Title:
Servant Leadership and Research: Using Both to Build Sustainable Service Projects

Linda Johanson, EdD, MS(n)
Department of Nursing, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC, USA

Session Title:
Servant Leadership Skills
Slot:
O 03: Monday, 19 September 2016: 4:45 PM-5:30 PM
Scheduled Time:
4:45 PM

Purpose:
to define servant leadership, to explain how servant nurse leaders can promote the building of sustainable service projects in developing countries, and to convey the results of a nurse-led research project to install and study the effects of clean water filters in rural Guatemalan villages

Keywords:
servant-leadership, service and sustainability

References:
Becchetti, N. Why most mission trips are a waste of time. Center for Student Missions. Retrieved from https://www.csm.org/articlewhymost.php
Greenleaf Center. What is servant leadership? Retrieved from https://www.greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/

Abstract Summary:
This presentation describes the concept of servant leadership with suggestions concerning how servant leaders can use their skills combined with research tools to promote building sustainable service projects. An example of a nurse-led research project to install and then examine the effects of clean water filters in Guatemala is presented.

Learning Activity:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define servant leadership</td>
<td>Provide an overview of the definition and characteristics of servant leadership such as listening, empathy, healing, awareness, stewardship, and building community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe how servant nurse leaders can promote the building of sustainable service projects in developing countries.</td>
<td>Give examples of how nursing is a caring profession, and because of this, nurses are often drawn to volunteer for situations such as medical mission work or disaster outreach, where the skills of a health care professional are needed and appreciated. However, one of the criticisms of short-term medical service projects in developing countries is that they lack sustainability. Draw parallels with how the characteristics of servant leadership can be used to build sustainable service projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain how the results of a nurse-led research project to install and study the effects of clean water filters in rural Guatemalan villages relate to servant leadership</td>
<td>Provide the details of a nurse-led research study as an example regarding how servant leadership can help build sustainable service projects. Provide the problem, purpose, research question, design, procedures, and results, tying in the characteristics of servant leadership and meaning for the nursing profession.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abstract Text:**

Nursing is a caring profession, and because of this, nurses are often drawn to volunteer for situations such as medical mission work or disaster outreach, where the skills of a health care professional are needed and appreciated. However, one of the criticisms of short-term medical service projects in developing countries is that they lack sustainability. A team enters a culture for a brief period of time, and when they leave there are no lasting changes to the host community.

The content in this presentation relates to the conference theme of leadership success, specifically servant leadership. The concept of servant leadership, leaders who are servants first, has characteristics that be used to promote the building of sustainable service projects. This presentation provides a foundational overview of servant leadership characteristics (such as listening, empathy, healing, awareness, stewardship, and building community) and provides suggestions concerning how servant leaders can use their skills combined with research tools to develop projects with lasting impact. As an example, a nurse-led research project to install and then examine the effects of clean water filters in rural villages in Guatemala will be presented.

To initiate this project, a nurse utilized servant leadership skills to organize and lead a group of volunteers, including health care professionals and students, on a medical mission trip to two rural villages in Guatemala where they conducted mobile medical clinics. Included in the clinic work was the assessment of the major health problems in both villages. Community tours revealed that the homes in the villages had no access to clean water, and a large number of infectious diseases were observed in the clinics.
The goal of this project was to follow up the medical clinic work with installation of water filters in all homes (approximately 300) in the two rural communities, teach children and adults about the importance of clean water, demonstrate how to properly care for the filters, and conduct a follow-up assessment of health in the two villages (6 months post-installation). The research question was: Does use of clean water filtration systems in rural Guatemalan villages accompanied by education regarding the use of clean water and its impact on health reduce the incidence of water-contaminated related disease?

Analyzing pre- and post-installation health assessment data provides a greater understanding of the impact that these water filters could have on the health of residents in these communities, and it facilitates better service to these populations in the future. As a result of this work, hundreds of people living in two rural communities in Guatemala will gain access to safe, clean drinking water and will learn about safety, health, and the importance of clean water. Providing access to clean drinking water, together with educational resources, will not only decrease the incidence of water-borne diseases but will eliminate or reduce the need to collect rainwater in unsafe, open containers. Such actions promote the reproduction of disease vectors, for example mosquitos, which transmit malaria, dengue, and chikungunya, as well as the most recent major health concern – the zika virus. Finally, collaborations with local organizations will help to build sustainable working relationships for future outreach and research projects in this region.