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Bridging Training Gaps in Leadership Capacity: A Critical Approach to Assessment and Evaluation for Program Improvement and Development

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Running Head: BRIDGING TRAINING GAPS IN LEADERSHIP CAPACITY; A CRITICAL APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

**Bridging Training Gaps in Leadership Capacity:
A Critical Approach to Assessment and Evaluation for Program Improvement and
Development**

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A capstone paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master of Arts in Sustainable Development at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

August 7, 2017

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Consent to Use of Capstone

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Alysia Ballinger

August 7, 2017

Dedication and Acknowledgements

This research inquiry is dedicated to individuals who have devoted their careers to developing humanity and protecting the environment.

I definitely hope to relax when I get back home. I will disappear into the forest and be rejuvenated by the beauty of the mountains. – Wangari Maathai (1940 – 2011)

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Abbreviations

B

BU 7 – Bargaining Unit 7 Agreement

C

CCC – California Conservation Corps

CSLEA - California Statewide Law Enforcement Association

COMET – Corpsmember Orientation Motivation Education Training

CI – Conservationist I

CII – Conservationist II

CM – Corpsmember

CMD – Corpsmember Development

P

PRWORA - Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

PSCW - Project Service Conservation Work

S

STEP – Student Temporary Employment Program

ABSTRACT

This research paper seeks to explore leadership capacity of Civil Service employees whose job it is to develop young adults with job skills and positive life changes within the framework of a modern-day workforce development program serving industry needs within environmental conservation work. The purpose of this study is to identify gaps in training and program functions so that recommendations could be made towards increasing leadership capacity of Civil Service employees as well as program development. The use of both feminist and institutional cultural theories informs the philosophical framework of this paper. These helps to explain the case study's hierarchical organizational structure that drives decision-making processes. A program evaluation design is used to analyze three different sets of data collected from surveys administered to program staff and sponsors between 2016 and 2017. I conducted a thematic analysis of recurring themes in these data sets. The findings identify a lack of individual support for program participants during their first two months in the program, and the need to enhance training for Civil Service employees to include mentorship 'soft skills' encompassing subjects such as career development and pathways, working with disabilities, and overcoming drug and alcohol addictions. It is the responsibility of management to address this critical program deficiency if they are serious about upholding an equitable program mission of putting people on a path to making positive life changes and becoming productive members of society.

Introduction

The rise of workforce development programs began during the Great Depression in the 1930s. These were intended to address critical socio-economic and environmental needs within the United States. Today, workforce development programs still play a critical role in America's economy, serving disadvantaged populations and specific local industry needs. The Civilian Conservation Corps, a public work relief program for unemployed and unmarried men, stayed in operation from 1933 to 1942 to increase employment for families who suffered unemployment. The California Conservation Corps (CCC), which started in 1976, was built from the original Civilian Conservation Corps model and recruits a diverse population of young adults between the ages of 18-23 years. Today's CCC is a partially funded State program that seeks contracts from Federal and State Agencies and the private sector to earn funds, which are then used to support its program operations. Legislative authority is administered to the CCC under the Public Resources Code, §14300, et. seq., allowing the hiring of young people for projects that are defined under that code. The CCC acts as a workforce development program, allowing young adults, both men and women, to gain skills in natural resource restoration pertaining to fisheries and salmon restoration and recreation trail building skills within Federal and State public land agencies. Members will also be trained and have opportunities to work on emergency response to natural disasters, this includes fire prevention, fire suppression and disaster relief. The CCC acts as a secondary emergency assistance agency by supporting allied state, federal and local agencies in their emergency and disaster recovery efforts. Program participants, or Corpsmembers gain leadership skills, increase their knowledge of civic engagement and prepare for meaningful work in the field of natural resources and conservation. The young adults who join the corps are generally California residents from low socioeconomic backgrounds, high school drop-outs or

have been identified as potential drop-outs, and are unemployed or looking for other opportunities. Other recruits may be coming from other ‘corps’ experiences, or post-college, gaining work experience in conservation work and service-learning programs.

One challenging aspect that the CCC grapples with is that it receives only partial funding from the State, which requires the program to contract with other agencies for reimbursable project work, referred to as Project Service Conservation Work (PSCW). In addition to PSCW, the CCC is also required to keep up with legislative performance requirements and mandates from governing authorities. Not only is the institutional context complex, but the role and requirements for Civil Service employees working with the corpsmembers continues to expand, while training and development for this work has either decreased or stayed the same. PSCW requires field supervisors to work long-hours in remote areas with little to no opportunities for job laddering or higher education endeavors. Field supervisors, in large, are themselves former program participants, having a minimum of six months of leadership experience, one year of supervisory experience and the equivalent of a high school diploma. The CCC, at one time, required field supervisors to have the equivalent of 30 semester hours of college, which currently is not a requirement. However, corpsmembers may earn scholarship(s) as a part of their CCC program experience. These scholarships have a life-span from 2 to 7 years, though if the Corpsmember is recruited into a Civil Service position prior to using the scholarship, the required work schedule for emergency response creates a barrier in accessing higher learning at a community college or University.

Purpose of Study and Statement of Research Question

In this study, I ask how can leadership capacity be increased for employees whose job it is to develop young adults’ job-readiness and civic and community engagement to move them

beyond their program experience? Training the program participants or Corpsmembers, is the responsibility of a Civil Service workforce, comprised of individuals with a diverse range of skills, abilities, education and backgrounds. Field supervisors, referred to as a Conservationist, spend the most amount of contact hours with corpsmembers and are most commonly former CCC program participants themselves. This being identified, it can also be assumed that they share a common background relating to general recruitment guidelines that are associated to character, function and history, which led them to the door of the CCC. Therefore, I would suggest that identifying gaps in training and assessment should include mindfulness in bridging the *equity* gap between the Civil Service workforce of individuals who traversed the upward mobility ladder through the program ranks versus those that entered the Civil Service ranks through higher education or another avenue.

Through this inquiry, I want to examine if the job requirements correspond to current training being negotiated through union agreements. These agreements should also be in line with the CCC Operating Statutes within the State of California Public Resources Code, Sections 14000-14406. I will analyze differences between union agreements and the Civil Service training program to identify gaps and to bridge and strengthen leadership capacity for Civil Service employees working with youth in the Conservationist I position. The Conservationist I position is specific to the CCC and acts as the crew supervisor on work projects.

Through analyzing Civil Service trainings for Conservationists, an opportunity could emerge for refined and new subject content, supporting Conservationists in having a wider skill set for addressing the barriers to success that corpsmembers are encountering. By refining and incorporating new subjects within training, employees could improve their work confidence and reduce frustrations within the barriers they face with working with corpsmembers. This could

result in higher retention rates of Corpsmembers during their first two months within the program and an overall increase in program moral.

Many would agree that aside from the youth that the CCC serves, the Conservationist is the heart of the agency. Nevertheless, one of the main challenges of working for the CCC and implementing effective change is the ‘red-tape’ of bureaucracy. The CCC culture is widely known for its hierarchical power structure. The Director is an appointed official from the Governor of California and works with an Executive Team that resides over a division of two regions within California. The regions are divided geographically and consists of residential and satellite centers that are overseen by a District Director, placed at each establishment. Positions are ranked in tiers that create a reporting hierarchy. This trickle-down effect of orders, information and communication proves to be difficult and frustrating, as the Conservationist I position is on the bottom of the hierarchy paradigm, but spends the most amount of contact hours with the corpsmembers. Conservationists rely on a Union agreement for California Statewide Law Enforcement Association (CSLEA), to negotiate their training needs.

Former corpsmembers that access their Civil Service career in this capacity rise-up through the ranks of the program design, beginning as an entry-level corpsmember. The program duration is one year, though if an individual takes initiative in becoming a ‘super-grade’ proving themselves within a technical or leadership capacity, they will be given the option to extend their time in the program by an additional year. By doing this, they gain leadership skills by acting as an assistant to the Conservationist on the project site and leading activities with their peers or community outside of work-life. Conservationists are required to have an understanding and working knowledge of information and mandates that provide equality within the workforce, while leveling equity for individual success.

Personal Subjectivity in Relation to the Analysis

As someone who has fostered a long-standing relationship with the CCC program by way of several capacities over the course of 20 years, it is imperative to say that my own subjectivity with experience to this program will appear throughout this inquiry. As a former corpsmember, I joined the CCC in 1997, where I lived at a residential center, located in the former Insane Asylum of California at Stockton that was built in 1851. The hospital closed between 1995 and 1996 and the CCC acquired a part of the building at a reduced rent. It was on this campus that I completed my initial corpsmember training, still referred to as COMET - corpsmember, orientation, motivation, and education training. A significant impact the training had on me was learning about the historical and cultural aspects regarding the geography and natural resources in which we would be working. Stockton is known for its delta and levees system, established through the Swampland Reclamation Act of 1861 to increase the acreage of productive lands. This Act brought poor Chinese immigrants into the area to do this work for roughly one dollar an hour. Fresh out of my COMET experience, I found myself working around the clock with my fellow COMET cohorts on emergency flood response, repairing and reinforcing this same levee system to assist in protecting residential homes and livestock residing on farmlands. The CCC has a motto of 'hard work, low pay, miserable conditions and more.... I think that having this in mind along with the background knowledge I was introduced to, helped me to bond to the kind of work I was learning to do; developing within me a sense of pride by contributing to a history and culture that shaped my Nation. To this day, I believe it is still important to revisit the Chinese historical sites that I was introduced to 20 years ago, to reflect on my own experiences, those before me, and work that is still to come.

I was successful in the program, excelling within all program entities until I completed all program requirements. I lived on that Stockton campus for nearly one year, until I joined the CCC Backcountry Trails program, a six-month program in partnership with AmeriCorps. This program is designed for members to live in the wilderness, working on building, maintaining and restoring recreational hiking trails for the U.S. Forest and National Park Service. After this experience, I continued in my CCC experience and was promoted to work as a COMET instructor in the capacity of Special Corpsmember; a position where one can no longer fraternize with corpsmembers, but is also not considered to be Civil Service. For this position, I relocated to another CCC residential center located in a rural coastal community in Klamath, California, this time housed on a former Navy base. The region is largely known for its Native American population of Yurok people. I stayed in this capacity for only about six months, and from there moved on from my program experience after being offered seasonal employment in the recreation and trails department with the U.S. Forest Service in the Klamath National Forest. Though similarly, this short position as the COMET instructor also instilled in me the cultural and geographic significance of the work I was doing, and since, I've continued to value and seek out these connections to any place I visit or work. From 1999 to 2009, I worked in several capacities with sponsoring government agencies, supporting the CCC mission while simultaneously working towards a bachelor's degree in Geography with a minor in Natural Resources, Planning and Interpretation. This was made possible through the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) under the Federal government and the scholarships I earned as a corpsmember through the CCC and the AmeriCorps partnership. My work with the U.S. Forest Service focused on the maintenance and restoration of recreational hiking trails. For roughly 6 seasons in predominately remote wilderness locations, I worked directly in the field with

Conservationist I's to execute project work as a technical advisor while also spending one on one time with Conservationist I's and Corpsmembers, supporting their role as crew supervisor and mentoring them while discussing work site expectations, Corpsmember dynamics and providing moral support.

For the past 10 months, I have held a position with the CCC as a Human Resources Training Analyst in the Headquarters office. During my time in this position, I observed a 40-hour training session for Conservationist I's who had been working in their positions for about 2 years. The training is a mandated requirement under a bargaining unit agreement between the CCC and the California Statewide Law Enforcement Association, which the Conservationist I position is categorized. The overview of the union agreement states that the agreement is for 'employees protecting state lands and buildings, furnishing emergency services, issuing licenses or permits, arresting individuals violating penal or administrative laws, and protecting the public from fraudulent practices and schemes.' The overview does not specify developing youth or training individuals who are enrolled within a work-force development program. Within the agreement, specifically for the Conservationist Series, it does outline that at the two-year mark of employment, the Conservationist I position shall have 40 hours of Conservationist Leadership Training. It is within the power of the CCC to decide the outline for training and the content within reason. However, one of the main driving factors is cost and minimizing the need for outside contractors. This indicates that the CCC utilizes its own staff to conduct trainings and continues to use the same material that was introduced to employees during their initial training, the information is not new or revised.

During my observation of this training, I noticed that guest speakers, came to talk about their experiences in leadership with the CCC, and at times, the talks and information were

redundant. Human Resource specialists arrived to talk about compliance regarding health and safety, even though the Conservationists had already been working within their capacity for 2 years, some even longer. Sexual Harassment Prevention training was sprinkled through-out the four, ten hour days of training, and similarly, this was a training that everyone was already required to have attended. To me this did not seem like the CCC was teaching new skills or seizing an opportunity to increase leadership capacity. The days were long and individuals who are used to spending their days outside moving about, were now sitting in a classroom for nearly ten hours each day, watching other people speak on various subjects. For one session, a motivational speaker was scheduled and was an outside provider. The impact of his story was powerful, though it revolved around his path to success after being incarcerated for many years and his involvement in violence and gang activities. While some Corpsmembers and Conservationists, do come from backgrounds of gang involvement and violence, they cannot be enrolled into the CCC if they are on probation or parole or ever committed a violent crime. The upside to this session was the open discussion around biases and challenging individuals to discuss them openly. I saw individuals become vulnerable by admitting their biases and realizing how this may play a role in their leadership capacity.

My impression was that these Conservationists, after being in the field for 2 years, needed a space to reflect on their experiences and to exchange with their peers' techniques that were successful and to identify areas that needed improvement. It is of my opinion that after two years in the field, these individuals were the leaders that we should be learning from. This training did not utilize any kind of pre-assessment survey to learn how to support the needs of staff, even though the experiences and backgrounds of the employees had a lot of variation. It appears that time and consideration for supporting Conservationists to a higher level of

professionalism is falling short over simply keeping up with mandates to stay in compliance with the union agreement. The question that kept raising in my mind was, how can the CCC improve Conservationist Leadership Training to really assist experienced individuals with strengthening their capacity in a field in which they were already knowledgeable? Can the CCC alone provide adequate leadership education and training to its Civil Service workforce?

The CCC Operating Statutes

California legislation outlines the operating statutes which drives the purpose, intent and the mission of the CCC. The CCC operating statutes is under the Public Resources Code, §14300, et. seq. The primary mission of this statute states the following: “California youth should be encouraged to reach his or her full potential, but that many youths require guidance and support to reach their goals and make positive changes in their lives.” The operating statutes combines both the need to understand and appreciate the environment and the goal of supporting youth. Above all, the statute declares that most importantly, the CCC shall continue its mission of “instilling basic skills and a healthy work ethic in California youth, building their character, self-esteem, and self-discipline, and establishing within them a strong sense of civic responsibility and understanding of the value of a day's work for a day's wages. It is the further intent of the Legislature that corpsmembers graduate from the corps with good work habits, positive attitudes, and broadened professional horizons. It is the intent of the Legislature that the Corps blend academic and job skills training with personal growth opportunities in order to develop productive youths who can make substantial contributions as California workers and citizens.”

The Use of Data Sets to Identify Areas for Improvement

The use of data sets based on surveys administered by the CCC reduced the effects of my personal biases by not allowing me to formulate subjective questions which could have emerged from my own former and current experiences and knowledge. Long before I arrived at my current position, the criteria for data gathering was developed by CCC units and executives with external mandate requirements to obtain information on compliance and overall general knowledge for program development and improvement.

Literature Review

This literature review explores the concepts of workforce development which is defined in the journal *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development* as “the coordination of public and private sector policies and programs that provides individuals with the opportunity for a sustainable livelihood and helps organizations achieve exemplary goals, consistent with the societal context” (Jacobs, 2006). This literature review also addresses feminist, historical and institutional questions related to workforce development. Many of the journals and publications used in regards to workforce development has been sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. Based on current literature and research, one prominent realization is that the success of workforce development programs, societal program or initiative, depends on the connections to other programs that otherwise would have been considered in isolation from each other (Jacobs, 2006). The connections that Jacobs refers to has historically been between communities, schools and youth.

Through questioning the importance of developing leadership capacity, examining a top-down approach to leadership remains relevant. In one study on Private and Public Leadership, results counteracted the theory that great leadership resides on the top executive levels, but

rather, needs to be examined on all levels (Perry, 2010). This is particularly important in addressing leadership capacity since a model for youth leadership must identify future leadership qualities required to prepare for a generational transition from baby boomers and retirement, which is predicted to leave a gap of leadership and knowledge within the U.S. workforce (McElravy and Hastings, 2014). Statistics indicate that over half of all management occupations will be transferred to younger generations within the next two decades (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). By re-examining leadership qualities outside of the hierarchal power-structure is to understand that true leadership emerges from whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others (Perry 2010).

Increasing the capacity for leadership would require the implementation of equity into the leadership model. Prior research indicates that workforce development has had positive effects on what is to be considered the working poor (Zandniapour and Conway, 2001). Research shows that the benefits of a workforce development program resulted in increased wages and more success in finding employment after participating in the program (Zandniapour and Conway, 2001). What we learn from examining social theory is that identity operates as a social construct, rather than being naturally given at an individual level (Ho, 2007). Behavior in diverse settings is often intertwined and encompass a complex system of information processing, interaction frameworks, and the social aspects (Ho, 2007). These overlapping social systems are important to examine because they create a symbolic interaction. In other words, people collectively create the reality in which they live and symbolically identify with certain categories (Ho, 2007). The implication of this is that it creates a barrier for enacting equity as a program principle for implementing a capacity to continue to learn, question assumptions, and evaluate outcomes (Witham, Malcom-Piqueux, Dowd, & Bensimon, 2015).

The literature highlights historical programs and their training criteria to help identify past societal needs, current research highlights a generational gap in knowledge and leadership. For instance, the Civilian Conservation Corps emerged out of the needs of the Great Depression. A historical perspective in current research can appreciate that while helping to develop a more relevant program and training model for the needs of today's workforce. The historical context also raises a feminist question. The history of Civil Service in the United States, outside the parameters of the military, is credited as starting with the Civilian Conservation Corps, beginning in 1933. The Civilian Conservation Corps had a two-fold mission, conservation and putting men to work under the general welfare of the U.S. Army (Perry and Thomson, 2004). From a feminist approach, examination of the current program structure should be examined to understand if it continues to be influenced by the time when the program served only men. Within today's California Conservation Corps, women make up a significant percentage of the program participants. The California Conservation Corps has an end goal of placing program graduates in the field of natural resource conservation professions that are largely managed by State and Federal agencies. Today, people at all levels are being urged to undertake a greater role in leadership, with such a strong discourse, it is vital to deconstruct, interrogate and re-approach leadership from a feminist point of view (Sinclair, 2014).

Within the dimension of instructional culture, there are challenges with financial pressure, growth in technology, change in staff (roles and retention) and public scrutiny (Kezar, & Eckel, 2016). Ho offers an important insight for any examination of institutional culture which is to seek a balance between program funding, humanity and legislation and strengthen a holistic approach to understanding these forces at work (Ho, C., 2007). Perhaps this may help explain why certain institutional emphasis is placed on which staff trainings to properly serve the needs

of program participants. The holistic methodology will highlight areas of concern, as it is all connected and needs to be addressed for recommendations.

This literature review highlights four important themes that include leadership capacity on all levels, equity and symbolism of group acceptance, historical practices and institutional culture. Previous work in the field of workforce development relates to the proposed research because it identifies historical and evolving aspects to keep up with changing times and policies relating to learning for work (Jacobs, 2006). Also, previous research identifies the demographic populations that utilize workforce development programs, initiatives that support or have supported the programs, community engagement and union contracts (Meléndez, E., 2004). State and federal initiatives regarding workforce development programs use various terms such as youth or adult vocational training, and are often associated with secondary vocational training, welfare-to-work and other public assistance programs (Jacobs, 2006). The literature on workforce development creates a greater awareness about the connectedness of systems – linking together public education institutions, government, community-based organizations, profit and non-profit institutions (Jacobs, 2006).

Research Methodology

For this research, I constructed a framework for building program capacity based on my literature review to include four areas; internal, interpersonal, institutional and industry. In this way, I present a holistic methodology that is useful in understanding the CCC's complex responsibilities to better understand where gaps need to be addressed regarding the needs of people, institutional barriers and the industry of natural resource conservation. This framework aims to address the development of humanity, to balance the needs of people while managing program costs and legislative agreements (see Figure 1.). There is a challenge of balancing

sustainable program development within the constrictions of the program design. Without proper monitoring, one program aspect can precede other important aspects, which drives imbalances within the program design, potentially impeding the program mission. This research focuses on the aspect of humanity and the development of people.

The purpose of using such an approach is because of the long-standing history of the California Conservation Corps and its 40 years within legislation and its 20-year partnership in service-learning with AmeriCorps. My emphasis on history, governance and community partnerships frame the holistic methodology. By examining institutional culture, I identify areas where research is abundant and uncover gaps where research is needed (Webster and Watson, 2002). By examining the leadership and development needs, I provide greater understanding of the training needs of Civil Service staff that work with Corpsmembers, the program participants and areas needing more clarity to support the role of staff within the job duties. Feminist and institutional culture theories provide me with an understanding of critical areas within the history and gender biases of leadership and development – with the intention of learning how to do valuable work in a new way.

I compared documents that outline the role of the corpsmember and the responsibilities of the supervisor, using data from previously administered evaluations and surveys spanning the years of 2016 and 2017. In total, three data sets were anonymized by paraphrasing open-ended responses into categories that derived from a framework for capacity. The data involved responses from 29 participants in set one, 120 in set two and 109 in set three. Through this process, I identified themes and documented how many times they appeared within the data sets. This process of analysis retains the confidentiality of individuals and partnering agencies. The surveys and evaluations were collected from the following categories: partnering agencies based

on their experience working with the CCC; employee training experiences based on bargaining unit agreements (this includes CI training within 6 months and again within 2 years); and staff responses regarding corpsmember orientation, motivation and education training (COMET) and retention within their first two months post-COMET. Additionally, I examined the provisions of the collective agreement negotiated between the State of California and California Statewide Law Enforcement Association (CSLEA), under this current contract for 2016 to 2019.

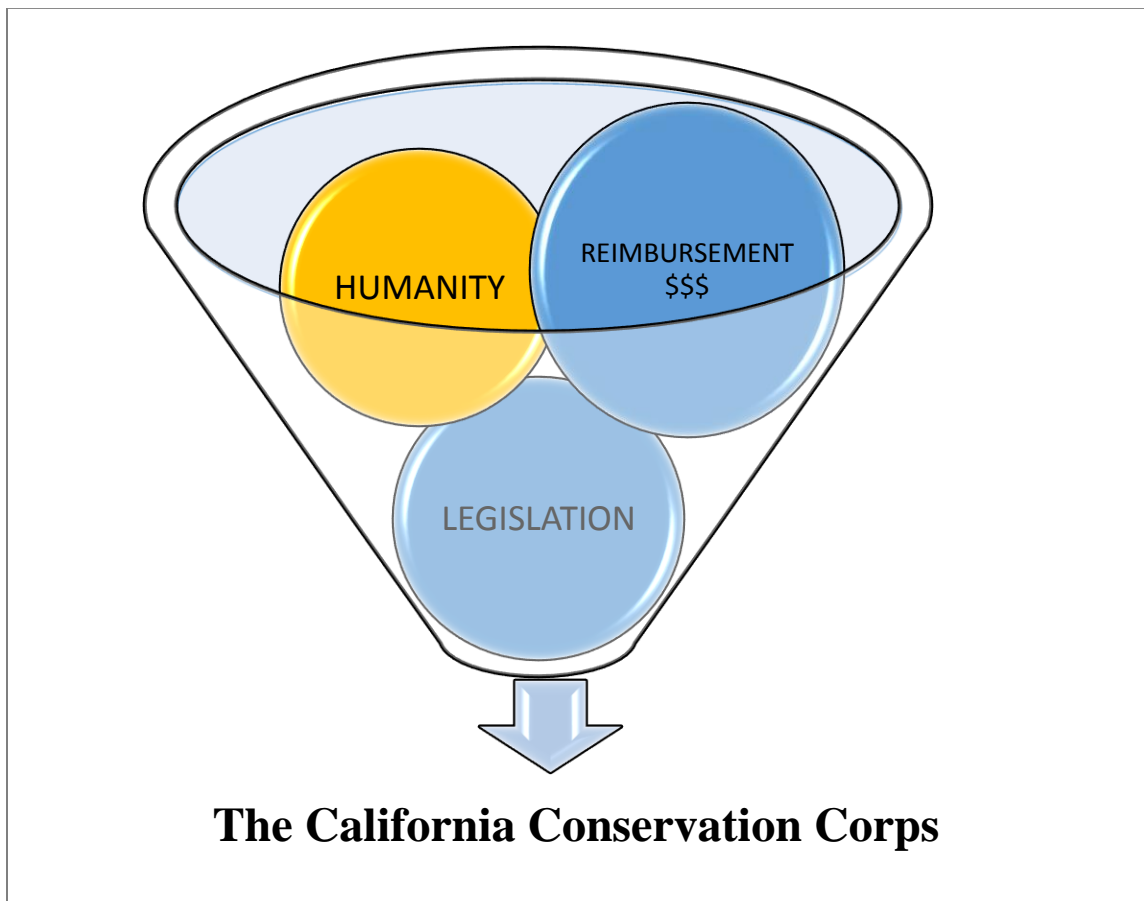


Figure 1. The aspects of balancing program needs.

The purpose of triangulating data sets from different units and not just comparing criteria within a single category allows for a holistic process to emerge. Similarly, this represents the whole body, rather than a part. The CCC, like many State agencies and organizations often

operates in silos, making it difficult to gain access, compare results or extract information for program improvement purposes. This often results in efforts being repeated, ignored or overlooked altogether. My intention was to overcome this fragmentation through identifying repeated themes across program functions, highlighting areas that are functioning well versus areas where improvement and the development to systems are needed.

Research Design Limitations

The limitations within the research design appear within the CI data sets. This data has limits because the open-ended comments are in regards to specific subject content within an attended training or the instructor's method of teaching. It is not capturing data for training content needed or training(s) needed to improve their job performance. Instead, it can see how well they liked a subject or additional resources needed for a subject. Only on occasion did a comment show that something entirely different may have been needed or modified.

Findings – Analysis of Data

Through a data analysis, I brought forth a framework for program development to categorize information into themes that emerged from within the framework's categories: industry, institutional, interpersonal, and internal. Determination of themes was based on the amount of times information repeated itself throughout the data (see figures 2 and 3). The themes vary from each data set, depending on which program area the data was collected from; Sponsor, Field Staff, or Conservationist I data. For example, it became clear that Sponsor data addressed mostly industry concerns since this is the part of the program that encompasses project reimbursement work. Contrary to Sponsor outcomes, CCC field staff whose job it is to develop corpsmembers encountered more issues within an institutional framework based on program

barriers that require them to keep up with compliance rather than focusing their efforts on implementing an equitable process for developing individuals.

Sponsor Data

This data was collected by the Corpsmember Development Team at headquarters. The survey respondents were employees from the Sponsoring agencies that work directly with the CCC on projects such as fisheries for fish habitat and stream restoration, trail maintenance, and energy conservation and retrofitting. Overall, this data provided constructive feedback of where issues are and improvements that could be implemented, based on the services provided by the CCC.

Within the framework of industry for natural resource conservation, sponsors showed appreciation of the CCC's longstanding mission and the labor services that are provided. It should be noted that most of the time, work locations are in remote areas, unpredictable terrain and in direct exposure of weather, including extreme heat and cold temperatures. While highlighting these difficult situations, and stating that they appreciate the CCCs hard work, Sponsor feedback highlighted consistent patterns of communication break-downs with the crew supervisors, seemingly to cause strain with interpersonal relationships. Throughout this feedback, it appears that Sponsors do not have a full understanding of the CCC's dual mission of developing youth and its relation to project work.

Issues with communication appeared in the following categories; scheduling & crew availability; equipment; and the cost of corpsmember training and staff training. For example, under Scheduling and Crew Availability, there were two specific comments that sponsors reported that the crew failed to be present in its entirety. This meant that crew members were missing or the crew supervisor, referred to as the Conservationist I or CI position, was not available because they were delivering individual evaluations. The issue at hand appeared to be

that the sponsor was not informed that 2 or more people would be missing from the project site and that the Civil Service employee would not be providing direct supervision to the crew that day. This resulted in a decline of work productivity, meaning that the crew took advantage of their supervisor's absence and did not produce the work quantity that was agreed upon.

Within the Sponsor data, it appeared that Sponsors lack awareness of the dual characteristic of the program, creating an interpersonal conflict with the crew supervisor. It is a monthly obligation for the crew supervisor to provide each crew member with a monthly evaluation. Keeping in mind that the CCC is a workforce development program and this is how Corpsmembers, the program participants, receive feedback on their performance.

Another issue within communication was between project assignments and the priority that emergency response takes over non-emergency projects. The Sponsors seem perplexed when the crews cease work once an emergency is declared, e.g., fire season and fisheries projects – the Sponsors also seem to lack awareness that the CCC responds to emergency assignments that will precede non-emergency project work.

Sponsors fail to understand that the CCC is a job training program and that training for them starts by attending roll-call at 6:30am each day. This training regime includes preparing Corpsmembers to be on-time, appropriately dressed with safety gear, the transportation to the worksite, a tailgate safety meeting and warm-up exercises for injury prevention. Appropriating the costs of some of this time seemed to confuse sponsors as they are expecting a full day's labor. This raised further questions regarding the Sponsors understanding of how many hours a corpsmember is required to address program functions within a single day. Prior to a Corpsmembers 6:30am schedule, they are also required to report to the kitchen to have breakfast, make their lunch and clean their living quarters.

Repeated themes throughout Sponsor data included a lack of understanding with the CCC's dual mission of project work, including emergency response and the youth development aspect. By failing to understand the full mission, sponsors also appeared to not understand appropriating costs for anything outside of labor, e.g., transportation and warm-up exercises. In combination of these two themes, this makes me question how sponsors view their role in the development of societal aspects that affect today's youth. It appears that sponsors need reminding that Corpsmembers are not Government or State employees, rather they are young adults being trained in a program and providing labor services on project work is a part of that program requirement.

My recommendation is that the Sponsor should be made aware of program processes that may impede project work during the negotiation of the contract agreement, making it a discussion between the Sponsoring project manager and the CCC's project manager (e.g., every third week of the month, the crew supervisor will spend 3 hours each day, over the course of a two to three-day period, administering one-on-one evaluations). Based on the issues with communication, it appears that much of the subject content is not controlled by the crew supervisors and needs to be addressed during the contract agreement. The crew supervisor is generally overseeing up to 15 corpsmembers on worksite projects. If each corpsmember receives a minimum 30-minute evaluation, then up to 7.5 hours needs to be provided for the crew supervisor and one additional corpsmember to be absent from the worksite. The agreement needs to discuss if additional supervision needs to be implemented during the evaluation period and which side of the agreement, Sponsor or CCC, will be required to provide additional supervision. Based on my own field experience, the Sponsoring agency will often send out additional

assistance when the crew supervisor is not available or the CCC will send out a relief supervisor – availability pending.

Similarly, contract agreements need to provide a clause that encompass the priority for emergency response. Often, the crew supervisor is not aware that they are leaving for an emergency in advance. This does not allow them to give sponsors advanced notice. It appears that it needs to be the responsibility of a project coordinator or manager to communicate to the Sponsor when a crew will no longer be available.

Communication issues need to be addressed to strengthen the interpersonal relationships between the CCC and program sponsors. If the gap in supervision is addressed in the contract, it can relieve the crew supervisor from the burdening complaints of being negligent of their supervision over the crew and the decline in productivity during evaluations or emergency response timeframes. By making it a part of the project's contract agreement, the CCC will be creating clear guidelines for the development of corpsmembers and maintaining the reminder to Sponsors the dual aim of the CCC's program mission.

Other issues of concerns brought forth by Sponsors was the training needed for both Corpsmembers and crew supervisors (see figure 2). In total, 10 comments regarded training that fell under the industry framework and what is required to be successful on the job, for both Corpsmembers and Crew Supervisors. I listed out the categories which Sponsors described the issues to fall under. It appeared that multiple sponsors regarded the lack of training as an issue, but had different ideas about describing the kind of training needed.

Sponsor Feedback Data	Sponsor Categories	Corpsmembers Training	Number of Comments: 5 total	Supervisor Training	Number of Comments: 5 total	
	<i>Themes within Sponsor Categories</i>	Increase opportunities, e.g., chainsaw certification and small engine repair		2	Cross-training of CIs	1
		Health and safety hazards: poison oak, footing		1	Professionalism in the workplace	1
		Provide Continuous refreshers		1	CM work ethics/life skills	1
		Environmental awareness/conservation protection		1	Track and quantify work production/totals	1
					Diversify the selection pool of CIs - other than former CMs	1
					Supervisor to CM ratio - especially a crew with all new recruits	1

Figure 2. Sponsor Data

Field Staff Data

This data was collected by the Corpsmember Development Team at Headquarters. The survey respondents were Field staff, any person working at a CCC location other than the Headquarters office, including office technicians, administrative officers, crew supervisors, project managers and coordinators, and staff covering temporary or special program assignments.

Within Staff data, comments highlighted a lack of development opportunities for both corpsmembers and staff. Staff stated that they are unprepared to work with or support individual corpsmembers within the program, during the Corpsmember’s first two months. One comment

said that the lack of training for staff to deal with Corpsmember issues promotes a sink or swim mentality. Out of 119 comments, 42 agreed that most issues they encounter are behavioral, and twenty-five staff said the issues are mental-health related. Overall comments from staff included the need for training that included: mental health, drugs and alcohol and emotional intelligence.

Staff feel that Corpsmembers are not getting the training they need during COMET to be prepared for the program. Within the COMET curriculum, Corpsmembers are not being exposed to the actual work-site and conservation education during training. Staff comments were divided into what subjects they think were most important to expose Corpsmembers to during their COMET experience (See figure 3). Out of 81 comments for subjects needed, Staff thought that Corpsmembers should have more life-skills training to prepare them for their time in the CCC.

I found it challenging to analyze this data due to the use of broad statements regarding dissatisfaction, either with staff training and development or support for corpsmembers and their success. This data made relevant that CCC employees are dissatisfied with how the program has evolved over time and that there appears to be a lack of support for Corpsmember integration during the first 2 months.

CMD Data	CMD Categories	The CCC is effective in helping corpsmembers face the challenges listed above.	Total Number of Comments: 22	Needed Subject Content for COMET	Total Number of Comments: 81
	Themes within CMD Categories	Doesn't provide training in this area, doesn't provide the right kind of training		7	Conservation education / Grade experience and tools
Too focused on work and reimbursement			1	Career Development - resume writing, IDP, program options and opportunities	8
None or limited resources			1	Life skills - communication, family planning, STDs, money management	27
Outdated information			1	Other - not familiar with COMET	32
Ineffective communication skills			2		
Other -			10		

Figure 3. Field Staff Data

Conservationist I Data

The Conservationist I position is that of the Crew Supervisor. It is a Civil Service position that is specific to the CCC and has its own training requirements within a union agreement between the State of California and California's Statewide Law Enforcement Association. This agreement covers individuals working in the field of Protective Services and Public Safety. The overview for this agreement states, "Protective Services and Public Safety: Employees protecting state lands and buildings, furnishing emergency services, issuing licenses or permits, arresting individuals violating penal or administrative laws, and protecting the public from fraudulent practices and schemes."

This data for this survey was collected by the Training Unit at Headquarters. The purpose of the evaluations was to collect feedback from training sessions that are required through the Bargaining Unit Agreement. Within this agreement, an outline for training requirements state the following:

- A. New employees shall receive a minimum of eighty (80) hours of orientation and Initial Entry Training which includes, but is not limited to:
 1. Orientation to State service, and the job of the Conservationist.
 2. Basic Safety and Vehicle Information.
 3. Hand Tool Orientation and Usage.
 4. Corpsmember Discipline and Grievance Procedures.
 5. Basic Supervision of corpsmembers.

The discrepancy within the bargaining contract is that the CCC can wait up to six months for Conservationists to attend this training and by that time, some have already learned the above outlined information through on-the-job training. Advanced trainings are outlined in section H of

the contract and require a Conservationist to request permission from their supervisor and pay for it themselves and request reimbursement. Due to the nature of a Conservationists duties of responding to emergency's or working on project reimbursements, it does not seem common for a Conservationist to request time off work for professional-development. If the opportunity or request did arise, a relief supervisor would need to be available. In section B of the contract,

B. New employees shall attend the Conservationist Leadership Academy in the second year after hire. The Conservationist Leadership Academy will be offered to Conservationists I who have not been afforded the opportunity to complete training as defined in (A).

The trainings mentioned in section C are the same trainings that are offered in sections A and B. This section outlines critical knowledge that a Conservationist needs to perform their job on the basic level. However, the trainings outlined in this section need to be requested by the employee and approved by their supervisor.

C. On an as needed basis to ensure proficiency in the performance of the employee's duties and responsibilities, but at least once every three (3) years, any Conservationist who so requests, the department shall authorize training in conjunction with an approved annual Individual Training Program (ITP) including, but not limited to the following: basic supervision, water safety, human relations, employment sensitivity training (sexual harassment, fraternization, and cultural diversity), chainsaw usage, and hand tool/power tool usage.

Not all the data within this data set was relevant for this inquiry, which is discussed in the limitations section of this paper. Within the data results for CI training, staff feedback indicates that there is not enough time being allotted to each subject and that time management raises an

issue for the comprehension of important policy's that Conservationists are responsible for upholding. The phrase 'more time' appeared 23 times within 156 comments. Upon further analysis, I could see that the concentration of these comments appeared within the subjects of Vehicle Policy Review, Introduction to Corpsmember Development, Injury Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP), and Workers Compensation. Within the Injury Illness Prevention Plan feedback, 9 out of 11 comments from Conservationists stated that they needed more time to understand the content within the Injury Illness Prevention Plan. For Corpsmember Development, 3 out of 5 five people commented that they needed more time with this information.

Aside from commenting on the time management issues of the training content, Conservationists gave very little information on the trainings they would like to receive. The concentration of comments made relevant that time management is an issue, though a critical inquiry to how they might do their job better is lacking. Conservationist training is currently administered under the Human Resources Unit and the subjects being introduced to Conservationists appear to do more with Human Resources related policies around mandates, rather than program operations and functions regarding developing youth and technical skills for natural resource conservation work. Based on my experience in the training unit, sending Human Resources staff to conduct training is a cost-effective measure rather than contracting with youth development professionals to provide adequate trainings relevant to the program needs. I associate the lack of feedback with the following factors; evaluations are not being designed to ask the right kinds of questions, Conservationists may be too new or unknowing of Sponsor feedback to know what would be helpful and training classes are small and providing open feedback could feel unsafe.

Comparing and Contrasting Results

To bridge training gaps for leadership capacity, I conducted a critical approach, assessing data sets to highlight areas for program improvement and development. Within the data sets, I examined relationships and program functions between Sponsors and Civil Service staff. It appears that the CCC has an overall satisfactory rating amongst sponsors and project work within the industry of natural resources conservation. However, there appear to be more interpersonal issues between Staff and Conservationists regarding communication. There seems to be the common theme that trainings for both Corpsmembers and Staff would be beneficial for the work they are doing and sharpening basic skill sets to become more knowledgeable and proficient in the work they are accomplishing. There is a theme within communications breakdowns and a lack of understanding regarding the dual mission of the CCC amongst some staff. This is a management issue and should be addressed. Once the Crew Supervisor is made aware of any upcoming changes in scheduling or program needs, they can remind the Sponsor of the contract agreement requirements, but should not be held accountable for missed communication when maintaining basic program functions.

The balance for training and development for Civil Service staff does not appear to be in balance with developing Corpsmembers or supporting the program mission. In development and individual relationship building does not appear to be within balance (see figure 4). More so, the CCC does not seem to have a framework for guiding training for the appropriate subject content needed for addressing specific critical areas of concern.

Establishing a framework rooted in progressive measures for social justice and the target industry of natural resource conservation would be a stepping stone for the guidance needed to reform training for Civil Service employees serving a mission driven agency for youth development.

Conclusions

When comparing the responses of the Civil Service employees to those of the programs Federal and State Sponsors who provide the programs reimbursement goals, the program appears to be placing a heavy emphasis on Sponsor and project satisfaction. This ensures monetary support to keep the program in existence to have this program opportunity available to society. The program aspect which appears to be in need is leveraging the equity gap to provide the support needed for new individuals, both for Corpsmembers and Conservationists. Without bridging this gap, the program risks operating similarly to a welfare-to-work program, placing emphasis on job placement over training and education. Balancing the needs between soft skills trainings to support Corpsmembers and Staff while providing technical training for the industry of natural resources conservation is the cornerstone for program effectiveness. Civil Service employees need to be trained to work with the needs of individuals who come from disadvantaged populations to better understand the likeliness of barriers to conventional employment.

When comparing the CCC legislative statutes to the training requirements of the Union agreements, there seems to be a disconnect with how to execute trainings to accomplish the intent and mission of the program. My experience with training is that no more than two hours during a 40-hour training session was allotted to Corpsmember Development. This lack of subject content within training is a disservice to both the professional development of Conservationists and the support required for Corpsmember success. When examining the union agreement and comparing that to the data, there appears to be an imbalance in what the Conservationists are receiving in training and what the overall needs to the centers are

experiencing. Through cross-referencing the data with the union agreement, it is open to interpretation to which subjects will be addressed and the timeframe allotted to each area.

It appears to me that andragogy for Civil Service exists with a lot of room for democratic reform, which can continue to be developed through the legacy and continuous development of programs. However, within the framework of institutional culture, reform appears to be impeded and lacks new and creative ways of executing program objectives. In accordance with policies and regulations through governing agencies overseeing compliance, the balance to develop Civil Service staff is cumbersome and often falls short in professional development regarding youth. Like so many institutions, the CCC needs transformational change, not just in leadership but in the recruitment of diverse program participants.

To bridge training gaps for leadership capacity, I conducted a critical approach, assessing data sets to highlight areas for program improvement and development. Within the data sets, I examined relationships and program functions between Sponsors, Corpsmembers and Civil Service staff. It appears that the CCC has an overall satisfactory rating amongst sponsors and project work. However, the balance for training and development for Civil Service staff and Corpsmembers in development and individual relationship building does not appear to be within balance (see figure 4). More so, the CCC does not seem to have a framework for guiding training for the appropriate subject content needed for addressing specific critical areas of concern.

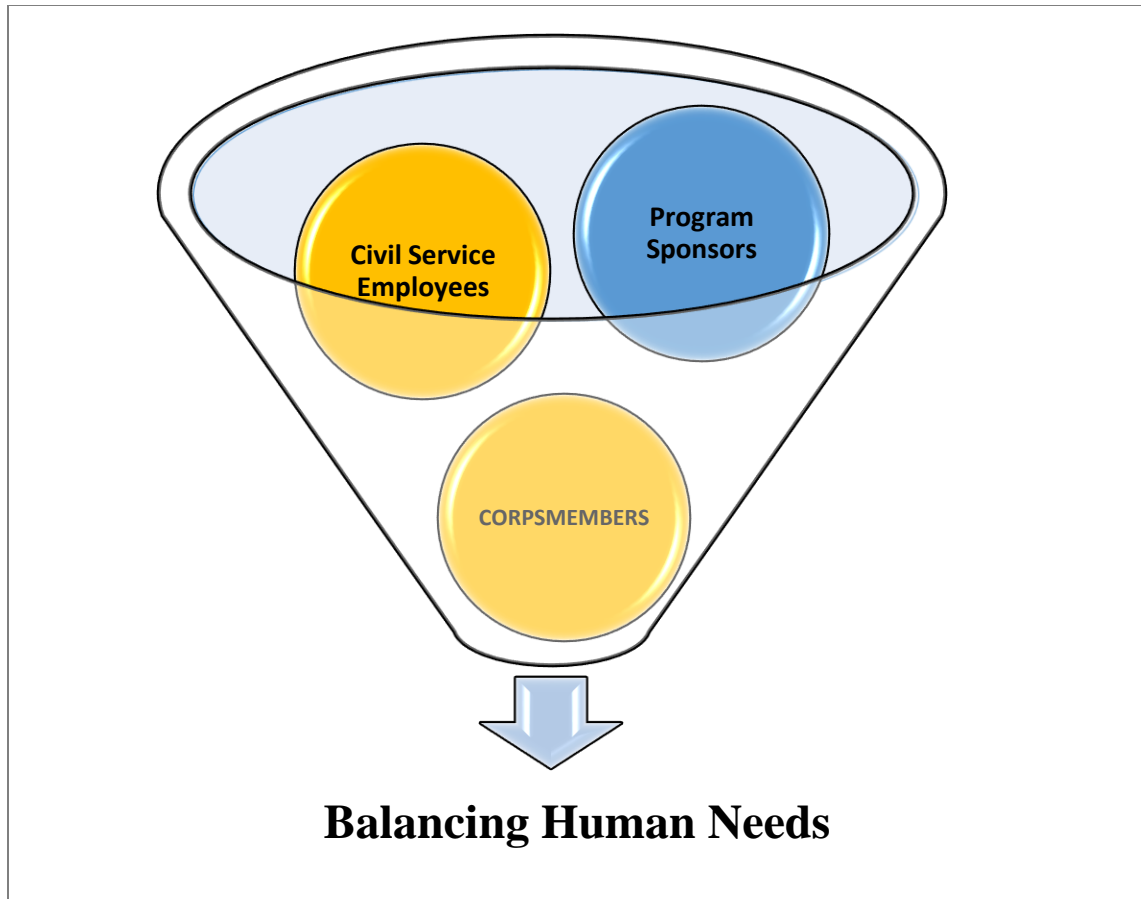


Figure 4. CCC Relationships

Based on the context and themes within the data, CCC centers are grappling with behavior issues which they feel unprepared to address, which affects Corpsmember retention rates within their first two months of being in the program. There does not appear to be a balanced approach in regards to the soft-skills training to support individuals within the desired subjects requested by staff, e.g., mental health, drug addiction, life skills and career development. While it is mentioned several times within Corpsmember Development data that Conservationists face difficult issues with corpsmembers, the open-ended comments did not provide indication that Conservationists or Staff understood the concept around *who* the program is meant to serve, appearing to lack understanding of the demographic characteristics of participants who historically utilize work-force development programs. By not having this data,

it is difficult to gain an understanding if there is a certain expectation around program demographics driving implicit biases. Without creating an understanding and awareness for the need of soft-skill training, the CCC could be at risk for driving cognitive or implicit biases. I am uncertain if this understanding exists among CIs as some of the ‘other’ comments referred to recruitment issues rather than having a deeper understanding of why work-force development programs exist and the demographics in which they serve.

The imbalance amongst Civil Service and CMs appears to be driven through the absence of a guiding framework to address multi-faceted program needs. Through the examination of the data, it appears that a framework needs to address the multiple layers of development for both Civil Service and CMs around the themes and the need for a balanced approach. The data appeared to address issues relating to the individual as well as the industry, which leads me to believe that a guiding framework would consist of multiple levels for addressing different elements within internal self-examinations and individual biases, interpersonal challenges, institutional barriers within systematic process and industry in relation to conservation and workforce development.

To increase leadership capacity to better support youth development, this research highlights an opportunity to implement a framework to address multiple areas and bring balance to the human development in which the CCC strives. This approach could also be relationship building between the CCC Headquarters Unit and the Field Units. To provide a satisfactory training program for young adults, it is important for CIs to know how to help corpsmembers reach the level of performance required to be successful within their program experience.

Recommendations for further research

When examining the qualitative data sets from open-ended comments, a sense of empathy amongst Sponsors emerged through the themes of development and training needs of staff and corpsmembers. Other Sponsor comments regarded appreciation of the hard work and efforts provided by the CCC. My own subjectivity to the situation realizes that many of the Sponsors are also former corpsmembers. By way of working for a sponsoring agency, this job places them above and beyond their CCC experience within the relative industry of natural resource conservation. It can be assumed that working with corpsmembers evokes a sense of empathy towards wanting these new Corpsmembers to achieve program success, like their own. On the contrary, when examining the qualitative data sets from Staff, a sense of frustration seemed to emerge towards a perceived absence in the lack of training and development staff felt they need to do their job adequately.

There are multiple variables that could play a role in future research, including staff diversity, job loyalty despite unfavorable circumstances and industry driven implicit biases. It is with my understanding that many program staff are former program participants, examination of staff diversity and program recruitment could be a valuable source for determining efforts needed for staff development and support for a workforce primarily made up from former youth classified as disadvantaged. The training curriculum for Conservationists does not appear to take into consideration that most Conservationists are former program participants and aside from their program experience and achievement of their high school diploma, may have very little outside experiences or education. The number of subjects they are exposed to within a short amount of time, could potentially be overwhelming and executed poorly if the audience receiving this information isn't being considered. Therefore, perpetuating a similar sink or swim

mentality towards Conservationists, as staff stated was happening towards Corpsmembers. One indication that there may be shared learning traits within the data was the amount of responses from Conservationists desiring more time allotted to understanding certain concepts, policies or information being presented.

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