on CBSL reports.

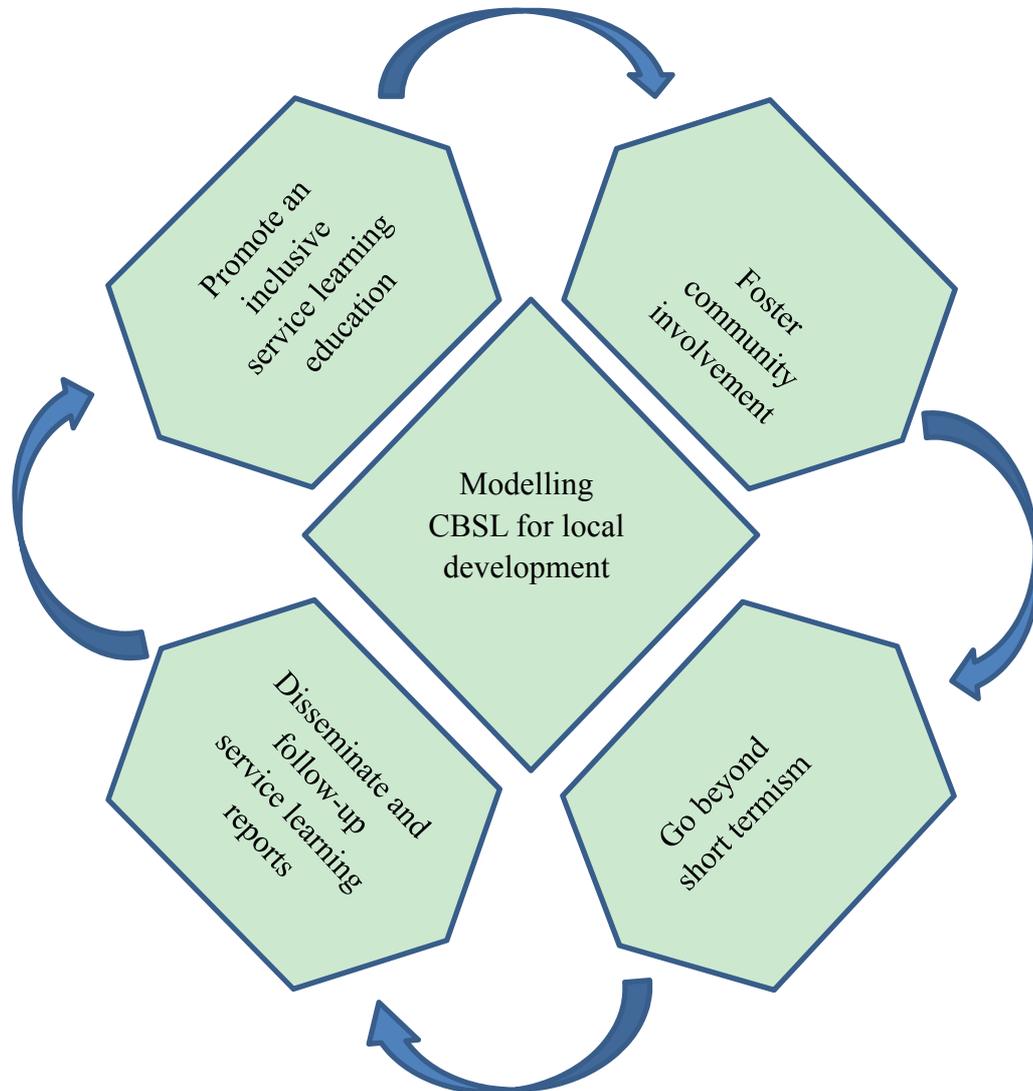


Figure 1. A community-based service learning (CBSL) model for local development

5.1 Promoting an Inclusive Service-Learning Education

A significant number of research participants felt that the failure of CBSL to provide sustained benefits to the community is largely due to a lack of knowledge of the scheme and its potential outcomes. The necessity to promote an inclusive service-learning education highlights the need for informed student and community participation (Bringle and Steinberg 2010). Rather than recognizing an aspect of CBSL such as internship as an asset to local transformation, instead, some organizations with the track record of hosting interns consider the process a burden and liability to their profitability. Speaking of this, a university member of staff maintains:

‘The staff of most of these community organisations do not consider internship as a win-win situation where the organisation is gaining and the university is gaining. Some organisations do not have that service or that department in charge of internship, and when it is not structured to accommodate internship and its merits; students go there and are not properly supervised’ (Joseph, male, 31-40, Bomaka)

Given this assertion, there is need to bring all stakeholders to a state of awareness of CBSL’s potential to not only improve student learning (Chun et al. 2012), but also meet some specific community needs (Jacoby 1999) within a win-win context for both stakeholders. Questions on how to carry out supervision, evaluation and

strategic involvement of interns in the work place can be addressed through a scheme intended to educate the community on service learning. The community is not the only party that should be educated on CBSL. Additionally, students should be educated on the scheme so that they can also make the most of its benefits and practices which are not consistent with the underpinning ethos of CBSL.

5.2 Fostering Community Involvement

Participants' narratives suggested that framing and firming up of CBSL to respond to local needs, in addition to enhancing student learning and civic growth, require full engagement *with* the community. The following interview transcript casts some light:

Q: Are community members involved in setting the stage for internship?

A: They are not involved in the selection of students, they do not participate in determining which students gets to where. What they do is, they received the students and exposed them to what they are doing. That is the way it operates with the university.

Q: Is it important for community members to be part of the selection process?

A: I would have thought so, because sometimes I find my consultancy being flooded with too many students, such that it becomes a problem to manage. So if the law firms themselves were involved, I think some of these difficulties would have been handled and these problems avoided. So I believe that perhaps it would be a good thing to get them involved even from the very beginning. (John, male, 41-50, GRA)

Historically, the university tended to almost unilaterally impose projects and processes onto the very community it has a responsibility to support. One obvious consequence of this would be that the community may be less likely to fully engage with the projects or may consider their involvement to be an additional burden on their time and resources (Dunne, Akyeampong and Humphreys 2007). Also, the case is compounded by the lack of consultation on projects that are likely to address the priority needs of the community. Consequently, imposing an agenda of CBSL on the community falls short of identifying and addressing community needs, in an interlocking process of meeting the university's objective and fostering local development.

Walters and Openjuru (2014) and van Schalkwyk (2015) argue that university engagement can have limited benefits to both the university (with respect to teaching and research) and communities. However, a university's enduring contribution to local development calls for sustained involvement of local stakeholders in its engagement processes. The local community should be allowed to participate in its transformation and in instances where the community is able to demonstrate the required leadership capacity, it should be allowed to lead. Community participation in CBSL activities can lead to a better understanding of the challenges facing the community and how these concerns can be addressed in ways that are relevant to the local context (Warren et al. 1989). This points to the need to address the mechanism by which local people can become part of CBSL schemes and play an active role within a context of co-creation of knowledge.

5.3 Going Beyond Short Termism

Whilst it can be argued that students who spend more time on the field than expected may have their academic trajectory altered, a participant whose organization had a long standing tradition of hosting interns upheld that extending the time for a CBSL activity would enhance the student experience, as well as boost the host organisation and local community's productivity. This participant elaborates:

'It takes enormous time and energy to give interns the needed skills and experience to perform tasks on the field and just about when we [the host organisation] are about to start benefiting from their services, their time runs out and they pack their bags and leave'
(Cornelius, male, 51-60, Molyko)

As with most projects, time is a limiting factor. However, extending the time for CBSL could enhance the benefits to the university, the student and the community. Furthermore, joined-up working to schedule and allocate resources for CBSL activities would ensure that students are able to acquire the required skillset, experience and reflection needed to support their learning and make meaningful contributions to the local community in sustainable ways. However, the issue of cost when considering an extension and duration of a CBSL activity remains contentious.

Participants' narratives revealed that in most cases, students are responsible for the costs associated with internships. There are also costs associated with hosting interns such as providing field supervision and material

resources. Extending the duration of a CBSL activity would therefore have implications although the overarching benefits can outweigh the costs (Bringle and Steinberg 2010). One participant suggested that there should be a specific budget at the university to support CBSL activities. He asserts: 'As part of community outreach of the university and knowing that the university is there to provide services to the people, CBSL as an item should be budgeted under outreach' (Joseph, male, 31-40, Bomaka). It was noted during fieldwork that the university operates an annual budget and while there was a budget line dedicated to outreach, there was no specific line to cover CBSL activities. Mtawa, Fongwa and Wangenge-Ouma (2016) maintain that lack of funding can hamper a university's community engagement, especially in a developing world context where resources are scarce (Teferra and Altbach 2004; Mbah 2016). By providing a budget line or funding for CBSL activities, this could facilitate the processes of internship, for instance, through enabling and sustaining adequate field supervision, bankrolling the cost of materials used by students in host organisations/communities and offering remuneration to professionals in the community who are taking time off to provide students with requisite training and skills.

5.4 Disseminating and Following up on CBSL Evaluation Reports

It can be deduced from research data that when students engage in field project on a subject that is of great concern to the community (such as water crisis), community members are galvanized, with the hope that the project will deliver tangible benefits to the community. With this heightened emotional involvement and expectation, community members are disappointed and feel let down if the outcomes of a CBSL activity (data and key findings from evaluations) are not fed back to the community. Chun et al. (2012) assert that the third phase of an action project should see a student prepare and present his or her findings from an investigation in a planned culminating event in the company of other students, faculty members and family. This article expands on this, arguing that findings from an investigation carried out in a local community should not only be presented to students, faculty and family members but should be targeted to other key members of the local community. One may inquire: are there educational, developmental, social or other forms of benefits associated with feeding back CBSL reports to the community? One community member with a tradition of hosting interns in his organisation suggests: 'We need to be handed copies of the internship reports as it can help us a lot to shape our organisation and prepare for the next intake of interns and the internship process' (Cornelius, male, 51-60, Molyko). However, it is evident that researchers do not always provide their hosts or participants with findings from their research despite receiving honest consent and concerns from their interviewees (Mertens 2007; Silka 2005). This addresses an ethical concern as the act of reporting to a community or an organisation after a CBSL exercise can lead to local transformation, organisational innovation, growth. There are further potentials for better planning and appropriate management of subsequent activities, more so, if relevant recommendations embedded in the reports are taken on-board in formulating social policy and local development drives.

6. Conclusion

Findings from research data highlight CBSL activities in the community as having the potential to foster local development. Given that the goal of learning is transformational, constructing frames of references which are more inclusive, open, reflective and able to support positive change (Dirkx, Mezirow and Cranton 2006), CBSL constitutes a tool in engendering local development drives. In projecting CBSL as an instrument for local development, this article underscored the need for an inclusive service-learning education. The informed participation of university and community stakeholders in framing but also firming up CBSL objectives and processes are crucial. Furthermore, community driven development resulting from CBSL activities can be sustained through collective participation, looking beyond short-term planning, fostering a deeper dissemination and maximization of field reports to address an array of community concerns. Through these measures, CBSL can be optimized and modelled towards local development. Although this article brings to the fore an insightful approach to community-based service learning's contribution to local development, modelled on field voices which can be replicated in similar contexts, further studies would benefit from a larger sample size and comparative analysis of different practices in different regions of the world.

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