Northwest University

Community Development and its Practitioners

A Thesis Project on the Demands of Twenty-First Century Community Development and a Program Evaluation of the International Community Development Program

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Thesis Project

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INTRODUCTION

The field of community development aims at finding solutions to the systemic global issues. The Masters of Arts (MA) has become the standard level of education for any person who aspires to create significant impact in the realm of community development. Graduate programs that seek to meet the growing demand for the credentialing of community developers only remain relevant by being on the cutting edge. To keep up with this demand in a 21st century context, academic programs that provide training in community development must adapt to the changing times by focusing on concepts of globalization and the postcolonial world. In addition, practical training in strategic planning is essential for effective 21st century community development. In this thesis I will make the case that these three program criteria are essential for any effective community development program. If an MA program in International Community Development is to prepare future practitioners for effective community development, it is necessary that the curriculum encompass the three essentials of understanding globalization and the postcolonial world, and developing effective skills in strategic planning. I will support this claim with academic research and conclusions drawn from a qualitative case study of Northwest University's MA in International Community Development (MAICD) program. This same study provides the basis of a more detailed program evaluation of the Masters in ICD at Northwest University (see Appendix A).

The three guiding points of this thesis project are globalism, the perspective and impact of post-colonialism, and the requirements of strategic planning—and the demands they place on an effect MAICD program will guide this thesis. I will first consider how the phenomenon of globalization demands that ICD students start with an understanding of how globalization affects both themselves and those they would serve. Secondly, I will

consider how an effective MAICD program helps students understand the assumptions and outcomes of post-colonialism, so that they will not repeat those same mistakes in their efforts to serve communities. Finally, I will consider the essential role and shape of strategic planning in transforming idealistic plans into concrete help. .

In order to identify the training and knowledge necessary for an effective Master of Arts in community development we must start with a working definition of community development. However, as Buss and Fabiani point out, practitioners in the field have varying definitions of what constitutes community development (Buss and Fabiani 3). These variations are accounted for based upon the variety of fields that practitioners work in. Claudia Maria Vargas, a professor of public administration at Portland State University, has conducted substantial research on sustainable development and also works in community engagement. She provides an accurate description of the field in an article titled, "Community Development and Micro-Enterprises: Fostering Sustainable Development"*:

> What community development strives for is to give ordinary people a voice for expressing and acting on their extraordinary needs and desires in opposition to the vested interests of global economic and political power, to counter the increasing co modification of human welfare and human beings themselves. (Vargas)

In other words community developers work to engage the community they are operating in to provide solutions to problems on a different level from that of governance,for the common good. The type of person that enrolls in an MA in Community Development is one whose mindset can be explained as "common good purpose trumps all" (Kelley and

Kelley 39). Therefore, our working definition of community development focuses on solutions aimed on the common good, rather than political expediency or efficiency.

The development of the neoliberal school of thought, and the accompanying understanding of community development provides and excellent guide in discovering the nature of community development. In the 1980's neoliberalism emerged as the overarching theory behind community development. Initially the main focus was on the market; neoliberals felt governments should step back from economic involvement to make room for grassroots approaches, sustainable development, and an evolving focus on the influence of gender on development. In the 1990s, the approach evolved to encompass post-development theory this reflected a concern that community development is "a form of colonialism and Eurocentrism". This resulted in an increased focus on the relationship between culture and development (Willis 28). Concentrated effort to avoid the appearance of colonialism has lead to a focus on culturally sensitive development work. Still, grassroots movements, and sustainable development remained key to the neoliberal development approach. The 2000s saw additional changes to the neoliberal theory of development, with an increased concern regarding globalization and rights-based development. Sustainable development, post-development and grassroots approaches remained significant (Willis 28). Through these developments, the neoliberal approach to community development has consistently emphasized the importance of culture, rights, and small movements for successful community development. In a postcolonial world, social diversity and recognition of power dynamics is fundamental to appropriate development. More specifically, postcolonial development focuses on dismantling "Northern assumptions ... particularly within the context of places and

people who have experienced colonialism from perspective of being colonized" (Willis 30). For all these reasons, Successful community developers must understand the impact of both globalization and the landscape of the postcolonial world. In summary, neoliberalism highlights the themes of globalism, post-colonialism, and grass roots movements in community development.

GLOBALIZATION

In the 2000's, the neoliberal approach to community development puts significant weight on paying attention to globalization. As per the definition offered by authors Lechner and Boli in *The Globalization Reader*, "globalization refers to the processes by which more people across large distances and become connected in more and different ways" (1). This definition of globalization does not refer exclusively to the migration of people, but also goods, knowledge, and ideas. Increased access to new commodities, for communities and community developers creates a need for full comprehension of the impact these changes may have. The shrinking of this world is happening in full view (Tomlinson 370). This concept of globalization has caused massive changes to our world, and so necessitates massive adjustments to any MA program in community development. Since community development is a field of practice that occurs around the world, practitioners must possess global understanding. Students in an MACD program can work towards global awareness by leaving their own personal frame of reference and thinking in terms of others, from different contexts (Demos 2/7/2018). Community development practitioners must be able to take their knowledge and apply it in different contexts around the world, particularly in relevant subject areas such as global awareness and global citizenship.

To address the challenges of globalization, an effective Masters program in community development must start with global awareness. Global awareness refers to a conscious recognition of the processes of globalization and the impact that it has had on the interconnectedness of the world as it is seen today. Before a community developer can go out into the world and work with other cultures they must develop this awareness so that they work and experiences they have are culturally appropriate and valuable (Gibson). To be a successful community developer, it is important that knowledge and understanding of cultural implications across a variety of work contexts are understood. In many cases, this initial education is foundational, but provides for a level of knowledge that will prepare developers to learn the remainder in their specific work contexts. Global awareness involves a normative environment that leads people to a greater identification with other global citizens (Reysen). The classrooms in an MA in community development provide this normative environment to learn about and identify with the implications of global citizenship. Global awareness is an important step in recognizing the progression of globalization and the impact it has on 21st century community development. An MA program in community development must provide students with increased global awareness.

An MA program in community development must educate students about global citizenship. The definition of this term is open to debate, but overall it refers to a level of citizenship that goes beyond city, state or country, and a citizen like this has a greater concern with issues such as hunger, peace, disease, and the environment in terms of their potential global impact (Gibson). In order to be a community developer, a practitioner must understand they already are a global citizen and then be educated about what that

means. An MA in community development must encourage the concept of global citizenship with education about globalization. An MA program in community development must create the space where students can explore globalization and the implications of global citizenship for themselves and those they will serve. As practitioners begin to learn the realities of global citizenship, they will be better equipped to identify themselves on a global rather than a national level (Reysen). This process helps to develop "a felt responsibility to act for the betterment of the world" (Reysen). An effective MA program in community development must include an opportunity for future community developers to identify globally as opposed to nationally, and begin to understand the requirements of global citizenship. This altruistic and holistic attitude will help practitioners to work well in their future contexts. This foundational training is key, as practitioners cannot become community developers unless they first identify themselves as global citizens.

To be a global citizen, one must have an interest in the world, and this is often fueled by "critical moral consciousness" which relates to "empathy, social justice, and a moral responsibility to act" (Reysen). An MA in community development must create global citizens with a strong internal need to act, supported by knowledge and understanding of globalization and it's accompanying impact.

When students develop empathy for the plight of others, there is often a correlated sense of responsibility to help alleviate these problems. Global citizens take a more holistic view of issues and solutions. An MA program in community development must impart empathetic global awareness and one of these results is the greater understanding of global citizenship. Once a person understands they are a global citizen, learning about

the implications of that citizenship is a simpler process. For an MA program in community development to be effective in training future practitioners, the curriculum must include a focus for students to think in global terms, and to see the long reaching impact of global issues. Community developers must be culturally aware, and part of this awareness requires global education. Globalization has influenced the spread of people, products, knowledge and ideas and as such has changed the way that community developers must approach globalization. Finally, globalization is a useful lens to gain a clear perspective on one of the greatest enemies of effective community development, colonialism.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN A POSTCOLONIAL WORLD

Colonialism is an enemy of effective community development because, instead of providing true benefits to the community, it enforces the values and frameworks of foreign cultures on the community through the political control by foreign states over people and territories, with or without permanent settlement by the colonizing nation (Willis 20). Post-colonialism refers to the period of time in which these colonial empires have been dismantled and the unique aspects of smaller communities are valued. Colonialism resulted in a centuries long dominance of strong states over weaker, resource rich territories. European colonialism created global links and created unfair power relations between those undertaking colonization, and those that were subject to colonization. However, even in the face of the post-colonial age, a perspective of neo-colonialism, in which the global North tends to dominate the global South, economically and politically, must still be taken into account (Willis 20). The ability to recognize social diversity, and the nuances of power relations in the face of colonizing tendencies is key to community development.

Due to the historical memory of colonialism, and the existence of neo-colonialism effective community developers must operate appropriately to avoid any resemblance to this historical oppression or assuming their own values and solutions are normative, by educating with the lens of the post-colonial era. An MA program in community development must involve education about various perspectives and backgrounds. Community developers will enter new contexts and require a different understanding of issues. Additionally, working in new communities will include the need to understand that community, their needs, and how best to approach their needs. One way to accomplish this is to challenge typical ideas about development from the grassroots (Willis 28). Grassroots development can be accomplished by taking smaller, contextualized approaches to community development, starting with the specific histories, resources, and norms of the community to be served. A community developer that enters a new area and comes up with solutions based upon their own ideas over that of the community would not be able to create sustainable, appropriate change. They are acting with a mindset of colonialism. At the same time, to create long-term change, the community must accept the solution developed from the grassroots. A community developer's role is to work with the population to develop contextualized solutions, starting with grassroots ideas and resources, and only then bringing their own expertise to bear on the challenge. However, it is not enough to take a grassroots approach only at the inception of a project, the entire process of community development must be defined by grassroots interaction with surrounding communities.

Community development in a post-colonial age must therefore work to help-the population in the community feels engaged and involved, ensuring that their ideas and

norms are included, throughout the entire community development process. In other words, community development must start at a grassroots level, and continue to operate at that grassroots level throughout the process. As a community developer, one must cultivate a connection with people of all different backgrounds and their stories. The desire to dominate the story in favor of one's own group dissipates as respect for other groups grows. By allowing multiple perspectives or stories to coexist, a more holistic view of one's future work contexts is possible. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie calls the dangers of a limited perspective, "the danger of a single story." In her Ted Talk Adichie says her writing formerly assumed that only foreign concepts had a place in literature and restricted her writing to subjects she had read on but had no direct experience with. She did not consider writing from the perspective of her own culture as having value. This illustrates one way in which stories are a function of power, depending on how they are told, and how a "single story" robs people of their human dignity (00:00:22-00:03:00). In the context of community development, practitioners must learn to put aside their own story or perspective, and abandon the dominance of a single story, or they give the impression that other stories have no place in community development. Multiple stories and perspectives create a holistic picture of a population; it's need, and possible solutions. Without this approach, differences in background create a conceptualization of "us and them" (Volf 99). The "danger of the single story" is avoided, as community development is able to bring multiple stories alongside one another. One way that an MA in community development helps future practitioners learn other stories to use in the field is through the exposure to different perspectives from classmates (Rasaie). This is only one way a future practitioner may learn to bring multiple stories and perspectives into

conversation with one another to bring about practical, realistic solutions to community problems. In summary, Postcolonial development requires respect of cultures, other stories, and an awareness of the impact that processes of development can have. In a postcolonial world, where cultural rehabilitation is still occurring, it is essential for both those giving and receiving development to feel that their own history and norms are significant to the community development.

Community developers in a post-colonial age must also come alongside those they are working to help throughout the whole community development, always from a place of equality, not superiority. When providing aid to impoverished people, one must acknowledge one of the fundamental feelings surrounding poverty: shame. To work with people who are feeling shame, it is necessary for developers to also acknowledge their own weaknesses and to come together in a place of reciprocity (Corbett and Fikkert 61). The process of coming alongside the other party throughout the process, exhibits a level of humility and creates an open path of communication and respect between those receiving aid, and those providing aid, defusing this shame.

Another benefit of coming alongside populations from a postcolonial perspective is community empowerment. When empowered, the population is gaining control over development work in the their locale, and increases their knowledge and confidence (Ahmad and Talib). Shedding the façade of superiority is an essential skill for community developers who want to empower the community. Beyond colonized populations, any marginalized population must be given a sense of control and power as part of the growth of community empowerment. An MA program in community development must include

empowerment of communities as a primary goal in order to overcome the long-term impacts of colonialism on populations that have been oppressed or marginalized.

Finally, adaptation is an important skill anyone working in community development in a post-colonial age. Community developers must have the ability to adapt programs, practices, and ideas to what they find as they come alongside these populations. If programs and methods are not adapted to a new context, community developers are simply reviving colonialism, forcing their own cultural ideas, conceptualizations, and solutions on a population. In this world, it is important to avoid forcing one's conceptions of good living, and rather to work in terms of what the community wants or needs (Willis 32). Taking the time to develop culturally appropriate goals that fit with a community in the global South, for example, is more important than bringing that global South population to the standards of the global North. When an aid worker enters a poor community, and works to alleviate the symptoms of poverty rather than the root causes, problems in the community can be exacerbated (Corbett and Fikkert 53). The desire to help, and to fix the immediate needs of a community may be the faster option, but is neither better nor sustainable. It belies the very cultural imperialism that characterized colonialism. A community developer must understand the factors that have lead to a community being impoverished, not merely come with ready-made answers. An MA program in community development must teach students to adjust their programs and projects to the work context. The ability to reorient and adjust is key to successful and sustainable development (Seddon). When a community developer acknowledges the history of the community they're working in, they have a better ability to create solutions guided by their culture and norms. A Northwest University ICD alumna, Fiona Balsa

noted in an interview that the varied perspectives brought in the classroom prepared her for the various contexts she would eventually work in (8/10/2017). A community developer must understand that the field, world, and methodology are all constantly changing and to get set in one such mindset or context is unacceptable and will compromise the ability of said agent to create effective and sustainable social change for years to come.

An effective MA program in community development must include training in globalization, post colonialism, and the value of a grassroots approach. An understanding of colonialism sheds light on the historical dominance of colonizing nations, opening the student to the possibility grassroots and community driven solutions, which are both more effective, and culturally appropriate. An understanding of globalization challenges the student to adapt to different contexts for work, and to readjust one's plans, projects and programs based on context and all of which is essential to successful community development. Exposure to, and the breakdown of the concept of the single story provide a foundational cultural training, preparing practitioners to adjust to new contexts. A grassroots approach enables a community developer to enter a new context and to understand and work within that to create successful change. In a postcolonial world, grassroots approach and an understanding of globalization help community developers avoid the frameworks used by colonizing nations to the detriment of those colonized.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

A strong foundation in the specific skills of strategic planning is needed to work in 21st century community development. Strategic planning refers to a series of analytical techniques and planning methods that generate a frame of reference for the examination of a program or project's missions and goals, analysis of strong and weak points, and

plans for implementation oriented around action (Blair). To serve the demands of

community development, strategic planning must also include an additional focus on

community involvement in order to achieve effective grassroots participation in every

step of the project. In the context of 21st century community development strategic

planning as a practice encompasses the methods involved in creating successful, effective

plans to implement change. Strategic planning must take into account the areas relating to

community development including project management, program evaluation and

fundraising. There are additional aspects of strategic planning that apply to community

development, but those are outside the scope of this project.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

In the field of 21st century development, strategic planning includes the practice of

clearly delineated project management. The practice was first formalized during World

War II primarily for military and construction projects on a large scale. As time has gone

on, the practice has evolved to the set of theories and methods that make up the practice,

to plan and control projects specifically related to time, expense and scope (Vidal and

Marle). In the context of community development the practice must also take into

account the long-term goals of the project in question. The success of the project relies on

the parts working together (Whitten 176). Learning to look at the organizational whole

helps community developers take into account the various pieces of a project, and to

avoid missing any parts. Community development is more successful when the plan is

clearly stated, and this also results in significantly less waste.

A case study from the Orchard Retail District in Singapore provides an excellent

example of how project management affects community development. A community

development project was planned to build a space for youth in the area to express their

creativity in an open-air building that provided opportunity for display and audience in the Orchard retail district of Singapore (Hua and Chuah). According to the team leaders, the project regarding the youth artistic center had detailed checklists, time schedules, a working knowledge about the various authorities involved in the project and the approval process were all key aspects of success driven by a clear project management process (Hua and Chuah). Ultimately, the tools of project management help to cultivate good relationships with the community, the funders, and the authorities. A clear plan and scope of the project, a strategic and viable financial plan, a timeline for the project, and awareness of potential inconveniences all can create better relationships between the project manager and the community (Hua and Chuah). Overall, community development takes place in a world that is filled with human complexity, and having a project management strategy in place accounts for the vagaries and complexities associated with complex community development projects.

An MA in community development program must include training in effective project management. While project management tools and frameworks provide structure for broad and complex community development projects, they must be used with caution. It is necessary to use project management to look at all the pieces holistically. When project management is excessively focused on part of the project, for example result reporting and financial burdens, and does not take into account long-term objectives the project may be compromised (Ika). Project management must look at the short and long-term goals. In the context of community development, it is important that the skills of project management be taught in a way that allows for the skill to be scaled to the complexity and scope of the program or project in question (Ika). The use of micro-

focused project management will compromise projects. As is demonstrated by the case study about the Singapore community project, project management ensured that all the moving pieces in the project were accomplished, and that adequate time was allotted for each step. Project management is essential in 21st century community development due to the scope and complexity of the work, but should be focused on the whole project not just on donor driven results.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The practice of program evaluation takes a holistic view of the plan and actions taken and measures the effectiveness of the efforts in light of the stated goals. The evaluation shows areas where change may be beneficial to the success of the project. According to Melvin Mark, Gary T. Henry and George Julnes, "evaluation exists to improve the way that programs and policies function by providing information that can be used in democratic institutions to advance social betterment" (49). In the field of community development, expanding the body of information so that others can learn from previous projects is key. In a community development specific context, program evaluation "improves outcomes" by answering "basic questions about a program's effectiveness" (Metz). In the context of 21st century community development, the ability to check the progress of the work undertaken prevents waste, and allows for more accurate reporting to stakeholders. Program evaluation helps social change organizations "assess their progress against a theory of change" (Bornstein and Davis 66). In a field like community development, understanding the importance of the practice of program evaluation helps community developers and other agents of change to identify a clear path to the overall goal.

The ability to design an evaluation based upon the resources, activities, the desired outcomes and the indicators surrounding those are key to proving the potential

viability of a program and completing a thorough planning process. In 21st century community development, there has been an increase in the desire for transparency and performance management (Buss and Fabiani 4). Any practitioner of community development or nonprofit work should know that resources are finite and using them responsibly is key. Program evaluation can be a quantitative or qualitative measurement of programs and the effectiveness by looking at all elements, including the stakeholders (Bamberger and Rugh 231). A plan for a program evaluation shows more accountability between the stakeholders, the donors, and the team in the field.

An MA in community development program should include education on what program evaluation is, how it can be effective in measuring success, and how it can allow for the work to adjust if the goals are not being met. As a part of community development work, program evaluation is a fundamental step for success. The incorporation of a program evaluation into the process of planning forces program designers to clearly define the goal, and to better ensure that resources are all being used towards the achievement of that end. At a time with increased focus on results and efficiency, as well as on the tracking of those parts, the knowledge to use established tools towards that end is key to successful community development.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

In the category of strategic planning, financial knowledge and foresight is needed for successful community development practices, so an MACD program must include training in financial literacy and knowledge, including fundraising and budgetary design. In the 21st century, funding sources and requirements to gain funding have evolved. Changes in the sources and availability of funding, and the requirements to be granted funding indicate the need for financial literacy. Applying for funding requires budgetary

plans, financial reports, and if applicable to the project and type of application, plans for return on investment.

Over the years, the sources of funds have evolved. The establishment of good relationships with funders and organizations helps to ensure continued financial support. There have been studies conducted that show even in times of economic downturn, that nonprofit organizations that have established financing relationships do not typically experience funding problems (Besel et. al 56). Successful funding of community development projects in the 21st century requires learning about the variations and evolutions of finance in the field. An MA program in community development must keep up to date with the changes. A portion of this success can be attributed to the reevaluations concerning the standard practices for fundraising in the late 20th century, and pivoting to encompass the changing attitudes and culture that has come about from reactive, younger donors (Nichols 1). Oftentimes those who enter nonprofits are not aware or are lacking in the "aspects of the fiscal management process" (Herzlinger 60). Part of effective fundraising includes the ability to manage money and finances.

Fundraising and grant writing are key aspects of the program. Financial knowledge is key in most fields. In addition, people that enter the field of community development work within nonprofit organizations are forced to face the realities of cost minimization (Hughes 429). Understanding of the skill of budgeting and fundraising are key to successful projects and continued financing. When applying for and seeking out funding it is necessary to have a rough idea of a budget in place to demonstrate that the money has a designated purpose.

Community development in the 21st century has brought about a greater need for formalized financial comprehension. A practitioner must have a fundamental knowledge of fundraising methodology and budgeting. The demands of the evolving field of community development encompass a variety of strategic planning areas, and financial knowledge and the ability to raise or generate funds provides the financial support needed for community development projects.

Elements of strategic planning are an important piece of effective community development. Planning, tracking, and reporting on development projects and programs are essential to efficiency, responsible stewardship of resources, and reporting. Additionally, the increased focus on data collection represents the chance for a growth in the body of available data about community development projects. An increase in available research and data leads to more knowledge, and down the road more successful projects. In order to continue the work of community development, adjustments to fundraising practices as sources and norms surrounding monetary support are needed. As the goal of this field of development is systemic, sustainable change it is important that all possible steps be taken in favor of that end.

CASE STUDY: NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY MA IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Northwest University MA International Community Development (NU MAICD) program, located in Kirkland, Washington, is dedicated to training future practitioners of community development with a unique set of programmatic design elements and features. The MAICD program takes place over the course of eighteen months, with a cohort learning structure.

NU is a Christian University and thus the MAICD program is faith-based. Based on alumni experience, this fact is one of the benefits of the NUMAICD program. The faith-based nature of the program was found to be beneficial for students, regardless of their own background, or of other members of the cohort (Butts; Demos 2/7/2018; Lay; Rasaie; Thomas). The inclusion of a diverse cohort in the program structure provides a practice space for future community development. Per alumni experience, the courses provide space for discussion, debate, and disagreement with respect (Butts; Cox; French; Madsen; Rasaie). This type of environment helps students to prepare to work in contexts with unfamiliar cultures, sensitively and appropriately.

The MAICD program also provides the practical experience necessary for effective community development, through various applications including through case studies in the courses (Balsa). The program curriculum also incorporates practical knowledge through the inclusion of the practicum courses on topics such as project management, program evaluation, and fundraising and grant writing (Cox; French; Koga; Thomas). The mix of theoretical and practical courses is designed to prepare graduates for the field in a balanced way. To accomplish the overarching goal of preparing practitioners of community development the MAICD program employs specific programmatic elements taught by practitioners in the field. The MAICD program uses practitioners in the field of community development to give students a more practical education (Krook). The use of practitioner scholars provides a stronger foundation for practical application of skills in the field of community development.

The ICD program includes a wide variety of course offerings aimed at training well-rounded practitioners of community development. The promise of this combination

of courses is to prepare potential practitioners to create social change, equipped to engage

in domestic and international development. Over the years the course offerings and

orders have evolved to reflect 21st century community development. Overall, the courses

can be divided into four categories:

The Practicum Courses:
- Project Management
- Program Evaluation
- Fundraising and Grant-writing

The Core Courses:
- Culture Studies
- Community Development
- Leadership
- Globalization and Development
- Research for Social Change
- Spirituality Culture and Social Justice
- Social and Environmental Justice
- Social Entrepreneurship

Elective Course options over summer semester:
- Disaster Relief and Development
- Peace and Reconciliation.

Thesis Practicum Courses:
- Fieldwork
- Thesis Project I
- Thesis Project II

Over the ten years that the MAICD program has existed, the courses and the format have

evolved based upon experience and feedback. However, the core of the program relies on

the theory that training future practitioners of community development can lead to

widespread social change and is further demonstrated by the logic model for the MAICD

program (see Appendix A1).

The NU MAICD program aims to train practitioners of community development

to have a holistic, contextualized knowledge for the field. From that point the graduates

are prepared to enter new contexts and to work alongside the community to create

change. Overall, completion of the ICD program at Northwest University builds students

up to create change in our world (French). The courses, the program elements, and other

factors work in concert to train agents of social change. In Appendix A, there is a detailed

program evaluation of the ICD program to analyze how it is educating practitioners of

community development and recommendations for improvement.

CONCLUSIONS

The practice of effective community development in the 21st century requires extensive

training in specific skills and disciplines. As an Master of Arts degree has become the

standard of higher education for community development, it is important that these

higher education programs stay up to date with the demands of the field. As one part of

training, practitioners of community development must understand the theoretical

underpinnings and implications of globalization early in any community development

program.

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APPENDIX A: NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT MA PROGRAM EVALUATION

Program Evaluation of the Master of Arts in International Community Development

(MAICD) at Northwest University

Conducted for Forrest Inslee PhD, Director of the MAICD Program

Conducted by: Sydney Peterson

MA Student in the NU MAICD Program

Date: April 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Master of Arts in International Community Development (MAICD) program at Northwest University is aimed at the formal education of effective, culturally sensitive practitioners of community development. Through a combination of theoretical and practical application courses the ICD program promises to accomplish this training. The cohort learning style employed alongside the enrollment of diverse students provides a cultural education with various perspectives coming together to learn the methods and theories behind effective community development. Conclusions about the effectiveness of the program were pulled from the experiences of the MAICD alumni, and they indicate that the cultural training and global awareness from the program is strong, the balance between practical and theoretical skills must be maintained, with a shift to include more practical applications of skills, and that stronger professor orientation would lead to academic consistency and better outcomes for graduates. Practitioner-scholars have proven beneficial to the program, specifically regarding the practicum courses and hard skills. Overall the MAICD program is accomplishing its goals. The recommendations in the report are based upon the MAICD alumni feedback and a logic model based upon the program. The logic model graphic is located in Appendix A1.

INTRODUCTION

This report is based upon the Master of Arts in International Community Development (MAICD) at Northwest University in Kirkland, Washington. The report draws from archival academic research and MAICD alumni interviews for its conclusions. The report takes into account the professional outcomes of ICD graduates encompassing practical experience, best practices of the program, and areas for strengthening and improvement.

This program report is organized based upon a template from the Evaluation

Center at Western Michigan University (Robertson and Wingate). The report is formatted

with an executive summary of main findings, a program description, background of the

evaluation, methodology of the evaluation, evaluation results, recommendations and a list

of references. In Appendix A1, there is a Logic Model of MAICD program at NU.

The intended audiences for this evaluation are Northwest University, and the

MAICD staff that will be responsible for the implementation and use of the results. The

director of the MAICD program, Forrest Inslee, PhD requested this program evaluation

and is the primary intended audience.

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the professional outcomes of

MAICD alumni in the field, and to analyze how the program has prepared them for their

work in community development. This report also provides insight from the alumni

reflection on aspects of the MAICD program that were especially beneficial, and those

that could be altered or improved for the betterment of the program and outcomes for

graduates. The results of this report will be used to make changes and alterations to the

MAICD program and to ensure that its goal of training effective practitioners of

community development is accomplished.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Overall the goal of the MAICD program at NU is aimed at the training of effective

practitioners of community development, who are equipped to operate in domestic and

international contexts. This multi-disciplinary program takes place over the course of

eighteen months, and is constructed along the lines of an educational cohort. Over the

course of the program, there are practicum courses aimed at a practical foundation in

skills for community development, core courses for the theoretical foundation in the field,

and the fieldwork and thesis courses for the completion of the final graduation requirements of a thesis paper or project.

The MAICD program at NU is funded by student tuition and the Northwest University budget. Alumni and other organizations also make financial donations and support the program by volunteering.

This evaluation is intended to serve the staff of the MAICD program at NU and any future students who will benefit from program improvements. Additionally, any communities that will be helped by graduates from the MAICD program will benefit from well-trained community developers.

At this stage, the MAICD program at NU has been operating for ten years. The program has evolved over the years and has changed to incorporate suggestions for improvement.

EVALUATION BACKGROUND

This program evaluation and report is intended for use by the MAICD program staff to inform program improvement and alterations. The scope of the evaluation took place from July 2017 to April 2018. July 2017 was the planning phase. MAICD alumni interviews were conducted from July 2017 to February 2018 to ensure a substantial amount of data to work with. Interviews were transcribed and coded as the beginning of the data analysis process. Archival supportive research has been conducted since September 2017. The report will be submitted in April 2018.

Two primary stakeholders in the MAICD program were involved in the planning and implementation process. Forrest Inslee PhD is the program director and requested the evaluation. He has facilitated contact with MAICD alumni, and provided structure and

feedback on the process along the way. The other stakeholder involved in the planning and implementation process was Lisa San Martin, a program staff member and MAICD alumna. She is the advisor for the thesis project that this report is a portion of.

This report is relevant to the MAICD context because an MAICD student who had an understanding and knowledge of the program rhetoric, and could better understand the feedback from the MAICD alumni conducted the evaluation and wrote the report.

The budget for this report is not relevant. Since this report is a part of a thesis project for a current MAICD student, there were not budgetary considerations made. Additionally, the evaluation team is the MAICD student, Sydney Peterson. Lisa San Martin, MAICD alumna, is the advisor for the project.

EVALUATION METHODS

The alumni interviews were conducted conversationally, focused on three topic areas: practical skills learned, best practices, and areas for strengthening or improvement.

This program evaluation plan is based on the baseline research conducted to establish necessary practices in the field of community development as well as to gain feedback from a variety of alumni based upon their experiences in the field post-program. The alumni feedback also provides a chance for these alumni to look back reflectively on their experience in the program. The baseline evaluation and research was done to determine the focused outcomes generated by graduation from the program that are needed to educate community developers.

In order to evaluate the NU MAICD program it is necessary to have an outline of information being sought out to base the interviews around. The main points of the interview revolved around three overarching questions for the MAICD alumni. What

practical skills did you learn in the program that you were able to apply in the field?

What aspects of the program best prepared you for your professional career? What would

you have changed about the program to improve the program itself and outcomes for

graduates based on your professional experience post-graduation? Indicators used to

demonstrate the importance of the data was based upon consensus and repetition of

points.

The framework for suggestions and data is drawn from archival research and the

MAICD alumni interviews. To recruit MAICD alumni for interviews, several Facebook

posts in the ICD Alumni page were written and the evaluator reached those who

responded. Additionally, Forrest Inslee, PhD and Lisa San Martin went through the

alumni list to recruit interviewees that would likely be especially helpful. In the case of

these alumni, Lisa San Martin would send out either a Facebook message or an email

with the report author included to connect the alumni with the evaluator. Interviewing the

MAICD alumni collected data for the report, and these interviews were recorded and

transcribed by the report author.

Data from the interviews was stored with the evaluator. Alumni interviewed had

the opportunity, if desired, to redact any statements or portions of the interview. The

interview data was first transcribed, and then reviewed and coded. Over the course of the

research and report process, the interviews were listened to a second or a third time for

the sake of evaluative accuracy. The data was grouped according to the three overarching

questions of the evaluation, and connected with the thesis paper that the evaluator has

written as a part of the NU MAICD graduation requirements.

EVALUATION RESULTS

In order to work in the field of community development practitioners must have both the practical knowledge for the field along with the theoretical backing. The results of alumni interviews seem to point to the need for balance between practical and theoretical; the importance of academic consistency in grading and orientation of professors; and the need for diversity and a safe space within the cohort to encourage education about culture, globalization and global citizenship.

RESULTS: PRACTICAL VERSUS THEORETICAL BALANCE

Overall the experience of the alumni from the ICD program at NU to their professional experience indicated a need for theoretical knowledge with a strong foundation in practical application.

From the experience of ICD alumna Andrea Krook, the theoretical education provided in the ICD program was valuable, but found herself in need of more practical skill-related knowledge in the field. She summed up her experience by saying that while the theoretical "spoke to her heart" she found that "when you get into the field you can't be a philosopher" (Krook).

ICD alumnus Jesse Crock found an imbalance in the program in favor of the theoretical, to his professional detriment. After graduation, he entered the field and found that the ICD degree was a generalist degree. When he entered the program, he appreciated the focus on theory, however, once he was in the field, he found he was struggling to "design a healthy agricultural program" and needed to scale his general knowledge into a "more refined approach" to be able to design specific programs (Crock).

ICD alumnus Geoff Sheridan looked back and wished for more practical knowledge to be prepared for the field. On the other hand, he felt that the curriculum

itself was well balanced in terms of subject matter (Sheridan). From Geoff Sheridan's perspective, the curriculum itself was balanced in terms of subject matter; he wanted more practical application of the material (Sheridan).

ICD alumnus Spencer Oswald felt that while the program had value, it did not teach him the practicalities he needed for the type of work that he was going into, specifically data analysis (Oswald). By increasing options for specialization within the program graduating students would be more able to follow specific interests post-grad with more preparation and confidence.

ICD alumna Fiona Balsa observed that the case studies incorporated into the program prepared her for her future professional career, as she was able to see real world problems, and potential solutions (Balsa).

It should be noted that three of these alumni, Jesse Crock, Spencer Oswald, and Fiona Balsa all graduated from earlier cohorts, and since then there has been an adjustment to include more practical, specific training in the MAICD program. However this feedback is significant as it indicates the need for a continued practical application. This adjustment can be seen in the increased presence of practicum courses in the MAICD program at Northwest University.

Key areas of practical education within the MAICD program at Northwest University, based upon alumni feedback are the practicum courses: project management, fundraising and grant writing, and program evaluation.

Based upon alumni feedback, project management was one of the most valuable skills from the program (Crock; French; Krook; Thomas). These alumni found the skills from project management to be extremely beneficial in their professional careers. A main

finding from this evaluation is that the project management practicum must continue and be applied throughout the program after the initial practicum course.

Fundraising is significant in community development work and the training students received on the topic was well received and useful (Krook; Thomas). ICD alumna Andrea Krook pointed out that having a professional fundraiser teach this practicum course helped her mastery of the topic (Krook). Based upon this experience from the fundraising practicum, having practitioners teach these courses helps with student mastery. ICD alumna Sarah Ena felt that she would be able to write a grant application based upon the program (Ena).

The third practicum course is program evaluation. Several ICD alumni considered program evaluation to have been the most valuable skill, and most applicable in the field (Aaron; Crock; Oswald; Sheridan). ICD alumna Sara Ena felt that she would be able to conduct a program evaluation in a general sense (Ena).

The other two practicum courses are fieldwork, and the thesis project course. Based upon alumni feedback, students felt well prepared for this joint process (Butts; Cox; French).

Alumni also felt prepared for the field due to the theoretical knowledge of community development learned. One example comes from ICD alumna Sarah Ena, who coming into the program was not sure what her direct interests were and appreciated having a program that allowed flexibility and the ability to learn about a variety of different topics (Ena). Multiple alumni had a strong foundational knowledge of the issues and theories involved in community development (Demos 2/7/2018; Ena; French; Koga;

Krook). Education in the MAICD program must include a balance between the theory and the practical.

CONCLUSIONS: PRACTICAL VERSUS THEORETICAL BALANCE

Overall based upon alumni feedback, earlier on in the existence of the ICD program at NU, the balance between the theoretical and the practical skills placed more focus on the theoretical over the practical. Over the years of ICD that balance has evolved. From alumni feedback it is important to have both theoretical and practical education for successful outcomes in the field of community development. The practicum courses are clearly an extremely fundamental portion of the ICD program as a whole.

RESULTS: PROFESSORS AND PRACTITIONER-SCHOLARS

The MAICD alumni had various opinions on the quality of, and need for orientation of professors. The MAICD program at NU utilizes a mix of scholars and practitioner-scholars to teach the courses. In order to maintain positive outcomes for students, professors need to have a stronger, more uniform orientation that gives them a clear vision of the type of program that they are teaching in, including general academic expectations, typical assignment types, grade and workload standards, and the general culture of the ICD program (Butts; Cox; Koga). A level of consistency amongst professors contributed to student success and positive outcomes.

On the other hand, ICD alumna Andrea Krook felt that the presence of a practitioner-scholar in the fundraising and grant writing practicum especially helped her to hone the skill (Krook).

The program director also serves as a professor and thesis advisor, Forrest Inslee, PhD. By alumni feedback he was considered very valuable to the program (Butts; French; Koga; Rasaie; Thomas). However a program like ICD rises and falls with its leader, and

in the future, if new leadership is in place, the program would have to continue under new guidance.

CONCLUSIONS: PROFESSORS AND PRACTITIONER-SCHOLARS

Overall, practitioner-scholars are beneficial to the program, but more uniform orientation would be beneficial to students. A certain level of academic consistency was considered important for ICD alumni. Orientation and specific communication about ICD-specific standards and culture would improve outcomes for students. Additionally, strong leadership has benefitted the program but could prove a future obstacle.

RESULTS: ACADEMIC CONSISTENCY

The feedback as connected to academic rigor was mixed. Some alumni felt that there was a lack of rigor to the assignments that would normally be expected in an MA program and that the level of difficulty be raised (Butts; Thomas). In contrast to that opinion, ICD alumna Rella Madsen thought the writing assignments honed her writing for her future professional career (Madsen). From ICD alumna Stephanie Thomas' experience, while the precision required from the writing could be frustrating, it was helpful in preparing for her work at United Way (Thomas). On the other hand, ICD alumna KC Cox especially found difficulty with the consistency of professors and their academic expectations over the different courses (Cox).

CONCLUSIONS: ACADEMIC CONSISTENCY

Within the MAICD program, a need for academe consistency is necessary. The expectations of academic deliverables should be fitting to a Master of Arts degree. Clear communication of expectations should be provided to both professors and students in the program.

THE COHORT, DIVERSITY AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

The cohort structure and diversity greatly contributed to the ICD alumni's knowledge of culture. The program is started with a new cohort of students each September. Alumni feedback about the cohort, cultural sensitivity, and knowledge was positive as it allowed for new perspectives and unique discussion. The combination of people from different backgrounds and cultures in the classroom fueled discussion and incorporated various perspectives. This diversity also created a safe space for students, without overwhelming (Aaron; Balsa; Butts; Cox; Demos 2/7/2018; Koga; Rasaie; Sheridan; Thomas). The cohort structure also helped with cultural contextualization (Aaron; Oswald). Additionally the support and closeness offered by the cohort structure was considered valuable and fundamental to the program (Ena; French; Lay). Overall, the alumni feedback in reference to the cohort structure and support therein demonstrated that of the aspects of the program it contributed strongly to the education and comfort of the ICD alumni, and to their positive outcomes in the field. For the ICD program to form global citizens, a diverse cohort, with room for cultural contextualization and discussion was key.

CONCLUSIONS: THE COHORT, DIVERSITY AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Per ICD alumni feedback the cohort structure contributed overall to positive outcomes in the field, and for a positive program experience. The diversity of the cohort, and the discussion within the classroom contributed to greater cultural understanding, learning, and comfort. This space allowed alumni room to contextualize culture as well. Additionally, with regard to the cohort, the support provided was key to completion of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The desired outcomes are based upon the logic model (see Appendix A1) and the findings from the evaluation.

Desired Outcome 1: Students graduate the ICD program with both a generalized knowledge of community development, combined with some specialized knowledge of micro-focused community development skills.
Recommendations to Achieve:
1. Emphasize the practicum skills and their execution
2. After the practicum course is over, to continue to build on practicum skills in future courses.
3. Continue to incorporate case studies throughout the courses and the program
4. Connect theoretical foundations with practical applications
5. Ensure that students have a strong theoretical base of knowledge

Desired Outcome 2: Students graduate the ICD program as global citizens, having been exposed to a diversity of opinion, of background, and of perspective.
Recommendations to Achieve:
1. Maintain the cohort structure
2. Recruit students from diverse backgrounds
3. Maintain the classroom as a safe space for disagreement and discussion
4. Incorporate diverse readings and topics to keep the class lively

Desired Outcome 3: The academic rigor and uniformity of the program prepares graduates of the ICD program for the professional world.
Recommendations to Achieve:
1. Uniform orientation of professors
2. Grading uniformity across the courses
3. Increase academic rigor with stricter writing requirements

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APPENDIX A1: LOGIC MODEL

LOGIC MODEL: ICD Program Evaluation

Resources	Staff includes the ICD staff, adjunct and permanent professors and teaching assistants.
	Funding includes salary for staffing and student tuition.
	Program space includes classrooms, computer lab and kitchen space.
	Northwest University Writing Center
	Northwest University Library
Activities	Recruiting and evaluating students that will be a good fit for the ICD program
	Coursework to learn and synthesize the information into the bigger picture
	Fieldwork and thesis project as a cumulative display of students learning and applications`
	Involvement of guest speakers to broaden program material and participants
Outputs	ICD students graduate at the end of their completion of the graduation requirements.
Outcomes	Students graduate with a generalized and specific knowledge of community development
	Students graduate the program as global citizens exposed to many perspectives and ideas.

The academic nature of the program helps to prepare future agents of

social change for the field.

Goals	Education of agents of social change.
	Strengthen the impact of ICD program graduates.
	Grow and strengthen the ICD program and Northwest University's impact.