

Partnership among Universities: Synergistic Way of Sustaining University-Community Collaboration facing challenges of the 21st Century including 4th Industrial revolution

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Abstract: A comprehensible conceptualization mechanism that accounts for collaborative advantage is necessary to strengthen the capacity of a partnership. A mechanism that gives collaboration its robustness and rigour is synergy. Therefore, a framework to operationalize and assess partnership synergy, and capable of identifying its likely determinants; to address critical policy, evaluation, and management issues related to collaboration activities is much needed. This paper highlights some of the opportunities and challenges that collaboration among higher education institutions (HEIs) can facilitate the development of sustainable university-university partnerships in addressing societal issues. In particular, this paper intends to explore the potential for universities to collaborate primarily to build effective engagement mechanisms that will support an ongoing flow of new community projects and partnerships over time. In an 'age of austerity', the ability to maximize opportunity and minimize cost without affecting core services are of particular interest of many HEIs. The paper suggests that collaboration between universities through alliances and networking such as Asia-Pacific University - Community Engagement Network (APUCEN) can be an efficient and effective platform to promote engagement and cooperation to tackle issues of mutual concerns to provide sustainable solution to community's well beings. The sharing of best practices and exploring ways to work together would be an idealistic move forward into the 21st century and facing the 4th Industrial Revolution . When 4 billion people have no access to the internet how would the 4th Industrial affect them? Who would help them facing job losses and slow economic recovery? Collaboration among Universities is timely and APUCEN is capable of bringing players in the HEIs to fundamentally venture into innovative reforms in the areas of knowledge exchange, teaching and learning, improving deliveries, sharing of information and celebrating the idea of sustaining cooperation among the HEIs. Its important that universities remain relevant to provide help to the marginalized population.

Keywords: Collaborative partnership, engagement mechanisms, sustainability, HEIs.