Strengthening Community University Research Partnerships

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CHAPTER 4

Introduction to Case Studies

Rajesh Tandon and Wafa Singh

Community-University Engagement (CUE) is a multifaceted, multidimensional concept that can be applied to a vast range of activities, as well as to a certain view of the role the university has to play in societies (Escrigas, et.al, 2014). Engagement as a concept implies activity, interaction, sharing, and a dynamic that is in constant change and flux. It implies relationships between the university and communities at local, regional, national, international or even virtual levels. These relationships are sought for the reciprocal benefits of knowledge sharing and dimensions of co-creation that impact society and community, which are the central crux (McIlrath, 2014). The findings from the Global Survey in Support Structures for Community University Research Partnerships (Tremblay, et. al, 2014) highlight the different terminologies, structures, and networks prevalent worldwide, which are promoting and practicing CURPs in contextually appropriate ways. The practices and structures of engagement are rich and continually evolving. Some scholars speak of a community-university engagement movement (Talloires Network), service learning, Campus Compact, community-based research, engaged scholarship, CURPs and knowledge mobilization, and its variants, such as knowledge translation, impact or utilization (Escrigas et. al., 2014). According the global survey,

…the different cultures of knowledge are using the CURP process to achieve different objectives. The main goals of HEIs are student training, co-creation of new knowledge, KM and problem solving; the main goals for CSOs are co-creation of new knowledge, capacity building, social change and support community services. (Tremblay et al., 2014, p. 9)

At the global level, there is evidence that we are moving from traditional engaged scholarship, which is based largely on the work of a number of committed individual scholars and their personal connections to community, to a new institutional approach. This new phase is characterized by the creation of many centres, some wholly located in communities, and new structures to enable the generation, facilitation and sustainability of CURPs (Hall et al., 2013). Just like a good architectural design is fundamental to the successful construction, maintenance and liveability of a home, likewise, the appropriate architecture is necessary in instituting policies and programmes that deepen, broaden, improve and sustain CURPs (Jackson et al., 2013). By structures facilitating CURPs, we mean the “existence or creation of administrative or organizational structures such as Science Shops,
Community University Partnership Programmes, Servix Aux Collectivities, Research Mobilization offices or other research partnership services” (Tremblay et al., 2014, p. 6). The University of Quebec in Montreal, the Science Shops in the Netherlands and structures in some of the South African universities have been around for 30-40 years. The U.S. land grant institutions claim a heritage of 150 years. This means that the institutionalization of research facilitative structures is very uneven, with some new structures being created in the past year or two and others much earlier (Tremblay et al., 2014). As per the survey, just over 60% of higher education institutions (HEIs) identified have some form of structure created to support CURPs within the last 10 years (Tremblay et al., 2014).

Other dimensions most often linked to CUE are student experiential learning, sometimes called service learning, knowledge mobilization or attention to the impact of knowledge generated within HEIs within the non-university world and attention to policy dimensions or issues of the culture within HEIs that support or hinder respectful engagement (Tremblay et al., 2014). Scholarship of engagement, public scholarship and community engaged scholarship are defined as the collaboration between academics and individuals outside the academy for the exchange of knowledge and mutually beneficial resources, in a context of partnership and reciprocity (Ruiz, 2014). Several different terms are used to describe such collaborative research processes between the HEIs and the communities such as participatory action research (PAR), community based research (CBR), community-university research partnerships (CURPs), community-university engagement (CUE), and community based participatory research (CBPR). According to the survey by Tremblay et al. (2014, p.12),

…CURP activities are predominantly identified within the areas of CBR (54.4%), CBPR (39%) and engaged scholarship. Nearly 45% of financial support for CURPs is from Government; 30% from within the HEIs, as opposed to CSOs, which seem to be more self-funded, with less coming from Government (35%).

Although there is a large variation in the language, conceptualization and practice of these engagements, from ‘extension’ to ‘co-creation of knowledge’, participatory methods are at the core of successful CURPs. The cases from the global south underscore the central role that participatory methods for enquiry and engagement play in the success of CURPs. Overall, the picture that emerges is that research partners select the mix of participatory methods that best suit their objectives and context, and are consistent with the expertise of their resource persons and organizations. However, Tremblay et al. (2014) also found that less than 15% of the CURPs identified in their research originated in the community. The majority were top down from HEIs and outside sources such as government, industry or research groups. Additionally, financial programs, instruments and mechanisms often emerge as the most identified support needed for CURP’s for both HEIs and CSOs.
Considering these factors, a decision was taken to carry out an in-depth study of institutional structures and arrangements, as well as policy provisions for facilitation and support of research partnerships between community groups and universities in different countries. It was in this context that this study of institutional arrangements for the facilitation and support of research partnerships between HEIs and CSOs was undertaken to develop a deeper understanding of the issue. Experiences and case studies from different countries were expected to present valuable information about aspects of systems that work well, and which areas need to be strengthened in order to bring CURPs into the mainstream of HEIs.

**Key themes**

Each case study explored themes of policies, institutional practices in HEIs, and civil societies and community networks.

**Policies**

Policy frameworks are analysed in the first section of the case studies. In many countries, the community-university partnerships movement has evolved at the grassroots level and very often within a policy vacuum. Yet there has been recent evidence of explicit policy and other policies at nascent stages of development. In some contexts, engagement features as a component of policies that relate to other aspects of higher education, such as policy aimed at the research agenda, but indicate the importance of knowledge sharing and exchange or acting through national frameworks for the recognition of education qualifications (McIlrath, 2014, p. 42).

The case studies explore the evolution of national and provincial policies, and analyze key issues such as: provision of a clear mandate with respect to mainstreaming engagement in the academia; rules for enforcement of similar guidelines; mechanisms of enforcement; accountability; and incentivization provisions. Additionally, certain financial elements associated with the policy framework were also reviewed. The detailed questionnaire is included at the end of this section.

**Institutional Practices in HEIs**

The university has a responsibility to reach out to the community, to have a care or concern for the community, and to play its part in enhancing the well-being of the community (Barnett, 2014). The global survey findings pointed out the fact that, notwithstanding the unevenness in the distribution of models of community-university research structures, there was a consensus on that if CBR or CBPR is to be mainstreamed, institutional investment in structures to support and facilitate community interests and academic research interests is a key step forward.

The case studies each provide a brief account of two HEIs, who were considered by the editors as responsible institutions doing a commendable job in the context of community-university partnerships. Three crucial criteria were the institutional
structures, incentives and capacities. The focus was on specific structures within the universities that promote CBR/CURPs, their key functions, provisions and execution methodology. Information on incentives revolved around the credit provided to students/faculties for engaging in such work. If and how community engagement contributes to the accreditation of universities has also been covered in this section. Finally, information on institutional capacity refer to the potential to build partnerships in terms of available resources and other factors. In our opinion, some of the model universities were the University of Gottingen and Wageningen in the Netherlands; and Belfast University in Ireland. They are running Science Shops, which are specialized structures for promoting CURPs among all faculties in the University. Also worth mentioning is the Directorate of Research and Community Engagement in the University of Indonesia, and the Office of the Community Based Research (OCBR) at University of Victoria, in Canada.

Civil Society/Community Networks

From the global survey findings, it emerged that …there seems to be a trend in the engagement and decision-making process of CSOs in the life-span of the research partnership. They have higher active participation in networking and framing research agenda, and much less so when it comes to administration in research funding and data analysis. In addition, CSOs ranked high in participation of policy advocacy and development community action plan. (Tremblay et al., 2014, p. 9)

As the CSOs are key players in the process who bring in grassroot realities, they have great potential in helping the engagement agenda achieve its purpose. With this in mind, it was ensured that the account on local civil society in the case studies was centered on crucial pointers such as the civil society’s networks, structures and capacities. Some of the important civil society networks that emerge from the account on the respective case studies are Community Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) in the United States, which has played a crucial role in policy formulation, in addition to providing visibility to CBR and community led research and action. Another worth mentioning is the Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), which has been an important stakeholder in the engagement process. Similarly, research approaches at Community Based Research Canada (CBRC), Canada or CEPARGO in Brazil have been participatory and they have been encouraging community engagement in a multitude of ways.

Methodology

This study was carried out in an attempt to analyze the different policies, structures and supporting networks with respect to CUE and CURPs. Further, the case studies are intended to illustrate how country policies on community-university partnerships have been playing a crucial role in mainstreaming CURPs. The selec-
tion of the individual countries for the purpose of this study has been based on prior information, and also from the broad findings emerging from the survey. Reflection of broad and varying practices and perspectives in a holistic manner was kept in mind during the finalization of the respective countries. After selecting individual countries, based on what emerged from the survey, the case studies have been categorized based on the prevailing policy environment for promoting CURPs in the different countries.

The first category is comprised of countries wherein a clear national/provincial policy for supporting such engagements and partnerships already existed, such as Argentina, Canada, Indonesia, Netherlands, Palestine, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The second category covered countries wherein such policies were in the making, or the possibility of institutionalizing such policies was high, such as, Brazil, India, Ireland, Jordan, Korea, and Uganda. Although most of the country case studies materialized and were successfully documented, the project lost out on covering Palestine and Korea due to unavoidable circumstances. Meanwhile, in India, the University Grants Commission (UGC), the apex body for regulating higher education in India, rolled out a scheme in October 2014 for fostering community engagement in HEIs. This new development was the first step forward in shifting India from the second category to the first.

Having selected countries for a detailed analysis of institutional structures, policies, and arrangements that support research partnerships, the project laid down a framework which formed the structural basis for the case studies. Firstly, in each selected country, existing policies and funding mechanisms were reviewed through secondary sources, and an assessment was obtained through interviews with knowledgeable sources. Based on this assessment, two HEIs were selected from each country, and the institutional arrangements for promoting and practicing CUE/CURPs were documented through secondary literature surveys and interviews with knowledgeable people inside the HEI. Although much attention was given to reflecting the various diversities, the final selection of HEIs was based on the access available to the researcher. In relation to those selected HEIs, experiences of partnership of local civil society and community structures was systematically collected through field visits and conversations for identifying what is working well and how. Assessment of civil society networks and mechanisms operating at provincial/national levels in the respective countries was made both with secondary materials available, and primary data through interviews and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs). Therefore, each of the case studies begins with the analysis of the policy framework with respect to CURPs, then goes on to the analysis of the respective HEIs and the institutional structure and provisions in place for CURPs. Finally, the studies end with examining a local civil society network that has been actively partnering with the HEI in practicing CURPs/CBR. For preparing the country case studies on similar lines, the UNESCO Chair in Community Based
Research reached out to the local knowledgeable resource persons in the respective countries, including practitioners and partners engaged in common networks (with shared goals and objectives).

Argentina's case study was co-authored by Walter Lepore (University of Victoria), and Dr. M. Alejandra Herrero (University of Buenos Aires). Here, community engagement is carried out under the broad framework of ‘Service-Learning’, well supported by the policy actors such as the National Ministry of Education in the form of National Programs on Service Learning. The Canada case study, co-authored by Dr. Leslie Brown and Dr. Budd Hall (University of Victoria), Dr. Joanna Ochocka (Centre for Community-based Research) and Dr. Sylvie de Gosbois (Université du Québec à Montréal) emerges as an ideal example of a country having suitable structures in place for promoting CE. Despite of the absence of a federal government dossier on higher education, the Association of Universities & Colleges (AUCC) has been playing a critical role in setting standards for engagement.

Indonesia stands out as a country which enjoys the strongest policy support for CE activities, and its case study was co-authored by Citra Wardhani (University of Indonesia) and Nur Sri Ubaya Asri (University of Indonesia). The policies, articulated by the Directorate General of Higher Education & Ministry of Education & Culture, clearly provision the mainstreaming of CE into the university curriculum. The Netherlands study, co-authored by Dr. Henk Mulder (Groningen University) and Dr Gerard Straver (Wageningen University), presents a case wherein the overall policy framework guides towards ‘transferring knowledge on behalf of the societies as the third mission of the universities’. South Africa emerges as another case having a strong national policy. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) provides a broad framework for the forms of community engagement-socially responsive research, partnerships with civil society organizations, etc.

The case study on United Kingdom, co-authored by Sophie Duncan & Paul Manners (National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement), also places a lot of importance on public engagement in research. The UK Higher Education Initiative (supported by UK HE funding councils, research councils and Wellcome trust) has been a key actor promoting such efforts. While the U.S. does not have clear policy provisions promoting CUE, the Land Grant Universities (LGUs) have shown commitment towards CBR, and have been carrying out community-university partnerships in agriculture in a coordinated framework. The U.S. case study was drafted by Dr. Elizabeth Tryon (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Dr Philip Nyden (Loyola University Chicago) and Dadit Hidayat (University of Wisconsin-Madison).

The first country case in the second category is the Brazilian study, which is co-authored by Dr. Crystal Tremblay (University of British Columbia) and Dr. Jutta Guthberlet (University of Victoria) and Michelle Bonnatti (University of Buenos Aires), is an example of how a country has developed a favourable environment for CE.
The facilitating policies under the ‘Citizen Constitution’, call for HEIs to link teaching, research and services to the community, a concept referred to as extensao. The Indian case study, co-authored by Wafa Singh (Participatory Research in Asia) and Dr. Rajesh Tandon (President, PRIA & Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education), suggests hope for how the policy perspective towards CE has been gradually changing for the better. With key policy actors such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) playing a lead role in devising new schemes and initiatives, CE is gradually gaining ground.

The Ireland case study, authored by Dr. Lorraine McIlrath (National University of Ireland), is an example of how gaps in national policies can impede the process of mainstreaming CE into the university framework. Here, although the policy vision broadly offers support for CBR, there is no requirement for CBR practices to be implemented within the HEIs, or for designated funding that supports such efforts. Despite the absence of a structured policy framework, certain universities are seen as performing fairly well in the field of CUE. The Jordan case study, authored by Danielle Feinstein (American University in Cairo) and Mohammad Rabai (The Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement), is a case which seems to be mired with conflict conditions. The instability in the country results in an unfavourable environment for CE in general and CURPs in particular. Finally, the last country case in the second category is the Ugandan study which is authored Dr. George Ladaah Openjuru (Gulu University). The Ugandan case again shows a country which faces both the weak formulation of policies on CUE and their poor implementation. Although the broad provisions under the Universities & Other Tertiary Institutions Act (UOTIA) directs the universities to include solutions to social and economic problems of the community in their teaching and research programmes, CUE is not made compulsory for higher education.

The next section of the book goes further to document the experiences from the twelve country case studies. This is followed by a comparative analysis of the cases with respect to national policies, institutional structures and CSOs/other networks, which draws out the broad themes that emerge from the cases.

**IDRC Study on Mainstreaming Community Based Research: Framework for Preparing Country Based Case Studies**

**Purpose**

Case studies are intended to illustrate how country policies on community-university partnerships are being institutionalized and practiced at the level of HEIs and community organizations. The methodology described below is intended to achieve the above purpose. The framework with respect to the case studies to be selected can be outlined as per the indicators mentioned below.
Selection of Countries for the Case Study

In-depth case studies in selected countries will cover the questions in the framework provided later. It appears meaningful to select two types of countries:

• the first category comprises of those where a clear national/provincial policy for supporting such engagements and partnerships already exist. Countries identified include Canada, South Africa, United Kingdom (UK), Indonesia, Argentina, Netherlands, U.S., Palestine

• the second category comprises of those countries where such policies are in the making and potential for institutionalization of such policies is very high. These are India, Uganda, Brazil, Korea, Ireland & Jordan.

Methodology

1) The finalization of 15 country case studies will be based on both prior knowledge and emerging information from the survey. The above list of countries is finalized on May 17.

2) In each selected country, existing policies and funding mechanisms would be reviewed through secondary sources, and assessments of the same obtained through knowledgeable sources through personal and/or skype interviews.

3) Based on this assessment/review, two HEIs will be selected in each country for review of institutional aspects; this part may require study of existing documents and interviews with knowledgeable people inside the HEIs.

4) These two HEIs in each country may be so selected as to provide for diversity—national/local, urban/rural, large/small, public/private, etc. Key consideration in such a choice would be the selection of those HEIs which resonate with the perspective of this study.

5) In relation to those selected HEIs, experiences of partnership of local civil society and community structures would be systematically collected through field visits and conversations to identify what is working well and how.

6) Assessment of civil society networks and mechanisms operating at provincial/national levels in those countries would be made both with secondary materials available, and primary data through interviews and FGDs.

Deliverable

The timeline for delivery of initial draft of each case study is end of October 2014. Each case has to be written in a manner that it can become a standalone document for the book, and its experiences can be used as exemplars for the proposed Handbook. The case study should be about 15-20 pages (4500-5000 words) and if practical policies, tools and instruments are collected in the course of preparing these case studies, they can be shared with the project coordinators.
Framework of Study

The following sets of questions need to answered in preparing country case studies; in addition, there may emerge some nuances which may be important to capture, beyond the check-list below. Please keep in mind the purpose of each case study while collecting data and writing it.

I. POLICY

a) National/Provincial Policy
   
i) What policies are in place (national/provincial) that facilitate community-university engagement and community-based research?
   
ii) Do the policies mandate the HEIs to include such engagement with the community, within their curriculum?
   
iii) Are there any specific rules/laws/guidelines that enforce such activities?
   
iv) Do the policies list down the provisions to ensure the engagement activities? Or is the HEI free to devise its own mechanisms?
   
v) Does the policy envisage any monitoring mechanism or fix accountability for the compliance of its provisions?
   
vi) Does it provide certain added benefits for the respective complying university, such as a qualifying criterion for accreditation purposes?

b) National/Provincial Funding Mechanisms
   
i) How are the engagement activities between the university and the community funded?
   
ii) Is the funding a wholly government initiative? Or do private players also participate in it? Do other networks, such as civil society also contribute?
   
iii) Is the funding meant only for research activities? Or does it envisage other programmes such as development and educational programs and initiatives?
   
iv) Is the funding available appropriate to recover the costs of such engagement activities? If not, how are the expenses met?

II. HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

(These questions may be answered for each HEI selected)

a) Institutional Structures
   
i) Are there any specific structures within the HEI which help facilitate the process of community-university engagement?
ii) Do these structures envisage certain key provisions that help mainstream community based research within the traditional research carried out in the university premises?

iii) What are the mechanisms through which they ensure the sustenance of such collaborative ventures with the community?

iv) Are they mandated by law to serve certain key provisions under the community-university engagement arena?

b) Institutional Incentives

i) Is the work done under the premise of community engagement included within the curriculum of the university?

ii) Does the HEI award academic credits to students who indulge in such community engagement work?

iii) Is any professional credit attributed to those teachers/professors who work with students on such projects? Does involvement in such work pave the way for their professional career enhancement, by way of promotions etc.?

iv) Does the institution encourage students to undertake such work, through other kind of incentives (apart from academic credits?) If yes, what are they?

c) Institutional Capacity

i) What are the capacities of the HEI with respect to CBR? Any specific mechanism in place that helps facilitate this process?

ii) What are the capacities with respect to building partnerships with the community or the civil society?

iii) Are there enough resources to invest in such engagement opportunities?

iv) Are there any specific provisions within the university structure, in line with the theme of community-university engagement? Or any means through which the University endorses any such activity?

III. COMMUNITY/CIVIL SOCIETY

(These questions may be answered for each CSO or network identified)

a) Networks

i) What are the networks that are promoting CBR, especially with a view to facilitate engagement of civil society with HEIs?

ii) What kind of roles do they play in creating, promoting and ensuring engagement opportunities, at the national and the provincial level?

iii) How do they facilitate such engagement by way of their interventions?
iv) How do they network with other organizations, in order to promote such engagement?

b) Structures
   i) What kinds of structures/organizations exist in the community that facilitate engagements with HEIs?
   ii) How do these structures get created, strengthened and supported by HEIs and/or other intermediaries?
   iii) Are these temporary, project-specific structures or ongoing community mechanisms playing an additional role?
   iv) What kinds of leadership and decision-making mechanisms do these structures have?

c) Capacity
   i) What are the capacities with respect to community based research or community-university engagement in local community and civil society?
   ii) What are the capacities in such community structures with respect to building partnerships with other networks/organizations?
   iii) What kinds of funds do these community/civil society structures have to support their engagements with HEIs?
   iv) What kinds of protocols support equity in sharing of financial resources made available to HEIs for such partnerships with civil society and community?

References


