SERVICE-LERNING as a framework for the Co-creation of inter-disciplinary and inter-organisational teaching modules.

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The aim of this paper is to examine if work on the co-creation of teaching and educational module as a collaboration between Educational Institutions, professionals, vulnerable users (especially vulnerable youths and students can be inspired by and located within discussions of SERVICE-LEARNING.

The Paper will look at SERVICE-LEARNING as a distinguished concept in relation to other forms of community involvement by University and teaching institutions and the look and and examine some of the experiments at SERVICE-LEARNING at VIA University College, Denmark.

Service Learning is a form of collaboration between 4 partners, Students, Educational institutions, Community Resources and Community Citizens.

Some of the core characteristics are:

• Advance learning goals (academic and civic) and community purposes,
• Involve reciprocal collaboration among students, faculty/staff, community members, community organizations, and educational institutions to fulfil shared objectives and build capacity among all partners,
• Include critical reflection and assessment processes that are intentionally designed and facilitated to produce and document meaningful learning and service outcomes.

This way of understanding SERVICE-LEARNING is very similar to the ideas of integrated periods of Internship within an educational curriculum or perhaps examples of field education where students are asked to do research within a field context or use the community as educational supports and educational aids as didactic objects to the students subjective learning.

It is within this field of distinguishing between different forms of collaboration between Universities, Professional Practitioners, Community Resources and Community Citizens that inspiration can be found in the work of A Fuco (2011).

Fuco (2011) defines Service-Learning using the two elements of Beneficiaries and Focus (A. Fuco 2011 p. 10) is a useful way to start an understanding of the area of collaboration and possible co-creation between Universities and Communities.

FIGURE 2: DISTINCTIONS AMONG SERVICE PROGRAMS
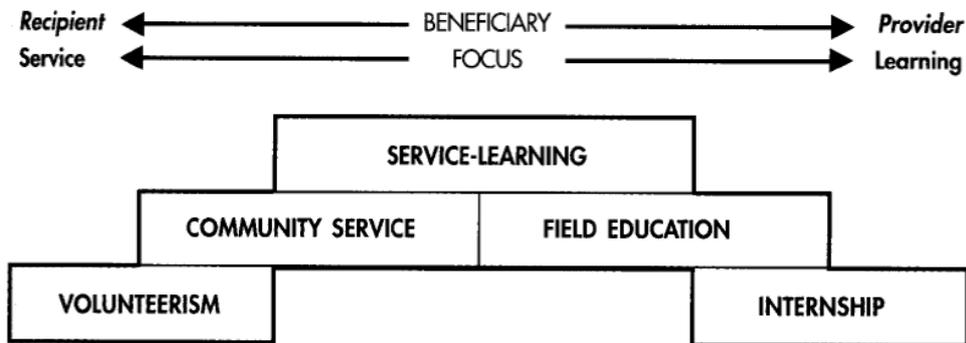
(A Fuco 2011 p 10)

At the same time Fuco (Fuco 2011 p.10 draws on Sigmon 1994 where he distinguishes between four types of service learning:

service-Learning	Learning primary goal service as a secondary goal.
Service-learning	Service delivery primary and learning secondary.
service learning	delivery of services and learning are independent.
SERVICE-LEARNING	Service delivery and learning dimensions are given equal weight and complement each other.

(Sigmon 1994 as reproduced in Faco 2011 p.10)

There seems to be a distinction in the conceptualisation provided by Sigmon of weight and of primary goal or intention. The dialectic seems to be between learning (student learning) and service provision as a resource to the community. This distinction is seen in the discussion of beneficiaries and distinction between recipients and providers. It is basically a question of weighting and then focus and primary and secondary goals. The distinction is between the servicing the community or student learning as the primary goal. In between and balancing these two goals is the category of SERVICE LEARNING as can be seen from figure 2.

> "Service-Learning programs are distinguished from other approaches to experimental education by their intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service as well as to ensure equal focus on both the servie being provided and the learning that is occurring." (Fuco 2011 p.12)

Thus academic interests and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences associated with professional Social Work and combined with and embedded in a context of citizens and communities experiencing a provision of services and support.

SERVICE-LEARNING presupposes collaboration between organizations from at least two sectors civil-society representing the community but also academic institutions representing organisations embedded within the educational sector and in Denmark within the public sector. Mackintosh (1996) in her paper on partnership provides a framework for understanding forms of inter-sector collaboration and can be used to elaborate and develop Fuco's conceptualisation of service-learning.

Mackintosh argues that "the concept of partnership contains a very high level of ambiguity. Advocates point to the mutual benefits of joint ventures the synergy created by collaboration between partners……..Critics point to schemes labelled "partnership" where the benefits appear to accrue chiefly to one side of the venture, where partnerships seems another word for privatisation of public policy and assets, or where the cost of collaboration appear to out-weigh its benefits." (Mackintosh 1992. P.210) His leads her to distinguish between three main types of motives for partnerships and collaboration between organisations from different sectors.

- Budget enlargement.
- Synergy.
- Transformation.   (Mackintosh 1992)

The Budget enlargement form is characterised by the desire of one organisation to enter into a partnership with other organisations from other sectors to extend or enlarge their budget, typically in these days to fill the gaps of budget cut-backs.

An example of this form or argument for partnership was offered in 2011 when as part of celebrating the European Year of Volunteerism the head of the "Center for Socialfaglig Udvikling"[1] when giving a Keynote speech he expressed the view that partnership between the public sector and voluntary organisations could be relevant to fill the holes left by cut-backs in public sector budgets and when the public sector can retain control over their activities and initiatives. It can be seen from this interpretation that the voluntary sector is seen as a necessary evil and one that could be tolerated if under strict control and the guidance of the public sector.

Synergy as a motive or form of partnership is a form where the aim is to collaborate around the creation of something (resources, services etc) that transcend the existing forms. This form is not controlled by or dominated by one sector but draws on and

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[1] Centre for development of Social Methodology (my translation) seehttp://www.aarhus.dk/sitecore/content/Subsites/CenterforSocialfagligUdvikling/Home.aspx?sc_lang=da accessed 22.10.14.

integrates the resources of several sectors in new forms and creating new solutions of services.

Transformation as a form of partnership is one that has as its characteristic the transformation of existing forms of partnership or cross-sector collaboration. "Another theme of the 1080s and the 1990s has been the effort by central government to reform the public sector on a more market-like model. One vehicle for such a transformation has been the bringing of the private sector into the public." (Mackintosh 1992 p. 215).
An example of this transformative form of partnership could be the company Specialist People Foundation[2] a foundation started by Thorkil Sonne.

Mackintosh (1992) and Hastings (1996) amongst others, use the concept of partnerships as an umbrella concept applicable when talking of Transformative, Synergy and Budget Enlargement motives and forms of collaboration.

Lowndes, Nanton; McCabe and Skelder (1997) distinguish between partnerships and network forms of collaboration.

The Features of Networks and Partnerships

	Network	**Partnership**
Focus	Individual relationships.	Organisational relationships.
Motivation	Voluntaristic.	Voluntaristic or Imposed.
Boundary	Indistinct	Clear.
Composition	Fluid.	Stable.
Membership	Defined by self and or others.	By formal agreement.
Formalisation	Low.	High.

(Lowndes, Nanton; McCabe and Skelder 1997 p. 336)

At the same time they draw on Powell, (1991) when emphasising that networking is based on trust and that this trust and networking is a usual pre-stage to the development of partnerships and "a key feature of networking is that it cannot be formalised into rules or procedures" (Lowndes, Nanton; McCabe and Skelder 1997 p. 337) they conclude their paper by saying that networks are characterised by informal relationships between individuals and partnerships as more formal inter-organisational agreements. Following this conclusion it would seem that partnerships are perhaps suggested as a more appropriate form of relationship when building inter-organisational relationships and networking more appropriate when building relationships between individuals and perhaps as a pre-stage to developing formal partnerships.

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[2] See http://specialistpeople.com/

SERVICE-LEARNING as a form of collaboration is dependent on not only the social political welfare regime but also and perhaps more importantly the position and understands of collaboration taken by the key partners. The Scandinavian Welfare model (Esping Andersen 1989)[3] with a high degree of public sector deliver of welfare services and a high degree of public sector decision making about the levels and types of welfare services provided to citizens and communities can encourage and facilitate a top-down approach to collaboration and lean towards budget enlargement as a response to cut-backs or restricted growth within the public sector.

Furthermore SERVICE-LEARNING is dependent on the ability of the partners and especially the leading or initiating partners to accept and take on a post-modern approach to partners from the voluntary sector and community citizens and especially vulnerable citizens. The ability of the leading initiative taking partners to adopt a post-modern position towards members and citizens from the other partners as equals with a right to self-determination is crucial to the development of collaborative partnerships. While this might seem as a natural and obvious point, Adams (2003)[4] and Vincenti (2010) make the point that organisations need to be empowered and professionals self-empowered to work with empowerment methodology, in a similar fashion perhaps organisations and professionals need to be post-modern to work with a post-modern understanding of collaboration and partnership.

VIADEM SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT Aarhus Denmark.[5]

Background and Motivation for the project (Why).

The background for and motivation for the development of the project will in this section be, in outline form, presented in an attempt to provide the reader with a framework of Community Development within Social Work Education in a Danish Context. The section will offer a short introduction to some of the historical background of Community Development teaching within Social Work Education and some of the most influential changes and opportunities associated with the move towards the present, on-going, revision of the national curriculum.

Considerations around the contents (What).

The suggested development of the practice-related and practice-near teaching is located within a formalised partnership cooperation with the Municipal Council of Aarhus, the Department of Social and Labour Market Conditions, Hotspots Centre and VIA University

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[3]Three-Worlds-Welfare-Capitalism 1989
[4]Social Work and Empowerment Robert Adams 3rd Edition 2003 Palgrave Macmillan
[5] This section is based on an original appear presented by G.Vincenti and A. Auken Anderassen in 2011.

College, Department of Social Work and to also include participation by the civil society Centre for Voluntary Action in Aarhus and the Housing Association Præstehaven.

There are within the partnership identified five focus fields:
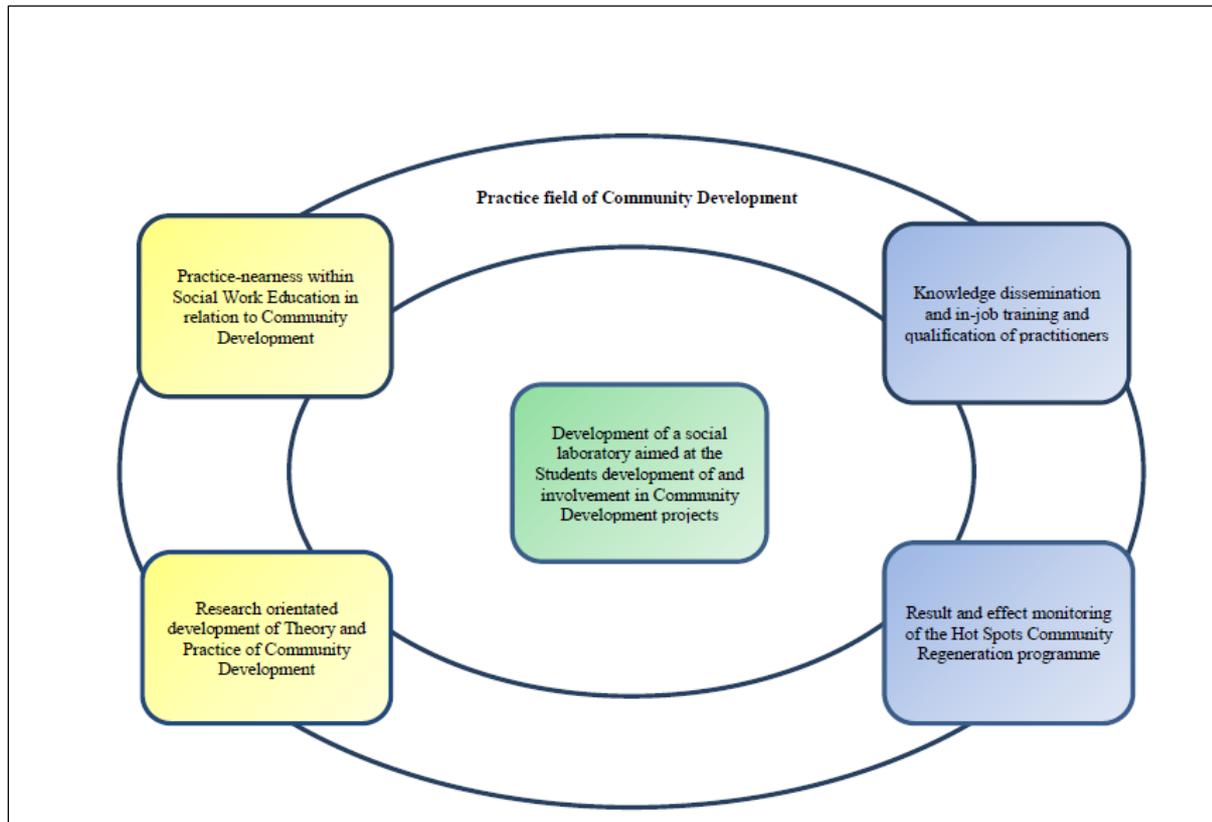
The common meta-goal of all the partnership is the strengthening of Community

Development initiatives within the identified neighbourhoods. To support this there are within the partnership and project three interlocking sub-areas each represented with a different colour.

- The two blue sub-projects, are the prime responsibility of the Hotspots Centre, and the results and experiences of these areas will feed into and qualify the other sub-projects.

- The two yellow sub-projects will be the prime responsibility of the Department of Social Work and likewise draw upon and feed into and qualify the other areas.

- Finally the Green project, the Development of a social laboratory aimed at the Students development of and involvement in Community Development projects will be the responsibility of all the partners (Hotspots Centre, Centre for Voluntary Action, The Præstehaven Housing Association, and the Department of Social Work, VIA University College).

The Social Laboratory is aimed at providing students with a voluntary based learning environment as a supplement to their other learning activities. The partnership agreement stipulates that the School of Social Work will recruit between 15 – 30 students willing to develop their knowledge and skills of Community Development through commitment to and participation in projects in the Bispehaven Neighbourhood, within the area administered by Præstehaven Housing Association. The students will receive supervision and guidance from the Hotspots Centre and the individual concrete projects can be located within civil society and or public sector initiatives. The students together with the practice field will have ownership of the activities and projects and gain hands-on experience and learning of the challenges and forms of community development, experiences and knowledges that can be developed through other activities such as Bachelor Thesis or be embedded within the 3rd year 15 ECTS optional module.

The Social Laboratory will also provide the researches associated to the Research orientated programme with a laboratory for practice based experimentation of new or revised forms of Community Development interventions.

Organisational and planning considerations (How).

The formalised partnership between the four partners (Hotspots Centre (The Municipal Council of Aarhus), The Centre for Voluntary Action in Aarhus, the Housing Association Præstehaven and the Department of Social Work, VIA University College is unique within the field of Social Work Education in Denmark and represents an exciting challenge. It enables a synergy between the partners from the different sectors and represents both what Macintosh has defined as collaborative synergy (Machintosh 1992) and can be seen a an example of Åkerstrøm Andersen's "Partnership of Second Order (Åkerstrøm Andersen 2006; 165- 179)

What Have we Learned?

The learning experiences can be placed on three levels, organisational experiences and learning, the students and vulnerable citizens as co-creators of change and the cooperation between community resources and VIA University College, Department of Social Work.

Upon an organisational level we have learned that a formalised partnership has protected the project, the students and especially the local community resources and partners and vulnerable youths and citizens of the area from domination and colonialisation by either

the Municipal Department of Social Welfare and VIA University College. As the project has proceeded and received awards and prizes from national institutions and organisations[6] so the heads of Departments and Faculties at VIA University College have wanted to join expose the project and take over ownership. The partnership contract and formalised partnership agreement between the partners has taken on the function of a protector of the rights of voice and co-creation for the students and vulnerable youths. The formality of the partnership agreement has hindered unisectoral domination and threat to the principles of collaboration and co-creation embedded within the original idea. At the same time it has shown that it has been possible to maintain the project as an example of SERVICE-LEARNING (Fuco 2011) and neither volunteerism nor community service and again neither field education nor internship on the other hand (se Figure 2). Interestingly perhaps the struggle for maintenance of a collaborative partnership form underlines the point made earlier about empowered organisations and self-empowerment of staff and Heads of Departments, as a presumption for empowering practice and following this the idea of the need for post-modern organisations and post-modern staff as a presumption for collaborative partnerships based on and embedded with the ideas of co-creation with vulnerable citizens and youths and local resources.

Students and vulnerable youths from the community where VIADEM is located have learnt to work together, have learnt to respect each other and exchange life experiences. They have also provided alternative experiences or pictures of each other's resources and challenges than those gained from either Universities, and schools of higher educations (vulnerable people are seen and constructed as social problems as the objects of social work interventions) or in the outside environments of challenged communities[7]. Working together towards common and co-defined goals students and the youth start co-creating experiences and build relationships for each other based on respect and the positioning of each other as co-subjects or co-citizens. These experiences support the challenging of dominant doxia of vulnerable youth as social problems or objects of others initiatives (Jaervinen 2002). As a basis for future project and designs for educational modules these experiences of student and vulnerable youth's co-development and shared experiences provide useful and valuable input that can be drawn on by Universities and other Institutions of Higher Education.

Higher educational Institutions and Universities by providing the opportunity and resources for either SERVICE-LEARNING projects are contributing to creating the framework in which academics, students, youths, community resources and other professionals can co-create change and build sustainable social capital within the vulnerable communities. But only if the formal partnership is based on collaboration and co-creation and if the intentions are seen s the creation of new responses or what Macintosh (1992) calls synergy between themselves. The experiences of VIADEM project

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[6] VIADEM as the project is called has received two national awards the one from Trygheds Fund and the Other from the National Association of Social Workers, furthermore the students have been invited to Linaeus University, Kalmar to lecture on their work to Students of the Swedish University.
[7] In Denmark the most vulnerable and challenged communities are officially described as Ghettos and are registered on a Ministerial Ghetto List.
seehttp://mbbl.dk/sites/mbbl.dk/files/dokumenter/liste_over_saerligt_udsatte_boligomraader_pr_1_okt_2013.pdf for the full list. (accessed 10. Jan 2015)

in Aarhus are that there is a constant threat to these principles from the top-down and dominating positions of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education towards both practitioners and community partners. It is apparently not necessarily sufficient that the ideas of co-creation and partnership are written into the mission statements of Universities etc, it is also necessary that the management levels of Heads of Departments and Heads of Faculties and other Academics need to also have adopted and incorporated the ideas and positions of co-creation. This is the point of self-empowerment (Adams 2003 and VIncenti 2002) as a pre requisition for moving towards collaborative forms of partnership.

Perhaps this point could be the central learning experience of the VIADEM project and one that could be taken on to other SERVICE-LEARNING initiatives and similar initiatives based on the ideas of collaboration between institutions and partners from different sectors and the co-creation of teaching modules based on the experiences of vulnerable youths and challenged communities and subjects and owners of their own future. Perhaps the point of self-awareness and an aware institution is the essential ingredient without which such initiatives will fall back to being one more top-down initiative aimed at construction vulnerable youths as objects of academic interest and the activities or interventions of professionals.

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