Chapter 11
Developing Leaders While Sustaining Values

Learning from International University Partnerships

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Introduction

On July 7, 2007 the most famous drop-out from Harvard University, Bill Gates, received his honorary degree. At the commencement ceremony he made a clear appeal to integrate quality education with the values and urgency of alleviating poverty worldwide. As a self-taught professional, Mr. Gates invited traditional academia to become more effective in solving world problems. He invited universities to be more pragmatic and value-centered in achieving a more creative capitalism with a human and sustainable face.

I left Harvard with no real awareness of the awful inequities in the world – the appalling disparities of health, and wealth, and opportunity that condemn millions of people to lives of despair. I learned a lot here at Harvard about new ideas in economics and politics. I got great exposure to the advances being made in the sciences. But humanity's greatest advances are not in its discoveries – but in how those discoveries are applied to reduce inequity. Whether through democracy, strong public education, quality health care, or broad economic opportunity – reducing inequity is the highest human achievement. I left campus knowing little about the millions of young people cheated out of educational opportunities here in this country. And I knew nothing about the millions of people living in unspeakable poverty and disease in developing countries. It took me decades to find out (Gates, 2007).

Mr. Gates urged the university administrators to base their policies and decision-making on the idea of creating solutions to world problems. He urged people at one of the most prestigious academic institutions in the United States to look at the least privileged people and societies and dedicate their institutional and intellectual resources toward making a positive difference in the world.

Let me make a request of the deans and the professors – the intellectual leaders here at Harvard: As you hire new faculty, award tenure, review curriculum, and determine degree
requirements, please ask yourselves: Should our best minds be dedicated to solving our biggest problems? Should Harvard encourage its faculty to take on the world’s worst inequities? Should Harvard students learn about the depth of global poverty . . . the prevalence of world hunger . . . the scarcity of clean water . . . the girls kept out of school . . . the children who die from diseases we can cure? Should the world’s most privileged people learn about the lives of the world’s least privileged? These are not rhetorical questions – you will answer with your policies (Gates, 2007).

These remarks reflect the crisis and opportunities that adult education (AE) faces today. In the northern hemisphere, market oriented service economies demand more skilled and competent professionals. Traditional educational opportunities have largely failed in delivering value-centered and socially engaged quality formation. The Enron ethical debacle warns us that success cannot be achieved merely through corporate strategies and financial greed. In the southern hemisphere adult and value education is not considered a priority either. The urgent needs for culturally competent and indigenous pedagogies are overshadowed by the pressing demands of achieving primary universal education by 2015. South and East Asian developing countries such as India, Thailand and the Philippines, just to mention a few, contribute highly in the preparation of adults and professionals in the global economy. Indeed, the rapid growth of Asian private and public universities in the last 25 years is testimony to the demands and possibilities that higher education and adult education represents in the global economy (Altbach and Selvaratnam, 1989). Yet, as universities in developing countries achieved important goals in their independent and post-colonial era, they also fell short in recognizing the functionalist reduction that adult education in particular faced in the post-modern and global economies of the 1990s and current decade (Knowles, 1985).

Value-centered international adult education offers new opportunities in overcoming these limitations through cross-border and intersectoral partnerships. The case studies examined in this chapter show how exposing world poverty along side with the creation of institutional partnerships impact the personal and professional formation of adult students at DePaul University and other academic institutions worldwide. Drawing from the analysis of these successful cases, the author defines the essential dimensions to develop Sustainable Value Leadership Programs applied to international adult education. The Chiapas-Mexico Program, the Manila-Philippines Program, and the United Nations-New York Program are three successful examples of international adult education that the Management of International Public Service Graduate Program, at DePaul University has implemented during the past six years. The School of Public Service (SPS), under which these programs operate, is the largest graduate program in the country that educates professional and adult students to the values of international relations and effective cross-cultural management for non-governmental organizations and public service. About 20 percent of our 480 graduate students participate in one or more study abroad program. With more than 1,800 alumni, the SPS program distinguishes itself by being “International-by-Design.” Most students who join the Master of Science and other degree programs are women and men with several years of experience