University Engagement Research Environment

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Abstract

Higher education is now more responsible and responsive to society. To tackle social problems with complexity, dynamic and uncertainty environment requires new production of knowledge. Engagement research is a process of integration with service learning that embedded in the university's governance and education management system. Higher education institutional management of research environment is to sustain university engagement. Research environment is now part of the Research Excellence Framework (REF)[1], the new system for assessing the quality of research in higher education institutions in the UK. Thus, a new culture of university engagement research environments to provide a context to particular institutional practices for engagement research. It is necessary to understand the research environmental systems both in the university and community setting. A higher education system is not purely formed by national regulations and policies, but an understanding collaboration with equal partners in the society. According to Buddhist principles,[2] education creates intelligence (Yonisomanasikàra) responsively to society within learning environment (Paratoghosa).

Keywords: University, Engagement, Research, Environment

Introduction

The traditional roles of university are 1) teaching and learning in the development of human, 2) conducting research to create new knowledge and innovation and 3) contributing to social, cultural and environmental development. As societies struggle with problems ranging from economy, environment and climate change to quality of life. These challenges are knowledge intensive. Universities are knowledge-intensive institutions

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[1] REF 02.2011 (2011) REF 2014: Assessment framework and guidance on submissions. http://www.ref.ac.uk/media/ref/content/pub/assessmentframeworkandguidanceonsubmissions/GOS%20including%20addendum.pdf

[2] Phra Brahmagunabhorn (2013). Educational Philosophy of Thai (Thai version), Buddhadhamma Part: Educational ministry". Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn University press.

that have vital roles to play in addressing these challenges. Civic engagement should be a core function of the modern university by integrating the three areas of university activities: teaching and learning and research.[3]It is becoming increasingly important for university management to balance the high demand for academic quality in education and research, with the role of participating in social change.

Now, many universities began experimenting in making their knowledge more useful for their host societies. Boyer[4] thus aimed to 'reconsider' scholarship, and reinvent a more holistic view of scholarship as 'a variety of creative work carried on in a variety of places measured by the ability to think, communicate and learn.' He, therefore, proposed four overlapping but distinct functions of scholarship:

• The scholarship of discovery;

• The scholarship of integration;

• The scholarship of application (later renamed engagement); and

• The scholarship of teaching.

The key issue in the definition of scholarship of application or engagement is the distinction, it makes between applied scholarship and community service or citizenship.

The Durham University Model[5]

As a 'world class' university, members of some communities in the Durham area felt that 'the university was not just a few miles away but on another planet.' It was the communities' taxes that funded Durham University establishment. University engagement has been embedded in the university's structures and educationmanagement processes.

3   McIIrath, L. (2013). Higher Engagement and Civic Engagement : Comparative Perspectives. Gateway : The International Journal of Community Research and Engagement , Vol 6: 231-32, © UTSePress and the authors.
4   Boyer, E. L. (1990) Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Jossey-Bass, New York.
5   Russell, A., Andy et.al.(2011).SustainingCommunity-UniversityCollaborations The Durham University Model. Gateways: InternationalJournal of CommunityResearch and Engagement. Vol 4: 218–31, © UTSe-Press and the authors.

There are many reasons why community engagement may be important: (1) to enhance the profile of the university in its locality as a good neighbor and responsible employer; (2) to increase recruitment; (3) to enhance the skills and experience of members of the university; (4) to take advantage of funding opportunities; and (5) to enable better research. There are four principles underlay the proposed community initiative:

1) Empowerment. The most effective way to tackle disadvantage is to empower people to help themselves, through 'action research' allows solutions to be customized to local conditions and needs as perceived by local communities.

2) Partnership. Multiple partners can best identify and define problems through their different approaches to communication with communities, and bring different views on how similar problems have been successfully tackled in other communities and lessons to be learned.

3) Education. Universities are currently focused on 18–21 year olds. Widening of their role for community development must begin early in the lives of children.

4) Leadership. Durham University is one of the leading research-led universities in the UK and a node in global networks, attracting international thinkers and innovative ideas to the region. Staff in the university would work collaboratively with local people, communities and partners in an innovative and exciting new approach to community regeneration and renewal. A key component of this plan would involve the establishment of university 'one-stop shops' in selected local communities, through which local people could find out about the resources available through the university and could communicate the sorts of help and support that they needed.

Engagement Australia[6] is promoting a common view of "engagement" as 'the cultivation of relationships that lead to

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[6]   Knowledge Network Institute of Thailand (2014). EnT Digest. http://www.engagementthailand.org/.

productive partnerships which yield mutually beneficial outcomes to universities and their partners through the application and utilization of university resources including staff, students, infrastructure and knowledge and across the breadth of university activities including Research, Education and Service. (Professor Pierre Viljoen, Chair, Engagement Australia)

University Engagementin Thailand

The Thailand Research Fund[7] has been supporting Community Based Research (CBR)[8] and Area Based Collaborative Research (ABC Research)[9] in collaboration with about 25 universities in Thailand. Participatory action research (PAR) has been applied into the research process of these universities. Community researchers are working with academic researchers as equal partners to co-create authentic social changes. One of the good practices is The School of Traditional and Alternative Medicine (STAM), Chiangrai Rajabhat University.[10] STAM has been working collaboratively with local people integrated with student service learning and becomes a part of local public health service system in Chiangrai Province.

In 2013, the Commission of Higher Education has announced the regulation of promotion academic position on social responsibility. This policy would enhance more universities to work in collaboration to social change.

What is "University Engagement?" [11]

Engagement Thailand – EnT has been established in May, 2014 and 45 universities are its members. The principle of University Engagement in Thailand is 1) Partnership, 2) Mutual benefit, 3) Scholarship and 4) Social impact. Engagement University would appreciate the values, culture, knowledge and skills of people in the society. Engagement research is a process of integration with service learning and embedded in the university's governance and education

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[7]   http://www.trf.or.th/

[8]   http://vijai.trf.or.th/

[9]   http://abc.trf.or.th/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=703&Itemid=57

[10] http://stam.crru.ac.th/newindex/

[11] Knowledge Network Institute of Thailand (2014). EnT Digest. http://www.engagementthailand.org/.

management system and research environment which includes policy, strategic planning, financing, curriculum development and working environment in the university.

> "The concept of service learning[12]　 represents a shift from traditional teaching and learning towards experiential knowledge creation that proved to produce a highly positive educational outcome in terms of deeper professional knowledge, improved life skills, and a better developed sense of social and civic responsibility of the students involved. When PAR is performed as a specific form of service learning, teachers are required to act as tutors for their students as well as undertake research themselves"

The integration of service learning with research process is considered to be core activity of university engagement leading to co-production of knowledge in mode 2. The attributes of mode 1 and mode 2 knowledge production are in table 1.

Table 1: Attributes of Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production[13]

Mode 1	Mode 2
Academic context	Context of application
Disciplinary	Trans disciplinary
Homogeneity	Heterogeneity
Autonomy	Reflexivity/social accountability
Traditional quality control (peer review)	Novel quality control

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[12]　Bodorko s a, Barbara and Pataki a, b, Gyorgy. (2009). Linking academic and local knowledge: community-based research and service learning for sustainable rural development in Hungary. Journal of Cleaner Production Vol17: 1123–1131.

[13]　Hessels, L.K. and Lente, H. van (2008) Re-thinking new knowledge production: A literature review and a research agenda.Research Policy Vol 37 : 740–760. www.sciencedirect.com.

Figure 1:Combination of Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production in the university engagement research environment.
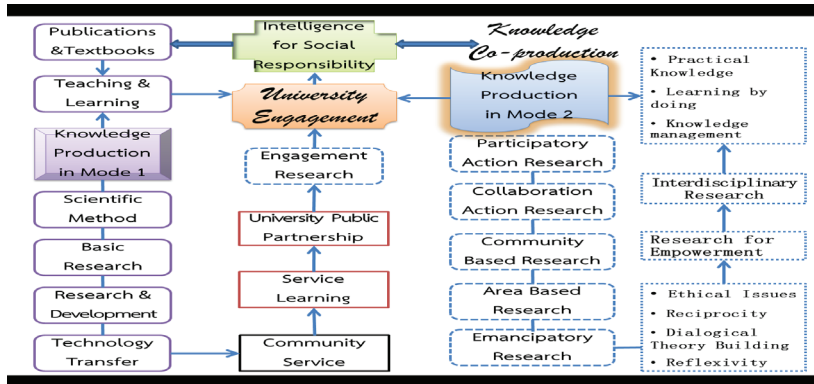
"The Human Mind as a Tool of Research"[14] would be introduced in the theory of Knowledge creation with thecombination of Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production in university engagement as shown in figure 1.It is convincing to understand Emancipatory Action Research[15]that are

1) Ethical Issues   the right of research subjects to exercise ownership and control over the knowledge produced about them.

2) Reciprocity in the Research Relationship Reciprocity implies give and take where there is a mutual negotiation of meaning and power, mutual education.

3) Dialogical Theory Building A feature of emancipatory research is building theory through dialogue rather than expert imposition, the agenda for research and theory must be set in dialogue with communities themselves and not in reference to the professional interest of the researcher alone...

4) Reflexivity By reflecting upon and acknowledging one's own objectives and biases one can retain an awareness of the importance of other people's definitions and understanding of

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[14] Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod. 2010. Practical Research: Planning and Design, Ninth Edition, Merrill. Copyright. Pearson Education, Inc.
[15] O'Shea, Éidín. (2013). First Steps to Developing Service Learning Initiatives using Emancipatory Action Research. Australasian Journal of University-Community Engagement, Vol 8, No. 1.

theirs'. This can also become part of the research findings.

Sustaining university-community engagement requires strategic institutional management of research environment. Research Environment is part of The Research Excellence Framework (REF) [16]which is the new system for assessing the quality of research in higher education institutions in the UK, and replaces the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in 2014. Under the new framework the three elements being assessed will be weighted as such: research output 65%, research impact 20% and research environment 15%.

The vitality and sustainability of the research environment is to determine how far the research environment supports a continuing flow of excellent research and its effective dissemination and application, as follows

1) Research resources: including staffing, research income, infrastructure and facilities.

2) Research management: including the forward strategy, staff development and training of postgraduate researchers.

3) Public engagement : including arrangements for the exchange of people and ideas with research user organizations, support for interdisciplinary and collaborative research, and wider contributions to the research base and relevant esteem indicators.

The Three Dimensions of Engagement Research in the 21st Century

As the complex, dynamic and uncertainty of society, "University Engagement" research culture is changing to be vital and meaningful in society. There are 3 dimensions of research view as shown in figure 2.

1.   Scientific Thinking: The production of knowledge and innovation by scientific method.

This systematic attention is the same process as the Four Noble Truth

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[16]   REF 02.2011 (2011) REF 2014: Assessment framework and guidance on submissions. http://www.ref.ac.uk/media/ref/content/pub/assessmentframeworkandguidanceonsubmissions/GOS%20including%20addendum.pdf

(Cattàri Ariyasaccàni) to create ability to learn and adapt with proper consideration (Yonisomanasikàra).

2. Research Skills: The capacities of researcher to utilize research methods and research tools

correctly including scientific competencies and ability to work in an interdisciplinary environment.

3. Art of Research Management: The ability to work in partnership and networking with

Stakeholders. This means to work in collaboration and developing a network as well as to have business culture and management skills.

Figure 2 Ecosystem : Structure and Function of University Engagement Research
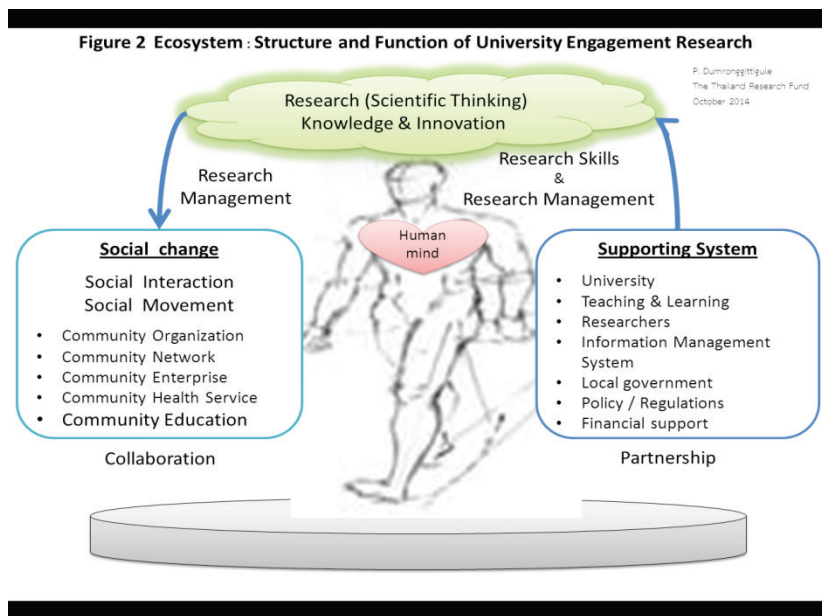
Conclusions and Recommendations

According to Buddhist's teaching "Education is to build up intelligence for social responsibility" The development of "human mind" is the core content of education. Education compost of Yonisomanasikàra (in human mind: insight learning, a systematic attention, scientific thinking) and Paratoghosa: (in environmental system: learning from others in the society).

Thus, a new culture of university engagement research environment is to provide a context to particular institutional practices for engagement research, it is necessary to understand the research environmental systems both in the university and community setting. A higher education system is not purely formed by national regulations and policies, but also the more informal cultures and agreements which shape what are accepted practices and goals. So an equally important element of understanding collaboration with equal partners in the society in making sense of the traditions and cultures of engagement which have built up in particular research environmental systems. (Figure 3)

Figure 3 : University Engagement Research
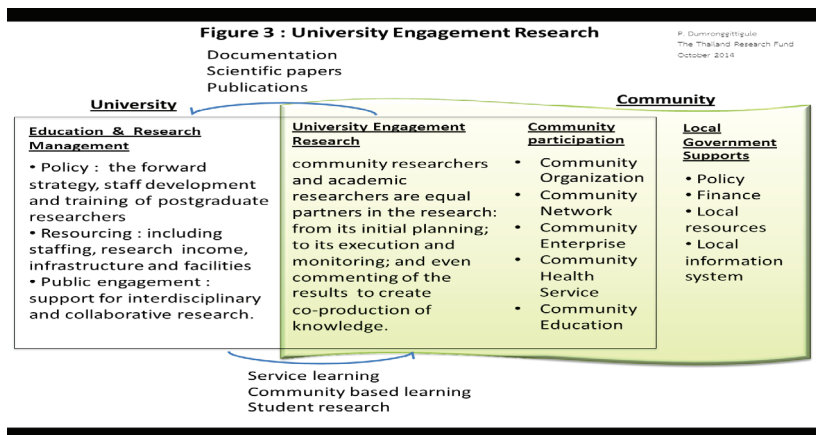
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      tent/pub/assessmentframeworkandguidanceon
      submissions/GOS%20including%20addendum.pdf.