Educating Students for Intercultural Competence: Examples from Italy and India

NEVIN BROWN, SENIOR FELLOW
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE
SIENA, ITALY

MARTHA FARRELL, DIRECTOR
PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN ASIA
Why Intercultural Competence at the “Engaged University”?

- How can postsecondary institutions engage effectively with the multiple cultures that now characterize communities, cities and metropolitan areas in Europe and Asia.
- What are the curricular and extracurricular strategies available for developing intercultural competence amongst our students?
- How do our institutions prepare faculty members for their instructional, research and service roles in “engagement”?
- How do we prepare community and its leaders to engage with higher education institutions?
- These cultures include immigrant groups, socio-economic, linguistic, gender and other subcultures.
An Approach in Italy: Program Overview

- Siena Italian Studies (SIS) is a “gentle” full-immersion program for intercultural education and service-learning based at the International Center for Intercultural Exchange in Siena.

- SIS has the objective of instilling reflective intercultural competence in its students through a three-pronged instructional approach: FICCS (Full-Immersion: Culture, Content, Service).
Service-Learning Program at SIS

- Central role of Service-Learning in FICCS

- Academic component:
  Institutions in Society – Immigration Healthcare and Education
  Italian Language – 75+100hrs approx. instruction
  Reflective Writing – 30hrs approx.

- Service component: 10-20 hours per week at one of many local agencies

- Accommodation in a family home-stay
For further information

Nevin C. Brown
International Center for Intercultural Exchange
(Siena, Italy)

nevinbrownsis@gmail.com
www.ticfie.com
PRIA’s experience of University- Community Engagement

Begin by identifying

- Institutes which want a holistic and long term relationship with the community
- Community leaders who are willing to approach the university and discuss potential programmes
- Facilitator as a bridge
PRIA experience of University- Community Engagement

Challenges of formal institution in community

- Students and faculty cannot speak local language
- Top down approach to giving information
- Stereotyped notions of a village – poor, uneducated
- Disconnect between theory and reality
Challenges of community

- Intimidation by the formal structures – conference halls, dining tables
- Hi-tech equipment – speaking from a stage and use of mike
- Cannot understand language of the faculty
- Unable to function in the formal set up
Issues to be addressed

- How do institutions become sensitive to the communities?
- What are the norms to be adopted?
- What kind of spaces can be created for interaction and dialogue and knowledge sharing?
- In what forms can community knowledge be recognized within the academic milieu?
PRIA experience of University - Community Engagement

**Ways Forward**

- Offer more opportunities of interaction between the two groups in both spaces
- Identify common issues and modalities of working together
- Facilitate meetings such that the knowledge of all is recognised and common action plans developed
- Use youth as a meeting point