Enhancing Graduate Employability through Community Engagement: A Case Study of Students' Community Service at Kenyatta University

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Abstract

Kenya is increasingly looking to universities to prepare individuals who are employable, can contribute to the country's socio-economic development, and can improve the country's standing in the global arena. This paper argues that community engagement presents higher education with an opportunity to enhance graduate employability by helping to develop generic skills while benefiting off-campus communities. Focusing mainly on Kenyatta University (KU), the authors examine the potential of one community engagement program—Students Community Service Programme (SCSP)—in these two areas. The article also discusses ways that community engagement can be improved in Kenyan universities.

Key Words: graduate employability; community engagement; community service; higher education; Kenyan education; development.

Section 1: Introduction—Enhancing Graduate Employability through Education in Kenya

Unemployment continues to be a major concern in Kenya. Kenyan youth—that is, individuals between 15 and 34 years of age—make up 34 percent of the population (and over 60 percent of the adult population) and suffer high rates of unemployment. This age group constitutes 70 percent of the total unemployment in the country (UNECA 2012; Omolo 2012). For example, in 2005-06, the open unemployment rates were 25% for 15- to 19-year-olds, 24.2% for those 20 to 24 years old, and 15.7% for the 25- to 29-year-olds, with the problem being severe in urban areas (Onsomu and Munga 2011*;* Omolo 2012). These figures do not compare favorably with the national average of 12.7 percent for the same year. Although unemployment figures decrease as youth get more education, recent studies show unemployment is increasingly becoming a concern among university graduates (Amimo 2012; Ponge 2013). Also increasing is the expectation that education will mitigate the continuing challenge of youth unemployment. This section highlights ways that some of the key policy statements have underlined this expectation.

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Since Kenya's independence in 1963, education has been expected to address the problem of unemployment of graduates (at primary, secondary, and higher educational levels) among other national and socio-economic challenges (Ojiambo, 2009; Riechi 2010). For example, the National Committee on Education Objectives and Policy of 1978 explicitly connected employment to nationalism and development. It recommended establishment of vocational, technological, and practical education to produce high-level skills for socio-economic development. In 1981, the Presidential Working Party on the Second University produced a report (the Mackay Report) that recommended the establishment of a second university. In addition, it proposed the restructuring of education into eight years of primary, four years of secondary, and four years of university education. Commonly referred to as the 8-4-4, this education system would to replace the earlier 7-4-2-3 structure. The implementation of the 8-4-4 system would seek to move Kenya's educational system away from its previous elitist mold by focusing on expanding access and the cultivation of practical skills. The Working Party recommended that Kenya's educational system should produce graduates who are self-sufficient and productive in agriculture, industry, and commerce. Education should give technical scientific and practical knowledge that is vital for self- and salaried employment for national development (Ojiambo 2009).

In 1988, the Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond ushered in cost-sharing, an approach influenced by the World Bank's and IMF's Structural Adjustment Policies of the1980s that emphasized reduced government subsidies in education and other social services (Abagi et al. 2005). At this time in the country's approach to development, market rationality had eclipsed the earlier view of government as the main provider of social services. The emphasis on producing employable graduates within the globalized market rationality increased in subsequent reviews. For example, in its report (the Koech Report), the 1998 Commission of Inquiry into the Education System in Kenya underlined expansion, inclusion, and efficiency in quality of delivery and outcome of the education and training processes (RoK 1999). A government task force, The Taskforce on the Re-Alignment of Education Sector to the Constitution of Kenya 2010: Towards a Globally Competitive Quality Education for Sustainable Development, emphasized producing globally competitive graduates. The task force reported that university enrollment shot up from 82,000 in 2003 to 180,617 in 2010, and stressed that as university education expands to admit more and more students, relevance and employability are imperatives (RoK 2012a).

Similar emphasis on reducing unemployment and on global competition is evident in the Kenya Vision 2030, which is the country's long-term development blueprint. According to Vision 2030, education is expected to help create "a globally competitive and prosperous country with a high quality of life by 2030" (RoK 2008). Kenya Vision 2030 "aims at providing a globally competitive quality education, training and research for sustainable development. It aims at matching skills to market demands through provision of relevant academic programmes at all levels" (Kenyatta University Strategic and Vision Plan 2005-2015). In the document, how education would do this remains vague. These sample education policy statements reveal that Kenya has historically viewed education as the engine of change toward meeting national needs, among them reducing youth unemployment. The statements also reveal an increasing appropriation of the globalization discourse in framing the country's socio-economic development reforms, as well as the expectation that education would change to facilitate the success of these reforms. Higher education bears the brunt of this expectation.

Section 2: The Challenge of Enhancing Graduate Employability and the Promise of Community Engagement

More than at any other time in history, universities in Kenya—and elsewhere in Africa—have faced pressure to change to match expectations undergirding globalization-induced national development plans. This pressure has presented various curricular, fiscal and infrastructural challenges.

In response, universities have embarked on transformations to meet these expectations despite these challenges. Transformations in universities that reflect the globalization discourse include branding themselves "world-class" universities, expanding student enrollment and modes of study, offering market-driven programmes, internationalizing campuses and curricula, enhancing information and communications technology, diversifying sources of revenue, increasing focus on the customer/client, adopting international standards of excellence, such as the International Organization for Standardization's (ISO) Quality Management Systems, and prioritizing curricula geared to developing in graduates skills that would help them compete favorably in the knowledge-based global economy.

Criticisms of the negative effects of globalization on higher education abound (see Munene 2008, 2012; Kamola 2011, 2012; Amimo 2012; Riechi 2010; Kamaara 2011; Wangenge-Ouma 2008; Mamdani 2008). Among them is the university's inability to prepare employable graduates for local labor markets, which leads to rising graduate unemployment (Ponge 2013; Amimo 2012; Riechi 2010; Kamaara 2011; Oanda and Jowi 2012). Ponge (2013) lists factors that contribute to unemployment of Kenyan university graduates, including mismatch in labour market demand and supply; inadequate labour market information; discrepancies between graduate expectations versus market reality; lack of work experience; and lack of life skills training. He argues that the greatest challenge is to prepare graduates who are both employable and employment generators in their national contexts. Yet this focus on "local" labor markets may be at odds with the current push for the "global," which, as critics have pointed out, has resulted in a competitive, commercially driven, and low-quality massified university education. Also at odds is the overemphasis by universities on subject area content at the expense of the development of generic or "soft" skills among students.

Recent literature on the relationships between higher education and graduate employment has emphasized that universities need to develop a deep understanding of the graduate attributes that are needed in the labor market (Amimo 2012; Griessel and Parker 2009; Lie et al. 2009; Archer and Davison 2008; Teichler 2007; Schomburg and Ulrich 2006; Hart 2006; Karugu and Otiende 2001; Harvey 2000). According to this literature, it is generic skills that need more attention from higher education. Harvey (2000) notes that "[e]mployers and their representatives consistently say that, to succeed at work, most people in future must develop a range of personal and intellectual attributes beyond those traditionally made explicit in programmes of study in higher education institutions" (p. 8). Generic skills, as James et al. (2004) point out, are more explicitly defined as "the skills, values and attitudes which potential employers might find desirable" (p. 2). They are comprised of such interactive skills as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, as well as personal skills. As described by Harvey (2000), personal skills include "willingness and ability to learn and continue learning, ability to find things out, willingness to take risks and show initiative, flexibility and adaptability to respond, pre-empt and ultimately lead change" (p. 8). Also included under personal skills are "self-skills," such as self-motivation, self-confidence, self-management, and self-promotion.

Kenyan universities have been slow to equip their students with the generic skills needed in local labor markets. This is in part because universities are often unconnected to their local contexts in ways that undermine the pursuit of mutually beneficial goals. Universities must take engagement with off-campus communities seriously in their quest to reduce graduate unemployment through the development of generic skills. When universities seek to nurture generic skills in their students through community engagement, it can foster connections with local contexts in ways that enhance graduate employability and benefit communities. The term "community engagement" is used here as it is often used in higher education to describe a range of activities that include, among others, community-based volunteer work, community-based learning, and programs, projects, and research that address specific social, economic, and political needs of communities (Aurora et al. 2012). Although the community engagement mission of the university has not always received the same attention as the other two missions—pedagogy and research—it is increasingly becoming part of the higher education discourse across the world (Bender 2008; Jacoby et al. 2009; Mule 2010).

Advocates of community engagement emphasize the mutual benefits that can accrue for on-campus and community constituencies. The community engagement movement has manifested itself worldwide through the work of individual universities, as well as national, regional, and international consortiums that have expressed a commitment to promoting deeper relationships between higher education and off-campus communities. Examples of these bodies include: The Research University Civic Engagement Network, the Talloires Network, The Campus Compact, South Africa Community Higher Education Service Partnerships (CHESP), The African Institute for Capacity Development (AICAD), and the Association of African Universities (AAU). African universities, either on their own or through international consortiums, have underlined the role of the university in transforming society by helping address existing challenges at local, regional, national, and global levels. Addressing an AICAD symposium on university outreach activities in 2010, a representative of Kenya's Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology called on universities to "enhance 'outreach' or 'extension' of their resources towards solving public needs and [increase] their contributions to the larger society" (AICAD 2010). At the policy level in Kenya, the Universities Bill 2012 has listed one of the five objectives of university education as "to contribute to community service." In addition, increasingly, the mission statements of many Kenyan Universities are including a commitment to "service," although it is possible that community service or community engagement is understood and institutionalized differently in each institution.

Research that is mainly done in the United States and Europe has shown that community engagement can lead to enhanced generic attributes among participating students. For example, it can lead to personal and interpersonal development, ability to work well with others, leadership, and communication skills (Astin and Sax, 1998; Astin et al.1999). Community engagement research further shows a connection between community engagement and the development of social responsibility among graduates (Astin and Sax 1998; Eyler and Giles 1999; Rockquemore and Schaffer 2000; Vogelgesang and Astin 2000; Tartter 1996). This literature urges higher education to prepare graduates who are socially responsive; that is, graduates who have a good grasp on (and understand how to respond to) social, economic, and development challenges facing society. Such graduates are also likely to possess generic skills needed in the job market. The following section uses a case study to underline the important role that community engagement can play in enhancing graduate employability while benefiting off-campus communities.

Section 3: The Case of the Students' Community Service Programme at Kenyatta University

The Students' Community Service Programme (SCSP) at Kenyatta University (KU)—the second largest public university in Kenya—raises important questions in relation to graduate employability. What generic skills do students develop through community service experiences? In what ways does the students' community service benefit society? How can community engagement be enhanced in Kenyan universities?

The SCSP is a community engagement program founded on the notion that a world-class institution such as KU, while committed to preparing students for the globalized market place, must also be committed to service. "Service to humanity" is one of the University's core values and is enshrined in its mission statement and planning documents. To streamline the coordination of community engagement at KU, University management initiated the Directorate of Community Outreach and Extension Programmes (COEP) in July 2007. The main charge of the directorate is to "facilitate the KU community to reach out and touch the lives of Kenyans by extending knowledge, skills, information and other resources that would help improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities" (COEP 2010). The directorate further helps communities identify, mobilize, and use the resources available to them for their own development.

In KU, community engagement is framed within the broader goal of providing students with an opportunity to hone their skills and contribute to the development of communities in which they serve, thereby promoting national development. SCSP is a flagship program for COEP. It is a collaborative initiative between KU and Equity Bank, a leading commercial bank in Kenya. The program was launched on June 11, 2008, as part of broader transformation efforts at the University. Its main goal is to facilitate KU students in offering services to communities during university vacations in April, July/August, and December. Before students embark on community service projects, they are intensively trained about issues they are likely to encounter in the communities. Subject matter specialists from KU, Equity Bank, and other relevant institutions are invited by the directorate of COEP to offer the training. The topics covered in the training include HIV/AIDS awareness and management; drugs and substance abuse awareness and management; food and nutritional security; environmental conservation and management; peace-building and conflict resolution; motivational talks in schools and student empowerment; basic financial and entrepreneurship skills; sports and games for social cohesion; and self-awareness and peer pressure. After the training, students are posted to serve in public and private institutions of their choice. These include hospitals, health centers, chief's camps, youth centers, government offices, schools, children's homes, homes for the aged, banks, and rehabilitation centers, among others

In these organizations, KU students are connected with site-based supervisors who guide, supervise and issue evaluation reports based on the students' performance, using a standard evaluation form. Students also use a form to report on their experience. In addition to students and site-based supervisors, university supervisors also provide feedback on students' service. They visit a sample of students placed in different parts of the country and prepare reports based on their observations and conversations with the students and site-based supervisors. The reports from students, site-based supervisors, and university supervisors are used for the review and improvement of SCSP. After successful completion of their community projects, students are presented with certificates of participation. The SCSP experience was designed to provide students with an opportunity to interact and serve their communities as they learn from the experience. It also was expected to help cultivate an ethos of service, while increasing students' knowledge of the communities to which they may return to live and work after their university education.

Section 3.1: Description of the Study

In an impact assessment questionnaire that was given to 300 students (approximately 10 percent of those who completed their two-week community service in the 2010-2011 academic year), participants responded to questions that, in part, asked them 1) to identify institutions/organizations in which they undertook community service and why they chose those organizations; 2) tasks performed at these sites; 3) skills learned during their community service; and 4) challenges facing the communities served. In addition, 10 percent of site-based supervisors in the organizations that hosted students doing community service in the same year were requested to fill out a questionnaire that asked them (among other questions) to list the benefits of community service to their organization, and to summarize activities performed by students in the host institutions. 255 student questionnaires (85 percent response rate) and 222 supervisor questionnaires (75 percent response rate) were returned to the COEP office and analyzed. (See Tumuti et al. (2013) for a description of the larger study.)

For this paper, in addition to the quantitative questions regarding gender, school, home province, and host community sites, the questions listed above were considered relevant to the current topic. For these more qualitative questions, responses were subjected to a thematic content analysis (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). This approach allowed movement beyond counting explicit words and phrases to developing categories based on both implicit and explicit ideas expressed in the data.

The student participants, 64 percent of whom were males, undertook their community service in different communities across the nation. Their distribution across all eight home provinces reflected student enrollment in the university. For example, 27 percent of student participants in community service came from Central province, which enrolls the highest number of students in the university, while only two percent were from the North Eastern province. The distribution of students in community service by the 12 KU schools represented also reflected enrollment patterns in the university, with the School of Education at 35 percent, followed by School of Business at 22 percent, while the School of Visual and Performing Arts and the School of Agriculture contributed the lowest at 0.79 percent each. Students completed their community service in a wide range of community organizations and institutions, including schools, hospitals, community centers, government offices, businesses, homes for children and the elderly, and religious institutions (see Figure 1). In SCSP, students chose their own placements, and they reported that their choice of host organization was mainly based on accessibility from their homes (35.79 percent), their passion for the work being done by the host organization (35.75 percent), and relevance to their areas of specialization (27.32 percent).
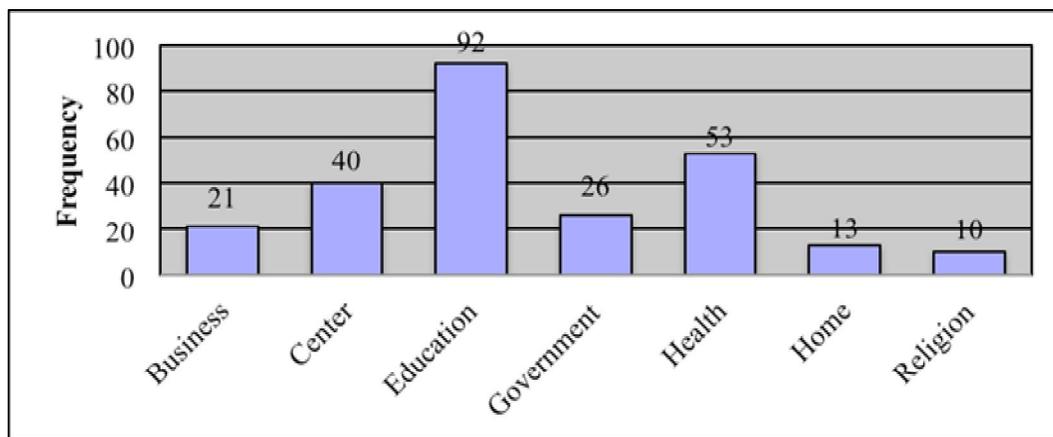

Figure 1: Distribution of community service sites

## Section 3.2: Generic skills reported by students in the SCSP

Students' responses indicated community service exposed them to "real life" in the communities they served. Since students in this study spent full days in their host organizations for at least two weeks and lived in the communities they served, they became conversant with and reported high levels of involvement in daily activities of their host organizations and communities. Students performed tasks in the following categories: education-related, office work, manual labor, sports-related, and community action, as shown in Table 1.

As is evident in Table 1, most students were asked by host organizations to engage in teaching or dissemination of information, whether in schools, community centers, chiefs' camps, or hospitals. They may have been assigned this role because organizations see university students as being in possession of knowledge that is needed by communities. Students may have felt more comfortable delivering service in this category because these specific topics had been well-covered in their community orientation training. In addition to this category, students also participated in community action activities, including outreach, mobilizing, research, and managing projects. They also engaged in office work, including bookkeeping, preparing accounting reports, reception duties, and record-keeping. A smaller number of students were involved in keeping the host organization's grounds clean and tidy. Some of those volunteering in schools, youth centers, and homes for orphans were also involved in coordinating sports and games.

Table 1: Breakdown of Categories and Tasks Performed By Students Within Each Category

Categories	Tasks	Frequency
Education-related	Taught groups of learners	58
	Gave public talks on specific topics	154
	Counseled groups or individuals	44
	Total	*256*
Office work	Performed various office tasks including bookkeeping, preparing accounting reports, and taking inventory	79
	Total	*79*
Grounds and sports	Grounds work / sports and games	51
	Total	*51*
Community action	Outreach to community and mobilizing for action	87
	Research and project management	5
	Total	*92*
Grand Total		**478**

Across these varied activities, students reported learning a range of skills that correspond to generic skills identified in the literature reviewed in Section 2 of this paper. The 564 skills they mentioned in the order of frequency are in communication/interpersonal, learning, self-skills, networking, teamwork, problem-solving, and initiative categories (see Figure 2). These skills reported by respondents can be further grouped into three clusters, based on focus: Communication with others, Learning, and Self-development. The first cluster is the largest, and includes communication/interpersonal skills, teamwork, and networking skills, as captured in Figure 2.
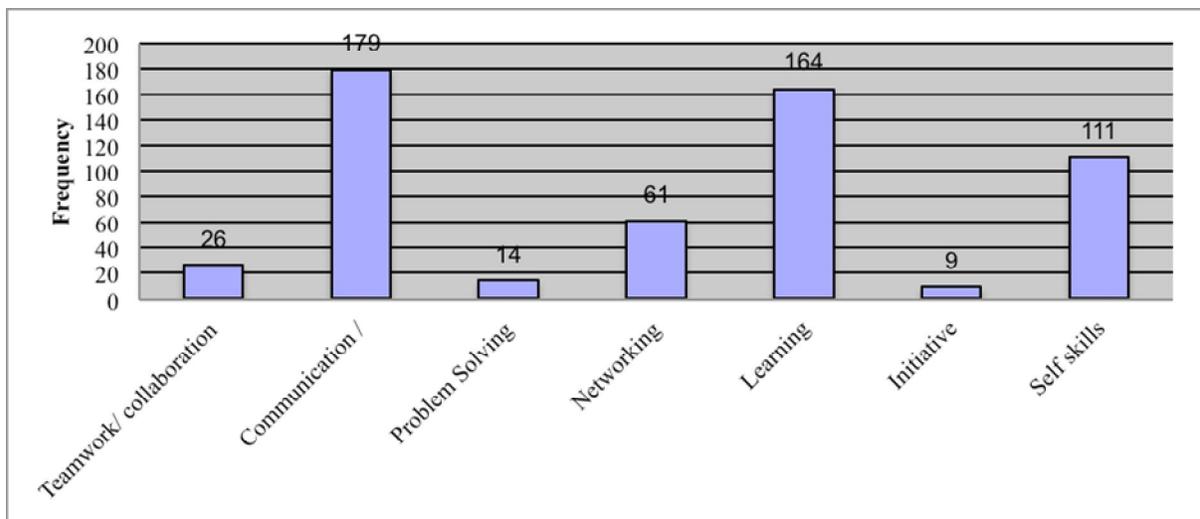
Figure 2: Skills Gained During Community Service

These skills are somewhat related, as they speak to an individual's ability to connect and work well with others. The second cluster is Learning, which comprises students' willingness and ability to learn new things, their use of prior knowledge in new ways, and ability to problem-solve in new contexts. The learning and problem-solving skills categories in Figure 2 are included in this cluster.

The last cluster, Self-development, comprises the initiative and self skills categories, both of which speak to the development of individuals in terms of esteem, confidence, self-management, etc. The emergence of these three clusters (Communication, Learning, and Self-development) from the student survey and observations of the SCSP by participant observers are convincing of the potential for community service to enhance generic skills that are needed in the 21st-century marketplace. A community service experience that is longer than the two weeks of the SCSP would likely yield even better results in this regard.

Section 3.3: Community Service—Benefit to Society

It is evident that students involved in this case study developed generic skills that are likely to help them in the job market, as discussed above. However, an important question remains as to whether students' community service can also benefit society. Two types of societal benefits are discussed here. The first one is the direct benefit received by host communities through students' community service, as expressed by site-based supervisors. Ninety-seven percent of the site-based supervisors surveyed reported that tasks performed by students in the host organizations were either "very beneficial" or "beneficial," and three percent reported "fairly beneficial." In articulating the benefits of students' service to host community institutions, site-based supervisors mentioned 368 benefits. The benefits were grouped in categories including education, capacity-building, action on environment, campus-community relationship-building, and behavior change, as shown in Table 2. Not surprisingly, given the responses of student respondents discussed above, site-based supervisors identified education-related service as most beneficial to their organizations. They also appreciated the extra pair of hands that increased capacity in their organizations. They probably appreciated this because many organizations are inadequately staffed. Site-based supervisors also acknowledged the benefits of students' service in terms of enhancing the environment, strengthening community-campus relationships, and facilitating behavior change in individual community members.

Table 2: Benefits of Community Service to the Hosts

Categories	Benefits	Frequency
Education-related	HIV/AIDS awareness	38
	Peer counseling/ motivational talks	28
	Improve academics	23
	Youth empowerment awareness	18
	Improve financial literacy	16
	Provide new skills/knowledge	9
	Drug and substance abuse awareness	24
	Total	*156*
Capacity building	Staff support to reduce workload, increase efficiency	40
	Introduce new way of doing things—creativity	16
	Improve organization performance	14
	Total	*70*
Action on environment	Help conserve environment	18
	Plant more trees	17
	Better conserve environment	20
	Total	*55*
Campus/ community relationship-building	Foster university and community bond	14
	Improve organization's image to community	10
	Provide good role model	27
	Total	*51*
Behavior change	Foster positive behavior change	10
	Improve student/teacher relationship	13
	Appreciate self-worth	13
	Total	*36*
Grand Total		**368**

All of the benefits reported by site-based supervisors suggest important contributions that students made to their host communities. Student work in communities is one way of understanding how students' community service may benefit society.

The second way in which community service may benefit society is by equipping students with knowledge about the social, economic, and developmental challenges facing the country in ways that their on-campus learning alone may not. The argument here is that, because they are tomorrow's workforce, university students need to get a good grasp on societal challenges and possible solutions. Research has shown that community service while in college increases the chances of choosing service-related careers and fosters in graduates the value of life-long community service (Smedick 1996; Astin et al. 1999; Vogelgesang and Astin 2000). Students in the current study cited poverty, illiteracy, drug and substance abuse, ignorance, lack of funds, HIV/AIDs, unemployment, food insecurity, and poor infrastructure as major challenges facing the communities they served. Table 3 shows the frequency of each challenge mentioned by students.

Table 3: Challenges Faced by Host Communities

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	101	14.87
Illiteracy	70	10.31
Drug and substance abuse	50	7.36
Ignorance	48	7.07
Lack of funds	36	5.30
HIV/AIDS stigma	36	5.30
Unemployment	26	3.83
Food insecurity	25	3.68
Poor infrastructure	24	3.53

Given the fact that Kenya's educational system has been criticized for alienating students from the lived realities in their communities due to its preoccupation with testing, training for white-collar jobs, and increased focus on globalization at the expense of local needs, this awareness of challenges facing communities cannot be understated. For some students, community service may have been the first time they have thought about society's problems and their personal responsibility in addressing them. Knowledge of the problems facing Kenyan communities is important, as it may also influence the way students understand the concept of service to humanity (which is included in Kenyatta University's mission statement) and how it connects to their training and careers.

Section 4: Strategies for Enhancing Community Engagement in Kenyan Universities

The analysis of the Students' Community Service Programme in the preceding section reveals its potential in enhancing generic skills among students. It also shows that society benefits from students' involvement in community service. Staff members involved in the coordination of the program have sought ways to improve the program for greater impact on students and society. Suggestions for improvement gathered from participants often include extending student time in their community sites, more pre-service orientation, and more support with regard to stipends. While these are useful suggestions, they amount to just tinkering within the existing program. In this section, this discussion is expanded to explore three strategies that could bolster community engagement in KU and, by extension, other universities in Kenya. The discussion is informed by the preceding assessment of the SCSP and observations during a benchmarking activity that the authors of this article completed in 2012-2013 in select universities in Kenya, as well as by relevant literature.

Section 4.1: Increase Student Participation in Community Engagement

The first strategy relates to increasing student participation. In most universities in Kenya, only a small percentage of students are involved in community engagement during their undergraduate tenure. Most of this involvement is in the form of co-curricular volunteer work coordinated by student clubs and/or on-campus community engagement coordinating structures. This is certainly the case with the SCSP described in this paper, which is coordinated by the directorate of COEP. Given the benefits of community service, as the discussion in previous sections shows, universities cannot afford to ignore the potential inherent in this practice. Universities can choose from an array of available options for enhancing students' community engagement. These range from providing rewards for participation to making community engagement a requirement for graduation. In doing this, care must be taken to ensure representation across gender, geographical regions, and academic disciplines.

Section 4.2: Infuse Community Engagement in the Curriculum

The second strategy focuses on curriculum. In many universities in Kenya, community engagement is an isolated practice, in that it is minimally (if at all) integrated with pedagogy and research. At KU, SCSP is not connected to academics, and students do not earn credit that count toward their graduation requirements. In the best-case scenario, universities should aim for infusion. In the "infusion model," as explained by Bender (2008), "community service and engagement should be embraced and promoted as a means of improving the quality and relevance of teaching and learning, and research" (p. 89). In this comprehensive approach, community engagement is defined as "the combination and integration of service with teaching and research related and applied to identified community development priorities" (Lazarus et al. 2008, p. 61). Students exposed to the infusion model are likely to be exposed to community engagement at multiple levels, thereby increasing the likelihood of enhancing generic skills. They are also more likely to be sensitive to society's needs and to understand how their academic work can support societal development.

Section 4.3: Bring "engaged scholarship" to the "core" from the "periphery"

The third strategy calls for a redefinition of scholarship. Many universities in Kenya include in their mission statements a commitment to social responsiveness or service to humanity, as is the case with KU. However, as Favish et al. (2012) have noted, "social responsiveness" is a nebulous concept that can be used to mean different things to different people and institutions. They suggest the use of the phrase "engaged scholarship" instead, which is a concept that was popularized by Ernest Boyer in the 1990s. A shift from the notion of social responsiveness to engaged scholarship allows the university to redefine in important ways its relationship with the society in which it exists and which it serves.

First, the idea of engaged scholarship allows universities to infuse community engagement with pedagogy and research, as noted in Section 4. 2. Infusion suggests that community engagement work by staff and students comes to be regarded as being at the core, rather than at the periphery, of university functions. When infusion occurs, shifts will be necessary in the ways that pedagogy, research, and service are evaluated and rewarded in the university. For example, these functions are evaluated for their impact on on-campus and community-based constituencies. Second, the notion of engaged scholarship allows the university to embrace its role in helping to address challenges faced by the society to which it belongs and contribute to sustainable development. According to Fourie (2003), "various definitions of sustainable development include the following components: the achievement of lasting satisfaction of human needs; the improvement of the quality of life; the idea of cost-effective development; the notion that people-centred initiatives are needed . . ." (p. 33). The notion of engaged scholarship challenges engagement for its own sake or for university branding purposes. Finally, a change to engaged scholarship requires universities to dedicate adequate funds to support the shift.

Engaged universities identify community engagement as a funding priority, as they reach out to governmental and non-governmental funders and donors. The strategies outlined in this section suggest that Kenyan universities should identify themselves more explicitly as engaged universities and embark on changes that enhance student participation, curriculum change, and university-community relationships in ways suggested here. Such a shift is likely to enhance community engagement: an engaged university is more likely to provide opportunities for developing students' generic skills while benefiting society.

Section 5: Conclusion

In this paper, it is evident that community engagement provides an important but inadequately-used tool for developing generic skills that may enhance graduate employability. Kenya's higher education institutions can and should fully exploit the potential of community engagement toward enhancing graduate employability. In doing so, they also attend to their stated mission of social responsibility. Of course, embracing community engagement is much easier said than done. Institutional culture in higher education in Kenya, as is the case elsewhere in Africa and abroad, is resistant to change that threatens the status quo. Community engagement as envisioned in this article calls for a redefinition and intertwining of the core functions of the university in a way that challenges the traditional view of the university as an ivory tower that dispenses academic knowledge produced on campus. For the shift toward "engaged university" to occur, the institution first and foremost needs leadership that fully appreciates the benefits of community engagement, both rhetorically and in action. Adequate funding and a deep sense of responsibility toward addressing society's challenges and sustainable community development must also accompany the shift. And lastly, since little can be achieved in higher education without full support from the teaching staff, the reward system must incorporate the infusion of community engagement in pedagogy and research. This means that pedagogy and research will be evaluated for their impacts on on-campus and community-based constituencies. In sum, this paper has argued that a university that takes seriously the challenge of producing employable graduates must pay attention to the role that community engagement can play in enhancing generic skills in students and, of course, be willing to put in place changes that can help institutionalize such engagement.

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