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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to bring attention to the potential that non-governmental organizations have in facilitating youth development and enhancing global citizenship. This can potentially be accomplished by utilizing international service learning as a means of capacity building. Non-governmental organizations that educate youth about community development or civic engagement are particularly capable of implementing such methods. This paper describes the benefits of enhancing global citizenship in youth through service learning and the potential of this work for capacity building and community development. An illustration of this process is provided through a description of Global Potential (GP), an organization that provides international service-learning opportunities to high school students in New York City. This paper also elucidates GP's journey toward becoming a learning organization in order to expand and better serve its target population. Lastly, the implications of expanding and replicating service-learning programs are discussed.

Introduction

Community development through capacity building has been an effective method for changing communities for the better. The existing literature includes many examples of how capacity building has been beneficial, particularly when working with vulnerable populations. For instance, studies show the utility of capacity building with the elderly (Austin, McClelland, Sieppert, & Perrault, 2012), people living with disabilities (Nord, Timmons, & Lavin, 2015), and those living in poverty (Arellano, Balcazar, Alvarado, & Suarez, 2015; Pawar & Torres, 2011). Because capacity building is a multifaceted approach with varying and flexible methodologies (Harrow, 2001), community workers have some leeway in determining specifically how they engage their target population.

Working with youth can be an effective way to develop communities, especially communities that have a history of disenfranchisement and marginalization. Focusing on youth development as a means of capacity building can have lasting positive effects on their communities (McKay, Sanders, & Wroblewski, 2011), and there are a number of ways to effectively engage youth. Regrettably, youth are easily disempowered and overlooked due to power differentials associated with age, race/ethnicity, and class among other demographic differences (Evans, 2007; Gillborn, 2015; McMurrey, 2014). However, enhancing global citizenship in youth is a way to educate them about their role in society, increase their capacity to influence change, and encourage them to become civically engaged members of their communities. These specific objectives can be accomplished through programs that seek to enhance global citizenship in youth through international service learning (Hartman & Kiely, 2014).

Due to the advent of the digital age, people from around the world are connecting in ways that were inconceivable before the start of the 21st century. The resulting increased capacity for community and economic development in a global context has created opportunities for work related to youth development, enrichment, and civic engagement through service learning and cultural exchange. What makes this increased capacity important is that xenophobia and "otherization" stand to be diminished following exposure to varying worldviews (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Keen & Hall, 2009; Seider, Rabinowicz, & Gilmore, 2011). The impacts that cultural exchanges can have on youth development are promising in that they prepare youth to interact with a world that is becoming increasingly diverse. With that in mind, international service-learning participation gives youth the chance to develop a sense of global citizenship by experiencing an unfamiliar culture with the intent of humanizing and serving those who are supposedly different, an experience that could potentially yield a number of benefits for them and their respective communities (Giddings, 2003; Hartman & Kiely, 2014; Keith, 1994; Kiely, 2005).

Presently, there are multiple working definitions of global citizenship in the existing literature across various disciplines (Lough & McBride, 2014; Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013). Snider,

Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013) conceptualized the idea of global citizenship as "awareness, caring, and embracing cultural diversity while promoting social justice and sustainability, coupled with a sense of responsibility to act" (p. 1,600). Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013) expounded upon this definition by illustrating how each aspect of this definition applied to a global perspective. For instance, within their conceptualization, social justice is rooted in attitudes toward the equitable treatment of all humans, and responsibility to act is viewed as an obligation to work toward the betterment of the world (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013). The emphasis placed on social justice and a sense of responsibility to be civically engaged has implications for work currently being done with youth to ensure that they become well-rounded, civic-minded adults (Mitchell, 2007). Service learning, particularly international service learning, could potentially demonstrate ways in which youth can be groomed for becoming global citizens (Hartman & Kiely, 2014). The successes of these programs support their development and replication in other regions, which would also inform methods of capacity building centered on youth.

The purpose of this paper is to bring attention to the potential that non-governmental organizations have in facilitating youth development and enhancing global citizenship. This can be accomplished by utilizing international service learning as a means of capacity building with youth. Non-governmental organizations that educate youth about community development or civic engagement are particularly capable of implementing such methods (Crabtree, 2008). The aims of this paper are met by discussing youth development as a form of capacity building. The benefits of enhancing global citizenship in youth through international service learning are also discussed. An illustration of this process is provided through a description of Global Potential, an organization that provides international service-learning opportunities to high school students in New York City. This paper also elucidates Global Potential's journey toward becoming a learning organization in order to expand and better serve its target population. Lastly, the implications of expanding and replicating international service-learning programs are discussed.

Capacity Building through Youth Development

The literature has yet to provide a definitive conceptualization of what capacity building is (Simmons, Reynolds, & Swinburn, 2011). Harrow (2001) explored the various ways that capacity building has been applied theoretically and in practice. She concluded that "[r]ather than regard capacity building as an a-theoretical notion, it can be seen as a notion, which is theoretically homeless; but for which some temporary accommodation can be found…" (p. 226). At first glance, this vagueness may seem limiting, but when considering how nuanced and involved the process of capacity building can become, it is understandable that capacity building remains such a vague concept. Even though capacity building is conceptually broad, there are common elements that have been constant in its application, particularly when it comes to understanding power (Diamond, 2004; O'Hare, 2010; Pawar & Torres, 2011; Richards-Schuster & Dobbie, 2011) and inclusivity (Arellano et al., 2015; Checkoway, 2013).

For this paper, McKay, Sanders, and Wrowbleski's (2011) conceptualization of capacity building is most appropriate. They maintain that "[c]apacity building is about expanding possibility, potential, and access to power" (p. 17). What makes this conceptualization so fitting is the acknowledgment of existing dynamics related to power within communities. Capacity building is a process that seeks to ensure that all community members have an opportunity to be involved in decision-making (Checkoway, 2013; Finn & Checkoway, 1998). What is key here is an acknowledgment that the involvement of all stakeholders from every corner of a community is critical for lasting positive change (Pawar & Torres, 2011). The understanding that all community members have value manifests in the way that practitioners engage that community. To accomplish this, the experiences of community members should be understood. In other words, community workers must collaborate as partners working *with* community members to acquire the change being sought as opposed to working *for* the community to bring about change or commandeering the process in some way.

It should be noted that capacity building is not a foolproof endeavor free of pitfalls and shortcomings. It is risky to assume that all communities are monolithic and that members want the same outcomes (Pawar & Torres, 2011). Additionally, it is naïve to assume that all community members are invested or even interested in bringing about the same changes (Shirlow & Murtagh, 2004). Given the size and diversity of opinion within most communities, the best practitioners can do is to respect the self-determination of each community member, ensure that there is an opportunity for all involved to be heard, and work to resolve any conflicts as they arise. Once efforts have been made to understand the realities faced by members of the community, it becomes possible to assist them in finding solutions that address concerns

that have been raised by building upon identified strengths (Altschuld, Hung, & Lee, 2014; Austin et al. 2012; Pawar & Torres, 2011).

Many of the strengths in disadvantaged and marginalized communities can be found among their youth. Unfortunately, these youth are often disregarded or undervalued, mainly receiving attention when they are perceived to be disruptive (Evans, 2007). In that regard, engaging youth through service learning as a means of capacity building within underserved communities can serve a dual purpose. Firstly, youth development programs can empower and enrich a vulnerable population in ways that allow them to thrive. Youth are given an opportunity to see themselves as valuable resources instead of individuals in a state of perpetual need. Secondly, youth development programs can aid in community development and capacity building by tapping into one of the community's most viable resources, their youth. Capacity building as a process is very much aligned with the tenets of asset-based community development. Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) explained that communities more often benefit when they are viewed from a perspective of strengths and potential as opposed to one of need and deficiency. In order for this to occur, the skills, knowledge, and insights that community members possess must be acknowledged and utilized to facilitate positive change (Preece, 2016). The idea of shifting the onus of community change to its members by assessing the community's capacity for growth is rooted in the understanding that "community development takes place only when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort" (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996, p. 25).

International service-learning programs that teach youth about civic engagement, community development, and capacity building empower youth to, in turn, work with communities in a way that helps those communities to find their voice and make positive changes. By encouraging youth and educating them on how to be active members within their respective communities, they become well-equipped to facilitate capacity building processes apart from the program as a result of their experiences.

McKay, Sanders, and Wroblewski (2011) wrote about the utility of capacity building through service learning with youth. Not only did they explicate the micro, mezzo, and macro implications of capacity building, they also demonstrated that youth are fully capable of contributing to their own development as well as becoming change agents in their own families, peer groups, and communities. What is important about this realization is that youth become

empowered to become active members of society with the confidence and knowledge to aid in resolving issues that impact their communities and others. Programs that increase global citizenship are especially useful in achieving this objective in that youth are shown that they have something to contribute to society while experiencing first-hand the global contexts in which many issues exist (e.g., poverty and health disparities).

Enhancing Global Citizenship through International Service Learning

International service learning blends academic instruction and community-based service in an international context (Crabtree, 2008; Hartman, Paris, and Blache-Cohen, 2012). Several studies have shown the benefits of youth (i.e., adolescents and emerging adults) involvement in international service learning (Banks & Gutiérrez, 2017; Kiely, 2005; Lui & Lee, 2011, Niehaus & Crain, 2013; Pless, Maak, & Stahl, 2011). The effect of international service learning on participants has been evidenced in how they saw themselves and the world around them (Hartman & Kiely, 2014). Youth who have taken part in international service learning have also demonstrated an evolved understanding of poverty and the socioeconomic conditions that perpetuate it (Crabtree, 2008); reconsidered their career path as a result of their participation (Liu & Lee, 2011); and shown an increased commitment to community service and civic engagement (Niehaus & Crain, 2013). The findings of these different studies fit within the conceptualization of global citizenship posited by Snider, Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013) to varying extents. This is apparent because they each relate to some level of awareness, caring, embracing cultural diversity while promoting social justice, and/or a sense of responsibility to act. All of these qualities readily lend themselves to capacity building, thus making youth who view themselves as global citizens fit to lead and participate in such processes.

Despite research that has linked international service learning to conceptual aspects of global citizenship, the findings of studies that investigated a more direct link between service-learning experiences and a sense of global citizenship are mixed. For instance, Miller (2014) found that the more countries a student visited, the higher their likelihood of viewing themselves as global citizens with the power to help solve the world's problems. Horn and Fry (2013) also produced findings that supported the idea that study-abroad programs with service-learning pedagogies can cultivate personal growth, cognitive engagement, and social capital that culminates in

active global citizenship. Conversely, Hartman and Kiely (2014) conducted a comparative case study of three international service-learning programs and found that participants, mentors, and community partners struggled with the construct of global citizenship and what it means. These conflicting results could at least partially be attributed to the inconsistent conceptualizations of global citizenship present in the literature (Hartman & Kiely, 2014).

Each of these studies has in common the acknowledgment of the contributions that youth can make in solving society's problems. However, youth are often excluded from the discourse around how society functions (Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo, & Sheblanova, 1998; Goodwin & Young, 2013). This exclusion is particularly true for minority youth (Camino & Zeldin, 2002; Evans, 2007). To date, studies that specifically explore the impact of service learning on underserved, minority youth are limited (Curtis, 2016). Even less is known about how international service learning affects youth development and global citizenship in this population. In fact, much of the existing literature on international service learning focuses on the realization of privilege and the acquisition of cross-cultural competence in college students, which is definitely important. Yet little attention has been paid to the effect these experiences have on marginalized youth who are most likely to experience overt structural oppression and institutional bias at home. This is problematic in that service-learning opportunities are traditionally provided without accounting for existing structures of oppression (Kinloch, Nemeth, & Patterson, 2015). Investigating the experiences of these youth has great potential to illuminate their potential to positively impact communities both locally and abroad. After all, people who have experienced inequity in economic, social, and cultural spaces are well-suited to understand and identify structures of oppression and the needs they create (Clayton, Hess, Hartman, Edwards, Shackford-Bradley, Harrison, & McLaughlin, 2014).

Research that supports the development of global citizenship in marginalized youth is needed because "[y]outh development skills and strategies that emphasize youth voice and civic engagement have become essential tools for change and transformation in contested spaces where disparities produce societal failure to thrive" (Schneider-Muñoz & Politz, 2007, p. 32). Hartman (2016) stated that evidence-based approaches are necessary in order for service-learning practitioners to build capacity, undo stereotyping, and maximize student and community member outcomes. Furthermore, research would help meet a need for the development of social and

organizational structures that allow youth to successfully transfer newly acquired skills and worldviews to their home communities (Hartman & Kiely, 2014; Pless et al., 2011). The implications of such research could point the way to new approaches to community development and capacity building that activates and takes advantage of the talents, insights, and energy of young people.

A Case Example: Global Potential

Global Potential is presented here for two reasons. The first reason is to demonstrate the ideas mentioned previously in practice within the context of the existing literature. Recall McKay and colleagues' (2011) conceptualization of capacity building, which entails expanding possibility, potential, and access to power. The second reason is to illustrate how a non-governmental organization can instill a sense of global citizenship in marginalized youth and create opportunities for positive youth development through international service learning.

The mission of Global Potential is to transform "youth from underserved communities through education, service learning, and cultural exchange into globally competitive leaders of positive change in their lives and communities" (retrieved from http://www.global-potential.org/new-page-2). This particular service-learning program works primarily with underserved and marginalized youth to increase their civic knowledge and enhance their global citizenship so that they may become change agents in their communities. Intensive training, mentorship, and service learning with an emphasis on community capacity building are utilized to help the program achieve its mission. Global Potential was co-founded by three social workers with a desire to aid marginalized youth in finding their voice by giving them opportunities to learn about the world around them and how they can help to change it for the better. The organization was created with the intention of providing youth a skill set that would enable them to assist foreign communities in finding their collective voice and develop the ability to help improve their home communities. By engaging youth in this way, the volunteers and staff at Global Potential treat youth as a valuable resource worthy of refinement as opposed to a powerless group in constant need.

Global Potential's program is implemented through three phases over the course of approximately 17 months. In the first phase, youth attend weekly workshops that focus on educating them about civic engagement, cultural competence, global preparedness, social entrepreneurship, community service and development, and advocacy. This phase employs

a critical pedagogy that encourages participants to be active learners, while encouraging them to work toward change in their community (Sprague Martinez, Reich, Flores, Ndulue, Brugge, Gute, & Peréa 2017). It is during this phase that youth are led to think critically about social, economic, and political systems, becoming co-learners with other participants and facilitators alike as they are encouraged to find their voice and critically assess their place in the world. Facilitators create spaces for youth to be proactive in their learning as they reflect on lived experiences, ask questions, and challenge one another in a safe environment. This more inclusive approach to learning gives youth the opportunity to consider multiple contexts associated with social issues (Matthews, 2014). Engaging these youth in a dialogical learning process that emphasizes issues of equity and social justice results in their being primed to engage new and foreign communities in meaningful ways.

In the second phase of the program, youth participate in service-learning projects locally or abroad (e.g., the Caribbean, Africa, or Central America) for up to six weeks. It is in this phase that youth work with communities to address concerns identified by their members. Asset-based community development with the host communities often takes place at this time as students enact what they learned during the first phase of the program. Youth work with communities to identify and mobilize strengths by including community stakeholders in the development and implementation of the projects (Kramer, Amos, Lazarus, & Seedat, 2012). This approach allows youth and community members to equally take ownership of the process as they engage in shared problem-solving starting with the expertise and insights present within the community (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996).

In the third phase of the program, mentorship and facilitated group discussions afford youth the opportunity to critically assess their positionality and examine social, economic, and political systems from a global perspective engendered by their recent experiences abroad. This phase of the program is critical in that scholars have noted that participants often return from international service-learning experiences without any formal or structured reintegration that helps them to process the subsequent impact on their worldview (Crabtree, 2008; Hartman & Kiely, 2014). With the assistance of mentors and staff, participants channel the knowledge, skills, and experience acquired during the first two phases into service-learning projects that will benefit their home communities.

Participants often remain in contact with their host communities once they have completed the program. Many youth have gone on to partner with their host communities on other projects or remained involved in the work that began during their initial visit. For instance, in 2012, two Global Potential participants completed a service-learning project in Haiti. That experience led them to co-found a nonprofit organization in response to needs they observed. In 2015, this youth-led organization began working with the community in Terre Froide, Haiti. The community members of Terre Froide expressed a need to build a local school. As a result, a collaborative effort between the youth and the community was launched to meet that need. Both youth continue to work with the community in Terre Froide, returning each year to help community members realize their goal. After years of community partnerships, the school opened in fall 2017. This anecdotal account illustrates how youth can use the skills that they acquired as Global Potential participants to engage in social entrepreneurship, fundraising, and community development.

Each expected outcome associated with participation in Global Potential (e.g., increased self-efficacy and civic knowledge in youth) stems from the program's mission. The intention is for youth to graduate from the program as high functioning, well-informed, civically minded individuals with a desire to give back to their communities. More specifically, they aim to instill a strong sense of what it means to be a global citizen by increasing their communication skills, academic and social efficacy, self-esteem, leadership skills, life satisfaction, and cultural competence. The idea is that individuals who develop these skills will not only be better equipped to handle personal challenges, but will also be more likely to push for meaningful change at a mezzo and macro level (i.e., within organizations and the larger society).

The mission of Global Potential and the outcomes anticipated for each participant in the program are very much aligned with the conceptualization of global citizenship put forth by Snider, Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013). The mission of the program and the curriculum being implemented with the participating youth are driven by the idea of enhancing global citizenship through youth development. Awareness, caring, embracing cultural diversity while promoting social justice and sustainability, and a sense of responsibility to act are all concepts that participating youth learn about at some point during their time in the program.

Global Potential is currently making strides toward becoming a learning organization by developing a more research-driven program evaluation that will help them to identify which aspects of the program are in line with their mission, and which aspects can be strengthened to increase their efficiency. Once this revised process of program evaluation is firmly established, Global Potential will be more adaptable as an organization. As a result, they will increase their capacity for growth and replication. Research on the work with youth happening at Global Potential can provide an example of capacity building and community development that is multifaceted and has far-reaching implications for improving service provision to this population in a way that increases civic engagement in underserved youth while simultaneously enhancing their sense of global citizenship. Furthermore, the research being conducted at Global Potential is important because "empirical studies connecting international experiences to global citizenship are rare..." (Lough & McBride, p. 457). What research has been done on youth service programs in general, to date, has been inconsistent (Hartman & Kiely, 2014; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006; Kiely, 2005).

Considering the existing literature that explores the benefits of having a sense of global citizenship and research that leads to the development of organizational infrastructures that support pathways to that end become critical (Camino & Zeldin, 2002). These infrastructures would include international networks of service learning that would facilitate the exchange of ideas on how to address local problems from a global perspective. Ideally, the resulting international service-learning experiences generated by these networks would incorporate a combination of civic education, cross-cultural immersion and relationship building, community development, shared inquiry for problem-solving, and meaningful learning experiences rooted in critical reflection (Crabtree, 2008). Even though the potential of international service learning has only recently begun to be investigated (Horn & Fry, 2013), organizations like Global Potential can serve as an example of how to support youth development and enhance global citizenship through service learning.

Conclusion

Society has become increasingly globalized both socially and economically in the 21st century. The shift in how communities around the world connect has made the idea of global citizenship more tangible and realistic, although there is currently no consensus on what constitutes global citizenship in the existing literature. Researchers have, however, made connections between service-learning programs and a sense of global citizenship (e.g., Keen and Hall (2009), highlighting the potential benefits associated with program participation and the implications for youth development and civic engagement. Yet, little research exists that explores how international service learning geared toward enhancing global citizenship in youth can be used in capacity building efforts, particularly in youth from underserved, marginalized communities.

Considering all the benefits associated with participating in international service-learning programs, it would seem that the skills developed by youth would be effective in initiating community engagement that extends beyond participation in two ways. That is, program participants can potentially become change agents in their home communities as a result of taking part in an international service-learning program. Also, these youth become empowered to assist other communities in capacity building, which would possibly be due to their enhanced sense of global citizenship. Global Potential is an example of a non-governmental organization that seeks to enhance global citizenship in underserved, marginalized youth through international service learning with the intent of empowering participants to become active, civically engaged members of their respective communities. Through research, Global Potential seeks to fortify its mission and grow as a program to increase its impact on youth, especially those from marginalized communities.

Capacity building through youth development is a worthy endeavor for any profession geared toward community development, social service, or social justice. For instance, the pursuit of enhanced global citizenship for youth present in the literature and exemplified by Global Potential is embodied in the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) statement of ethical principles, particularly the principle of social justice. The five components of social justice put forth by IFSW are: challenging negative discrimination, recognizing diversity, distributing resources equally, challenging unjust policies and practices, and working in solidarity.

One must be caring and aware in order to challenge negative discrimination. It is not possible to embrace cultural diversity without first recognizing and respecting ethnic and cultural diversity. Promoting social justice and sustainability calls for an equal distribution of resources. Challenging unjust policies and practices would not occur if people did not feel an obligation to act. Lastly, global citizens by most accounts are inclusive and believe in working in solidarity.

The alignment of global citizenship's conceptualization with the IFSW statement of ethical principles shows that extracurricular service-oriented programs aid in the development of a global civil society (Schneider-Muñoz & Politz, 2007). Additionally, capacity building that respects the rights and voice of the communities being impacted calls for these same values to be held constant. What remains is a need to develop a consistent, interdisciplinary understanding of what it means to be a global citizen. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical evidence linking international service-learning experiences to a sense of global citizenship (Hartman & Kiely, 2014; Lough & McBride, 2014). Fortunately, research and practice are coming together in a way that will help to better understand how to conceptualize global citizenship and the most practical means of achieving it.

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