Review Essay

The Confluence of Rivers

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Service-Learning and Social Entrepreneurship: A Pedagogy of Social Change

Sandra Enos
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Introducing the Rivers: Service-Learning and Social Entrepreneurship

Sandra Enos is a cartographer. Not in the practical sense of charting geological phenomena, topographies, or local transportation routes, but in the metaphorical sense. She seeks to create a map. Not necessarily with lines, colors, or scales, but with her words and a synthesis of the fields of service-learning and social entrepreneurship. The map she crafts in the book, *Service-Learning and Social Entrepreneurship: A Pedagogy of Social Change*, provides a historical context, a lay of the land, and an organizing theme for how we in higher education can “reconsider our [engagement] work on campus and to connect to broader and deeper purposes . . . [with] service-learning and social entrepreneurship” (p. 84). While these two are currently overlapping in practice (for example, see Ashoka U, DukeEngage, Ripple Effect Learning Community at Western Carolina University, etc.), empirical research into the relationship, or perhaps partnership, of service-learning and social entrepreneurship is limited. Enos notes that in 2013 a review of research focused on this relationship resulted in fewer than a dozen articles. Clearly there is much more to be known about and explored through the rich soil and fertile valley that lies between these two rivers.

In geography, two rivers meeting is a confluence. One particular conflux gaining recent attention has resulted from two rivers of work that seek to align an institution’s mission and resources through community engagement (service-learning) and social innovation (social entrepreneurship). To not recognize the parallels of these rivers of work would be a missed opportunity to better understand the complementary frameworks currently used to navigate the engaged learning practices applied in these “social

change spaces.” Particularly relevant is Dee’s (2001) conceptualization of social entrepreneurs as social sector change agents who develop a mission to create and sustain social value, pursue new opportunities to serve the mission, engage in a process of adaptation and learning, solve and think beyond resources, and exhibit high accountability to constituencies served and outcomes created. Core to Enos’s argument is that despite their common spaces,

there has been surprisingly little conversation, notice, or reflection on the work of the other from each field . . . [Enos] argues that these fields have much to offer to each other and that expanding definitions and ways of considering this work should characterize a next generation of community engagement. (p. 3)

She goes on to say, that “working together in a more collaborative, educational, and community[-focused] agenda holds great promise for community engagement that is deep, inclusive, and cares about impact on students, faculty, institutions, and community” (p. 1).

The book’s primary goals are (a) to analyze the history and current status of service-learning and social entrepreneurship as both pedagogy and disciplines within higher education; (b) to identify the gap in empirical and conceptual research so as to better understand the relationship between service-learning and social entrepreneurship; (c) to offer numerous tributaries (in the form of research questions) to be explored; and (d) to propose strategies to advance an agenda that educates students deeply and broadly for active citizenship.

Charting the Rivers: Exploring each Chapter

The considerable thought and intentionality around the structure of the book directly address-

es the context, key concerns, opportunities, and strategic practices associated with service-learning and social entrepreneurship. The four chapters that guide the reader through the author's thinking include: The Landscape of Social Change Education, Organizing for Engagement, Challenges for Service-Learning and Social Entrepreneurship, and Educating for Engagement: A Turning Point. Each chapter will be discussed in order to provide the reader with a sense of the written map Enos has charted.

Chapter 1, The Landscape of Social Change Education, frames the approaches of service-learning and social entrepreneurship within American higher education. This lay of the land chapter brings together and synthesizes a thorough review of social change and civic learning literature from relevant seminal works from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Boyer, 1990; Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007), the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U, 2012), and the National Civic Learning & Democratic Engagement Network (AAC&U, n.d.), which together serve as the compass guiding higher education to our true north – “greater engagement with the community by aligning [our] resources with community needs” (p. 2) and to “advance civic learning and democratic engagement as an essential cornerstone for each student . . . [and] to build a national agenda that will move civic learning from the periphery to the center of student learning” (p. 3).

A clear theme introduced in Chapter 1 and referenced in every chapter is the juxtaposition between the respective birthplaces and families into which social entrepreneurship and service-learning were born.

They are like siblings, separated at birth, raised by two different sets of parents. You can see similarities in the source code and the ultimate purpose and goal of bettering humanity, but their respective environments shaped them in different ways. (Dostilio & Perry, in press)

Enos presents an important observation illuminated and discussed numerous times throughout the text. “Social entrepreneurship's roots are in the real world,” (p. 53) and as it grew it matriculated into the university environment, whereas service-learning was born and developed in the academy, essentially on campus, and then migrated into the real world. Perhaps this is why an early service-learning book addressed the question, *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* (Eyler & Giles, 1999) and only after this question was asked and thoroughly answered, did researchers ask the ques-

tion, *Where's the Community in Service-Learning Research?* (Cruz & Giles, 2000). This is not an inherent flaw of the service-learning field, but it is indicative of the field's early focus. Compare this to social entrepreneurship, which, over the years, has been primarily focused on impacts, results, and outcomes specifically within communities by addressing community challenges from the ground level. The Ashoka Fellows program is a prime example of this community practice focus. Since 1982 over 3,000 social entrepreneurs in 70 nations have been identified and supported as Ashoka Fellows – individuals identified locally, vetted locally, and tested locally to generate systemic local (and beyond) social change. Selection criteria for an Ashoka Fellow respect the individual and their history, the social change idea, and the positive social impact potential.

Chapter 1 ends with a comprehensively informative table comparing service-learning and social entrepreneurship on 18 different dimensions of practice, such as mission, language used, focus, central teaching goals, journals, and research organizations.

Chapter 2 offers the newest contribution to understanding the practical implications associated with the confluence of service-learning and social entrepreneurship. Giving insight into how ten current higher education examples of service-learning and social entrepreneurship are organized institutionally, Enos identifies, investigates, and offers transferable considerations for campuses navigating either or both spaces. An introduction into the process of institutionalization within higher education demonstrates the relationship that exists between service-learning and social entrepreneurship. Juxtaposing the growth of service-learning and institutionalization measures with the current status of institutionalizing social entrepreneurship education on these campuses illuminates a related pattern of cloth from which both have been cut. Salient here is the guidance that while “service-learning and civic engagement movements . . . play a critical role in helping advance social innovation education . . . it is essential that we distinguish the purpose, boundaries, and desired outcomes of each” (Ashoka U, 2014, p. 25).

Enos identifies “observable patterns in the organization of these programs . . . [the] disciplinary homes for service-learning and social entrepreneurship . . . how institutions frame engagement and how programs that offer service-learning and social entrepreneurship are related to each other” (p. 27). Enos researched the 10 institutions receiving both the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification and the Ashoka U designation. All 10 are

members of state or regional Campus Compact organizations and also have received the Corporation on National and Community Service President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. These 10 institutions are highly decorated, intensively engaged, and represent a range of institutional types and undergraduate populations.

Enos's findings derive from her analysis of semi-structured interviews and campus artifacts (e.g., web page content, resources, etc.) from each of the 10 participant institutions. The eight key observations from the analysis primarily illuminated the "critical differences among the ten campuses" (p. 32), and ultimately what emerged were "individual profiles, tied to institutional size, history, culture, and leadership" (p. 33). The eight key observations include curricular and co-curricular engagement; institutionalization and program building; centralization and decentralization; size, complexity, and cohesion; centers for support and faculty ownership; language and definitions; centrality and marginality; and disciplines and schools. Considering the critical differences across the 10 institutions, perhaps the reader would have gained more insight into how service-learning and social entrepreneurship are organized on each campus through individual case studies on each institution. Enos pushes in this direction with a table that presents models of service-learning and social entrepreneurship education, but the reader may have been better informed about each of the eight key observations if they would have been used as a framework for crafting a robust case study of each institution. This would have been a large undertaking, but by doing so much more that could have been conveyed in this chapter. While a valuable extension and progression of knowledge was offered in this chapter, Enos acknowledges the limitations of the research. While the emergent themes (or observations) from unitized and categorized qualitative data are organic, emic, and therefore not considered *a priori*, the vehicle selected to articulate those findings is the choice of the researcher. In this, case studies would have provided a more robust and thorough articulation of the emergent themes.

Chapter 3, Challenges for Service-Learning and Social Entrepreneurship, discusses the unintended consequences associated with institutionalization, scalability, and the myriad definitions and articulations of service-learning and social entrepreneurship. Balancing the numerous definitions, interpretations, and applications with the goal to bring the proclaimed "pedagogy of social change" from the margins to the core of an institution, service-learning and social entrepreneurship must avoid the pitfall of becoming too focused on transactions and

bean counting versus transformation and seed planting. This chapter focuses primarily on the complex arguments and critiques of service-learning and social entrepreneurship, suggesting that both pedagogies suffer from similar challenges, including the development of "better practices in community partnerships, assessing impact on students, faculty, institutions, and community, and extending definitions of engagement" (p. 43).

Enos illuminates and synthesizes four challenges with service-learning which are deeply rooted in a rich, but complex soil. First, she identifies service-learning's diverted history from being a tool of civic skills to a tool employed to teach disciplinary content (Saltmarsh, 2005), resulting in service-learning missing its civic gold standard. This seems to be associated with the perception that service-learning, as democratic engagement, is a Trojan horse of progressive politics and a liberal agenda. Second, she notes the tensions between those who serve and those who are being served that leads to sustained structural or systemic imbalances in power and privilege. Davis (2006) suggested that the reluctance to address these inequalities is a key reason why we do not talk about service and leads to an approach that perceives service is simple when in fact it is quite complex. Third, she describes a bend in the arc away from social justice or social change that is focused on transformative community building and a bend toward transaction-based nonprofit organization assistance. This is well articulated in the research of Korgen, White, and White (2011), Mitchell (2008), Lewis (2004), and Daigre (2000) through the juxtaposition between critical and traditional service-learning. And fourth, she suggests a too intensive focus on the goals of "transformation of the academy and changing the world" that has led to a failure to adopt the most traditional strengths of the academy (e.g., being a critical conscious producer and arbiter of knowledge). Enos echoes Jacoby's (2015) argument that to progress and maintain relevance, service-learning "must open itself up to constant and critical re-examination of the field's basic principles and practices. Failure to critically reflect on the aims, the claims, and the work of service-learning violates the core concepts of the field" (p. 53).

Similarly, social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship education are not without their own critics and critiques. The first comes with the two different codified approaches to social entrepreneurship: social enterprise and social innovation. Social enterprise is primarily concerned with supporting a socially infused mission through the generation of earned income (e.g., TOMS, BANGS, Warby Parker), while social innovation strives to develop

new approaches to meet social needs (e.g., Modern Postal System, KIVA, Sistemas de Tecnologia Agro-electro). Many researchers call for a blurring of the lines or a bridging between these two approaches. The way to do this, according to Dees and Anderson (2006), is to be focused expressly on “social impact, using a combination of philanthropic and business perspectives” (cited in Enos, p. 54). This process, the blurring of boundaries between sectors, can lead to new ideas and educational opportunities vis-à-vis current community challenges.

Another divergent path comes with the critique comparing social entrepreneurship with other tools for change. Enos reviews Light’s (2011) book (in the fall 2014 *Michigan Journal*) succinctly articulating the argument between social entrepreneurship, writ large, being *the model* of social change rather than *a component* of social change. Enos extends the idea that social entrepreneurship is *a component* of social change by discussing the complementary roles of social safekeepers, social explorers, and social advocates. Together, this cadre of social agents is in a position to tend the gardens of social change, development, and transformation. This extension and refinement of social entrepreneurship points to the assumption that “not every social problem requires a social entrepreneurial approach” (p. 58) and suggests that through the expertise of all four of these social change agents a broader, more impactful approach to social change can be developed.

Chapter 3 ends with a strong explication of the critiques of social entrepreneurship education and aligns the similar challenges associated with the teaching of service-learning and social entrepreneurship. Ultimately, this chapter frames and contextualizes a thick, complex challenge. Just when the reader is wondering where to go next, Enos suggests a modest proposal in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4, *Educating for Engagement: A Turning Point*, proposes four strategies to integrate service-learning and social entrepreneurship. These strategies are:

... organizing frames that fit campus culture and type and allow for a broader view of engagement while also incorporating frameworks to develop principles of engagement, the development of community engagement toolboxes, the exchange of best practices from both service-learning and social entrepreneurship, the development of learning goals that span several streams of community engagement. (p. 66)

The first strategy offers clearly defined frameworks to advance active citizenship, including a call to organize (a) around the public and civic purpose of higher education (e.g., *A Crucible Moment*,

AAC&U), (b) for engaged learning (e.g., High Impact Practices, Kuh, 2008), and (c) around collective impact (Klein, 2011) and community focus (Cruz & Giles, 2000). These frames serve as a resource for preparing the next generation of service-learners, social entrepreneurs, and social change agents to “translate careful thought into effective action” (Freeland, 2009, cited in Enos, p. 69). This particular proposition captures two imperatives of social change: first, a commitment to “careful thought,” which includes the elements of civic learning identified in *A Crucible Moment* (knowledge, skills, values, and collective action), and second, an investment in “effective action,” which includes approaches that center on collective community. The translation of careful thought into effective action is possible if college students are able to carefully and confidently work across borders, beliefs, communities, and systems to develop a common agenda, manage resources and teams responsibly, and manage and measure that agenda through to fruition.

The second strategy suggests a variety of tools that address social problems (e.g., Pathways to Public Service, Social Change Wheel, and the Community Engagement Toolbox). At their core, service-learning and social entrepreneurship are about empathic, reciprocal, and effective social change with an explicit emphasis on problem solving, and without effective problem solving, they are at best a hollow teaching approach and a failed venture, respectively. The third strategy, described in seven pages, represents a microcosm of the whole book. This strategy calls for an exchange of the best resources and perspectives from service-learning and social entrepreneurship in order to meet unmet social needs, positively contribute to communities, and add value to engaged partnerships, projects, and people. Finally, the fourth strategy reminds the reader that it is imperative that this work is organized around student learning goals. There is a sense of urgency that manifests in this brief section, and serves as a reminder that the work of higher education institutions is essential to develop a critical yet appreciative, civically yet civil, and personally-tuned yet community-focused democratic constituency.

Concluding Thoughts

Enos’s book maps the spaces of social change pedagogies. Without her investigation and problematizing, as a field we could not come to collectively know it as well as we do now. In my opinion, few research books enable the reader to begin to strategically apply the contents while reading, as this book ably does. This text is for those who have been waiting to connect service-learning and social entrepreneurship. The urgency in this book is pal-

pable, the timeliness is spot-on, and its applicability is quite literally at the reader's fingertips. Whether a person is entering into this space for the first time, has experience navigating these uncharted waters, is a practitioner looking to develop a better program, or a researcher investigating these pedagogies, this book will serve as the cornerstone for moving forward. The level of synthesis across the sections provides the breadth necessary of a primer and the depth demanded to serve as the clarion call to further explore the timely, complex, and provocative questions we in the service-learning and social entrepreneurship fields must address.

Without further investigation into and a strong application of these pedagogies of social change, the promise of bringing together service-learning and social entrepreneurship will remain unmet. But if these two rivers begin to join, the promise of which Enos has so capably helped us to see, we can harness the strengths of both to become a mighty force for community change and student learning.

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