



KNOWLEDGE AS ENABLEMENT

Engagement between higher education
and the third sector in South Africa

EDITORS

MABEL ERASMUS
RUTH ALBERTYN



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SCHOLAR**

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South Africa

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● PREFACE

Even though the phenomenon ‘community engagement’ has evolved as one of the three core functions (together with research and teaching-learning) of higher education in South Africa, there remain conceptual and theoretical gaps in this knowledge field. One of the questions that remains largely unanswered pertains to whether, how and to what extent the collaborative building and exchange of knowledge, skills, expertise and constructive attitudes – that are the drivers of community engagement – actually lead to enablement of participants toward achieving the goals that they set out to reach together.

The idea behind this book is to confront some of the unanswered questions that emerged through the experiences of a group of colleagues and partners, mostly working together in service learning endeavours at the University of the Free State (UFS). The focus at the UFS on the exponential growth of service learning as a curricular, engaged form of teaching and learning of necessity led to the expansion of collaborative partnerships with external constituencies who were willing and able to provide community-based sites for students to learn and serve. Over time it became clear that a majority of these partners were from the non-profit sector. As the head of the service learning division at the UFS, one of the editors, Mabel Erasmus, realised that some of the staff involved had limited understanding of who these participants really were, how their organisations functioned and what challenges they faced in providing essential services to many of the most vulnerable members of society. The first initiative to explore this matter further was in the form of a collaborative research and development project funded by a charitable trust and managed most effectively by Willem Ellis, one of the authors in this book. Shortly after this project was concluded the first call for proposals in the funding instrument of the National Research Foundation, referred to simply as “Community Engagement”, was issued and the research proposal that was submitted, based on the outcomes of the charitable trust funded project, was successful.

The original project application stated the overarching research question as follows: “How can higher education institutions and the non-profit sector establish long-term research-based collaborative engagements that will be mutually empowering and enabling through joint, reciprocal knowledge-based activities and capacity building?” Over three years a number of collaborative research activities were implemented; postgraduate studies were funded, some of which have been completed; assistantships were funded (the most noteworthy of which is that of Magda Barnard, who played a key role as project assistant); and staff development grants were utilised fruitfully, as can be gleaned from the chapters of three of the authors. An important component was support for and supervision of the various researchers linked to the project, most of whom were and are working towards completing master’s and doctoral studies.

Subsequently, the outcomes of some of these studies and others that had already been completed were linked to the book project that was initiated early in 2013.

The original project team decided on the publication of a peer-reviewed book as the culmination of the work that had been done, in the belief that it could provide evidence of the enabling, collaborative research engagements that were originally envisioned for the project. It was also decided that the more inclusive concept of 'third sector' would be adopted to include the many types of organised civil society that are formed voluntarily for public purposes, and not only those organisations officially registered as non-profits. This concept also positions the book within international movements that acknowledge the urgent need to focus scholarly attention on this key sector in society which occupies a rather precarious position between the state (first sector), business and industry (second sector) and informal, private or family relationships (fourth sector?) within the broader society.

As the book project unfolded it developed a life of its own. Expertise regarding the enablement of academic growth and development through engaged scholarship was required on the team. To assist in steering the book project towards successful completion Ruth Albertyn joined as co-editor. She most skilfully facilitated the academic writing process with authors, some of whom were not experienced in producing scholarly work. Writing workshops were held to discuss and focus on the unifying ideas and ideals of the book. It was collaboratively agreed that the aims of the book were 1) to stimulate debate around issues at the interfaces between higher education institutions and the third sector of society, and 2) to highlight the unique role of such relationships in contributing to knowledge enablement.

Along the way several authors who were not part of the original project team came on board. Each of them heeded the writing briefs about the book that were sent out regularly and focused their chapters neatly within the parameters of the title and aims of the book. In the end the authors represented viewpoints from a variety of higher education institutions, academic disciplines, non-profit organisations and the public sector.

It is envisaged that this book will serve as a resource for capacity building endeavours that will be undertaken jointly by higher education institutions and organisations from the third sector in future. The ideals of community engaged scholarship will hopefully be served by this example of a joint initiative by academics and practitioners across various sectors in order to explore possibilities aimed at mutual, reciprocal enablement of all the participants.

The editors

November 2014

● FOREWORD

Ernest Boyer (1990:160) stated that the aim of education “is not only to prepare students for productive careers, but also to enable them to live lives of dignity and purpose; not only to generate new knowledge, but to channel that knowledge toward humane ends; not merely to study government, but to help shape a citizenry that can promote the public good”. The academy is slowly outgrowing the traditional view of scholarship for a richer view of academic work that is enhanced with civic engagement activities that are integrated into teaching (eg, service learning courses), research (eg, engaged scholarship), and professional service (eg, faculty members working with community partners on common interests). This new perspective on academic work reflects a fundamental epistemological shift in higher education: the academia relating to communities in ways that honour multiple ways of knowing and diverse knowledge bases in addition to the traditionally discipline-based, academic ones. To oversimplify, this shift is a reconceptualisation from (a) a model in which the academy has the expertise and the job of outreach programmes is to disseminate the knowledge and fix the problem, to (b) a new model of civic engagement that emphasises partnerships that are democratic (just, participatory, inclusive), reciprocal, and transformative. This changes the connotations of ‘service’ from the university expert helping the needy community recipient to university staff engaging in community work *with* community partners (eg, residents, clients) toward common goals.

What I appreciate about this volume is how it builds upon over a decade of work in South Africa that has been exploring the integration of civic engagement into the academy. Civic engagement in higher education should not be approached as an add-on, a separate area of academic work, nor as a lower-status activity. Civic engagement must be integrated into all aspects of the work of the academy and transform institutions of higher education into more democratic entities that can inculcate democratic values, democratic processes, and lifelong democratic habits among all constituencies. Although civic engagement partnerships need not be constrained by geography and they can occur between universities and government (first sector), business (second sector), and non-profit organisations (forming part of the third sector), there are significant reasons why the focus of this volume on the non-profit sector is critical. As this analysis highlights, the non-profit sector is the least studied and least understood sector of the three. These thoughtful chapters contribute to correcting that deficiency, and support the fact that additional study of this sector in South Africa is warranted. Partnerships between universities and the non-profit sector are underdeveloped. These chapters not only explore the diversity of partnerships that are possible, but also suggest how partnerships can be improved and how these partnerships can contribute to outcomes in the other two sectors. Unfortunately, the commodification of higher education has led to a tension among the multiple purposes of education. Chief among these are the seemingly competing purposes of education for economic goals (eg, careers,

economic development) and education for civic goals (citizenship, public good). Bringle, Clayton and Plater (2013:6) note that “a focus on private gain (credentialing for employment) may displace public good (educating for citizenship) as the primary *raison d’être* of the academy – to the detriment of our students, our communities, and our democracy”. These are not incompatible purposes. In America, *A crucible moment: College learning & democracy’s future*, released by The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (2012:8), calls for a pervasive “civic reform movement” to transform institutions of higher learning so that they “prepare students for careers and citizenship, rather than only the former” (2012:10). The report contends that “the more civic-oriented that colleges and universities become, the greater their overall capacity to spur local and global economic vitality, social and political well-being, and collective action to address public problems” (2012: 2). Finally, as Robert Payton (Payton & Moody 2008), the father of philanthropic studies in American, points out government is concerned with power and control, business is dedicated by profits, but the non-profit or third sector is imbued with trust. Civic trust is an important commodity to develop in civil society. Developing stronger, more frequent, and more democratic partnerships between higher education and the non-profit sector can strengthen the non-profit sector, highlight the role that each person (faculty members, students, community constituencies) can assume as co-researchers, co-educators, and co-generators of knowledge (Dostilio *et al* 2013), and, most interesting and promising, promote transformational learning and growth of each partner – not only students but also faculty members, university administrators, and community partners. Unequivocally then, this can result in a stronger democracy and a more just society in South Africa.

Robert G Bringle PhD DPhil

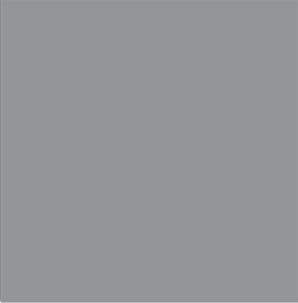
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AN INTRODUCTORY PERSPECTIVE ON THE KNOWLEDGE ENABLEMENT LANDSCAPE

POTENTIAL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION—THIRD
SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Ruth Albertyn & Mabel Erasmus

1. INTRODUCTION

If higher education is to play a meaningful role in society, it needs to engage with external knowledge partners. Community engagement, civic engagements and community interaction are concepts currently used internationally and in South Africa to describe this third core function of higher education institutions, practised alongside and integrated with teaching-and-learning and research. Organisations from the third sector of society, and non-profit organisations in particular, are often willing and able to be knowledge partners in higher education engagement endeavours. This landscape of the community interaction project in which universities engage is the focus of this book. In addition to this introductory chapter the book comprises the following three sections: The chapters in Part One put forward some of the main conceptual positions that guided our thinking; in Part Two the chapters specifically focus on matters pertaining directly to the third sector; and Part Three is dedicated to case studies proclaiming new approaches to knowledge enablement through higher education—third sector engagement. Our premise is that there is an essential link between enablement and knowledge creation, and the interaction between these concepts will be expounded in the chapters of this book.

The community engagement imperative in the higher education context has been well documented (Boyer 1990; Jansen 2002:507; Kraak 2004:244). Community engagement can contribute to serving the aims of social justice, equity and transformation in the historical context of South African higher education and society (Albertyn & Daniels 2009:413-415; Petersen & Osman 2013:4-5). The landscape of engaged activity in the South African context influences the work done in these

sites and thus forms the backdrop of our project. There are also innate tensions that universities face because they have to function in the globalised economy with the competitive, individualised focus of knowledge economies (Gibbons *et al* 1994:3; James, Guile & Unwin 2013:245). It is therefore a challenge for universities to remain relevant while retaining accountability to the local context where they practise their mission. However, what happens at the interface between higher education institutions and third sector organisations has not been explored in any depth in the South African context. The purpose of this book is to contribute to and promote dialogue on principles and practices of enablement through reciprocal knowledge sharing and collaborative building and utilisation of knowledge between the third sector of society and higher education institutions. It is our wish that by sharing contributions from both the higher education and the third sector in this book we will contribute to creating a ‘buzz’ in the landscape around the potential of this knowledge partnership to provide a generative space for knowledge production and innovation.

A landscape is a fusion of elements of people and places which together form an entity with specific characteristics. In this introductory chapter we explore the backdrop of this community engagement landscape where knowledge is created for mutual enablement. We argue that a common vision and mission could provide a fruitful focus in the process of community engagement.

We begin this chapter with more about the rationale behind our decision to bring together a volume of conceptual and research-based chapters on enabling knowledge through community engagement. Next we explore the community engagement context by looking at the motivation for focusing on the higher education engaged knowledge project in collaboration with external partners from the third sector of society, and more particularly non-profit organisations which constitute a large part of this sector. We then look at the purpose or the common mission of these knowledge partnerships, and finally we consider the process of mutual enablement towards achieving co-created goals. This discussion will set the stage for the chapters to follow.

2. THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE ENABLING KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Even though the phenomenon referred to as ‘community engagement’ (CE) has by now evolved as a third function of higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa (Lazarus, Erasmus, Hendricks, Nduna & Slamet 2008:60; Hall 2010:1-2; RSA DHET 2013:39), huge gaps in this subfield still remain. Definitions of CE often

represent attempts to capture the complexities and (political) sensitivity inherent in the concept. For example: CE is defined as “continuously negotiated collaboration and partnerships between [the HEI] and the interest groups that it interacts with, aimed at building and exchanging the knowledge, skills, expertise and resources required to develop and sustain society” (UFS 2006). We concur with the opinion expressed in the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (RSA DHET 2013:39) that CE “has been a concept with which the South African higher education system has grappled for more than a decade”. There clearly is a dire need to investigate and expand the collaborative knowledge-building activities between the following stakeholders in the broad CE endeavour: local communities; organised civil society or the third sector (non-profit organisations in particular); the HE sector (institutions, staff and students); the public (first) sector; and the private (second) sector. The authors of the chapters in this book wish to make a contribution to such an endeavour by presenting CE as a complex, crucial component of scholarly work, within HE and beyond.

We know from experience and also deduce from the literature (Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo & Bringle 2008:227-228; Hall 2010:48; Bezuidenhout & Erasmus 2013:168) that HEIs in many countries largely rely on collaboration with organisations within the third sector of society as sites for academic student service placement and community-based contextual research. Furthermore, given budgetary and other resource constraints within HE and the “vastly different” ways in which universities approach community engagement, “it is likely that future funding of such initiatives in universities will be restricted to programmes linked directly to the academic programme of universities, and form part of the teaching and research function of these institutions” (RSA DHET 2013:39).

The chapter by *Daniel Hammett and Daniel Vickers (with contributions from students)* is an example of how thoughtful reflection on the field experiences of students provides an opportune moment to turn experiential learning into a process of knowledge enablement and knowledge transfer among students and third sector participants. However, in the South African HE sector these opportunities are not always explored. There often seems to be a limited understanding of who third sector organisations are, how they function, what challenges they face, and what forms of capacity building they might require. While staff and students from HEIs are focused on the purpose of their planned activities at the NPO sites and the outcomes they wish to achieve, the voices (Alperstein 2007; Nduna 2007; Du Plessis & Van Dyk 2013) of the NPO staff and the community members who are served by these NPOs are often less audible. Power relations in the ‘knowledge society’ tend to be in favour of academic

knowledge that is perceived as being more valid and worthwhile than the knowledge that so-called laypersons in the community hold, despite the latter's many years of experience in the field. The irony is that without the NPO sector those who are most vulnerable in South African society will have no safety net where the service sector and their own local communities fail them. In terms of their social responsiveness, the higher and further education and training sector therefore needs to support NPOs more, by joining them in knowledge-based community activism, responding adequately to their training needs, influencing relevant policy implementation and playing a constructive role in community-based and participatory action research in collaboration with this sector. In the chapter by *Grey Magaiza* he explores community engaged scholarship as a pedagogy of possibility which is an ethically and politically justified scholarly activity that advocates for the best in the human condition.

Butin (2010:133) argues for reimagining collaborative practices and interdisciplinary inquiry, and for studying CE in its various manifestations "as a wonderfully complex and situated practice" that actually disturbs us and forces us to rethink the normal patterns of thought, belief and the very nature of scholarship. In looking at what is important to both sectors in the HE partnership and what matters to each, the knowledge creation process can be directed with positive fruitful focus on energising forces to achieve mutual benefits to both partners. This does not mean that the challenges and problems distinct in complex systems are repudiated. On the contrary, if the focus is on fruitful collaboration, then the creative tension which is characteristic of any complex system will be harnessed to provide a process and product which is innovative and of reciprocal value.

However, there are risks involved in such an enterprise. Risk is acknowledged as being an inherent part of any innovation process which implies change (Brown 2010:1215). If risk is seen as something to be avoided, the results of the knowledge process and project could be stifling, controlling and inhibited (Frick, Albertyn & Bitzer 2014:56). The fundamental force in these kinds of controlling interactions reflects power imbalances which threaten the sustainability of projects. In her chapter *Mabel Erasmus* points to the political unconscious of such power imbalances in society, which necessitates the creative coordination of the ideological with the Utopian elements inherent in community engagement in order to move forward in the knowledge society.

The *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (RSA DHET 2013:39) provides a concise outline of what the manifestations or forms of CE can entail, and acknowledges its presence within the higher education sector in the following statement:

What has emerged is that community engagement, in its various forms – socially responsive research, partnerships with civil society organisations, formal learning programmes that engage students in community work as a formal part of their academic programmes, and many other formal and informal aspects of academic work – has become a part of the work of universities in South Africa.

The chapters of this book thus represent a broad variety of the possible forms of CE, often integrated with and infused into both teaching-and-learning and research, and specifically in the context of “partnerships with civil society organisations” of the third sector. The aim is to search for essential links between knowledge and enablement for the purpose of improving and deepening engagement between HEIs and organisations of the third sector. The chapter by *Elize Janse van Rensburg* focuses on identifying factors that facilitate or act as barriers to enablement. She defines the concept of enablement and identifies principles which could serve as a guide for enablement in communities and emphasises the power of reciprocal knowledge sharing in a mutually enabling endeavour.

3. THE CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION–THIRD SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

In the ‘knowledge economy’ collaboration between HE and the public (first) and private (second) sectors of society is a given. According to Habib (2002:viii) the civil society sector “of which so little is known, represents the third element in the development equation”. Over the years the state and the market have been subjected to rigorous study, while civil society (third sector) has remained largely under-theorised despite being considered by many as representing a bridge between the citizenry on the one hand and the state and the market on the other. The growing realisation that development (and some forms of service delivery, for that matter) cannot be realised without the participation and mobilisation of this sector has led to initiatives across the world to study civil society, specifically in its third sector manifestations. Taylor (2010:1) describes a number of noteworthy developments in the field, providing “incontrovertible” evidence that there has been “a dramatic rise in research” which is gradually moving towards the establishment of third sector research as a new field of study. However, research into this sector in the South African context is not well-developed and thus closer involvement and deeper engagement from the higher education sector is required. The research reported in the chapter by *Deidré van Rooyen and Willem Ellis* was motivated by the need for an informed understanding of the third sector by any party wanting to interact with this sector, and provides insight into co-creating developmental solutions for challenges in the South African context through constructive engagement.

A comprehensive study of the size and scope of the non-profit sector in South Africa (Swilling & Russell 2002) was undertaken towards the end of the previous century. This is the first ever study that could claim to describe the sector in terms of its background, scale, employment, volunteers and finances, as well as its spread across different sectors of activity. The study posed considerable difficulties to the research team, but also rendered invaluable information for policy and practice. Since the intended follow-up study that was envisaged had not materialised at the time of publication of this book and no other comprehensive studies could be found, we had to rely largely on Swilling and Russell (2002) in selecting a few pointers about the field that are relevant to our book. We subsequently discuss these in conjunction with a limited number of international resources that offer more recent insights pertaining to the role and positioning of third sector organisations in society.

Taylor (2010:1) points out that a broadly accepted way of describing the third sector is achieved by defining it with respect to five structural and operational features: it is organised, private (separate from government), self-governing, non-profit distributing and non-compulsory. According to Ridley-Duff (2008:1), the third sector consists of “organisations established by people on a voluntary basis to pursue social or community goals”. Civil society organisations from this sector include NPOs, social movements, and other notions of civil society such as community-based and faith-based organisations. Corry (2010:16) includes social enterprises, partnerships and pressure groups. The range of possible forms or manifestations is broad. On the one end of the continuum they include multinational organisations positioned within “global civil society” with the critical intent of promoting ethics that centres on “the oneness of humanity”, the equality of all people and the idea that we have obligations to others that stretch beyond those that we are related to in some way or another (Taylor 2010:7). On the other end of the continuum there are survivalist, street-level organisations of every possible creed and kind. In *Stephan de Beer’s* chapter, he looks at local neighbourhoods in the inner city of Tshwane as possible sites of engagement. He argues for a reimagining of the third sector – drawing from a spirituality of abundance, exploring innovation and enterprise, and fostering practices of sustainability – which would enable optimal partnerships with local neighbourhoods and higher education institutions, hopefully resulting in more sustainable transformations.

It is possible for HEIs to collaborate with any of the civil society organisations mentioned above; however, when the aim of CE is to engage more closely with the developmental spaces where grassroots struggles are taking place, university staff members often find it useful and productive to partner with organisations registered

as NPOs. Examples are reported in the chapter by *Kirna Hellmuth*, who explores the contributions of the religious faith factor in faith-based NPOs and looks at ways that a partnership with higher education can contribute to management skills and knowledge for increased sustainability.

In the South African context organisations define themselves as registered NPOs by undergoing the process of being registered in terms of the *Nonprofit Organisations Act 71 of 1997*. Through such registration, they qualify to access the potentially huge financial benefits to be gained through a number of other acts (Swilling & Russell 2002:78). The term non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is often used interchangeably with NPOs. Nzimakwe (2008:90) refers to NGOs as private, self-governing, non-profit organisations promoting people-centred development, which are responsible to their donors and to the communities they serve. However, by being registered as an NPO, these organisations also become accountable to government and end up in the “cut-and-thrust of contemporary state NPO dynamics – both amicable and conflictual – as a dialogical struggle to define and give substantive content to the public space that has been created by law for managing state-civil society relations” (Swilling & Russell 2002:77). The question of finance for sustainability is relevant and the chapter by *Willem Ellis and Deidré van Rooyen* looks at the concept of social entrepreneurship. They report the findings of their study, highlighting the challenges facing the third sector in its endeavour to adopt a social entrepreneurial approach.

Amidst the highly contentious positioning of NPOs and the dire need for the public and private sectors to take NPOs more seriously, Habib (2002:x) calls upon higher education institutions to introduce Honours or Master’s teaching programmes designed primarily for the non-profit sector. More than a decade after the publication of the book by Swilling and Russell no such programme has yet been introduced in the South African HE context. This is in stark contrast to what has been happening elsewhere, especially in and from the United States, where the rise of the third sector can be illustrated by the “rapid global expansion” in academic centres and graduate degree programmes dedicated to non-profit management, voluntary organisations and philanthropy (Taylor 2010:1). One of the ideals behind the publication of this book is that it will become a useful resource in future post-school education and training programmes aimed at building capacity for the sector and stimulating further research about the intersection between higher education and NPOs in particular. Most of the other chapters in the book were produced in collaboration with or by persons from the NPO sector. We believe that valuable examples and principles of how knowledge becomes an enabler, specifically through engagement between the

HE and the third sector, can be deduced from each of the chapters. Simultaneously, the reader will learn more about the inner workings of both HEIs and NPOs.

4. THE COMMON PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES AIMED AT KNOWLEDGE ENABLEMENT

To provide a unifying focus for community engagement, we propose that we need to acknowledge and explore the common mission of such projects. One of the ways to build in reciprocity and move away from discrepancies of power is to act as partners with a common mission. Carlisle (2004:559) confirms the importance of developing common meaning as a way to address differences in various sites in a system. A common vision provides the fruitful focus for the interaction between partners in a complex system. The motive of an innovative project is change towards a desired goal (Brown 2010:1212). Edwards (2011:33, 37) refers to this as “common knowledge” or “common understandings”, and she suggests that this is an emotional driver of activity which is identified by asking participants what matters to them. She also refers to the long-term purpose of practices (Edwards 2011:35). Engeström (2001:134) refers to the common mission as the “object of activity” in his proposed activity theory, which is the objective or motive for the activity in the system.

An engaged university can contribute to change in society through knowledge enablement. Contemplating what the role of knowledge in enablement could entail requires a critical consideration of knowledge. Both the third sector and the HEI partners need knowledge and novel ideas to solve complex problems in society and enable people, institutions and communities to change conditions in their everyday world (Filstad & McManus 2011:764). Thus the problem solving process implies change and the product of problem solving usually results in change. Change is also fundamental to innovation (Brown 2010:1212). Problem solving is found at the heart of the research process and the outcome of research is then the creation of new knowledge, as novel ways to solve the problem are unearthed. One such example of innovation is found in *Elene Cloete's* chapter where she used social network analysis to shed an alternative light on the relations and degree of interaction between third sector and higher education institutions. In so doing she contributed to gaining a deeper understanding of partnership dynamics.

It is vital that the research needs to be appropriate for the context and include direct social change (Chen, Jones & Gelberg 2006:118). Furthermore, it should involve both the community and academic partners. The development of academics, students and external participants as knowledge brokers is important. Some of them would occupy positions of dual membership of the systems. Others will have to

possess and further develop the ability to practise “compassionate imagining” (Waghid 2009:77-80) through regular interaction with participants of the ‘other’ system. This requires that they go on to imagine how the knowledges can be incorporated into the curriculum and in working towards the achievement of goals in the third sector and the communities that they interact with. How complex the role of a boundary (knowledge) worker can be, is highlighted by McMillan (2009), who pleads for more understanding of and support for knowledge brokers from either side as they “need to have the confidence and courage to transgress into the knowledge of the other community, and to manage this transgression” (McMillan 2009:249). They clearly have a better chance of success if there is an enabling environment with others supporting their efforts. Brew (2003:180) contends that an integrated view of academic work as “inclusive knowledge-building communities of practice” is relevant. This type of research focuses on the involvement of all partners in the creation of knowledge to solve relevant problems (Wright *et al* 2011:83). The community-engaged scholarship (CES) or community-based research (CBR) approach to inquiry has been proposed by authors such as Freire and Fals-Borda (Minkler 2004:686) to “counter the ‘colonizing’ nature of research” often found in community education attempts. Petersen and Osman (2013:17) agree and refer to the traditional hegemonic position and dominance of academic knowledge; they note that the university not only “defines and constructs knowledge” but should also engage with “knowledge created in other sites of practice”. In addition, Hall (2009:5) suggests that engagement pushes at the “boundaries of conventional knowledge-making”.

Concepts commonly referred to in community engagement and CBR (such as participation, enablement, collaboration and empowerment) often vary across contexts and sites and depend on the positions and relationships within the sites and systems. They are thus likely to be relative and vary as the conditions change considerably from one context to another (McKenna & Main 2013:114). The nature of the project is that new knowledge to deal with a [community] issue is mutually constructed from both community [third sector] and academic components. Furthermore, there is an impact on the academic curriculum as it is re-examined in the light of [community-based] learning (Garraway 2009:244 – ‘work’ substituted with ‘community’).

Chen *et al* (2006:119) note the implications of CBR methods for design and practice, and ultimately ethics, and Minkler (2004:686) warns that in using a community-based approach to research it is important to guard against research which is “community placed” and not “community based”. This difference has an

influence on the attitude of the role-players, and if participation and ownership are not hallmarks of interaction, then the sustainability of these projects is questionable. The complexities of ethical considerations and the implications for practice are the main focus of the chapter by *Sunette Pienaar*. She notes that partners in community projects are often unprepared to deal with the challenges presented by collaboration and partnerships. She proposes an ethics framework, which might contribute to enabling participatory knowledge sharing among different sectors. In what could be regarded as an extension of this ethics framework, *Karen Venter and Ielse Seale* offer a framework of principles to guide the reciprocal knowledge sharing process among service learning participants. The focus of their empirical study was on establishing what service learning champions from the various sectors regarded as prerequisites for truly enabling knowledge sharing.

In discovering a common focus, the current debate around survival in the global world has relevance to all systems in society. In this regard *James et al* (2013:246) refer to the importance of knowledge, innovation and creativity for survival. The link to knowledge for enablement thus applies. Creativity in this context refers to the development of novel and useful ideas (*Liu, Liao & Lio* 2012:1188) and is the expected outcome of formal research qualifications (*Frick* 2012:125). Thus creative problem solving for change through research processes could be the basis for survival and optimal development when referring to the community engagement projects in higher education. *Chen et al* (2006:120) argue that usefulness is an important notion when discussing reciprocity between the third sector and higher education. One such example of usefulness is reported in *Elanie Myburgh's* chapter on harnessing technology in the development of a knowledge sharing and communication platform for partners across sectors. The platform, in the form of a learning management system, provided an inclusive environment for all participants and the participants reported feeling more empowered because they had a more equal voice and were able to share their views openly with all participants. *James et al* (2013:249) refer to the innovation which is characterised by knowledge interactions. Knowledge for enablement therefore needs to contribute to useful, creative and novel solutions to complex problems in communities. If all partners are united in the quest for creative solutions, and not merely driven by the imperatives and directives through policy documents and mission statements, then intrinsic engagement will provide fruitful focus in the knowledge as enablement project.

5. THE PROCESS TO FACILITATE CHANGE FOR KNOWLEDGE ENABLEMENT

Facilitation of the process of knowledge enablement may be needed when working with higher education–third sector partnerships. The type and level of change is important as it influences the sustainability and level of engagement in the endeavour. The importance of facilitation is especially pertinent in the complex, fast-changing environment in which universities and communities are based. McWilliam (2013:xvii) asserts that the “habits of deep and sustained engagement in learning (and unlearning)” are vital for participation in this complex environment. For sustained development in this context Guile and Griffiths (2001) state that greater depth of learning, rather than just the specifics of practice or superficial solving of problems, may be needed. This process leads to change or transformation (Mezirow 2000:131). Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning theory suggests that learning is a process whereby knowledge is created from a combination of grasping and transforming experiences. Change is thus integral to the process.

There is, however, often an aversion to change and challenge, as contended by McWilliam (2013:vii). In addition, Maskell and Malmberg (2007:606) suggest that the lack of unlearning is often linked to resistance to change. Sometimes change needs to be mediated when there is resistance, so as to break through the established routines where individuals, institutions and communities at times prefer to operate. Resistance may be situated in any of the sites within a system, like the individuals in third sector sites or individuals in the university systems. Mediation was the basis of the learning theory of Vygotsky (1978), who argued that learning takes place between the subject and object via a mediated act (Engeström 2001:134). In the South African service learning context, McMillan (2009:50) refers to the agents who help participants by making new connections across activity systems and in so doing facilitate new learning. McMillan (2009:57) highlights the importance of a shift from individualised practice to social practices between constituencies. Her view echoes that of Bartlett and Elliott (2008:66), who suggest that social engagements often engender contexts appropriate for valuable change and learning. Therefore, in the mediation process for change, learning becomes relevant whether it be learning or unlearning (McWilliam 2013:xviii), affecting both the third sector and higher education. In noting the importance of holding on to a common meaning when differences arise, Carlisle (2004:559) states that developing this common meaning is a “process of negotiating and defining common interests”.

Cognisance of the relationships where reciprocal benefits are valued is pivotal to sustainable knowledge enablement. Filtstad and McManus (2011:767) confirm the relational dimension of change in the learning process. Edwards (2011:33)

gives an interesting perspective in her research, and she refers to professionals in a collaborative work setting where both parties recognise distinctive expertise that varies across settings and contexts. These partners bring relational expertise together with their individual expertise, which enriches and enhances responses in an intervention. In addition she notes that relational agency is the capacity to work with others to “strengthen purposeful responses to complex problems” (Edwards 2011:34). *Pulane Pitso’s* chapter emphasises the value of authentic dialogue in collaboration efforts and demonstrates how she included the voice of the third sector in the context of the quest for improved service delivery in South Africa.

The mutual learning perspective is reflected in the work of James *et al* (2013:250), who state that learning is interactive and territorially embedded; it is a collective process at the individual and institutional levels and is not only an acquisition of specific technical (component) knowledge but also of routines and informal institutions (what they refer to as “architectural knowledge”). In reference to boundary work in an activity system, Edwards (2011:35) argues that boundaries are social constructions where “practices are alerted to changes which may affect actors’ relative power, their resources and their identities”. Edwards (in press) refers to the needs for “sensitive reciprocity” in facilitating learning. This not only illustrates the complexity of learning in such an environment but also reflects the “both-ways” process in community engagement.

Creativity may be required to solve complex problems and may be the outcome of organising knowledge in new ways. Hall (2009:11) calls this a “burst of creativity”. Often, however, tensions may be present among team members in a creative endeavour (Perez-Freije & Enkel 2007:11). Participants from both systems perform ‘boundary work’ that enables the transfer of knowledge across boundaries and its successful hybridisation. Hybrid forums, committees or discussion/working groups could be formed in which heterogeneous participants come together to work on the development of community-third sector-academic hybrid knowledge constructs (Garraway 2009:241-245). It is crucial to take into account their relative positions of power (Petersen & Osman 2013:12-13, 22). Dysthe, Samara and Westerheim (2006:303) state that dialogism, which sees knowledge as a process and product of interaction, is concerned with developing and transforming understanding through tensions between multiple perspectives and opinions. In this context then, meaning is created in interactions amongst dialogue partners. Filstad and McManus (2011:767) propose that in a complex system, the interconnected parts support and produce each other. Varied individual responses to collective challenges and opportunities therefore result in a continuous process of selection and interactive

knowledge creation (Maskell & Malmberg 2007:609). McMillan (2009:57) contends that different knowledges, voices and experiences need to be seen as central to engagement practices. As has been stated above, Edwards (2011:34) refers to relational agency when working together to solve complex problems. She mentions the constant dynamic of experts by recognising the motives and values that others bring to the endeavour and interpreting them in the current context. Furthermore, there is a need to constantly align the individual responses to the new interpretation of others who are working towards the common purpose. In *Patrick and Burneline Kaars's* chapter they report on an organisation which is based in a typical South African community that is plagued with societal ills. This registered NPO, of which Patrick is the chief executive officer, renders social services and developmental interventions to the community. These authors report on perspectives from the third sector and explore how to share and apply practical and theoretical knowledge and turn it into real change in communities.

6. CONCLUSION

A radical shift in attitude and practice may be required of academics in the partnership when conducting community-based research and practising community-engaged scholarship. Community-based participatory approaches break down the barriers between the researcher and the community (Minkler 2004:686) as both partners hold *quid pro quo* power relations in the process of useful relevant knowledge creation. Worthen (2011:540) contends that learning happens when, due to the dialectical relationships between the parts, the power balances change and new potential for action emerges and is mobilised. Enablement is thus needed at all sites and at all layers of the system, and therefore mediation in this process may be necessary. If the focus can also be placed on the outcome of knowledge production or the “burst of creativity” referred to by Hall (2009:11), it will serve as a motivational pull in navigating the tensions in the process of knowledge creation for enablement.

We have argued that by focusing on the common mission through sensitive identification of what matters to each partner, positive energy could provide the fruitful focus for community engagement projects. This positive energy is located in the unintended side effects of information exchange and the knowledge spillovers or “local buzz”, a term coined by Storper and Venerables (Maskell & Malmberg 2007:607). It is our desire that the chapters in this book will contribute to understanding knowledge enablement in engagement projects and generate this positive energy to help us navigate the higher education community engagement project – not as a compliance with policy directives or moral imperatives (although

this has its place), but out of a positive drive for reciprocally beneficial knowledge as an enablement project which is sustainable and brings about constructive change in society.

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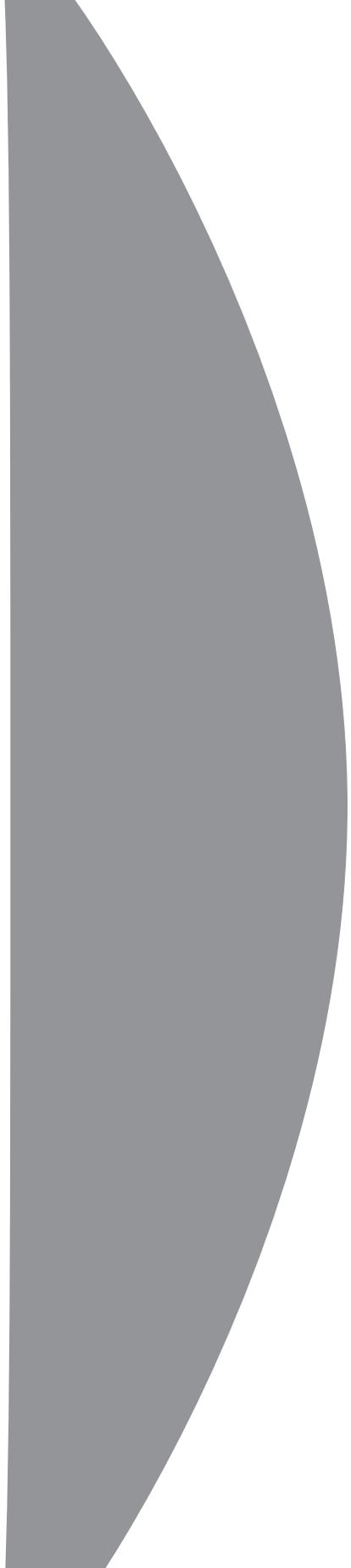
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PART ONE

CONCEPTUAL POSITIONS

1

ENABLEMENT – A FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SERVICE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Elize Janse van Rensburg

ABSTRACT

Service learning as a form of scholarly community engagement should be aimed at mutual enablement between higher education institutions and communities. Yet service learning has been criticised for perpetuating power imbalances and for not advancing true enablement in communities. This study sought to describe perceptions of community representatives regarding enablement in occupational therapy service learning engagements, and to identify factors that facilitated or acted as barriers to enablement. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven participants from service learning partnerships at a South African university. Participants' perceptions reported on were based on six enablement foundations from literature, namely 1) choice, risk and responsibility, 2) client participation, 3) vision of possibilities, 4) change, 5) justice and 6) power sharing. Factors perceived either as barriers or as facilitators to enablement were identified. Based on the results, principles of enablement were formulated for each of the enablement foundations. The identified principles presented in this chapter serve as guidelines for enablement in communities, and the power of reciprocal knowledge sharing is emphasised as a mutually enabling endeavour.

1. INTRODUCTION

I see this project as not successful ... I think it was impulsive ... Chased in, chased out. Here is this, here is that ... I think the tension that existed and the negativity was mutual ...

Experiences such as the one quoted above necessitates critical, collaborative investigation into what is truly happening at community level when higher education partners with the third sector, including non-profit organisations (NPOs) and the communities that they serve. Higher education institutions (HEIs) were given the formal mandate to engage with communities more than a decade ago in the National Plan on Higher Education, where community engagement was identified as one of the three core functions of higher education (RSA DHET 2013:39). Service learning (SL) has become one of the preferred forms of scholarly community engagement in South African HEIs (Hatcher & Erasmus 2008:57). Projects such as the Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships (CHESP) initiative were aimed at supporting and equipping institutions and staff with knowledge on best practices when partnering with communities (specifically through SL), presumably to ensure, among other things, that engagements with communities are enabling in nature (Petersen & Osman 2013:5). Yet, despite these efforts and numerous papers written on the issue, some communities still experience SL engagements with HEIs as ‘unsuccessful’, ‘impulsive’ and ‘negative’ – all but enabling. This state of affairs emphasises the importance of critical investigation into SL engagements in order to learn from mistakes and to work toward mutually enabling engagements.

In this chapter the concept of enablement is first explored, whereafter I report on the findings of a study on enablement in occupational therapy service learning engagements. The chapter is concluded with principles for enablement that were derived from the results of the study.

2. THE CONCEPT OF ENABLEMENT

In this review of the literature related to enablement I attempt to define and argue the importance of enablement in the context of community engagement. Enablement foundations are presented from the literature and discussed as a framework for presenting the results later in this chapter.

2.1 Enablement at the heart of service learning as community engagement

Community engagement, and particularly SL as a preferred form of scholarly community engagement, as stated above, was mandated primarily for its potential

to effect social transformation through emphasis on social justice and community development in a South African society characterised by inequality and division (RSA DHET 2013:39; Mitchell & Rautenbach 2005:101). Addressing pressing societal difficulties such as poverty, ill health and violence requires the promotion of agency – “the capacity of people to order their world, the capacity to create, reproduce, change, and live according to their own meaning systems, to have powers to define themselves as opposed to being defined by others” (Bhattacharyya 2004:12). I will subsequently argue that the promotion of agency occurs through a process of enablement.

The verb ‘to enable’ is defined as follows: “to give (someone) the authority or means to do something; make it possible for” (Oxford Dictionary). Enablement encompasses “facilitating, guiding, coaching, educating, prompting, listening, reflecting, encouraging, or otherwise collaborating with people so that individuals, groups, agencies or organizations have the means and opportunity to participate in shaping their own lives” (Townsend *et al* 2013:99). Enablement is collaborative, reciprocal and focused on mutual transformation – making positive change possible and promoting agency for all stakeholders. The reference to *all stakeholders* is important, especially in the context of SL; agency should be promoted in communities as well as in students when striving toward cultivating a sense of civic responsibility and sensitivity for social justice.

Perhaps the significance of the use of the word ‘enablement’ is best illustrated in contrast with another term frequently used in the context of community development, engagement and SL. ‘Empowerment’ refers to the “devolution of power” from one entity to the other (Urbanowski 2005:303); implicitly communicating a sense that power is transferred from the more powerful (HEI) to the less powerful (community). Discourse reinforcing any notion of imbalance in power is discouraged in the dialogue on community engagement (Butin 2003:1678, Hall 2010:26), possibly because experience has taught that power is not situated only with one entity. Rather, mutual appreciation of the assets of all stakeholders has proven to contribute to more sustainable, more transformative endeavours (Van der Merwe & Albertyn 2010:151-152). Therefore, enablement as a participatory process toward the promotion of agency and social transformation (for all stakeholders) should be at the heart of truly reciprocal SL engagements (Townsend & Wilcock 2004:77).

2.2 Enablement foundations

Emanating from the field of occupational therapy (OT), Townsend *et al* (2013) identify six ‘enablement foundations’ – these are core features of mutually enabling

endeavours. While discussed in the disciplinary context of enabling occupation in occupational therapy, these enablement foundations arguably have a wider application value, also in the context of SL. The six enablement foundations are illustrated in Figure 1.1. A discussion on each of the foundations will follow, with an attempt to apply these foundations to the wider context of SL.

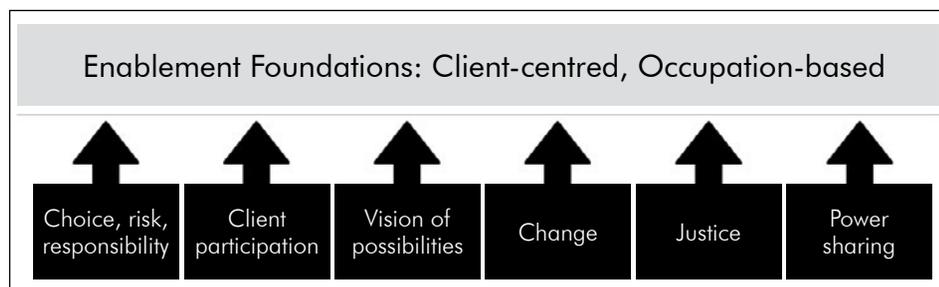


FIGURE 1.1 Enablement foundations [Reproduced with permission from the publisher. Source: Townsend *et al* 2013:101]

2.2.1 *Choice, risk, responsibility*

Careful negotiation of choice, risk and responsibility in an SL partnership is the first step to ensuring a mutually enabling endeavour for all stakeholders. The importance of community choice when negotiating the nature of collaborative activities is reiterated by authors such as Hall (2010:25) and Bender, Daniels, Lazarus, Naudé and Sattar (2006:96). Also, careful consideration of risks and clarification of responsibilities of stakeholders in advance mitigates potential misunderstandings and negative outcomes from the onset (Bender *et al* 2006:114). While this 'enablement foundation' does not constitute enablement in and of itself, it is a prerequisite for a mutually enabling partnership.

2.2.2 *Client participation*

Closely related to the notion of choice, client participation (which in the SL context is probably more aptly named 'community participation') is of utmost importance for enablement. Hall (2010:24) criticises the lack of community participation still present in some instances when quoting Kaniki's criticism of universities entering into communities without invitation, and 'helping' with what the universities believe is needed. An enabling engagement with the community requires active participation from all stakeholders (Du Plessis & Van Dyk 2013:82). Not only does active participation in decision making and problem solving enhance stakeholders' sense of ownership in the partnership, but it also "exerts individual human agency" (Townsend *et al* 2013:101).

Facilitating the necessary knowledge and skills for participation in decision making and problem solving should therefore be a priority in mutually enabling engagements. Collaboration based on mutual respect and open, honest communication ensures the best possible environment for community participation.

2.2.3 Vision of possibilities

A vision of possibilities as a foundation for enablement refers broadly to the mutual cultivation of hope, readiness and confidence through the nature of the SL partnership. In such partnerships, a vision of possibilities may spark ideas and dreams of things previously unimagined, especially as the partnership grows and contributes to the attainment of goals. It requires of partners to approach one another with optimism and positive regard, believing in the potential of the other to transform and grow. A vision of possibilities fuels the momentum for mutual enablement and often provides the impetus for renewed choices (for things not previously thought possible), a willingness to take risks or greater responsibility and enhanced participation (Townsend *et al* 2013:102-103).

2.2.4 Change

Service learning partnerships are built on the assumption that change, or transformation, is necessary and mutually desirable. Moreover, mutual commitment to change is stated as a 'key indicator' for the formation of successful – that is, enabling – SL partnerships (Bender *et al* 2006:95). What is important as far as enablement is concerned, is that change should be negotiated mutually based on a vision of possibility (Townsend *et al* 2013:104). Sincere belief in people's ability to be active agents of change is necessary to promote agency.

2.2.5 Justice

For SL endeavours to be enabling there needs to be sincere concern for issues of social (and individual) justice. Critical engagement with encountered injustices, and proactive questioning of assumptions that may limit agency, promote justice and enablement (Townsend *et al* 2013:10). Opportunities for critical engagement with issues of justice arise when working with people and communities who are, or have been, marginalised or otherwise 'disabled', whether by official structures or personal prejudice. Additionally, beyond engaging with these issues, active promotion of a more just society will not only be enabling but will also contribute to the intended purpose of community engagement to advance responsible citizenship and social justice (Petersen & Osman 2013:2).

2.2.6 Power sharing

Finally, power sharing as an enablement foundation has been one of the key characteristics of enablement that prompted the choice of the concept as a central theme in this publication. Much of the criticism against SL and community engagement, and frequently the reason for experiences of failure in such engagements, has related to the situation of power with one of the parties, instead of shared power (Butin 2010:7). As mentioned earlier, for engagement to be mutually enabling, inequality in power needs to be critically appraised and, as Mitchell (2008:56) argues, redistributed through the SL engagement. Appreciation of the different forms and application of knowledge assets offered by all stakeholders is vital in catalysing power sharing towards enablement (Du Plessis & Van Dyk 2013:82).

3. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ENABLEMENT IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICE LEARNING ENGAGEMENTS

SL has been used as an educational approach to allow OT students to integrate theory and practice in various fields. Teaching community-based practice (knowledge, skills and attitudes), and preparation for the community service year, appear to be some of the most prevalent student outcomes aimed for with OT SL in South African higher education institutions (Duncan & Alsop 2006:9, 16; Pretorius & Bester 2009:260-261). Service goals are developed in collaboration with communities, and are consequently unique to each community. While a balance is sought between benefit to the student and benefit to the community, literature still yields apparently less evidence for community experiences and outcomes than for that of students (Butin 2010:7). Consequently, the aim of this study was to describe the perceptions of community representatives regarding enablement in OT SL engagements, with a secondary aim of identifying factors that either facilitated or acted as barriers to enablement.

An interpretive, constructivist paradigm was chosen to frame the study (Denzin & Lincoln 2008:31; Creswell 2009:8). The constructivist paradigm emphasises the socially constructed, transactional nature of knowledge generation, resulting in findings which are a construction of interactions between the researcher and participant as interpreted by the researcher. A descriptive qualitative study design was employed. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted with seven community representatives from SL partnerships between an OT department and five community partners (one school and four NPOs). All of these partnerships had been established for at least two years at the time of the research. Community

representatives had to be members of the community and had to be involved with SL for at least two years in a supervisory capacity. Voluntary informed consent was given by participants prior to the study. Community visits were carried out before conducting the interviews to establish some trust between the researcher and the participants, thus contributing to validity of the data. Interviews took place on site in the community and were recorded using digital voice recorders. Interviews were transcribed, and the researcher and an independent coder did content analysis using a combination of *a priori* (deductive) coding based on the enablement foundations identified by Townsend *et al* (2013) and interpretive (inductive) coding as the data was further explored (Waring & Wainwright 2008:86).

Findings regarding community representatives' perceptions about enablement in OT SL engagements are organised according to the *a priori* codes based on the enablement foundations, and facilitators and barriers to enablement are mentioned throughout the discussion of these foundations. In order to protect the identity of students, other persons, institutions and communities involved in this study, reference to specific persons or places in verbatim quotes were replaced with [STUDENT], [PERSON] or [INSTITUTION] (or other relevant descriptions) throughout the presentation of the findings.

3.1 Choice, risk, responsibility

Findings related to the first enablement foundation are discussed under three separate headings, namely Choice: Collaborative decision making versus imposing decisions; Risk: Perceived risks versus reward; and Responsibility: Role clarification and relationships of trust.

3.1.1 Choice: Collaborative decision making versus imposing decisions

Issues of choice were voiced in the context of decision making and goal setting. Participants (indicated with a *P*) perceived collaborative decision making as a key facilitator of choice as an enablement foundation. Attention was drawn to the importance of processes of collaboration between students, supervisors and community representatives as noted in the following comment:

And then [STUDENT] and I and the principal ... discussed and worked out a programme together. I said what the needs of the school were, [PERSON] discussed it and the occupational therapists said what they can do ... and I think that was the success of the whole thing. Because there was cooperation and everybody was enthusiastic and had input (P2).

The value of collaborative decision making throughout all phases of the SL process is reiterated by Du Plessis and Van Dyk (2013:70). Collaborative decision making

enables SL partners to integrate goals which, according to Bringle, Clayton and Price (2009:4) denotes closeness, equity and integrity toward a transformational relationship within the partnership.

In contrast, where decision making was perceived as being imposed on the community rather than done in a collaborative way, the SL engagement was experienced as negative – perhaps even disabling:

So I think the tension that existed and the negativity was mutual. As a result of not having a proper structure and sitting down to talk like [PERSON] planned it this time (P6).

Imposing decisions has the potential to limit agency in partners. One participant emphasised that she needs to be aware of what goes on, but accepted just being informed and not contributing to decision making – even defending such a state of affairs:

I don't interfere. I will just give some advice ... (P7).

In this partnership it appears that on the part of the students and staff from the HEI, there was a lack of appreciation of the value of the knowledge the community representative has to share. This attitude, coupled with imposing rather than collaborative decision making, served as a barrier to enablement.

3.1.2 Risk: Perceived risks versus reward

Participants in the study perceived risks in SL engagements to relate to two primary issues, namely student preparedness and personal exposure (of the self, the institution or the community). For example, one participant expressed concern over students' preparedness to work with residents in a residential care facility, and expressed her concern that students experienced the interaction with her negatively (P6).

Mitigation of these risks could be sought through the application of other enablement foundations discussed in this chapter. For example, community participation through open, clear communication would lessen the perception of risk in terms of student competence if community partners are aware of exactly how students are prepared and supported to ensure that the service they deliver is of an acceptable standard. Continuous communication would also curb negativity if this develops, if it is addressed immediately and not left unresolved. However, no SL partnership is ever without risks – for all stakeholders involved. What seemed to facilitate enablement, however, was when the 'reward' gained through the partnership was perceived to outweigh the risk:

Because we realised that the risks we carry are minimal because it will deliver positive contributions to the community (P3).

Townsend *et al* (2013:101) urge that, in the context of occupational therapy, the objective is to enable “safe engagement in just-right risk-taking” which resonates with the perceived ‘just-right risk-reward ratio’ expressed by the participant quoted above.

3.1.3 Responsibility: Role clarification and relationships of trust

“Clear roles and specific responsibilities are among the hallmarks of a successful SL experience for the different partners involved” (Bender *et al* 2006:100). The importance of this principle of successful SL engagements was confirmed by participants, who voiced their frustration and perceptions of failure within SL engagements where roles and responsibilities were not clarified:

I just wondered ... the seeds are planted but what now? Will they take out the weeds – the students? Or is it expected of [PERSON]? For me there was a bit of a grey area. Was it done for [INSTITUTION] and now it is our project ... or should they follow up? (P6).

In a study conducted at another HEI in South Africa, Alperstein (2007:65) similarly found that there was a need for more clearly defined roles and expectations, since uncertainty regarding these aspects could act as a barrier to enablement. Indeed, where clarification of roles and responsibilities did occur in this study, it was perceived to facilitate success within the SL engagement:

So I think we were all informed about how it would work. And I think the students knew exactly what they came to do ... I don't think there was any confusion (P1).

Moreover, where responsibilities were clarified and borne reciprocally within a relationship of trust, community representatives felt confident to carry their responsibilities within the partnership:

So I really carried the responsibility with confidence because I knew the supervisors of the students, the trust with which we started when we established the relationship ... I knew that the supervisors would not drop me ... So the two-way trust relationship that was built between the students, myself, the supervisors, myself, the teachers and myself, the Governing Body and myself, it was one that I always carried with great confidence. I knew we worked in a team (P3).

The enablement foundation of choice, risk and responsibility rests heavily on the SL principles of reciprocity and mutuality, which necessitate collaboration and clear communication between all stakeholders in the partnership. Participants’ perceptions regarding communication, and facilitators and barriers to communication are explored in more detail below.

3.2 Community participation

Results pertaining to community participation yielded two distinct categories, namely Participation: Inclusion versus exclusion, and Communication.

3.2.1 Participation: Inclusion versus exclusion

Throughout the process of data collection, participants either voiced the value of inclusion in all the different phases of the SL engagement, or expressed dissatisfaction with being excluded from participation in certain aspects or activities as shown in the following quotations:

And I was not involved. I just heard coincidentally that one of the residents would be at the tea. I asked that day, you know, where does who fit in? I did not expect ... to an extent I did expect to be invited to the tea, but on the other hand I just wanted to be informed (P6).

Because the staff ... you have to talk to them. You have to sell this thing to them. You have to say why you want to do it, what the outcome will be ... unfortunately I was not involved there. I could not inform my staff (P7).

Exclusion as it was experienced by these two participants raises serious questions on issues of *justice* within these partnerships, which will be addressed later in this chapter. Marginalisation of community representatives (literally being moved aside or to the margins of the partnership) by HEI staff and/or students stands in direct opposition to enablement foundations of participation and justice, as well as to principles of partnership formation such as recognition and validation of partners, ensuring equity and reciprocity and ensuring diversity (Bender *et al* 2006:100-103).

However, the desire to be involved and the value of inclusion of various stakeholders, including community representatives themselves and other staff within the organisations, was also expressed:

Yes, we want to contribute to the success of the project ... we must cooperate. I am more than willing to cooperate (P6).

... if the students present the chair exercises alone, there are four or five people. And if we include one of the nurses there are twenty-five, thirty people ... It makes a difference (P7).

Inclusion of all stakeholders in a just and reciprocal way necessitates open, honest communication. Hence communication was identified as a distinct category related to community participation as an enablement foundation.

3.2.2 Communication

The polarities noted in most of the categories already discussed also marked the category of communication. While some participants experienced the value of

clear communication and reiterated the importance thereof, others experienced a lack of open, honest communication as a significant barrier in the SL engagement, particularly as it pertains to community participation in the partnership. The following quotations highlight this polarity as perceived by two different participants, while both reiterate the importance of communication:

... the university ... has always come to us and asked: how can we help you? ... So for future partnerships, the continuation of the partnership; if we take hands, communicate clearly with one another, are honest with each other and know what and how long and toward what we are working (P3).

So, I think more frequent feedback ... there is just uncertainty about who must do what ... There was a bit of a communication gap for me (P6).

Participants emphasised three characteristics of communication which they experienced as crucial to enablement, either through the presence or the absence thereof. These were frequent, formalised and face-to-face communication.

- **Frequent communication**

Frequent communication allows for multiple opportunities to share information, clarify roles and tasks, and raise issues of concern. When communication is continuous, open and honest, risks such as those related to personal and institutional exposure are minimised, and relationships can be strengthened. Frequent communication was identified as a key facilitator of enablement (P2), while the absence thereof poses a threat to the process of enablement.

- **Formalised communication structure**

Communication between SL stakeholders can be either informal or formal (Bender et al 2006:98). However, participants in this study specifically emphasised the necessity of formalised communication structures as a facilitator for enablement. For example:

I think we should meet on a structured basis, say on a Monday at eight ... I think the more communication there is, the more successful you will be. The fewer frustrations you will cause (P7).

The advantage of a formalised communication structure is that all stakeholders, regardless of their perceived power, are (or at least should be) included in the communication process. This facilitates better transparency in the relationship, which in turn is beneficial to the development and maintenance of the partnership.

- **Face-to-face communication**

Finally, communication should happen face-to-face, preferably in the community, as expressed by this participant:

... good communication between the two partners is very important. Physical contact. Meaning that it should not only take place over the phone but that the parties should get to know one another and understand what the intent is with the other (P2).

Face-to-face communication shows commitment to the partnership (Bender *et al* 2006:99) and as such contributes to building a relationship of trust (Du Plessis & Van Dyk 2013:76). This is especially relevant to the person or persons who take primary responsibility for the maintenance of the partnership, although face-to-face communication will benefit all stakeholders.

Communication which is frequent, formal and face-to-face facilitates enablement not only through enhancing client participation, but also through catalysing all of the other enablement foundations.

3.3 Vision of possibilities

Findings in this study yielded two categories related to a vision of possibilities, namely enhanced awareness and inspiring confidence.

3.3.1 Enhanced awareness

Participants perceived that it was helpful if students became aware of things they as community representatives had previously been unaware of. This enhanced awareness allowed for goals not previously thought of to be incorporated into the partnership (P1), sparking a vision of possibility:

I think the very important thing working with the university, it was a light to us. We were not aware. But it was really a light for us (P4).

Alperstein (2007:62) similarly found that students “added fresh views and identified shortcomings” in the community through SL engagements by virtue of being ‘outsiders’. She reiterated, however, that it was the community’s prerogative to implement students’ recommendations. This principle may curtail Kaniki’s concern (Hall 2010:24) referred to earlier in the chapter that universities offer “help on issues that the universities believe they need, but of which they may not be aware”, while leaving room for enhanced awareness as a mechanism toward a vision of possibilities.

3.3.2 Inspiring confidence

While using different words to describe their perceptions, participants voiced an intangible ‘something’ that resulted from the SL partnership. One participant described it as something that is missed when it is not there, a form of reassurance

to staff of the organisation (P3). Another perception of inspiring confidence involved community members (learners of the school) themselves:

... when you came here – it gave those children so much confidence. The children believed that they can do anything. So with our performance at the eisteddfod in [PLACE], many of our children received very good symbols (P3).

It appears that the presence of students in the community fulfilled a supportive and inspirational role that resulted in enhanced confidence among community members. However, this appears to be an unintended outcome that would require further investigation in order to understand the facilitating or inhibiting role that it could play in enablement.

3.4 Change

When participants were prompted to voice perceptions of change within the SL engagement, two primary categories arose, namely factors that had an impact (positive or adverse) on change, and tangible change experienced.

3.4.1 Factors that influence change

The data analysis revealed that frequency of student presence, continuity of services and repetition in order to contribute to sustainability are three related factors that have an impact on change, while tangible products, role-players' attitudes and an appointed occupational therapist were also identified as factors that influence change. In view of their similarity in nature, the first three factors are discussed together while the other three factors are discussed separately in the sections below.

- Frequency, continuity and repetition for sustainability

Bringle *et al* (2009:4) state frequency of interaction as one of three prerequisites for 'closeness' of a partnership. According to these authors, closeness in a partnership can range from unaware to transformative, based on the frequency of interaction, among other things. Participants in this study perceived their SL engagements to be lacking in frequency, and they expressed the desire for more frequent interaction (regardless of whether the engagement was perceived to be successful or unsuccessful) (P2, P6). Alperstein's study (2007:62) yielded similar results in that the time allocated to SL was experienced as a challenge, specifically pertaining to time for establishing trust relationships between staff and students.

In addition to a need for increased frequency of interaction, participants in this study perceived a lack of continuity and follow-up of student involvement as a barrier to enablement. It was said that things "came to a standstill" (P7), that there was "no

time for follow-up” (P1) and that the work done by the students “goes to waste” (P2) if they are not frequently present in the community.

The perception that work that was done goes to waste begs the questions “Is it worth it?” and “Is it just?”. If communities do not benefit from intermittent engagements, it would require HEIs to revisit the design of the SL programme in order to ensure that resources invested in SL engagements yield positive returns for all stakeholders, and to ensure that communities are not exploited for the sake of student education.

Finally, repetition for sustainability was identified as a prominent facilitator for enablement. While communities generally want to take ownership of the ‘products’ of SL engagements, the importance of proper enablement of communities before withdrawing was stressed:

... you can't just come for a week and put something down and walk away. You must repeatedly ... until it is consolidated in the community itself (P2).

Ownership and sustainability do not happen overnight. HEIs should be prepared to commit to long-term relationships that provide opportunities for frequent interaction, continuity and repetition. With due acknowledgement of logistical challenges of student academic programmes, the results emphasise that it is imperative to consider frequency, continuity and repetition *before* partnering with communities.

- **Tangible products**

And you left something behind ... like the pictures – each teacher received a healthy balanced lifestyle poster – and we can ... because I give LO [Life Orientation] I refer back to it. And then we remember (P2).

Especially in the absence of frequency of interaction, continuity and repetition, tangible products left in the community that relate to the service performed by students appeared to be a facilitator for more sustained change, specifically if community members were enabled to utilise these products. It therefore appears to be essential to enablement to leave some tangible, useful products in the community that support the change that was aimed for in the partnership.

- **Role-players’ attitudes**

Participants discussed how they perceived the influence of the attitudes of different role-players on change within the community:

... positive attitudes to make a positive contribution and a difference in the community. You know, you can't be fooled by what happens. Because you see there is improvement and upliftment (P2).

The attitudes of students and lecturers in particular were indicated as influences on change. Positive attitudes, dedication and enthusiasm seemed to have a positive impact on change as an enablement foundation.

- **Appointed occupational therapist**

Only two of the sites where the research was performed had access to an occupational therapist appointed by the community (NPO) who coordinated student activities (among other duties). These sites viewed the involvement of the appointed occupational therapist as essential to change:

Yes. [PERSON] definitely plays an important role. Because I think she knows the setup and what should happen ... so the fact that [PERSON] is here this year made a difference ... I think a full-time occupational therapist is almost the centre around which everything revolves (P6).

The relevance of the involvement of an appointed professional in SL engagements will probably depend on the nature of student involvement and service activities. In a discipline such as OT it seems to enhance student service and community benefit. However, rather than recommending that community organisations should attempt to acquire the services of a discipline-specific professional to enhance change toward enablement, it seems more apt to recommend that where discipline-specific professionals are already involved in or employed by the community, these may be well suited sites for the development of SL partnerships.

3.4.2 Observable change

Participants generally found it hard to express specific, observable change stemming from student involvement. Those that experienced the whole partnership negatively also perceived little or no change (P6), but among those who generally expressed satisfaction with the SL partnership there were some diverse expressions of perceived change, owing to the diverse nature of service activities in the different SL engagements. As was the case with findings related to vision of possibilities, however, participants found it hard to pinpoint the change and the mechanisms by which the change was facilitated as a result of the SL partnership. Change was noted in relation to community members' engagement in activity, behaviour, emotions and spirituality. There were also changes in management procedures and in institutions' connections with other community resources such as volunteers, as shown in the following excerpt:

... a total difference to the being of the elderly person. I mean, they sat in their rooms and they did not participate in activities. So it made a total difference in the setup of how we handled the elderly from day to day. Because we could

continue with the programme that the students laid down for us. Yes. And they also helped a lot with the volunteers. The students came and empowered the volunteers and the volunteers can now carry on with what the students did (P1).

A comprehensive discussion of the occupational changes (from an OT perspective) identified through the research is beyond the scope of this chapter and will consequently not be discussed in depth. Rather, specific findings pertaining to justice and power sharing as an enablement foundation follow.

3.5 Justice

Townsend *et al* (2013:105-106) suggest that justice from an enablement perspective entails four major characteristics, namely recognition of injustices encountered; showing positive regard for all people regardless of differences in ability, race or other diversity factors; questioning the self and others regarding assumptions about what is 'wrong' or should be done 'better'; and showing and acting on the belief that all people have a place in society. When participants in the study were prompted on issues of justice, few were able to articulate specific perceptions or experiences in this regard. Only one of the characteristics mentioned by Townsend *et al*, namely positive regard for diversity, could be identified during data analysis. The following excerpt is an example of how students' positive regard for diversity was expressed:

I think the students did not make distinctions about who they cared for. They really treated every elderly or disabled person in their own way (P1).

The findings of this study suggest the need for deeper investigation into issues of justice – both on the part of the HEI (staff and students) and within the community itself – especially in light of the fact that promotion of social justice and social responsiveness are fundamental aims of community engagement.

3.6 Power sharing

[U]ndergirding almost all conceptualisations of service-learning are modernist, liberal and radical individualistic notions of self, progress, knowledge, and power. Specifically, such a worldview is grounded in the notion that individuals are autonomous change agents who can effect positive and sustained transformations. It is the belief that we can consciously bring about betterment (by the more powerful for the less powerful) through a downward benevolence whereby all benefit (Butin 2010:7).

Butin's criticism of unequal power relations that seem to be so pervasive in the history of SL sensitises one to reflect critically on how power is perceived and practised in SL

engagements. In this study, findings pertaining to power were categorised into two categories, namely 'sharing power' and 'the power of sharing knowledge'.

3.6.1. Sharing power

Participants in this study appeared to perceive sharing of power between HEI staff and students and themselves as community representatives as a facilitator to enablement. Equality and mutual respect were singled out as key indicators of this shared power – one participant voiced it as *“there is no big brother in this relationship”* (P3). Another participant emphasised the importance of sharing power in the SL partnership as follows:

You know, if you are sharing, it's better than you telling me what to do. Because I've got a little input in that and then that makes me comfortable ... Because I've got something that I've put down on the table. It's not only for you to tell me what to do (P4).

It was apparent that sharing power contributes to feelings of comfort and inclusion in the partnership, enhancing opportunities for mutual enablement.

However, despite perceptions of shared or equal power, notions of 'being helped' – which alludes to Butin's (2010:7) downward benevolence – were still present in participants' descriptions of their SL partnerships:

So they look at the students with that expectation: you are here to help us (P3).

Perhaps an answer to this dichotomy of power sharing versus 'helping' is hinted at in the following comment:

I think our first aim was to help them [the students] to really work on ground level in poorer communities, and secondly to help the elderly in the old age home with some of their dysfunctions (P1).

Reciprocal helping, where the community also genuinely experience that they are helping and not just being helped, may assist in balancing power between stakeholders and contributing to mutual enablement. I expand on this idea in the following section on the power of sharing knowledge.

3.6.2 The power of sharing knowledge

In their conversations about their SL engagements, participants in the study referred to valuable knowledge situated both with the HEI (students) and in the community, as well as referring to things that the students may learn from the community, while the community also wants to learn certain things from the students. Table 1.1 illustrates these knowledge assets and desires with examples from participant verbalisations.

TABLE 1.1 Knowledge to share and knowledge to gain in SL partnerships

	Students	Community
Knowledge to share	<p>Students bring current knowledge: <i>Remember, we are old people that work here. The children have new ideas. Other ways of doing. New research that is done, and then they bring it to us (P7).</i></p>	<p>Community possesses valuable knowledge: <i>The students come in and want to finish this thing quickly. But we who work here, whose place it is, you know more or less what will work and what not (P7).</i></p>
Knowledge to gain	<p>Students have a lot to learn from community: <i>And then if they ... want to reach out further to the elderly. And experience the life of the elderly person. And then if they want to go further, to get to know the life of the person with Alzheimer's ... I think there is a lot for them to learn (P6).</i></p>	<p>Community expresses benefit from training: <i>And the students also gave training to Management. And it also helped them to see how the Eden project is incorporated in the [INSTITUTION]. Because they don't always understand. And now Management also has insight into it (P1).</i></p>

This perspective on knowledge, namely that both the students and the community have knowledge to contribute and knowledge to gain from the partnership, sparked the category of the power of sharing knowledge. Participants articulated how reciprocal knowledge sharing became an enabling force for students and community members alike. However, the most powerful anecdote illustrates not only the enabling power of reciprocal knowledge sharing, but also how sharing knowledge can influence a person’s entire being:

There was a student that traded knitting patterns with a lady here ... She sat with the lady and said she couldn't knit and the lady must help her. So the elderly could share some of their knowledge with the young people, which was wonderful ... So they could share knowledge with one another and I think the elderly enjoyed the young people more ... Because they feel useless and here this lady could give her knitting pattern to a student. And share her knowledge with the student ... I think they feel more of worth. They mean something to society again. Otherwise they just sit here. They feel their children rejected them ... society rejected them. They are too old to do anything. And then the student comes and learns something from the elderly person. I think it means a lot to the elderly ... upliftment, being human again ... feeling that they belong (P1).

Sharing power in an SL partnership through reciprocity and mutual respect, and sharing knowledge appear to be powerful forces toward enablement.

4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I discussed the concept of enablement and the six enablement foundations. I then presented the community representatives’ perceptions regarding enablement (in relation to the enablement foundations) as experienced in service learning engagements with an occupational therapy department at a higher

education institution in South Africa. I conclude this chapter by highlighting prominent principles of enablement communicated in the findings, as well as questions raised, in order to promote dialogue on the issue.

The following principles of enablement for service learning engagements in higher education are concluded from the findings presented:

- Enablement requires choice based on collaborative decision making.
- Enablement requires just-right risk-taking which is outweighed by the potential benefit.
- Enablement requires specific clarification of roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders negotiated within the framework of a relationship of trust.
- Enablement requires active inclusion of community participation throughout the partnership.
- Enablement occurs in the presence of frequent, formalised, face-to-face, open and honest communication.
- Enablement is promoted when a vision of possibilities is sparked by an increased awareness of possible outcomes, and confidence is inspired through involvement in the partnership.
- Enablement based on positive, transformational change requires frequent, continuous interaction of sufficient duration to ensure sustainable outcomes.
- Enablement depends on the attitudes of stakeholders and requires positivity, dedication and enthusiasm.
- Tangible products and appointed discipline-specific professionals in the community contribute positively to change toward enablement.
- Enablement requires active and explicit attention to issues of justice.
- Enablement requires power sharing based on reciprocity, equality and mutual respect.
- Reciprocal knowledge sharing is a powerful force toward enablement.

The findings in the study also raised the following questions:

- Why did participants find it difficult to specifically articulate the change that they experienced as a result of the service learning partnership? What are the implications thereof for enablement and transformation?
- What are the mechanisms through which student presence in communities inspires confidence that seems to facilitate enablement through sparking a vision of possibilities? Could a deeper understanding of these mechanisms enhance partnerships and sustainability?
- How can issues of justice be included more explicitly in SL engagements and would this enhance enablement as theoretically suggested?

- How can we utilise the power of reciprocal knowledge sharing for enablement across SL engagements more effectively?

Finally the compelling words of a participant from the study capture the most prominent, overarching principle of enablement – the power of sharing and working together:

... we are in shackles, but let's say, education-wise, information-wise we are so rich. It's because of the partnership. We wouldn't reach that if we were alone (P4).

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2

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AS PEDAGOGY OF POSSIBILITY AND KNOWLEDGE ENABLEMENT

Grey Magaiza

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores community-engaged scholarship as a pedagogy of possibility. I argue that community-engaged scholarship provides a collaborative platform for the generation of knowledge necessary for the amelioration of societal suffering. In this chapter, I regard a pedagogy of possibility as an ethically and politically justified scholarship activity that advocates for the best in the human condition. Although there are multiple pathways of how this form of scholarship can be achieved, I suggest that community-engaged scholarship is an activist research approach focusing on the co-production of lived knowledge in an inclusive, ethically viable and innovative way. Although the chapter centres on knowledge in the twenty-first century, particularly on the academy and marginalised knowledges, I place the emphasis on community-engaged scholarship as an illustrative paradigm shift in terms of university–community relations. I argue that community-engaged scholarship can be a viable and practical way of knowledge enablement. Furthermore, I propose that the third sector is a representative of communities who collaborate with universities; thus, it is suggested that the third sector involves boundary spanning actors with multiple roles in the co-production, consumption and dissemination of knowledge and its benefits.

1. INTRODUCTION

Twenty-first century academic life is no longer pursued in seclusion (if it ever was) but rather must champion reason and imagination in engagement with the wider society and its concerns. (Association of Commonwealth Universities 2001:i)

In a twenty-first century world characterised by uncertainties and risk (Beck 2000:19), scholarship needs to be firmly embedded in the social world it describes and critiques. In an era where universities have been accused of prioritising detached esoteric studies and theorisation over socially useful scientific investigations (Gaffikin & Morrissey 2008:99-100), community-engaged scholarship (CES) opens critical opportunities for reciprocal and inclusive knowledge generation. The term CES refers to research activities, teaching and service undertaken by university staff in collaboration with community members that embody the characteristics of both community engagement (ie, reciprocal knowledge sharing, collaborative partnerships, public purpose) and scholarship (ie, demonstrates current knowledge of the field/discipline, invites peer collaboration and review, is open to critique, is presented in a form that others can build on, involves inquiry). Glassick, Huber and Maeroff (1997:10) also argue that CES may strengthen the pedagogical infrastructure of higher education institutions and enable them to produce knowledge that is responsive to the social realities of society.

Bernheim and Chau's (2003:1) description of modern society as a knowledge society necessitates a theoretical analysis of the knowledge supply chain. In arguing for reciprocal knowledge sharing between universities and communities (including the third sector), this chapter critically engages with the underpinnings of knowledge in the twenty-first century by deliberately advocating and increasingly reaffirming the knowledge capacities of communities. CES is vital to this argument as it enables community knowledge to emerge in the academic and scientific mainstream through inclusive and collaborative ways that accommodate communities' knowledges. The *White Paper for Post-school Education and Training* of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) identifies the emergent challenges facing contemporary South African society as "the persistence – and in some ways the intensification – of serious structural challenges associated with unemployment, poverty and inequality ..." (RSA DHET 2013:2). These structural challenges provide a platform through which university education and in particular CES can be used to "undertake research to meet the economic and social needs of society, building knowledge-generating partnerships with public and private enterprises, other government departments and other institutions in order to meet these needs" (RSA DHET 2013:10). In this regard CES therefore opens divergent pathways for

communities and universities to solve emergent challenges collaboratively as it has the capacity to be rooted in communities' hopes, aspirations and social rhythms. In linking with the pragmatic and yet idealistic approach of the DHET, I argue for a pedagogy of possibility. Agger (2007:1-4) notes that a pedagogy of possibility is built on a foundation of optimism, patience, looking forward, local praxis and, above all, a prospectiveness which ensures that university community-enabled research "[i]s a matter of replacing shared knowledge of what is already real with social hope for what might become real" (Fataar 2011:86).

CES serves a dual purpose for communities and university researchers: on the one hand, to know better the conditions of the possibility of hope; on the other, to define principles of action to promote the fulfilment of those conditions (De Sousa Santos 2011). The underlying goal of the social change characteristic of CES confirms the approach as being amenable to a pedagogy of possibility. This chapter argues that CES can be a crucial pathway towards a pedagogy of possibility. It further highlights what is entailed in CES and to what extent it can be a critical model of knowledge enablement. I also explore how CES can be an important platform for the creation and consumption of socially transformative knowledge-generation approaches. Lastly, I critically discuss knowledge enablement between the third sector and universities as a possible application of CES.

2. COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP IN AN ERA OF UNCERTAINTY

Ever since Ernest Boyer's watershed publication *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate* (1990), there has been a growing legitimacy for community improvement oriented research. To define CES, one needs to be clear about the meaning of scholarship. As articulated in the current literature, scholarship is teaching, discovery, integration, application and engagement that has clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation and reflective critique that is rigorous and peer reviewed (Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions¹ 2005; Glassick *et al* 1997). This definition, which expands the seminal work of Boyer (1990), critically sets a yardstick towards acceptable, replicable knowledge. Boyer (1996) admits, however, that this definition does not do justice to other forms of knowledge created legitimately through avenues other than traditional research. This is an important admission as it lays bare the challenges of using an immutable conceptualisation of knowledge that does not allow for reciprocal knowledge sharing and creation as advocated for by CES.

1 Hereafter referred to as Commission Report.

CES is scholarship that involves the faculty member in a mutually beneficial partnership with the community (Commission Report 2005). Others, like Driscoll and Sandman (2001:11-13), conceptualise CES as the collaborative generation, refinement, conservation and exchange of mutually beneficial and societally relevant knowledge that is generated in collaboration with, communicated to, and validated by peers in academe and the community. CES is a distinct type of scholarship in that it emphasises genuine collaboration and enables sharing of expertise (O'Meara & Rice 2005:28). Likewise, Lerner and Simon (1998:3-4) stress that CES is characterised by bidirectional relationships that blend multiple stakeholder efforts. This creates opportunities for innovation in theory, research, practice and policy machinations. It is therefore important for universities to exploit these opportunities to enable them to increasingly play a leadership role in addressing problems of the larger community by having discursive and research relationships outside of the academy (Gelmon, Jordan & Seifer 2013). Minkler (2005) and Lasker and Weiss (2003) note that CES is more of a research framework for conducting community-based research than a methodology. Gelmon *et al* (2013) stress that CES should ideally be based on five fundamental principles:

1. Scholarly investigation of real-life social problems;
2. definition of problems by and with the community;
3. collaborative development of knowledge to solve public issues between academe and the community;
4. utilisation of institutional resources to solve real-life challenges; and
5. shared authority in defining success.

These principles encourage an assets-based approach to the development of communities and strengthen community resilience. The above-mentioned principles of Gelmon *et al* (2013) are underpinned by a myriad of philosophical constructs. An evolutionary realist philosophy of science is one such construct. A realist philosophy of science leverages multiple contributions and conceptual frameworks of contributors using a pluralistic methodology for advancing knowledge (Deiaco, Hughes & McKelvey 2012). There is a deep-seated respect for multiple perspectives on reality and a firm belief in the many ways in which knowledge can be acquired and utilised. This is important as it makes universities participants in a learning society where discovery, learning and engagement are integrated activities (Holland 2005) aimed at the betterment of society. In addition to the evolutionary realism mentioned above, CES builds upon critical theory and constructivism. Critical theoretical approaches tend to rely on dialogic methods which combine observations and interviews with research strategies that nurture conversation and reflection

(Kincheloe & McLaren 1994). This reflective dialogue allows the researcher and the participants to co-imagine a desired outcome and collaborate towards realising it. A constructivist emphasis, on the other hand, approaches research with the intention of comprehending “the world of human experience” (Cohen & Manion 1994:36). It suggests that “reality is socially constructed” (Mertens 2005:12). Creswell (2003:8) even argues that the constructivist researcher must expose as much as possible of the “participants’ views of the situation being studied”. Gergen (1999:4) stresses that “the constructionist dialogues contain enormous potential; they open new spans of possibility for creating the future”. A forward-looking philosophical enterprise such as constructionism creates numerous dialogical opportunities to craft a desired future. These intersecting approaches do not uncover universal truths, but deliberately focus on specific local conditions and the positive changes that reciprocal knowledge sharing can bring. The formation of personal relationships, trust and collaboration enriches and validates research findings (Hale 2001) as people feel a sense of ownership in the project; therefore, against this background CES can be regarded as a philosophically and theoretically rich research approach to link universities and communities to together focus on issues that affect them. It is therefore ideally suited to the twenty-first century, as the universalisation of knowledge and solutions to problems is adverse to the plural and uneven social life of the twenty-first century.

The tumultuous nature of twenty-first century social arrangements dictates a need for increasing collaboration between communities and universities to advance the public good. The multiple challenges (social, economic and political) necessitate a paradigm shift in university–community interaction. Smerek, Pasque, Mallory and Holland (2005:7) stress that universities can stimulate significant community improvement as they possess the human, fiscal, organisational and intellectual capital critical to address significant social issues. Furthermore, Smerek *et al* (2005) note that since universities are physically rooted in their communities, there should be enough motivation to invest in the betterment of their immediate environs. These statements lay an important background for a critical discussion of CES in the twenty-first century.

CES is a form of activist research seeking to foster a reimagination of university–community collaboration and craft sustainable alternatives to communities’ emergent challenges. The need for an activist scholarship is made all the more urgent by the fact that “our troubled planet can no longer afford the luxury of pursuits confined to an ivory tower ... scholarship has to prove its worth not on its own terms but by service to the nation and the world” (Boyer 1990:23). Hale (2001) stresses that academics must identify their ethical and political inclination in order to help correct

instances of human suffering and injustice. This call for positive change describes an inherent aspect for an enabling activist research agenda as it provides a platform for a mutually enhancing engagement. An activist research agenda intertwined with the principles of CES offered by Gelmon *et al* provides “the best possible terrain for the defence of humanity” (Burawoy 2005:25). This inherent quest for all that is good for humanity enshrined in CES makes this approach a protest at many levels. It is a protest against the exclusion of marginal knowledge and the *status quo* that favours universities’ knowledge as dominant. As a form of activist research, CES is deliberately structured against the marginalisation of other forms of knowing and is therefore a vital joint problem solving platform. Schensul (2010:309) argues that the elitist nature of the university and its claim to privilege in the production of objectively developed knowledge is incorrect. Barker (2004) further stresses frustration with the neutrality of traditional positivist science and yearns for alternative forms of knowledge generation.

Rylko-Bauer, Singer and Van Willigen (2008) advise that for activist research to be effective within the knowledge economy, academics must be ethically and politically subjective while espousing methodological objectivity. This means academics must willingly take a stand on societal disparities, at the same time offering evidence-based solutions to societal challenges. One of the suggested pathways through which evidence-based solutions can be produced and scaled up is by using third sector boundary spanning capabilities. Definitions of the third sector are contested (Schensul 2010; Corry 2010). Etzioni (Zimmer & Freise 2008:7) refers to the third sector as a societal sphere, “a third alternative, indeed sector ... between the state and the market” that is populated by organisations that are able to combine the entrepreneurial spirit and organisational effectiveness of the business firm with the common good orientation of the state and its public administration. Corry (2010) mentions that third sector organisations are in pursuit of social or community goals. This makes them amenable to CES as they are able to utilise social infrastructure for interactive knowledge production. Pohl *et al* (2010) note that interactive knowledge production is premised on the co-production of research which integrates different social worlds, in this case academic research, community life and the third sector, among others. This limits competition for relevance as knowledge produced outside academe is not marginalised with negative outcomes for society. Further discussions on the third sector and CES are provided in a separate section below.

The marginalisation of knowledge produced outside of academe is detrimental to the development of solutions to problems and challenges faced collectively by humanity. Importing solutions without consulting the people living with the challenges is not

only detrimental to the total ownership of solutions, but also to the consumption of knowledge. Figure 2.1 below represents the centrality of CES in the scholarship of teaching, research and service. Figure 2.1 further illustrates how CES has the potential to be aligned to and fully integrated with the three core functions of a university. The space occupied by CES is ultimately one that seeks to ensure equal representation of all forms of knowledge in the mainstream.

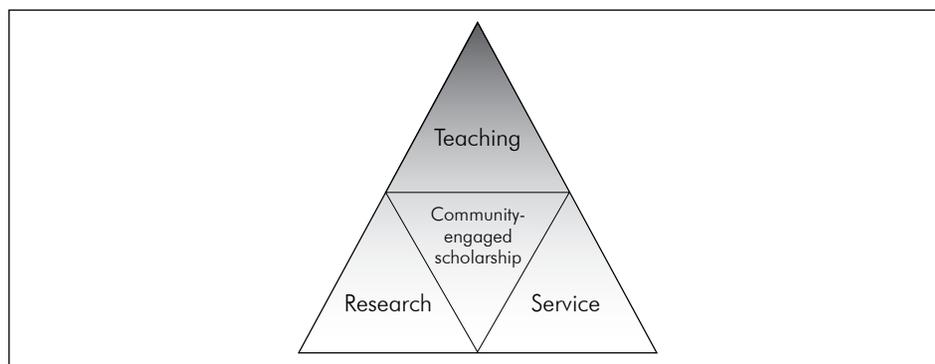


FIGURE 2.1 Centrality of community-engaged scholarship in higher education

CES is, however, unique in that it is at the epicentre of reflection and discovery where diverse groups of individuals can gather to articulate a vision, theory and practice and collaborate to create an altered social imaginary. CES has the advantage of including multiple stakeholders with divergent interests around a common theme.

3. KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND THE UNIVERSITY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Knowledge production has always been the responsibility of a few recognised specialists (Gibbons 2007), usually resident in universities and associated institutions. In the twenty-first century however, there has been a dramatic shift as knowledge is now generated by many actors, a situation that alters conventional knowledge arrangements. Nowotny (2003:152) contends that contemporary society is engaged in a tussle for expertise: “[E]xpertise has never been so indispensable while being simultaneously so hotly contested.” There are now numerous ways in which people can get expert knowledge on issues that directly affect them. The democratisation of knowledge, fuelled by information technology, has resulted in the university no longer holding the position of privilege with regard to knowledge generation. Gurstein and Angeles (2007:3) point out that “in a globalised world in which public issues and social problems stretch across wide spaces, affecting ever

larger numbers of people, it becomes increasingly important for individuals and communities to learn together". Furthermore, society now has highly informed and articulate individuals who seek to be informed and involved in decisions that have the potential to affect them. CES offers an avenue of inclusion for these individuals to interact with academe. The existence of a counter-expertise has vastly extended the boundaries of what can be regarded as knowledge. The counter-experts are usually labelled as such by mainstream academics seeking to marginalise other forms of knowing as inconsistent with the scientific stream. The counter-expertise challenges the dominant knowledge establishment and seeks to use advocacy avenues to gain a voice. Although much of this work exists in the "grey literature" (Aina 2000), it poses an interesting wealth of experience which mainstream scholarship can use. This begs key questions regarding the process and nature of authentic knowledge production, for instance: What is knowledge? What are the characteristics of knowledge production in the twenty-first century? What should be the role of the university in these new social arrangements?

The rest of this section grapples with these issues and uses social theoretical expositions to make its arguments.

In a knowledge society, knowledge production is mostly characterised by two modes (Kraak 2000; Gibbons 2003). Mode 1 knowledge production is pure, disciplinary, expert-led, supply-driven, hierarchical, peer reviewed and restricted to higher education institutions (Gibbons 2003:120). Mode 1 characterises the traditional scholarship and is more typical of the modern era where knowledge was the preserve of universities. Mode 2 knowledge production is described by Kraak (2000:2-3) as problem solving knowledge which is intrinsically transdisciplinary, transinstitutional and heterogeneous. I will discuss why universities need to move increasingly towards Mode 2 research and why it is important for universities to restructure their knowledge-generation processes to be effective in their social response function.

The twenty-first century has been described as the knowledge society (Bernheim & Chaui 2003), which makes knowledge the legitimate currency in contemporary life. It is, however, not just any knowledge but one characterised by a context of application (Gibbons 2007) in which knowledge has become an integral part of the global capital arrangements. The institutions producing this knowledge are central to not only its distribution and usage, but also to how it is packaged. Universities have a bigger part to play in society due to their increased visibility and student intakes. The World Declaration on Higher Education (1998:2) in its preamble affirms that:

Owing to the scope and pace of change, society has become increasingly knowledge-based so that higher learning and research now act as

essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations.

This spells out the need for universities to be closely embedded in the social arrangements of the societies in which they are located.

In light of the declaration quoted from above, the production of knowledge needs to operate in Mode 2. The quest for the sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations makes it impossible for knowledge to be solely a prerogative of research in universities. The dispersal of knowledge production spaces creates a need for connections to be made to tap into alternative sources of knowledge production. These alternative sources of knowledge are normally embedded in the lived realities of communities and are therefore indispensable to their continued existence. Any efforts towards sustainable development therefore need to be more holistic and incorporate local communities' ways of knowing. The quest for sustainable development in its broad sense necessitates a futuristic orientation which implies that universities have to cast their core functions of teaching, research and service (community engagement) on a long-term basis as well.

CES can be a key platform to enable multiple stakeholders to focus on general humanitarian issues like global warming and poverty (among others) as its research principles are based on collaboration. In terms of the defining characteristics of a knowledge society, social responsiveness and mutual accountability become core ethical imperatives that must guide universities as centres of knowledge production. Solutions that are generated in collusion with people affected by them have a better chance of being scaled up than if people are not included. Barker (2004:124) and Macfarlane (2007:53) concur that there has to be a direct link between the university expertise and the strengths of the community through the integration of teaching and research as well as the integration and application of scholarship which includes reciprocal practices in the production of knowledge.

When one discusses knowledge in the twenty-first century, it is a concept that should have lived relevance to whoever has it, and also a utility value when it is transferred. CES is an amenable research strategy that seeks to engage the public to scale up their lived knowledge and also how it can be scaled up to improve the human condition. Marginalised communities have clear strengths (Schensul 2010), and identifying these strengths is not the responsibility of one single discipline alone. Specific disciplines produce specific knowledge and therefore universities themselves need to restructure discipline offerings as societal problems are not limited to a single discipline. Robust knowledge production seeking to ameliorate borderless social challenges can only occur if disciplinary borders are broken down: knowledge created

through broader transdisciplinary, social and economic contexts that occurs within contexts of application and involves greater involvement with local communities and governments (Gibbons *et al* 1994) has a greater chance of being sustainable and fostering transformation than a 'silo' approach. In effect, there has been a dramatic shift of knowledge from being single discipline to interdisciplinary (Bernheim & Chaui 2003). CES enables transdisciplinarity as it changes discipline-based knowledge to problem-centred approaches that cover application and have relevance to the communities of practice applying it.

4. COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AS A PEDAGOGY OF POSSIBILITY

The twenty-first century is described as a new scientific age: an age of possibilities and probabilities (Bernheim & Chaui 2003). A pedagogy of possibility in this new scientific age rests on the cultivation of a tradition of research and engagement that learns to look for ways to a better world as a means of cultivating hope (Sinclair 2008). In this regard CES performs the valuable social task of helping researchers and the public to remember that problems are "not all there is" (Solnit 2004:9), and alerting them to already existing possibilities. De Sousa Santos (2011) disparagingly notes that for some thinkers, the possible is the most uncertain and the most ignored concept in Western philosophy; yet only the possible permits to reveal the inexhaustible wealth of the world. CES becomes a research inquiry into the alternatives that are contained in the horizon of concrete possibilities. If practised as a pedagogy of possibility, CES entails a symbolic expansion of knowledge sources, applications and agents in order to foster or frame a desired future. In a world characterised by structural inequalities, this intervention can maximise the probability of hope in a background of continued frustration (De Sousa Santos 2011). CES in this regard imagines the possible while at the same time defining the principles that can lead to the fulfilment of the possible. Marginalised communities are characterised by isolation and deprivation; however, using CES to explore possible pathways creates innumerable alternatives for such communities. Crafting solutions from the ground up (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993:1) entails a deliberate focus on helping the community stakeholders to work on their strengths to solve challenges.

A pedagogy of possibility creates hope, imagination and social innovation as it pushes communities and universities to use available energies and resources to make the world a better place. That scholarship must be "embedded in a kind of reflexivity that imagines a better world ..." is also averred by Fataar (2011:87). Sinclair (2008) stresses that making the world a better place is partly a moral or ethical enterprise,

deliberately focusing on changing the present for a better tomorrow. My focus on a pedagogy of possibility is therefore informed by “calls for dialogical engagement informed by pragmatic alternative imaginings” (Fataar 2011:86). I therefore argue in this chapter that an effective use of CES can achieve dual research and practice outcomes. The outcomes include a deep-seated understanding of difficult situations and contexts through dialogicality and furthermore the advancement of pragmatic or applied knowledge. I agree with Sinclair (2008:10) who reminds academic researchers of the importance of an “ontology of attachment, engagement ... likely to provide the impetus for social change and for making a better world, [rather] than nostalgia and estrangement”. Any quest for a better tomorrow therefore rests on a direct intellectual affront of currently lived realities.

CES provides a critical pathway for an enhanced but yet unknown tomorrow by “revaluing the present as the real site of action in the world” (Rose 2004:19). A focus on the present fosters an opportunity to craft a desired future; hence CES becomes a collaborative expedition towards securing mutually agreed futures. Furthermore, a focus on the present enhances humanity’s ability to combat social inequities rather than disillusionment and estrangement which are inimical to possibilities. CES encourages increased attachment to and engagement with the social world, and a pedagogy of possibility therefore rests on a call for more and not less involvement of universities in society.

5. CES AND INCREASED UNIVERSITY INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIETY

Knowledge occupies a contested terrain in the twenty-first century with expertise no longer guaranteed to be vested in universities alone. Although universities have locational stability, the knowledge supply chain favours academics that are socialised to believe in the trickling down of knowledge despite knowledge existing in multiple ways. It is therefore imperative for universities to create enabling environments for other types of knowledge to also gain their place on the knowledge supply chain. Although universities’ contribution to the broader regeneration agenda of communities is critical to the development priorities of communities, in most cases this is not bidirectional: for CES to be utilised as an enabling framework for enhanced university–community links, there are certain fundamentals which universities themselves need to transform. The universities need to transform their operational competencies to build capacity to engage effectively with other knowledge outside of academe. Gibbons *et al* (1994) argue that the extensive social distribution of knowledge creates fertile ground for transdisciplinarity. Such transdisciplinarity opens the creative capacities of researchers to integrate and build their work in broader

outcomes orientations. It even becomes an exercise well worth engaging in if the community members whose problems are being addressed are directly engaged. Transdisciplinary initiatives underpinned by the creation of new knowledge can be key to innovative problem solving (Christensen 1997). CES is the platform that enables universities to increasingly share their expertise in transdisciplinary teams in collaboration with community members in order to solve cross-cutting challenges.

6. THIRD SECTOR, COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AND ACADEME

The need for a boundary spanning entity to highlight the efficacy of evidence-based solutions is critical in a knowledge economy. Scott (1998:196) defines boundary spanning as the “bridge between an organisation and its exchange partners”. Friedman and Podolny (1992) also stress that boundary spanning incorporates multiple types of relationships with outside agents. The prominence of relationship building in boundary spanning actions overarches the identification of mutually beneficial issues, allowing partners to symbiotically work towards their realisation. Williams (2002) reveals that boundary spanning organisations create strategic alliances, joint working arrangements, networks, partnerships and many other forms of collaboration across organisational boundaries. In their discussion of service learning and community engagement within a South African context, Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo and Bringle (2010) recognise that partnership building is ultimately key to fulfilling the national agenda of South Africa, which is centred on community development and social transformation. HEIs in this regard are expected to forge sustainable partnerships and encourage boundary spanning as a way of expanding the knowledge supply chain. Thomson *et al* (2010) further describe a Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships (CHESP) triad model of partnerships comprising third sector organisations, universities and community residents collaborating to solve locally emergent challenges. The CHESP model represents how third sector organisations and academic institutions can evoke institutional strategies and devise collaborative pathways to solve common challenges, use limited resources effectively and ultimately satisfy an unmet need.

Boundary spanning also entails getting into spaces that institutions would not normally get into in order to solve emergent social issues. This necessitates changing the lens one uses to view the community partners who form an enduring conduit into the community. The methodology informing a changing of the lens is briefly described by Thomson *et al* (2010:227) who state that undertaking a situation analysis enabled students at Stellenbosch University to grasp the micro-macro development processes. In this context, the situation analysis informed the stakeholders about the issue to be

discussed and enabled the students to develop multidimensional views to co-develop solutions. However, it is unfortunate that the Stellenbosch University example, like most boundary spanning illustrations, is mostly taken from the perspective of the higher education institution.

The third sector is a crucial boundary spanning actor in the knowledge supply chain. Albertyn and Botha (2012:122) note that the knowledge supply chain is no longer dominated by HEIs but is now produced and used in multiple sites. The third sector forms part of a nexus of sites where knowledge production, utilisation and consumption is driven for the social and economic benefit of communities. During the era of Aids denialism in South Africa, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) sought to disprove the pseudoscience emerging from the government on the link between HIV and Aids. TAC partnered with established mainstream research institutions to debunk the myths about HIV and Aids (www.tac.org.za). Furthermore, TAC undertook an aggressive grassroots campaign to mobilise communities, corporate sector and universities to produce a counter-narrative to the government. In this case, a third sector entity coordinated a multi-sectoral civic campaign connecting theories emerging from university research with evidence from practice to create a rallying point around a social concern. It is in this sense I advocate for third sector boundary spanning as a strategy to create linkages between groups in order to move ideas, information, people and resources where they are needed most (Ancona & Caldwell 1992). The TAC illustration above also highlights how third sector organisations are characterised by value-driven action and commitment (Corry 2010), which makes them strategically preferable to partner with activist scholars in pursuit of CES. As boundary spanning organisations the third sector is able to generate social capital from the connections they are able to create.

The importance of advantageously using the social capital generated by the third sector to generate new knowledge with the people who need it is crucial in today's society. I argue that the third sector must perform a key boundary spanning role to enable the creation of new knowledge. Schensul (2010) proposes that this role entails ensuring that knowledge development emphasises partnerships and egalitarian social structures that are transformative by means of:

- A focus on co-production of knowledge through a deliberate realisation that science only provides a partial solution to some of the social problems communities face;
- utilisation of community structures as a rallying point for indigenous knowledge production and creation; and
- facilitation so that benefits of collaboration are equally enjoyed by both community and academy.

While it appears that the boundary spanning role I advocate above has more to do with creating connections between communities and the academy, I suggest that the gatekeeping role of the third sector is vital in achieving community buy-in. Furthermore, depending on the nature of the third sector organisation and the values it espouses, the fact that most operate in and within communities means they provide representation with which academe can collaborate to produce knowledge. The third sector is therefore an important ally in reimagining knowledge production, dissemination and consumption in communities that suffer from social inequities.

7. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I attempted to show the efficacy of CES in incorporating multiple knowledge streams in society. I have argued that CES is an alternative future-seeking platform with the potential to include multiple stakeholders in seeking solutions to social challenges. The localisation of problems and the utilisation of local assets make CES an amenable strategy that can achieve positive local transformation. The role of organisations from the third sector as boundary spanners is a critical enabler for the success of CES. Although it is an extension of the broader engaged scholarship perspective, CES is rooted in multiple theoretical and philosophical constructs underpinned by a quest for human flourishing. It is my contention that CES can be a viable option towards integrating multiple forms of expertise and the lived knowledge of marginalised individuals and communities. The brief discussion on the nature of the twenty-first century highlighted the need for universities to adapt to changing contexts which include a more enlightened citizenry eager to participate in policies and decisions that affect them; the democratisation of expertise underpinned by information technology; and, most importantly, the flourishing of grey literature driven by a swelling counter-expertise. This contextual environment provides a fertile space for the university to reach out to the margins, and to co-produce knowledge that has lived outcomes for society's emergent challenges. The third sector is a critical enabler of knowledge, strategic alliances and partnerships. CES is therefore the best suited platform for dialogicality and hope – both critical ingredients towards realising positive transformation and a yet unknown future.

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3

CONSIDERING ETHICS

ENABLING PARTICIPATORY KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Sunette Pienaar

ABSTRACT

Participatory knowledge sharing between the third sector and higher education institutions is recognised as a means to transform the academy and society for the betterment of both. Participation between different sectors, however, presents role-players with various challenges. Ethical dilemmas present one such challenge. Both higher education institutions and the third sector often lack frameworks for ethical engagement. Such frameworks might be accommodated in partnership agreements. However, partnership agreements themselves are often lacking, and in cases where they do exist, ethics are often not fully considered. Where ethics does come into play it relates to engagement with communities specifically, and not engagement between higher education institutions and the third sector. In such cases ethics is often regarded as an impediment to knowledge sharing. Proposals by academics referring to community-based participatory research and other participatory research methods are often rejected by institutional ethics committees because of epistemological preferences and the lack of ethics guidelines to accommodate such research. The third sector, again, is pressurised by donor expectations and requirements to deliver output against objectives within fixed time frames and against tight budgets. Few third sector partners negotiate ethics considerations with donors in the budgeting process. Accountability to communities is often neglected as a result. The purpose of this conceptual chapter is to synergise the accountability considerations of the third sector with ethics considerations for participatory research and ethics challenges encountered by both sectors in partnerships. The aim of this exercise is to propose an ethics framework to speak to the nexus between higher education institutions, the third sector and communities in engagement. Such a guiding framework might enable participatory knowledge sharing between the third sector and higher education institutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions (HEIs) that regard themselves as the sole producers and repositories of expert and legitimate knowledge may contribute to the disenfranchisement of poor, marginalised and indigenous communities by excluding their voices in knowledge making to solve social problems. The marginalised are dominated by the elite through the polarisation of control over the means of material and knowledge production. Without closing the knowledge and resource gap marginalised and poor people cannot be empowered to control their own lives (Rahman 1991). Serious structural challenges associated with poverty, inequality and unemployment will surely prevail for as long as the voices of those living this reality are excluded, and for as long as knowledge production is regarded as the privilege of a select few. Participatory knowledge sharing gives legitimacy to all knowledge. By legitimising the voices of the marginalised it alters the politics of power relations in knowledge making.

The role of education and training as a contributor to inclusive growth and employment generation is increasingly recognised in policy documents such as the National Development Plan (RSA NPC 2011) and the New Growth Path (RSA 2010). The *White paper for post-school education and training* of 2013 makes reference to community engagement in its various forms as a core function of the university. It refers to “partnerships with civil society organisations” (RSA DHET 2013:39) as a particular form of engagement. Such partnerships can take many shapes and forms. It can facilitate in-service learning and work-integrated learning programmes, collaborative and participatory research, and volunteerism, among other things. Community engagement is therefore a vehicle for participatory knowledge sharing and production in that it facilitates partnerships with the third sector, communities and other stakeholders.

The general understanding is that engagement through partnerships with civil society – or in any other form or shape – should be based on scholarship. Scholarship is defined by Michigan State University Outreach and Engagement (2009:2) as follows:

[Scholarship] is the thoughtful creation, interpretation, communication, or use of knowledge that is based in the ideas and methods of recognized disciplines, professions, and interdisciplinary fields. What qualifies an activity as ‘scholarship’ is that it is deeply informed by accumulating knowledge in some field; that the knowledge is skillfully interpreted and deployed for a particular setting; that the activity is carried out with intelligent openness to new information, debate, and criticism.

Partnerships between universities and the third sector is part of a bigger global trend towards broader participation of all stakeholders in policy making, programme planning

and other forms of knowledge making. The basic premise behind collaboration is that individuals and organisations can achieve a better outcome by working together than they can by working individually (Dhillon 2009). It is also assumed that “major advances in knowledge tend to occur when human beings consciously work to solve the central problems confronting their society” (Gibson 2006:2). The social sciences increasingly recognise that the ultimate role of scientific inquiry is to address pressing human problems. This can partly be done by engaging individuals and communities in a research process premised on facilitating positive social change (Lerner, Fisher & Weinberg 2000). These engagements take the form of multistakeholder partnerships and multidisciplinary research.

Collaborations and partnerships are lauded for enabling more efficient, effective and equitable outcomes. However, they are neither the panacea for all problems nor without shortcomings. Critics warn, among other things, about the increased costs associated with participation, and, more importantly, about the possibility of overlooking power imbalances, thereby entrenching and replicating inequalities even further (Cleaver 1999; Cooke & Kothar 2001; Cornwall 2008).

Although partnerships between HEIs and the third sector can enable participatory knowledge sharing, they can also contribute to and even entrench power imbalances, thereby defeating the very purpose of participatory knowledge sharing, which is to give legitimacy to all voices. This introduces certain ethical challenges to the partners. Although both HEIs and civil society organisations aim to achieve the same outcome of empowerment of the marginalised, individually they face their own distinct challenges.

The third sector is facing increasing financial pressures, even though the demand for their services has not changed or is even on the increase. They scramble to deliver the same services with a shrinking staff contingent and a much smaller budget in an attempt to maintain legitimacy and accountability with their constituencies. Some organisations venture into unfamiliar territory because of donor demands, delivering services in areas where they lack prior knowledge and experience. Donors expect increased value for their money and demand more and higher quality outcomes with a smaller budget against tighter time frames. They may therefore compromise on quality and sound labour practices to keep up with the demand. Governance requirements for civil society organisations have also become more stringent following the global financial meltdown of 2007/8 and organisations lack the resources to comply. It is therefore not surprising that third sector organisations could compromise on accountability to communities and sacrifice legitimacy in this scramble for resources. A loss of legitimacy threatens the very sustainability

of the third sector. Although more sophisticated organisations might take ethical considerations into account in choosing whom to partner with for development, they do not necessarily have a set of ethical guidelines that can be embedded in partnership agreements to guide the relationship.

HEIs on the other hand are confronted with challenges of a different kind relating to engagement. Few ethics policies consider the particular challenges presented by community engagement/engaged scholarship, despite the fact that community-based participatory research has evolved in response to traditional research approaches that stigmatise and marginalise vulnerable communities. Flicker, Travers, Guta, McDonald and Meagher (2007:1) state that “community-based participatory research (CBPR) has evolved as an effective new research paradigm that attempts to make research a more inclusive and democratic process by fostering the development of partnerships”. This approach attempts to address ethical dilemmas that emerged out of more traditional paradigms to make research more inclusive and democratic. Flicker *et al* (2007) conducted a study in the United States of America and Canada and found that ethical review forms and guidelines operate overwhelmingly in a biomedical framework. Such a framework does not take CBPR experience into account. Such frameworks typically focus on specifically assessing risk to the institution and the individual researchers instead of the communities. These frameworks also perpetuate the notion that knowledge production is the sole right of academic researchers. This poses a dilemma in that communities are placed at risk by using procedures that are inappropriate or unsuitable for CBPR.

Participatory research methods such as CBPR, which are designed to increasingly shift the power and control of decision making into the hands of the community, are often not recognised as being scientific enough because of epistemological differences among members of institutional review boards. The decisions taken by members of institutional ethical review boards may mainly reflect the epistemological views of rationalist theorists. Fundamentally, scholars differ about the appropriate foundation for the study of society. Discussions often centre on comparisons of qualitative and quantitative research methods and rationalist and postmodernist theoretical underpinnings. Participatory and community-based researchers subscribe to postmodernist theories and paradigms and qualitative research methods. Many scholars still regard social research that applies a positivistic, empiricist, natural science approach to social phenomena as more ‘scientific’ in contrast to qualitative methods. This point is illustrated in the ethics policy guidelines for institutional research three decades ago by Giddens (1984:77):

... concepts can be operationalized; objectivity is maintained by the distance between observer and observed along with the possibility of

external checks upon one's questionnaire; replication can be carried out by employing the same research instrument in another context; and the problem of causality has been eased by the emergence of path analysis and related regression techniques to which surveys are well suited.

Even today policies often do not make provision for methodology where the *sine qua non* is the commitment to see the social world through the eyes of the research participant which requires close involvement with research participants, consideration of contexts, emergent research designs and fluidity. This research approach is in sharp contrast with quantitative research design which emphasises hypothesis and testing and short periods of fieldwork involvement. The phenomenology of qualitative research takes the participants' point of view as the empirical point of departure against positivist approaches which view events from the outside with little reference to the 'insider's' perspective. Most research ethics committees do not make provision for guidelines to cover these studies. Submissions to ethics review committees of participatory research projects are therefore often rejected (Flicker *et al* 2007). The fact that academics from positivist traditions increasingly venture into community engaged research through the application of mixed methods and interdisciplinary research methods, as well as the application of community-engaged theory challenges the decisions of institutional ethics review boards that lean towards the acceptance of more positivist research applications.

Another challenge encountered by HEIs relates to the resource requirements for community engagement. Apart from staff costs, universities in general invest few resources in engagement, specifically because of the low financial return on investment (the social return is not being taken into account). Few universities in South Africa commit substantial resources to community engagement projects that translate into long-term partnerships. Engaged scholars thereby face similar challenges to third sector organisations in that they also have to scramble for donor funding for their engagement projects and activities.

Collectively and separately the third sector and higher education are confronted with significant ethical challenges in their efforts to empower communities. Scholars may have no choice but to abandon engagement when their applications are rejected by ethics review committees. Third sector organisations might risk losing their legitimacy in communities or might even face legal action as a consequence of unethical behaviour towards project beneficiaries and participants. Universities might suffer the same fate. However, a set of ethics guidelines for engagement between HEIs, communities and the third sector might address some of the challenges that impede knowledge sharing. Such a framework can guide negotiations for engagement partnership agreements.

In this chapter I will first provide an overview of the particular ethical dilemmas encountered by the third sector and HEIs in their engagement with communities. I will then consider the particular ethical challenges encountered in partnerships from a higher education perspective. Subsequently I will identify measures and solutions offered by literature and academic institutions to address some of the challenges. Drawing on the challenges and proposed solutions, I will attempt to present an ethics framework for the nexus between HEIs, the third sector and communities. This framework can potentially guide partnership agreements. The chapter will conclude with some reflections and considerations for further conceptualisation and research on ethical considerations in participatory knowledge sharing.

2. ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN ENGAGEMENT

The ethical dilemmas encountered by the third sector are presented in this section, as this issue relates to matters of accountability and legitimacy. Challenges in community-based participatory research in particular will guide the discussion on ethical dilemmas encountered by universities in the process of engagement.

2.1 Third sector ethics and the accountability challenge

The third sector generally aims to strengthen civil society and local governance with the objective of lifting marginalised communities out of poverty, especially in developing countries. As is the case with HEIs, this involves empowering marginalised communities to overcome structural and socio-economic disadvantages by expanding their choice, influence and actions (Giddens 1984; Kabeer 1999; Lukes 1974). It follows that empowerment results in greater participation of the marginalised in economic, social and civic domains and therefore in gaining access to resources (AusAID 2001; Narayan 2000). Although this generic aim is shared by third sector organisations and HEIs in their engagement efforts, the methodologies for achieving this aim, and the specific objectives to pave the way, might be very different. I will expand more on these diverging and converging interests.

According to scholars such as Lissner (1997), the third sector is essentially value driven. Kilby (2006) argues that third sector organisations and public benefit agents are therefore primarily accountable to the beneficiaries of their work. For accountability of the voluntary sector to be empowering, it should have sufficient openness to be scrutinised and to be controlled to some extent by beneficiaries and constituents (Conger & Kanungo 1988; Murthy 2001; Peters & Pierre 2000). Downward accountability to beneficiaries is therefore of paramount importance as empowerment is the ultimate aim of this sector. In a study titled "Accountability for empowerment" Kilby (2006) found that more structural (formal) links with

beneficiaries deliver stronger empowerment outcomes. This study also found that it is generally those non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with values that reflect a strong sense of solidarity with the poor and marginalised that have strong outcomes with their constituents. Despite these findings, which might provide some incentive for downward accountability, there are few other incentives for third sector players to implement and demonstrate accountability to beneficiaries.

Third sector organisations have to respond to multiple, complex and diffused accountabilities (McDonald 1999). The constituencies might consist of partners, agencies, donors and governments on all levels – from local governments to international business to multilateral development agencies. Third sector organisations might invest most of their time and their limited resources in demonstrating accountability to one particular group of stakeholders such as a multilateral donor or government agencies. The reporting requirements and delivery expectations of donor agencies might also exceed the investment in resources to be compliant. Governments sometimes outsource the delivery of government programmes to third sector organisations, as is the case with the delivery of services on the National HIV/Aids Strategic Plan of the South African National Aids Council. Balancing upward accountability to donors and stakeholders with downward accountability to beneficiaries/participants presents the third sector with a big challenge with ethical implications.

All these requirements and expectations can move the locus of accountability away from the very beneficiaries of the empowerment programmes of the third sector (Edwards & Hulme 1996; Elliot 1987; Fisher 1994; Foley & Edwards 1998; Fox & Brown 1998; Najam 1996; Robinson 1995; Zaidi 1999). Although mechanisms for downward accountability and participation such as regular meetings, involvement in programming, monitoring and evaluation, and community advisory boards theoretically exist, the tools for the enforcement of accountability to the beneficiaries are rather limited (Ferejohn 1999).

The demands of these many and varied accountabilities and the resultant loss of focus of accountability first and foremost to the beneficiaries of the programmes create a particular ethical dilemma for the voluntary sector. They might lose their legitimacy in the community in that they might default on the overall aim to empower marginalised communities.

2.2. Power-based, rights-based and interest-based considerations for ethical partnerships

HEIs participate in partnerships for social change in various forms. Some scholars view partnerships between HEIs and the community as a “special case of PAR

[participatory action research], where PAR's collaborative ideals are embedded in formalised relations between organised groups of university researchers and community constituencies" (Williams, Labonte, Randall & Muhajarine 2005:292). Other partnerships are confined to participatory research where commitments to future actions are not explicitly made, yet change is affected by using certain methods. In yet other instances universities are invited to participate in multistakeholder partnerships involving third sector organisations and/or government and business to address particular social issues. No matter what form the partnership takes or for what purpose it is established, HEIs are confronted with certain generic ethical dilemmas when they partner with stakeholders such as third sector organisations. Lytle, Brett and Shapiro (1999) suggest power-based, rights-based and interest-based negotiations as a framework for dispute resolution. This framework proves to be particularly useful in identifying ethical dilemmas between HEIs and the third sector in engagement.

Partners to partnerships are hardly ever "relatively equal in their power and access to resources" (Banerjee 2000:45) and therefore rarely negotiate on equal footing. The first dilemma therefore relates to the balancing of power asymmetries. Whoever is responsible for providing the biggest financial contribution to the partnership tends to be the more powerful partner in the arrangement. This partner often dictates the terms and conditions of the engagement. Donor agencies, research agencies and funders frequently initiate and fund university-third sector partnerships. As is the case with third sector organisations, HEIs are also often eager to participate in these partnerships, mainly because of limited resources for community engagement activities and competition among institutions for access. In the rush for funding, partners might neglect to consider and assess all the risks and ethical implications of the terms and conditions of the partnership, especially for the communities with which they engage. If not carefully negotiated and considered, partnerships can thereby easily bring "unequal players" to an uneven table to participate in difficult, predetermined decision making (Roe, Berenstein, Goette & Roe 1999), thereby entrenching the very power dynamics they are trying to overcome.

The second dilemma relates to the conflicting and converging interests of partners. Scholars can easily sacrifice their scholarly independence by adhering to terms and conditions that contradict or contravene their own ethical principles of engagement and sound research methods. Universities can also be used as tokens to validate the scientific merit of the partnership to mobilise more resources or to lobby policy changes for political motives. The desire of scholars to apply scholarly rigour might, as an example, often conflict with the urgency for action of the third sector. Universities can easily sacrifice scientific rigour and validity when pressurised explicitly

or psychologically to address the immediate needs of the community. The third sector might again transpose the risk for delivery onto university partners to sustain their own legitimacy with the community. This relates to Cortes's (1998) argument for the three university-based factors that can undermine community collaborations, one being the limited financial resources in the civic sector. The third sector might also harbour expectations that the university partners have the financial resources and the knowledge to solve dilemmas such as poverty and unemployment in an instant or that they themselves are really donors for the programmes of third sector partners. Conflicting interests might therefore present particular challenges to the partners.

Even if common interests should be identified, the culture of the different partners, their working methods and their organisational objectives are also often very different. Third sector organisations and universities often do not understand what the other party has to offer to the partnership and depart from an implicit understanding that the organisations share the same values and purpose. A lack of creative solutions to respond to underlying interests might threaten partnership success with unintended negative consequences for the community. When converging and conflicting interests are not made explicit by the negotiating parties to identify options for mutual gain and for better understanding of each other, partnerships can easily fail. Roles and responsibilities are dynamic and change with the engagement with community. If partnership conditions are too rigid and roles and responsibilities are fixed, not only will the partners bear the consequences but the community might suffer in the process.

Finally, the critical rights of universities, third sector organisations and communities are often not acknowledged by all partners. This dilemma comes into play particularly concerning the rights around the production and commercialisation of knowledge. The ownership of knowledge is regulated internationally by the Convention on Biological Diversity and nationally by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (RSA 1996), the *National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998* (RSA 1998), the *National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004* (RSA 2004) and *South Africa's bioprospecting, access and benefit-sharing regulatory framework: Guidelines for providers, users and regulators* (RSA DEA 2012). Not only statutory and legal rights come into play, but parties to partnerships that do not agree on a set of norms and standards for process (procedural rights) and outcomes (substantive rights) might come into considerable conflict with each other.

2.3 Ethical considerations in community-based participatory research

CBPR includes notions such as 'community-based action research', 'participatory action research', 'co-inquiry' or 'co-production', although proponents of each might

argue for the recognition of more distinct differences. CBPR includes the active involvement of the community and a range of community stakeholders in the entire research process, from the research design, the implementation of the research process to the dissemination of the research results and in many instances also the execution of programmes flowing from the research process. Essentially, CBPR, as a form of community engagement, is all about relationships between and among researchers, universities and communities. The question is: how do we ensure that we conduct these relationships ethically? Where debates about ethics of clinical research have been prevalent for some time (Emmanuel, Wendler & Grady 2000), community-based participatory research in its many forms raises additional questions and challenges.

The Durham Community Research Team at the Centre for Social Justice and Community Action at Durham University (Connected Communities 2011:2) has succinctly identified the many ethical challenges in CBPR from existing literature. They assert these challenges to be similar to issues experienced in qualitative research generally. Such issues relate to

partnership, collaboration and power, community rights, conflict and representation; ownership and dissemination of data, findings and publications; anonymity, privacy and confidentiality; institutional ethical review processes; and blurred boundaries between researcher and researched, academic and activist.

What this group of researchers find distinct to CBPR is “the openness, fluidity and unpredictability of the research process” (Connected Communities 2011:2). They subsequently recommend the adoption of specific CBPR ethics guidelines for United Kingdom researchers, funders and sponsors.

Yale University’s Centre for Clinical Investigation (2009) also developed an expanded set of principles for ethical engagement. The Ethical Principles of Engagement Committee of the Centre’s Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) is of the view that ethical review applies to interactions between research partners and not only to individual research subjects.

Following on the work of the Durham Research Team and the view of CARE, I wish to suggest that we expand the ethical guidelines/principles of engagement to include the third sector exactly because of their multiple accountabilities that pose specific ethical dilemmas for their engagement with community beneficiaries. I also suggest that ethics issues relating specifically to the partnerships between HEIs and the third sector be considered because of the increasing recognition of the importance of partnerships for sustained social change. I have already referred to these particular challenges in the sections above.

3. AN ETHICS FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

As a result of the many challenges encountered by community-engaged researchers in doing engaged research, and because of the difficulties encountered when approaching research ethics review committees for ethics clearance of their research, the University of South Africa (Unisa) decided to develop ethics guidelines for community-engaged research to be included into the existing research ethics policy. These guidelines guide community-based researchers and ethics review committees in CBPR and related decisions. This is necessary given the fact that studies demonstrate that institutional review structures, such as research ethics review committees, are reluctant to incorporate principles of CBPR into their considerations for ethics approval (Flicker *et al* 2007).

The guidelines developed by Unisa took cognisance of the ethical challenges of CBPR presented in the literature and experiences with community-engaged research projects. It also considered the work of Schopper *et al* (2009) as it relates to ethics in the third sector. Although it does not expand on ethics challenges encountered in partnerships, it does refer briefly to partnership challenges. The guidelines consider the following seven aspects relating to ethical dilemmas in community-based research:

1. knowledge production;
2. social and scientific value;
3. scientific validity and ethical merit;
4. fair subject selection;
5. the nature of participation;
6. informed consent; and
7. community involvement in the research.

The proposed guidelines acknowledge that academics share the privileged domain of 'knowledge production' with community members and other partners. Knowledge production is recognised as a blend of more traditional forms of knowledge production with 'lived experience'. It also recognises that community-engaged research emanates from partnerships and is oriented towards action and social change which is an integral part of the knowledge production process.

Secondly, the guidelines make provision for scholars to engage in a community or with a partner without a clearly formulated research question and without clearly defined and readily developed research tools and methods. This permits full participation of communities and stakeholders from the inception of the research

and allows for the unfolding of the research. This provision does not exonerate researchers from mapping the process that they plan to follow to ensure full participation of the community and partners in the specific issue to be researched. Researchers also need to demonstrate how they will enable community members to contribute their resources, such as local and indigenous knowledges and other pragmatic considerations, to the research. The guidelines also make reference to intellectual property rights that will have to be negotiated and safeguarded. Training with the community needs to be considered with the aim of empowering members to participate in the research. These steps are to be taken to demonstrate the social and scientific value of the research. Researchers are accommodated in seeking ethical approval when embarking on the various cycles of the research process should the research be of moderate or high risk. This provision allows for members of the review committee to determine the scientific validity and ethical merit of the evolving research.

Fair subject selection and the nature of participation are emphasised. Participants are to be selected not only on the basis of their contribution towards achieving the research goals but also for the ways in which they will benefit from the research. To enable participation, barriers such as transport costs need to be removed. A favourable risk-benefit ratio must guide participation. In this regard the researcher should also consider how to mitigate the politics of power. The guidelines further refer to particular issues regarding informed consent, notably clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of participants and stakeholders in the project. In this regard the guidelines stress the importance of agreements to guide interpretation and the ownership of data, authorship, dissemination of findings and financial accountability. This guideline allows for various methods to obtain consent such as digital recordings of verbal consent, written records that participants have been duly informed and consent from respected, traditional or elected community leaders.

The final section of the guidelines refers to the nature and structure of community involvement in the research. It requires a community body such as an advisory board or a community committee to be consulted on the planning of the research, the execution of the research and the dissemination of the research results.

4. PROPOSING AN ETHICS FRAMEWORK FOR PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND THE THIRD SECTOR

The proposed Unisa framework is arguably a good attempt to provide guidelines for CBPR for academics and ethics review committees. It goes beyond what ethics review committees would traditionally have considered. The guidelines even refer to

partnerships and certain issues equally applicable to third sector organisations. The intention of these guidelines was not to develop comprehensive ethics guidelines for the intersection between HEIs, communities and the third sector, but rather to integrate community-based research ethics into the existing research ethics policy of the university.

In this chapter I have proposed an accountability framework for the consideration of third sector ethics and a power-, rights- and interest-based framework for partnership ethics. I subsequently propose that the integration of these two frameworks' principles into the existing Unisa ethics guidelines provides a framework for ethical engagement for all HEIs, communities and the third sector.

I have attempted this integration by virtue of firstly adding to the existing elements of the seven considerations proposed in Unisa's policy on research ethics (Unisa 2007). I have merged considerations 4 and 5 into one consideration given the additional elements that relate closely to both. I have subsequently aligned convergent elements with elements of the existing guidelines and finally added ethical considerations that cannot be logically synthesised with the existing ones. These additions and emphasis are presented in bold in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1 An ethics framework for knowledge sharing between higher education institutions and the third sector

Ethics guidelines for higher education institutions' community-based research (Unisa)	Elements of the seven guidelines (4 and 5 merged into one)	Partnerships, power, interest and rights-based framework	Third sector accountability framework	Practical application
1. Knowledge production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Blends traditional forms of knowledge production with 'lived experience' ▪ Recognises that community engaged research emanates from partnerships ▪ Oriented towards action and social change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rights of various parties in knowledge production, ownership and dissemination must be explicitly acknowledged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognise sideways accountability of all parties in the partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community engaged research projects should be governed by a committee representative of the managers and decision makers of the different sectors. All decisions regarding knowledge production, ownership and dissemination should be made by this collective governance structure.

Ethics guidelines for higher education institutions/ community-based research (Unisa)	Elements of the seven guidelines (4 and 5 merged into one)	Partnerships, power, interest and rights-based framework	Third sector accountability framework	Practical application
2. Social and scientific value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open engagement with the community without clearly formulated research questions, tools and methods ▪ Mapping the research process – Contribution of knowledges and resources spelt out ▪ Negotiate and safeguard intellectual property rights ▪ Training of community members in aspects of community engaged research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emergent research designs ▪ Beneficiaries full partners to partnership ▪ HEIs and third sector partners to demonstrate extent of control by beneficiaries and constituents ▪ Relationships used as tool to negotiate power and interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Values of the third sector dictate downward accountability to beneficiaries ▪ Third sector and HEIs open for scrutiny by beneficiaries ▪ Demonstrate how upward and downward accountabilities are to be balanced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A mechanism should be established from the outset to allow for the flow of information from and to the beneficiaries, such as regular focus group discussions. ▪ Narrative reports should be co-authored by beneficiaries. Financial reports should be availed to the beneficiaries in a format and language that they can understand and interrogate. Budgets should make provision for interpreters, translators, time and space to allow beneficiaries to critically engage with the reports.
3. Scientific validity and ethical merit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethical approval from ethics review committees on various cycles of the research instead of once-off approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethical approval from beneficiaries negotiated through relationship, and legitimacy of partner and partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethical approval obtained from beneficiaries through downward accountability mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beneficiaries should be trained in ethics. ▪ Approval can be in writing, audio recorded or minuted.
4. Fair participant selection and nature of participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider risk-benefit ratio to participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interests and rights of all partners to be considered in selection and nature of participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community to co-select participants based on jointly agreed upon criteria ▪ Participants/ community beneficiaries to control the research process and action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection criteria should be workshopped with community leadership. ▪ Community leadership should identify and refer participants. ▪ Regular focus group discussions should accommodate inputs from participants in the research process.

Ethics guidelines for higher education institutions' community-based research (Unisa)	Elements of the seven guidelines (4 and 5 merged into one)	Partnerships, power, interest and rights-based framework	Third sector accountability framework	Practical application
5. Informed consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreements to guide interpretation and the ownership of data, authorship, dissemination of findings and financial accountability ▪ Allow for various methods to obtain consent such as digital recordings of verbal consent, written records that participants have been duly informed and consent from respected, traditional or elected community leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informed consent obtained through relationships with beneficiaries and partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sufficient information and training of all partners and beneficiaries on issues relating to informed consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Budgets should make provision for translation of information and engagement sessions with beneficiaries to obtain informed consent. ▪ The medium for obtaining consent (digital recordings, verbal consent, minutes) should be the choice of participants and in some instances community leaders. ▪ Informed consent should be revisited regularly during focus group discussions with participants.
6. Community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community body, that is an advisory board or a community committee, to be consulted on the planning and execution of research and the dissemination of the research results 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants allowed to access and scrutinise data and institutional/third sector/government/donor information ▪ Budgets to be allocated to allow for time and processes to facilitate structured community engagement by all partners ▪ Methods for structured accountability to be explicit ▪ Donors to programme with third sector organisations to ensure optimal downward accountability and prevent overregulation and stringent upward accountability ▪ Beneficiaries/ participants to participate in programming and budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every participatory research project should establish an advisory board or community committee to advise the project and to ensure community voices are heard and community leadership is acknowledged. ▪ The committee should meet as often as required by community stakeholders.

Ethics guidelines for higher education institutions' community-based research (Unisa)	Elements of the seven guidelines (4 and 5 merged into one)	Partnerships, power, interest and rights-based framework	Third sector accountability framework	Practical application
7. Balancing power asymmetries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Negotiate and spell out terms and conditions of the engagement ▪ Ongoing negotiation of power for equal decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mechanisms designed for participation of beneficiaries/ participants on all levels of decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beneficiaries should be represented in the project governance structure, the community committee/ advisory team and the focus groups.
8. Negotiating interests		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Negotiate and spell out interests, roles and responsibilities of all partners ▪ Explicit recognition of conflicting interests ▪ Frequently consider changing roles and responsibilities and renegotiate ▪ Ongoing conversation and negotiation to balance scholarly rigour with urgency for change ▪ Spell out financial and human resource contributions ▪ Be explicit about working methods, organisational culture and organisational objectives of all parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design of mechanisms to respond to underlying interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interests are disclosed and negotiated over time and through building trust. This process can neither be hurried nor is it a once-off event. ▪ Partnership agreements and funding should be flexible enough to accommodate emerging interests over time.

5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have proposed a conceptual framework for community engaged ethics that can be applied by higher education institutions, the third sector and other stakeholders when they embark collectively on projects of social change in communities. I have specifically considered the accountability challenges of the third sector, the ethics challenges encountered by partnerships, deploying a power-, interest- and rights-based framework and the particular ethics challenges encountered in community-engaged research as described by current scholars. The guidelines for community-engaged research developed from existing literature and experience in community engagement by Unisa were used as a basis to develop a comprehensive framework for all stakeholders.

This outline has been informed by certain choices of the author regarding specific elements that informed the development of the comprehensive ethics framework. Fellow researchers might approach the development of such guidelines from other perspectives and use different frameworks as reference. It would be of scientific value to determine whether other approaches to developing such frameworks yield similar results. More studies to develop comprehensive ethics frameworks for community-based research should be encouraged to enrich the one proposed here.

It is also hoped that universities can use this framework to include ethical considerations in partnership agreements. Ultimately, the ideal is that this guiding framework might enable more participatory knowledge sharing between the third sector and higher education institutions.

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4

THE POLITICAL UNCONSCIOUS OF HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Mabel Erasmus

ABSTRACT

Contradictions and contestations seem to plague the notion of community engagement in South African higher education. This is surprising in view of its overt links to Utopian ideals espoused by policy directives for higher education transformation in a democratic South Africa. This situation has an impact on the knowledge enablement potential in the interaction between higher education and the third sector. In this chapter I propose a perspective on this state of affairs that is influenced by Marxism. Creative tensions between ideological limitations and Utopian impulses in the field were investigated, using Fredric Jameson's notion of the Political Unconscious (Jameson 1981) as an exploratory tool. Based on a review of literature I illustrate manifestations of the dialectic between ideology and the Utopian vision of a classless society. I contend that this reading deepens our understanding of political factors in the broader society that maintain contradictions between public pronouncements and the experience of scholars, civil society organisations (the third sector) and community members involved in engagement practices. It also enables engaged scholars to reimagine South African society and the role of higher education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Karl Marx famously said that the task is not just to understand the world but to change it. A variant to keep in mind is that if you want to change the world you'd better try to understand it. That doesn't mean just listening to a talk or reading a book, though that's helpful sometimes. You learn from participating. You learn from others. You learn from the people you're trying to organize. We all have to gain the understanding and the experience to formulate and implement ideas and plans as to how to move forward. (Noam Chomsky 2012:305)

Understanding the world in order to change it, as Chomsky suggests in the above citation, resonates well with my idea of what higher education should be about. Many others have also been cherishing ideals of higher education for the common good, especially after the first democratic elections in South Africa. Yet, almost two decades after the release of *Education White Paper 3* (RSA DoE 1997), questions may be asked about the nature of the response of universities to the challenges and opportunities posed by the distressing contradictions within society that still require action. Expectations raised by the adoption of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* in 1996 (RSA 2007), and many laudable policy directives to follow, have in most instances not been met over the first years of democracy. What exactly the role of higher education in society should be has become increasingly contentious, confusing and contradictory, specifically when one considers how the notions of community engagement (as an overarching concept) and curricular forms of engagement, such as service learning, have featured in policy directives over the past years.

A conspicuous example of confusing trends in higher education emerges when considering the following omission: *Education White Paper 3* of 1997, which informed the *Higher Education Act* of the same year, put forward an agenda for the transformation of higher education from "segregated, inequitable and highly inefficient apartheid institutions, towards a single national system that serves both individual and collective needs" (Hall 2010:3). *Education White Paper 3* and several later policy directives placed emphasis on the importance of 'community service programmes' and 'knowledge-based community service' as a means to demonstrate commitment to the common good. Community engagement was depicted as one of the core functions of higher education, along with teaching, learning and research, and thus the *Criteria for institutional audits* (RSA HEQC 2004:19) included Criterion 18 that is dedicated to community engagement. When the *Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training* (RSA DHET) was released during 2012, it was rather alarming to those who valued the previous directives that the newly

established Department of Higher Education and Training did not mention the role of community engagement as a mechanism to infuse responsiveness to regional and national challenges and social responsibility into the core activities of higher education institutions. The South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF 2012) responded to this conspicuous absence by putting forward possible explanations of this omission by mentioning several milestones along the path to entrench community engagement as the third 'pillar' of higher education and, in conclusion, by submitting that "it would be remiss of the Ministry to avoid contemplating the role that community engagement will have in the envisaged Post School system or do so without the involvement of advocates of community engagement" (SAHECEF 2012:3). Probably in reaction to SAHECEF's submission, Section 4.8 on community engagement and graduate community service was added by the time the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (RSA DHET) was published in 2013.

The above-mentioned initial omission, and some other silences, tensions and contradictions that seem to plague the fields of community engagement and service learning in the higher education context remind me of the notions of the Political Unconscious and narratives as 'socially symbolic acts' that Fredric Jameson put forward in 1981. Seen as but one of many disconcerting features of the broader South African context, it is also a reminder that within higher education 'History still hurts' (in the overtly Marxist sense of the phrase).

It is acknowledged that higher education institutions in South Africa, as in many countries all over the world, have actively taken up the challenge of becoming more engaged with local constituencies and more responsive to the challenges faced by the various communities with which they interact. Those working in the field of higher education community engagement tend to experience obstacles and limited support that seem out of proportion with the emphasis that is placed on this third core function as a transformative mechanism (Erasmus 2007b). In the context of this book parallels may well be drawn with the precarious situation that organisations of the non-profit/civil society/third sector in South Africa find themselves. These organisations, which form one of the main constituencies that HEIs engage with, also face ever-growing expectations from both society and government which are neither acknowledged nor endorsed by an increase in funding or other forms of support (Habib 2002:viii-xi; Stuart 2014:2-4).

A literature review was undertaken to investigate both limiting ideological factors and Utopian possibilities for community engagement to contribute significantly to higher education transformation towards serving the 'public good' in South Africa.

In this chapter I argue that the idealistic language and Utopian impulses of *Education White Paper 3*, and similarly inclined state mandates regarding the role of community engagement, could be regarded as socially symbolic (language) acts that signalled the resolution of contradictions at an imaginary level, while leaving the ideological realities and structural inequality that govern the harsh material conditions of the lives of the majority of South African citizens virtually untouched. The struggle to move forward in transforming higher education also places limitations on the potential for creating knowledge for mutual enablement in the interaction between higher education and the third sector. The arguments below thus have a bearing not only on what is experienced within higher education, but also on what can be achieved through its various engagements with external constituencies.

After highlighting relevant aspects of Jameson's theory of the Political Unconscious in the next section, I put forward evidence from literature of both the ideological limitation and Utopian ideals currently existing in higher education community engagement. A discussion of contradictions influencing the field will be juxtaposed by a section on the Utopian ideals espoused by curricular forms of community engagement in particular. In conclusion, suggestions are made for the coordination of the ideological with the Utopian as a way to move forward with the transformation of higher education towards becoming institutions of collaborative, enabling knowledge creation.

2. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING: THE POLITICAL UNCONSCIOUS

For the purposes of this chapter I intend to frame the tensions and contradictions that exist between the Utopian impulses contained in state-mandated community engagement as a transformative mechanism and some identified confounding, limiting elements within (my understanding of) Fredric Jameson's (1981) notion of the Political Unconscious. I argue that interpreting the role of the higher education community engagement 'narrative' as a 'socially symbolic act' could deepen our understanding of the juncture that South African higher education institutions are now in, half-way into the second decade of the twenty-first century.

The concept of the Political Unconscious is embedded in the Marxist contention that, in the final analysis, everything is political (ie social and historical). This signals a negative diagnosis of contemporary culture and social life where ideological programming leads to false consciousness, class bias, and structural limitations. Westoby and Dowling (2013:56) point out that contradictions (both in individuals and in society) not consciously acknowledged and dealt with will be pushed into the unconscious realm, "only to manifest themselves at a later stage – usually in a more

destructive way than the original problem". To this I add the argument, inferred from Jameson's work, that narrative texts (or other cultural artefacts for that matter) often serve as socially symbolic acts aimed at disguising social contradictions by offering imaginary resolutions for repressed contradictions without actually effecting any real social change.

Jameson, a literary critic and leading figure of North American Marxism, published his seminal work, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a socially symbolic act*, in 1981. Westoby and Dowling (2013:30) point out that, based on reflections on and interpretation of Marx and Bakhtin Jameson argues that class discourse is essentially dialogical in structure and that the dialogue of class struggle is one in which two opposing discourses fight it out within the general unity of a shared code. Von Boeckmann (1998:41) adds the perspective of Marxist dialectics by pointing out that Jameson's dialectical critical methodology has both a negative and a positive moment, and thus is able to unmask ideological limitations and generate, through contrast, what lies beyond those limitations. Contending that the ethical oppositions of good versus evil that form the basis of Western thought can never be escaped, Jameson seeks to place them in a productive, dynamic tension through which a vision of collective relations might be imaginable.

For purposes of my own line of reasoning in this chapter I utilise aspects of Jameson's insistence on the simultaneously ideological and Utopian character of cultural texts. In the logically paradoxical nature of the dialectic of Utopia and ideology lies the possibility for the coordination of the ideological with the Utopian that has, according to Jameson (1981:298), "a theoretical urgency which is accompanied by very real political and strategic consequences". When focusing on Jameson's Utopian or positive hermeneutics, collective energies and the ideal of hope are activated. Within his notion of dialectic thought there is anticipation of the logic of a collectivity which has not yet come into being and which represents the achieved Utopian, classless society as the ultimate concrete collective life. In the next section of this chapter I point to examples from the literature on community engagement and service learning which resonate with aspects of such positive hermeneutics.

With reference to the ideological or negative hermeneutics which is the other side of the coin (or the other half of the yin-yang symbol), Jameson (1981:299) insists that "the will to domination preserves intact within the symbolic power of art and culture". This view points to the omnipresence of History (ie the sequence of modes of production) as the ultimate interpretive horizon. Jameson reminds us that History is what hurts, "it is what refuses desire and sets inexorable limits to individual as well as collective praxis, which its ruses turn into grisly and ironic reversal of their

overt intentions” (Jameson 1981:102). And putting it in even more ominous terms: “History, as ground and untranscendable horizon, needs no particular theoretical justification: [W]e may be sure that its inalienating necessities will not forget us, however much we might prefer to ignore them” (Jameson 1981:102). In the concise literature overview that follows, this more negative side of Jameson’s hermeneutics speak from ideological aspects and inherent contradictions in how community engagement is currently positioned in South Africa.

3. IDEOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS AND UTOPIAN IDEALS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Literature suggests that after almost two decades of ‘higher education transformation’ in South Africa, key elements of what such transformation set out to achieve have not shown as much progress as might be expected. In particular, one might wonder to what extent the ideal that ‘community service’ – later to be termed ‘community engagement’ – would emerge as the third core function of higher education, on a par with teaching-learning and research, has been achieved by higher education institutions. To what extent has the (Utopian) promise of community engagement making a significant contribution to the transformation of higher education towards becoming more inclusive, responsive and democratic been fulfilled at this point in time? Are we actually moving closer to affirming community engagement as a core value of higher education as Gibbons (2007) suggests we should?

The background regarding the growth and development of community engagement in South Africa, and service learning as a curricular form of community engagement, has been chronicled in a number of sources. Some that illustrate my argument about contradictions that manifest themselves in the simultaneous presence of ideological limitations, and Utopian impulses in this field, are referred to below.

3.1 Contradictions affecting community engagement

For higher education institutions in South Africa, engaging deeply, respectfully and humbly with their external constituencies seems the most natural thing to do. Yet, in a discussion document prepared for the Council on Higher Education, Hall (2010:2) comments that higher education’s community engagement imperative is regarded as “radical, risqué and anything other than taken-for-granted”. So what seem to be limiting factors? Possible reasons for the ambivalence regarding higher education transformation through community engagement are put forward by several authors. According to Hall (2010:2), the limited unequivocal support for community engagement suggests “an epistemological ambiguity in the knowledge

project of our universities” which is also experienced within other higher education systems. Thus, broadly speaking, uncertainty about what the ‘knowledge project’ of a university should entail is regarded as a limiting factor.

In this regard Albertyn and Daniels (2009:409) contend that conflicting (ie contradictory) interpretations and imperatives, dichotomies in the conceptualisation of community engagement, as well as the concepts of knowledge and power, influence universities at the levels of management, the academics in their teaching and research, and the communities they interact with. In a neat synthesis of the literature they provide a representation of how research in relation to community engagement is informed by these three levels as South African higher education institutions exist in the global reality (Albertyn & Daniels 2009:411). Their suggestion for an extensive research agenda for the field resonates with the general contention that not enough conceptual and theory-based research has been done on community engagement and service learning in the South African context. It is noteworthy that a considerable research incentive has been launched by the National Research Foundation in the form of the Community Engagement Research Programme since 2011. This might have been in response to Hall’s (2010:48) recommendation to the Council on Higher Education that the National Research Foundation should be encouraged to make recurrent funding allocations for “research about third sector engagement”.

In a comparison of the manifestations of service learning and community engagement in three national contexts, the United States of America, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo and Bringle (2011:216) depart from the premise that higher education all over the world is undergoing rapid and dynamic change “as societies endeavour to align the local context to national priorities and global pressures”. They maintain that this was particularly true of South Africa when, after the first democratic elections, national priorities demanded transformation of all sectors of society. I argue that such Utopian impulses in early policy documents should be seen against the backdrop of a much broader transformation thrust in the country. For the higher education sector this started with *Education White Paper 3* (RSA DoE 1997) that was mentioned above.

Another limiting factor in the implementation of community engagement initiatives is the fact that it has not (yet) been funded by government and thus remains an ‘unfunded mandate’. Thomson *et al* (2011:221) point out that despite the fact “that community engagement is widely practised the then Department of Education (DoE) did not provide any material means to achieve the goals of these initiatives”. Thus the clear policy mandate from government regarding the pivotal role of the

university in the broader transformation agenda of the state and the insistence that these institutions “should become more responsive to socio-economic issues of the country” (Thomson *et al* 2011:221) have not yet translated into the allocation of enabling mechanisms to higher education institutions in the form of subsidies for human, physical and financial resources. Since 2013, however, the new Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has been taking a more encouraging stance. The *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (RSA DHET 2013:39), section 4.8, stipulates that future funding will be “restricted” to programmes that form part of the teaching and research function of universities. This is what engaged scholars are advocating for in any case. I also find it significant that the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Funding of Universities recommends that “only those kinds of community engagement programmes or activities that carry credit value as part of an accredited academic programme receive funding” (RSA DHET 2014:265). Until any of these possibilities have materialised, government’s community engagement and transformation ‘narrative’ could be regarded as a ‘socially symbolic act’ that could have little impact on the actual nature and functioning of higher education institutions.

The “epistemological ambiguity” mentioned by Hall (see above) is also revealed in the Mode 1 versus Mode 2 knowledge debate (Albertyn & Daniels 2009:410; Hall 2010:18-20; Thomson *et al* 2011:218) in which there is a juxtaposition of knowledge for the sake of knowledge (Mode 1) with useable knowledge for the benefit of society (Mode 2). With the latter there is an insistence that universities generate contextualised, “socially useful knowledge” that integrates with other forms of knowledge in “the knowledge economy” (Thomson *et al* 2011:218). The most influential proponent of Mode 2 knowledge generation is Gibbons, who argued for instituting engagement not just as a core function but as a “core value in a Mode 2 society” (Gibbons 2007) at a conference in Cape Town in 2006. However, despite the pull towards the contextualisation of knowledge through engagement with the broader society, the close link between knowledge and power remains largely intact and manifests itself in a variety of ways. Hence some local academics have come to the conclusion that what lies beyond the ivory tower is “a desert called excellence” (Nash 2010:2), that is, an “intellectual wasteland” in which a managerial system is followed, with its concomitant emphasis on quantitative measures, ethical ‘neutrality’ and competition.

A further indication of the current ambivalence in the South African higher education sector about the positioning of community engagement can be gleaned from looking at two recent publications in the field. The first book is titled *Community Engagement*

in *African Universities: Perspectives, Prospects and Challenges* (Preece, Ntseane, Modise & Osborne 2012). In the introductory chapter the book's contribution is expressed as an effort to contextualise the "specific historical circumstances pertaining to higher education in African contexts and positioning the African university within contemporary world debates that give rise to a renewed global emphasis on universities and the notion of 'engagement'" (Preece *et al* 2012:1-2). The authors contend that the renewed focus on university engagement is a result of the movement on the African continent towards promoting development partnerships with the private sector and civil society (Preece *et al* 2012:9). Turning to South Africa, they point out that these trends were supplemented by the post-apartheid *Education White Paper 3* (RSA DoE 1997), "which explicitly referred to the need for South African universities to develop community service learning opportunities for students in an effort to encourage cultural tolerance and citizenship responsibility" (Preece *et al* 2012:9). They describe the development of community engagement over the past decade as a "rapidly moving feast" (Preece *et al* 2012:12) and point out that the earlier emphasis on 'service' has recently evolved into the notion of engagement as a mutual learning project and a means to contribute to the knowledge society, particularly in the form of Mode 2 knowledge (Erasmus 2007a; Gibbons 2007). In comparison with the book by Preece *et al* (2012), a publication bearing the title *Higher Education for the Public Good: Views from the South* (Leibowitz 2013) includes no chapters devoted to the concepts of community engagement and/or service learning and there is hardly any reference to these concepts. However, several authors do refer to matters that relate to the argumentation followed in this chapter. Hall (2013:27), for example, points to some of the contradictory drivers of higher education mentioned before. He points to the inherently ambiguous nature of universities, playing "a progressive role in contributing to educational attainment and its benefits", but "operating at the same time as gatekeepers that advantage and protect elites and their concentrations of symbolic capital".

With regard to the field of higher education engagement for the common good, where scholarly insights are supposed to lead to social action for change, there seems to be a tendency to avoid the "unity of a shared code" (Jameson 1981). There are always new, more exciting academic 'contestations' to be explored, placing limitations on the ability to use the gained insights to move forward and act as agents of change. From the Australian context Pearson (2009:192), an Aboriginal activist, reaches the "desperate conclusion" that he needs to dismiss much of contemporary culture and academic life as "just a big confusion-producing mechanism in the service of social stratification".

From the examples provided above it is clear that contradictions and tensions are at play in higher education systems. This is underscored by the contradictory drivers of higher education to which Webb and Burgin (2009:41) refer when they note that dwindling government funding for Australian universities has increased the imperative towards attracting more and better students through being “a university of international standing and outlook”. The authors point out that there is a contradiction between this imperative and the increasing pressure for teaching and research to be “relevant” and engaged with the community. In arguing how international university rankings should be considered “a flawed tool”, Muller (2013:18) questions whether the ranking measures reflect what we want universities in South Africa to be emphasising, and adds: “Does it really make sense to assess a privately funded university in a developed country against the same set of indicators as a publicly funded institution in a developing country?” In my opinion, it borders on delusions of grandeur when world-class status is pursued by higher education institutions of a developing country situated in severely under-resourced environs.

According to Watson (2007:29) the historical role of higher education has been more profoundly structured around cooperation and mutual support than competition; he argues that merely chasing “world-class” status may be too narrow an ambition for individual universities and their societies. At the very least “it is not a priority likely to serve civic and community engagement” (Watson 2007:46). Universities have vital roles in the twenty-first century knowledge economy and in society that go beyond pursuing the suit of scores currently regarded as world-class criteria. Such roles include supplying relevant qualified professionals and supporting professions with research and development “in all sorts of areas that may not be sufficiently glamorous to attract the world-class ratings, especially in the public service” (Watson 2007:39-40). Watson emphasises collaboration and mutual support in the field, pointing out that cooperating rather than competing with other higher education institutions is required in order to meet specific local and regional needs. Jameson’s (1981:299) above-mentioned argument that “the will to domination preserves intact within the symbolic power of art and culture” is clearly particularly relevant in academia, no matter how much emphasis is put on a transformation agenda.

In addition to the above-mentioned national and international contradictions, the South African context imposes limitations on community engagement that are embedded in structural inequalities in society that have not changed significantly since the first democratic elections. Ramphela (2012:35) suggests that with a Gini coefficient that is the highest in the world, the limited progress could perhaps be linked to “ambivalence of the present actors towards entrenching constitutional

democracy". In similar vein Singh (2013:14) proposes a study of "what policy levers and incentives, if any, have been put in place [by the state] to steer higher education institutions towards a broader notion of social transformation". My inference is that much of what has been put forward by government can be regarded as socially symbolic acts in the form of good intentions, laudable policy directives and even quality assurance mechanisms. These have not yet created an enabling environment in a country where there has been limited social change in the form of "a change in the material conditions of existence" (Von Boeckmann 1998:33), and this puts serious limitations on what universities can achieve in terms of transformation through community engagement. So how does this affect curricular forms of community engagement openly aimed at reciprocal, collaborative creation of knowledge for purposes of mutual enablement?

3.2 Utopian ideals of curricular community engagement

Embedding community engagement in the curriculum has been linked to the transformation agenda, specifically through the introduction of service learning. As a pedagogical approach that was brought to South Africa from the United States one might say that, in comparison with community engagement, service learning carries an additional burden of suspicion because of its origins in the heart of capitalism. The concept espouses Utopian ideals about responsible citizenship, partnerships and participation, reciprocal teaching and learning, and collaborative knowledge construction in ways that seem to presuppose a classless society. As the main thrust behind establishing service learning in South Africa, the Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships (CHESP) initiative (1999 until 2007) was managed in a way that linked it to the various state mandates throughout (Lazarus, Erasmus, Hendricks, Nduna & Slamati 2008; Thomson *et al* 2011:221; Hatcher & Erasmus 2008:50; Stanton & Erasmus 2013:76-85). Service learning was regarded as a powerful point of entry for community engagement by integrating it in the curriculum of South African students. A scholar in the field (Naudé 2012:226), defines service learning as "an educational approach that integrates/balances learning experiences with service (addressing goals identified by a specific community) through active and reflective learning". Thomson *et al* (2011:214) refer to service learning as "a teaching approach that extends student learning beyond the classroom"; they contend that "service learning as a distinctive pedagogical approach remains a nascent field", again pointing to the need for more research to be undertaken on the various aspects of this complex educational phenomenon.

Community engagement has been defined as “initiatives and processes through which the expertise of the higher education institution in the areas of teaching and research are applied to address issues relevant to its community” (RSA HEQC 2004:15). Service learning, which is but one of a variety of forms in which engagement finds expression, takes a much more Utopian stance. While this early definition of community engagement positions the university as the main agent that possesses specific forms of ‘expertise’ to be ‘applied’ to ‘its community’, advocates of service learning are intent on advancing a democratic, collaborative knowledge project in which all participants serve, teach and learn from one another through mutual, reciprocal knowledge sharing. Service learning has most of these characteristics in common with community-based research in higher education, as expounded by Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker and Donohue (2003). The model of community-based research that Strand *et al* (2003:8) propose is based on the following principles: It is a collaborative enterprise between academic researchers (staff and students) and community members; it validates multiple sources of knowledge, multiple methods of discovery and dissemination; and it has as its goal “social action and social change for the purposes of achieving social justice”.

In a comparative analysis of service learning in the United States and South Africa – informed by the educational philosophies of John Dewey and Julius Nyerere – Hatcher and Erasmus (2008:49) link this pedagogical approach to the dire need for “student education for responsible citizenship” in both the United States and South Africa. What differentiates service learning from other types of educational experiences that take place in the community is that “service learning is linked to a course and has the intentional goal of developing civic skills and dispositions in students” (Hatcher & Erasmus 2008:51). The authors state that the educational philosophy of John Dewey is valued as the bedrock for service learning in the United States. The role of education in a democracy was most explicitly defined by Dewey in *Democracy and education* (cited in Hatcher & Erasmus 2008:51), pointing to the need to find a balance between the tensions of social aims and individual development, among other things. He posed this pivotal question: “Who, then, shall conduct education so that humanity may improve?” Hatcher and Erasmus (2008:51) point out that Dewey posed the challenge of ensuring that education contributes to “social intelligence that will yield improvements in society and individuals who can develop to their fullest potential, in ways that will ultimately benefit society”. The socially responsible citizenship that Nyerere proposed from and for the African context had a similar thrust. In South Africa, service learning is valued by its supporters “as a means to cultivate social responsibility and prepare graduates equipped to work across racial and economic differences in post-apartheid society” (Hatcher &

Erasmus 2008:50). Thomson *et al* describe service learning as a vehicle to realise the potential of universities “to influence students to involve themselves in civic matters and develop the capacity to act efficaciously” (Thomson *et al* 2011:218). This they link to the need for “actively engaged citizens” in a well-functioning democracy (Thomson *et al* 2011:214).

In another comparative study Stanton and Erasmus (2013:78) refer to “partnerships as core practice” in South African service learning and mention the CHESP partnership triad model as one of the distinguishing features and departures from United States practice. In the original triad partnership that was regarded as vehicle for engagement during the CHESP initiative, the triad consisted of an academic partner, a community representative and a service provider. According to Stanton and Erasmus (2013:78), the importance of ‘community voice’ in the service learning partnerships points to the fact that democratic participation and inclusive partnerships were viewed more seriously in South Africa, as these concepts were linked to “national development challenges that the government required in its higher education transformation agenda”. According to the ‘bottom-up and inside-out’ versus ‘top-down and outside-in’ argument of the article by Stanton and Erasmus (2013), it is mentioned that the service learning initiative in South Africa “seems to have been more of a top-down, policy-driven movement, instigated and legitimized by the new government’s education ministry, and catalyzed by an outside organization, the Joint Education Trust” (Stanton & Erasmus 2013:90). However, the substantial funding that was given to participating universities by the Joint Education Trust during the CHESP initiative was not followed up by government funding ring-fenced for service learning or community engagement in general, leaving universities that participated with the choice of allocating funding from their own central budgets, finding (mostly unsustainable) *ad hoc* funding or terminating the work.

Literature about service learning is often produced by staunch supporters focusing on the many benefits of the pedagogy. From within the United States context, Butin (2010:xix) warns against complacency and invites academics and other practitioners to experiment with rethinking and constructing a service learning “made stronger by critique”. According to him, dominant conceptualisations of service learning privilege a ‘first wave’ mentality that poses service learning as “the answer no matter what the question is” (Butin 2010:144). The reason behind this is that the service learning movement attempted to position itself as a “theoretically and pedagogically unproblematic practice to be embedded within higher education” (Butin 2010:xix) instead of admitting (or realising?) that it is an ideologically driven practice (Butin 2010:37). In his book Butin attempts to strengthen a ‘second wave’ of questioning

and critique by providing “a flexible academic underpinning that accommodates the strengths of service learning instead of containing and constraining it” (Butin 2010:144). He further states unequivocally that the academy is by its very nature a space for examination and critique, especially when confronted with issues as complex and contested as what transpires within and across various constituencies and communities. In terms of Jameson’s dialectical critical method one could frame Butin’s call for committed, serious, scholarly examination as an attempt at coordinating negative and positive moments of community engagement for purposes of generating, through contrast, what lies beyond ideological limitations.

Before drawing some conclusions I present a framework constructed to summarise the dialectical trends that I have described in this chapter (see Figure 4.1). I commenced with the theoretical underpinning related to how the Political Unconscious manifests itself in terms of ideological limitations and Utopian impulses in the global context. Next I discussed how the higher education sector, especially in South Africa, is subject to manifestations of the dialectic of ideology and Utopia, similar to what determines the state of South African society. Finally, in the next section, I propose that it is possible to reimagine society by coordinating the ideological with the Utopian. In this, higher education can play a significant role through community engagement. If not, History is bound to judge us harshly.

4. CONCLUSION: COORDINATION OF THE IDEOLOGICAL WITH THE UTOPIAN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In this chapter I pointed out that there are inherent contradictions between state commitment to community engagement as a transformative mechanism in South African higher education and the limiting realities experienced by advocates in universities. As exploratory tool I utilised Fredric Jameson’s (1981) notion of the Political Unconscious in which he considers narrative texts as socially symbolic (language) acts that signal the resolution of contradictions at an imaginary level, while leaving the structural inequalities that govern the lives of South African citizens virtually untouched. My contention was that viewing the ‘narratives’ of higher education community engagement as socially symbolic acts could deepen our understanding of both ideological limitations and Utopian ideals in the broader society that maintain contradictions between public pronouncements and the experience of practitioners and community members involved in community engagement across the globe.

Based on a study of the literature in the field I illustrated how the dialectic of ideology and Utopia, that is inherent in (a Marxist-oriented analysis of) South African society,

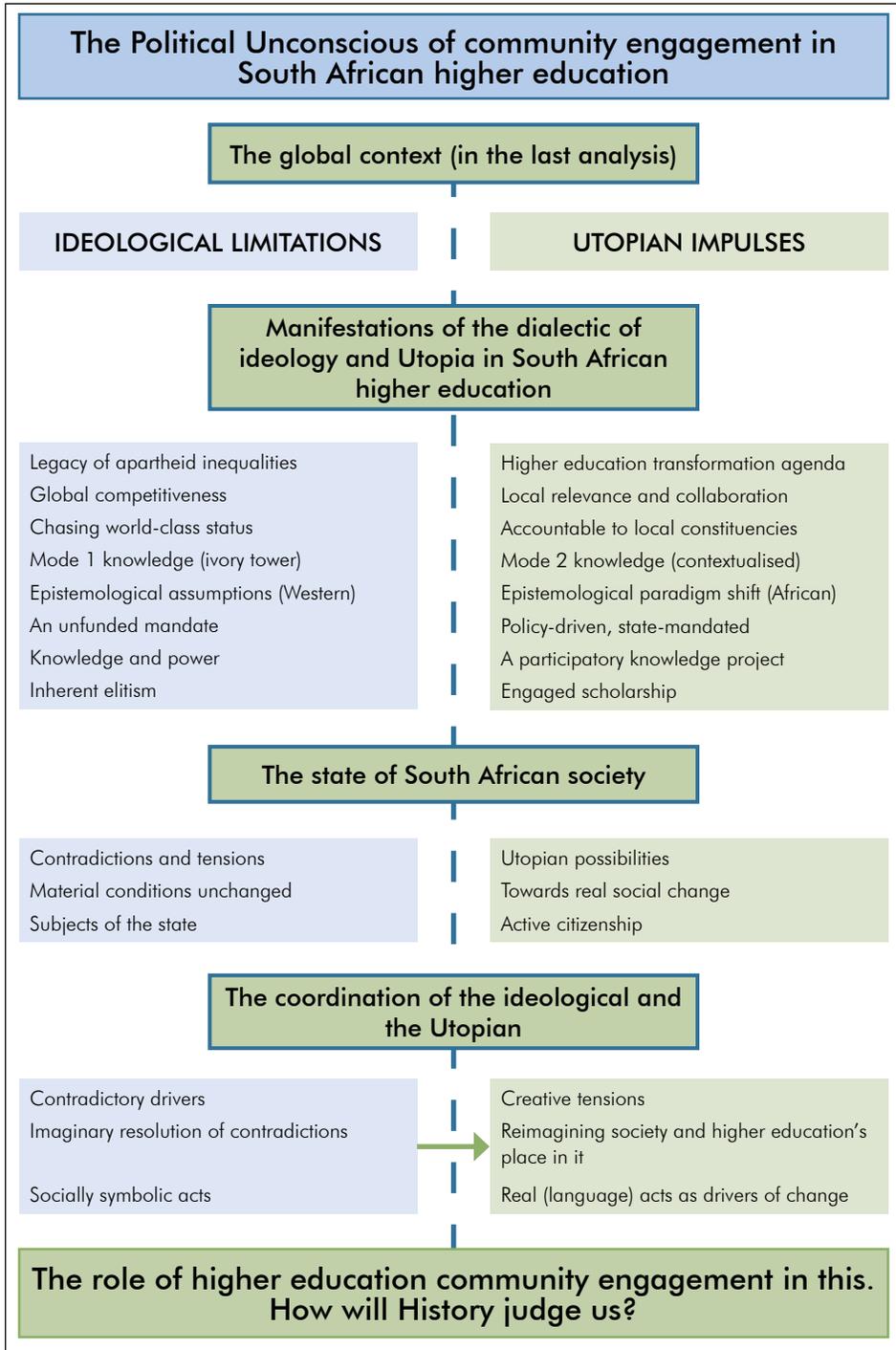


FIGURE 4.1 The Political Unconscious of community engagement in South Africa

plays itself out in the field of community engagement. Manifestations of this dialectic include a number of apparent contradictions in higher education and in the broader society as indicated in Figure 4.1. My contention, based on Jameson's call for the coordination of the ideological and the Utopian, is that these contradictions can (and should) be turned into creative tensions that enable the reimagining of society and the role of higher education in it.¹ In this manner socially symbolic acts are turned into real action as drivers of change in terms of mechanisms created through collaborative, engaged scholarship.

What keeps the will to dominate intact and contradictions alive is the tacit, unconscious realisation that inequalities cannot be eradicated or even addressed without putting the privilege of hegemonic groups in jeopardy. Understanding this about the world is vital when we intend to formulate and implement ideas and plans as to how to move forward, as Chomsky (2012:305) suggests. In his discussions on the future of community engagement in higher education, Butin (2010:133) shows us how it is possible "to ground the ideals and ideas of a social movement firmly within an intellectual one". Butin thus argues for reimagining collaborative practices and interdisciplinary inquiry, and for studying community engagement in its various manifestations "as a wonderfully complex and situated practice" that truly disturbs and forces us to rethink the normal patterns of thought, belief and the very nature of scholarship. According to Butin (2010:133) what we as practitioners and scholars must do is work through how to do and teach it well.

Ramphele (2010:3) contends that South African society is characterised by "a growing gap between laudable public policies derived from our *Constitution* and implementation that makes a difference in the daily lives of ordinary South Africans". This rings true within the context of higher education as but one of the sectors affected. In this regard Singh (2013:15) claims that "making social justice issues explicit and real within the notions of higher education responsiveness and accountability is likely to prove enormously difficult if not impossible". She insists that this task requires "not only tenacious commitment but also clarity of conception about what is required and the mobilisation of a range of role players around it". In my opinion the tendency not to build on courageous, commendable processes, such as the CHESP initiative, that were put in place before, shows a lack of commitment from the higher education sector itself.

¹ This resonates with De Beer's proposition in Chapter 5 that a third sector, reimagined for sustainability, can contribute to fostering an abundance mentality in its engagement with local communities and universities.

Von Boeckmann (1998:47) notes that Jameson's dialectical theory of ideology and Utopia foregrounds both the necessity of collective struggle and what makes this difficult for local political action to achieve, namely "the ways in which the material conditions of social life predispose us to self-enclosure and create boundaries for our vision of the future". In order for us to negotiate the boundaries of self-enclosure and limited vision of what is possible in the future, we have to acknowledge that we need to set modest goals because the work is so complex. Butin (2010:139) reminds us that doing legitimate community engagement is extremely difficult, but so are many other academic endeavours and these are, "simply put, our jobs as academics".

Those of us who, at times, still view the world through a Marxist lens need to keep reminding ourselves that achieving success in any field that threatens entrenched hegemonic positions will always require struggle. I believe that this knowledge also enriches our understanding of the position in which the majority of South African civil society organisations find themselves. History will always hurt in South Africa and no matter how much we try to forget it, we can be assured that it will not forget us, as Jameson (1981) reminds us. Working proactively with the Political Unconscious of higher education through community engagement will require persistence, humility and resolute collaborative action by those who commit themselves to scholarships of transformation and engagement. Striving to 'make' a better future, as Chomsky (2012) suggests, requires consistent effort to work towards resolving contradictions in ways that actually change the material conditions of people's lives, albeit in small (but significant) ways.

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5

REIMAGINING THE THIRD SECTOR AND ITS ENGAGEMENT WITH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

FROM SCARCITY TO SUSTAINABILITY

Stephan de Beer

ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a conceptual narrative, arguing that the third sector, if reimagined, can contribute significantly to enabling reciprocal knowledge between itself, local neighbourhoods and higher education institutions. Such a reimagination of itself – drawing from a spirituality of abundance, exploring innovation and enterprise, and fostering practices of sustainability – would enable optimal partnerships with local neighbourhoods and higher education institutions hopefully resulting in more sustainable transformations. The last part of the chapter envisages local neighbourhoods in the inner city of Tshwane as possible sites of engagement, in which the proposals of this chapter can be tested.

1. INTRODUCTION

Local neighbourhoods require strong socio-economic, physical and natural infrastructure to be viable, sustainable and resilient. The third sector – community-based, faith-based and non-profit organisations (NPOs), local citizens or citizens' groups – and higher education institutions (HEIs), in collaboration with local neighbourhoods, could help facilitate, ensure and sustain the institutional infrastructure required for such neighbourhoods. In this chapter I explore the tension between the undervalued significance of the third sector in bringing about transformational change, on the one hand, and the vulnerability of the third sector, as well as its own undervaluation of itself, on the other.

Third sector organisations are increasingly significant not only in local development engagements but also nationally and transnationally. However, the reality is that the same third sector seeking to mediate the well-being of their own local neighbourhoods are at times as vulnerable and unsustainable as the people and neighbourhoods they seek to accompany towards well-being. How do we therefore ensure a vibrant and sustainable third sector to continue as agents, facilitators and brokers of healthy local communities (neighbourhoods made up of people, places and power)?

At the same time the relationships between third sector organisations, HEIs and local neighbourhoods are often fragmented, engagements sporadic and unstrategic, and knowledge either disabling rather than enabling, or insufficiently enabled for different publics in order to have optimal transforming benefits.

In this chapter I would like to argue that a reimagined third sector can make a significant contribution to enabling reciprocal knowledge between itself, HEIs and local neighbourhoods, which, as a result, could help foster new and different ways of collaboration, greater sustainability of the third sector and the possibility of healthier, more sustainable, and indeed resilient local neighbourhoods.

The first part of the chapter focuses on reimagining a third sector that has a strong and self-critical consciousness of its own agency and knowledges, cultivates a spirituality of abundance, embraces shifts towards greater innovation in its enterprise, and fosters paradigms of sustainability. The second part of the chapter will reimagine the engagement between the third sector, HEIs and local neighbourhoods, with specific reference to narratives from the inner city of Tshwane.¹ Such a reimagined third sector would consider the possibility of enabling reciprocal knowledge with the potential to facilitate shifts in and between these different sectors and to contribute more specifically to the well-being and resilience of local neighbourhoods.

1 City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, which includes Pretoria.

2. REIMAGINING THE THIRD SECTOR

In proposing a reimagined third sector, four key elements – consciousness and agency, abundance, innovation and sustainability – are explored.

2.1 Fostering third sector consciousness: From charity and scarcity to agency

Most community organisations in South Africa are largely dependent on outside resources, other than on self-generated resources, for their continued existence. Although most community organisations will at some point claim empowerment as part of their mission – to help dependent individuals, families or communities, to break the cycles of poverty and dependence, and to find a greater sense of self-reliance – very few community organisations can actually demonstrate such self-reliance.

What is the dominant consciousness at work in the lives, minds and practices of community organisations? It is a matter of self-definition – the language we use for ourselves, the concepts we hold of ourselves, the way we carry ourselves, the manner in which we relate to those with more or less power than our own? Is the dependency and lack of sustainability of many community organisations not often the result of a dominant consciousness that is dictated by a scarcity- (or crumb-) mentality (Covey 1991; Walker 1991), a lack of robust and appreciative self-definition, and entrenched paradigms of dependency and service?

A few of these self-limiting notions are scrutinised further.

2.1.1 *The danger of charity*

Traditionally, ‘charities’ referred to organisations providing services to help the poor. In Biblical references ‘charity’ not only refers to particular practices, but it is also seen as a virtue – meaning unlimited love and kindness. In the Hebrew Bible charity is a characteristic of a righteous person: a righteous person practices charity, which is to give to the poor.

And yet, in our culture, the practice and virtue of charity have been distorted into something different to unlimited love and kindness. Charity has often become a practice of resource-rich people (power) providing handouts to resource-poor people (powerless) in ways that do not establish relationships of mutuality or equality. Charity too often leads to dependency and a perpetuation of inequality: that which is done to silence consciences, without a more fundamental restructuring of the way in which resources are gathered, accumulated or distributed. Too often charity is simply devised to keep exclusive tables intact, based on a premise of scarcity, and therefore

true sharing of abundant resources is prevented and nothing changes fundamentally (Covey 1991).

Too often third sector organisations themselves have developed beggar mentalities, doing everything required of them by donors (private or public), even if it is to deviate from their primary vocation, as long as they can retain their income.

If originally the term ‘charity’ was used to describe unlimited love and kindness expressed by righteous people in solidarity with those who were vulnerable, to reorganise the tables of humanity, then I want to suggest that the word has been co-opted by other agendas and reduced to alms-giving to keep the poor at bay. And therefore the third sector needs new language to define it, as well as the actions it undertakes, anew. If charity simply means to keep the current systems of the city and the world intact, and if those of us working in third sector organisations have become agents to make resource-rich people be less concerned about the disparities in our world, then we have lost the plot and our vocation with it. The vocation of third sector organisations is to facilitate greater degrees of human dignity, socio-economic equality, political agency, environmental justice, and working for wholeness of society in every respect.

Charity is the much more radical task of restructuring the way things are, instead of merely passing crumbs from rich to poor. If breaking the cycles of poverty, if rearranging the tables so that all can be seated and accessing resources of sustainable livelihoods, if subverting the tables of the rich, is what we do and then that is called charity, then charity is just. But if what we do is the kind of charity that consists of handouts keeping the disparities, dependencies, scarcities and distances in place, while some can never access sources of power, such charity has no justice to it.

2.1.2 The problem of non-profits

In the South African context most community organisations are registered as NPOs in terms of the *Nonprofit Organisations Act 71 of 1997* (RSA DoSD). Such organisations include community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, civic associations, sporting clubs, and a variety of other groups and institutions registered to operate without a profit motive. As with the notion of charity, although perhaps less pronounced, there are problems with the language of non-profits.

Firstly, most people associated with NPOs seem to think that they are not allowed to make profit at all. Some are even outright scared or sceptical about the notion of profit. And yet, that is of course not the case. NPOs are not primarily designed to make profit but are allowed to generate profits as long as such profits are ploughed

back into the core objectives of the company as spelled out in its institution, and as long as the profit is not more than a specified percentage of the organisation's total income. In a case where non-profits generate substantial profits, a separate special purpose vehicle might have to be created that will be taxable, but the profits will be reinvested for non-profit purposes. The point is simply this: NPOs are allowed to show profits and do not have to shy away from this possibility.

The deeper problem with the language of non-profits is the way in which the whole sector is defined in terms of what it is *not*. It is not a distinguishable sector such as the private sector or the public sector or the tertiary sector. It only speaks about what it is not, without actually describing what it actually is. Part of the legacy of Steve Biko (2002) and others was to help us see that one can never define someone in terms of who they are not. In the days of apartheid the language of 'whites' and 'non-whites', or even worse, 'Europeans' or 'non-Europeans', was common to describe different racial groups. Black people were defined in terms of who they were not. But who were they then? I could be accused of playing a semantic game. And yet, there is a depth of meaning and value in the language we use regarding ourselves. If we are only able to define ourselves in terms of who or what we are not, if we are not able to define ourselves clearly in terms of who we are, boldly and without apology, it might result in a lack of clear identity, which will bind us to the kind of captivity to crumbs that contemporary charity has brought about. We need to break those shackles if we, and those we want to be in solidarity with, are to be free.

2.1.3 The significance of the third sector

In response to this dilemma of language some consequently argue for other concepts and languages such as those of the community sector or voluntary sector. I would like to propose that we think of the third sector as it has become commonly known in places like France, Japan and the UK (HM Treasury 2007; Hull 2007). The International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR nd) is bringing together hundreds of scholars, researchers and practitioners, devoted to the study of civil society, non-profits and philanthropy, under the rubric of the third sector, now being internationally widely recognised. So whereas the term 'public sector' refers to government and 'private sector' to business, the 'third sector' refers to civil society organisations or, defined differently, the social economy.

Nation states are increasingly recognising the importance of the third sector in terms of how it contributes to the social infrastructure and well-being of society at large, and vulnerable populations in particular. If one were to take non-profits out of the equation in South Africa, many communities and vulnerable groups would be

completely exposed – consider social infrastructure in communities, the distribution of anti-retroviral drugs, the care of orphans and vulnerable children, support for homeless people and victims of domestic violence, the delivery of social housing, and so forth.

The Leprosy Mission, which has been in existence since 1874, and in South Africa since 1949 (Moller 2014), and whose mission is to address the challenges of people living with leprosy, has been largely in-sourced by the Department of Health for managing leprosy work in South Africa as a whole because of their history, legacy, credibility and the sophistication with which they have done their work over many years. Although leprosy has been reduced to the point of a small incidence rate in South Africa, this is one example of a third sector organisation adding significant value to society at large and probably at a fraction of the cost if it was to be done by the public or private sector instead.

From an economic point of view, nation states have started to recognise the importance of this sector – 12% of the workforce in France is active in the third sector and in some Scandinavian countries it might be closer to 20%. The housing solution of some countries lies completely with the third sector. The third sector contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) of some countries is to the extent of 12-20%. There is no way in which this could be discarded as insignificant (HM Treasury 2007; Hopkins 2010; Hull 2007).

Often the soul of a community is kept intact because of enduring third sector presence; when others disinvest, third sector organisations often take considerable risks to remain. The language of third sector organisations is often couched in terms such as ‘compassion’, ‘justice’, ‘solidarity’ and ‘dignity’, in a much more natural way than in the private or public sector. This is soul language that can help sustain communities, even, and especially, when infrastructure is scarce or under threat. The importance of this sector for stable and healthy societies should never (or no longer) be underestimated.

2.1.4 Consciousness and agency

Not only is the work done by the third sector about affirming a new consciousness of this sector, both within the sector itself and with those outside the sector as they perceive and partner with it, but it is also about a deeply personal journey for those actively involved in this sector. Embracing the belonging to this sector needs to go hand in hand with embracing the sector’s own agency, an acknowledgement that ‘it is up to us’. It might be ‘up to us’ to eradicate homelessness from the city streets, to arrest decay in certain neighbourhoods, to provide top-up services for school leavers

to ensure that they do not become the next generation of unemployed young people, and to foster a sense of manhood and womanhood that will help address gender violence and inequities.

In 2013 the theme of the annual Feast of the Clowns, hosted by the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, an inner city third sector organisation in Pretoria/Tshwane, was “It is up to us”. The aim was to explore the responsibilities, ownership and agency that ordinary people, third sector organisations and HEIs need to embrace, on their own but also in partnership, in response to some of the greatest societal challenges.

This notion of agency does not imply that third sector organisations should engage challenges exclusively, or that it is ‘up to us’ alone, but it does imply a very deliberate embracing of challenges by the third sector in the sense of taking ownership, of building partnerships, of acknowledging its distinctive vocation, strengths and capabilities, together with many others.

Embracing the sector’s own agency could imply starting to address challenges with which public sector and private sector organisations are not willing to engage. Sometimes it would mean crafting good practices in ways that might eventually inform local and even national policies and strategies. It often requires long processes of education and conscientisation for certain issues to be articulated well, until they become priority areas for all sectors.

The consciousness and agency (De Gruchy 2003) spoken of here should not be based on a false sense of confidence. It should be nurtured slowly, emanating from a deep rootedness in communities, intuitive knowledge developed over time, hard work to build a knowledge and capacity base, years of engagement and experience, well-developed skills and competencies, proven track records, broken cycles of violence and poverty evidenced in communities, measured and well-articulated impact, and sustained, humble service. All of this work needs to be done until third sector organisations are distinguished by others as the leaders in their respective fields.

This chapter suggests that for third sector organisations to be much more intentional about fostering own consciousness and agency, it is crucial that they have a deep self-understanding, rooted in clear values, and clarity of vision, mission and self-definition. It is a consciousness deliberate about deconstructing societal narratives that are oppressive and exclusive, affirming and appreciating own agency and assets and – even more importantly – having a deep appreciation for the agency and assets of the people and communities with which it journeys.

2.2 Cultivating a spirituality of abundance

It is vital for the third sector to develop a new self-consciousness through cultivating a spirituality of abundance. Such spirituality will help organisations overcome a scarcity mentality and result in them engaging boldly as equal partners with HEIs and both the public and private sectors.

Walker (1991) contrasts a spirituality of abundance with a theology of crumbs, suggesting that too often development aid, third sector organisations, HEIs and churches have a 'crumb mentality', waiting for crumbs to fall off rich people's tables (as in the Biblical story of Lazarus and the rich man), instead of using own agency and consciousness to create their own tables.

If the generic vocation of third sector organisations is to work for the common good of all people, which I suppose could be the case, obviously in partnership with many others, it can only sustain such a quest, if it is rooted in a firm conviction of the abundance of the global household. The Greek word *oikos* is the word for household and the root word for both economy and ecology. Ecology refers to the structure of the household, and economy to the way in which the household is managed, that is, how resources are distributed and shared, among other things.

A spirituality of abundance will not only affirm the abundance of the global household (ecology). It will also spend much time to foster practices and disciplines that will be concerned with both how to protect and sustain the structure of the household – for if we do not sustain it, it cannot sustain us – and with how resources are shared in this household.

Rooted in a spirituality of abundance, it then becomes possible for third sector organisations and their partners to believe in the possibility of sustainable communities and sustainable community organisations, to become bold in seeking innovative change that would be radically inclusive of the most vulnerable sectors of society, and to foster engagement with HEIs as equal partners. All of this becomes possible if premised on a spirituality of abundance, drawn from a theology of creation or a paradigm of an interconnected and interdependent global household (Fox 2000; Covey 1991). It will affirm that the abundant resources of God (Brueggemann 1993) are enough for our sustenance, that of our communities, and that of future generations, if such resources are distributed in a just, inclusive and responsible manner.

2.3 Embracing (social) innovation and (social) entrepreneurship

The significance of the third sector often lies with the (social) innovations that it facilitates to engage with societal challenges. A more deliberate self-consciousness will include an intentionality about innovation, creative ways of retrieving, capturing, articulating and sharing innovations that occur, to help change paradigms, processes, practices and programmes, not only at local level, but even nationally and globally. Of particular value in recent years was the work done by organisations such as Ashoka Innovators for the Public, the Schwab Foundation and the Skoll Foundation, not only to promote but also to reward and broadcast social innovation, assisting in scaling, replicating and multiplying good practices with the potential to transform systems, communities and people alike.

Closely linked to the concept of social innovation, although not necessarily to be equated with each other, is the concept of social entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs are people who see a gap in the market, and they create an innovative response to address a certain gap in a way that is financially not only sustainable but also profitable. Social entrepreneurs create social enterprises. Social entrepreneurs are people who see a gap or challenge in society, and then create an innovative response to make a change in terms of that particular issue in ways that are financially sustainable, and sometimes also profitable (Bornstein 2007).

The difference between NPOs and social enterprises are often the deliberate intention of social enterprises to ensure profit that is social, financial and environmental. A critical challenge to be further interrogated is in how far social enterprises could be created that would be rigorous in seeking to connect and embody both social innovation in the best sense of the word and with a deep sense of social justice, restructure the way the resources of the world are shared. Third sector organisations would do well to nurture reflective practices that will facilitate the best of social innovations for this and generations to come, and to embrace and encourage social entrepreneurship as a way to arrest and overcome some of the greatest challenges of society.

2.4 Fostering paradigms of sustainability

Flowing from a spirituality of abundance, and conscious practices of social innovation, should be an insistence on fostering new paradigms of sustainability. Sustainability, in the context of this chapter, refers to the global and national household, the local household (community or neighbourhood), as well as the community and the third sector organisation living and participating in the global, national and local households (Cobb 1992).

The Brundtland Commission (1987:16) of the United Nations defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Whether the global or local neighbourhood or household, or the local third sector organisation, the concept and challenge of sustainability remain the same: to ensure that there are enough resources today, equitably distributed, and that they are used responsibly in order for future generations to have adequate, sustainable and equitable resources. In this section I focus on sustainability in relation to local communities.

All community organisations are challenged and struggling with long-term sustainability. The questions that arise in this context are the following:

- How do we build local community organisations and civic infrastructure that last?
- How do we leave a legacy beyond the phase of the pioneer or the entrepreneur?
- How do our current actions outlive the current generation for future generations to benefit from them?
- How do we generate resources to sustain our actions?

Too often we think of sustainability only in terms of financial well-being. Some people focus on environmental concerns. In fostering paradigms of sustainability it is important to embrace a vision of sustainability that is intentional about fostering three overlapping and interconnected circles of sustainability in local community organisations and in local communities: the social circle (people), the economic circle (profit) and the environmental circle (planet) (Figure 5.1).

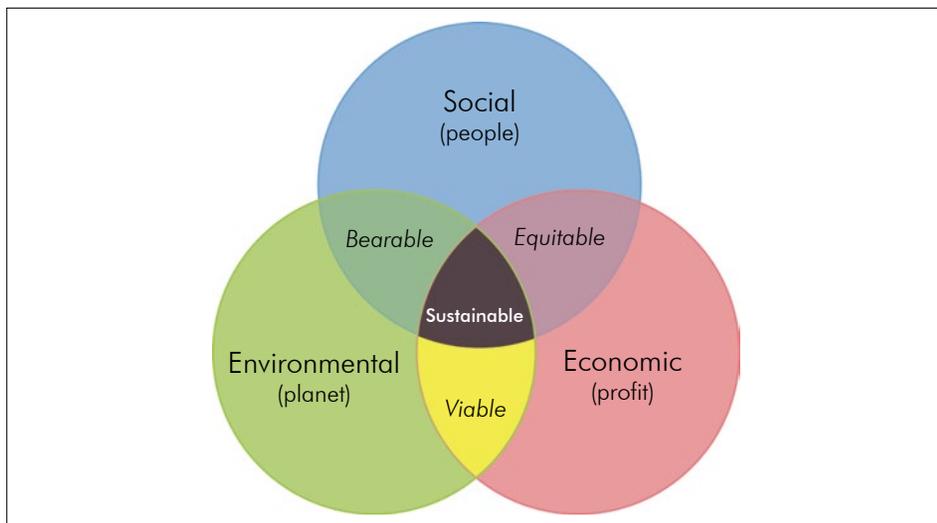


FIGURE 5.1 The three pillars of sustainability [Wikipedia 2006]

Socially and organisationally our actions must ensure the highest degree of equity and equality. Environmentally our actions must be such that the structure of the household can be bearable and durable for generations to come. Economically our actions must ensure viability for future existence. It is in the overlapping work to ensure all of these, often in a delicate relationship with each other, that sustainability will be achieved.

2.4.1 *The social circle*

Sustainability is not just about environmental and financial resources. In third sector organisations sustainability starts with the right people, being aligned to shared values and visions, and being committed to developing disciplines and processes that will continuously root the organisation, its people and its programmes, in the shared values and vision. As Collins (2001) suggests in *Good to great*, so-called great organisations are organisations that have the right people: people owning and embodying the values and visions of the organisations in the right places and aligned to their own strengths.

Sometimes sustainability requires not numerical or vertical growth, but rather a consolidation of growth. Scaling (Hurst 2012) is often narrowly interpreted as implying increased numbers and expanded impact in more places. Sometimes that is the last option if an organisation wants to live into the future – then, at a given time, trimming to scale (or reducing numbers) is what would be required to sustain both organisation and impact, and perhaps facilitate growth in terms of quality and depth. It is also in this regard that strong partnerships with HEIs can accelerate and deepen impact.

It is often at the level of organisational praxis that third sector organisations falter. Sustainability is not only about financial viability, environmental well-being, social equity, or the right values, visions and people – the deeper question is whether we have an organisational praxis that can sustain whatever we are about.

2.4.2 *The economic circle*

Sustainability is also about how we develop, manage, distribute and share economic resources – financial and material – in the global and local household.

Third sector organisations often find themselves in the space between resources and deficiencies, serving as catalysts or brokers for social and economic investments, usually in the hope that it would contribute to reducing the disparities between rich and poor. And yet, too often, this happens from a base of weakness and deficiency, from a scarcity mentality instead of from bold, conscious agency that is committed

to rewriting local stories of communities and of the organisations accompanying communities. Third sector organisations need to develop their own capacity to participate more rigorously in local economic development processes that would not only sustain themselves, but thereby also contribute significantly to local economic sustainability. Why is it that the profits of McDonald's and all similar franchise stores in my neighbourhood leave the area after closing time? Third sector organisations or local communities should perhaps explore investment in local business ventures that will generate profit, to be reinvested into local communities towards greater sustainability (Lupton 1993).

In the South African context many organisations have experienced financial crisis in the past few years, and even some of the strongest and most reputable organisations have had to close their doors because they could not sustain themselves financially any longer. Often such crises are caused by a lack of innovation in their funding strategies, or a lack of broad-based strategies. Consequently such organisations rely almost entirely on one donor for their budget, and when donor policy changes and the donor withdraws they have no choice but to close their doors (Calland 2013; Stuart 2013). What is required is probably a reimagined self-understanding within third sector organisations, disentangling themselves from a complete dependency on external resources, and seeking to become more innovative and entrepreneurial in building sustainable organisational models.

On the one hand they could continue to create a broad-based funding plan including support from individuals, friends, churches, the private sector, corporate social investment, government subsidies, donor agencies, bequests, trusts and foundations. But they should also go beyond that in creating the capacity for enterprise development, that is, rendering services for fees, doing consulting work, entering into government contracts, and embarking on own enterprise development. In engaging with HEIs, third sector organisations could create the possibility of offering their agency and wealth of knowledge as consultants or educators.

A reimagined third sector would include in any long-term sustainability strategy a strong and measurable impact assessment tool to ensure that impact can be measured and properly articulated. It would explore new kinds of donors and partnerships with institutions and regions not considered before. It would also be assertive in its critique of donors where donor support is inappropriate for contextual conditions or challenges, or where donors are unable to foster real partnerships of mutuality with third sector organisations.

2.4.3 The environmental circle

Sustainability is indeed about the environment – how to protect and sustain the structure of the household for future generations. Third sector organisations are often uniquely positioned to engage innovatively with matters of environmental sustainability at a local, national and global level.

The green economy offers opportunities that can be explored to create employment and build social capacity, to generate income, economic opportunity and financial sustainability, whilst protecting the environment. These three overlapping goals can add immense value to local processes of neighbourhood regeneration or community transformation. Burkart (2009) defines and envisions a green economy based on six main sectors, namely renewable energy, green buildings, clean transportation, water management, waste management and land management. I would like to suggest that third sector organisations, in partnership with HEIs and local neighbourhoods, would do well to consider innovative engagement in one or more of these areas of green economy. It has the potential to contribute to sustainability in holistic ways.

Many social innovators working in the third sector have engaged in the green economy to further the objectives of environmental justice, economic well-being, and social and human development. Learning from such good practices and contextualising them locally could go a long way in helping to facilitate a shift from charity to agency, and a new self-consciousness among third sector organisations.

Offering local contexts as sites in which to partner with those who have already engaged in the green economy successfully in order to be mentored into this arena, as well as including HEIs, would not only facilitate the generation of new and local knowledge, but would also contribute significantly to the triple bottom line of sustainability.

Textbox 5.1 proposes key elements to be included in a third sector praxis that could help facilitate sustainability in the broadest sense of the word. ‘Sustaining’ could be understood to refer to the actions, processes and disciplines required to sustain the third sector praxis itself, but it could also be understood to refer to the impact of the third sector praxis in terms of facilitating sustained organisations, communities, families, individuals, finances and ecologies.

An inherent mutuality is implied: we as the third sector organisation do certain things to sustain the praxis, and the praxis would then sustain the third sector organisation. The sum is more than its parts in the proposed element in the textbox – if we do the right things in the right way all the time, and I propose that the actions, processes

and disciplines summarised here below represent some of those ‘right things’, the eventual impact will not be proportional to the parts, but considerably more.

TEXTBOX 5.1 Sustaining third sector praxis

Sustaining third sector praxis

- Being present in communities
- Fostering communities of shared learning
- Reading the community well, together and continuously
- Developing a reflective praxis
- Building on own assets
- Developing strong networks and partnerships
- Fostering multiple communities of care, empowerment and citizenship
- Creating and articulating alternative visions, broadly owned
- Developing clear, simple strategies with measurable outcomes and indicators
- Enabling, empowering and participating organisational structures
- Policies reflecting core values and providing a supportive, not restrictive, environment
- Broad-based resource development strategies with social enterprise at its core
- Rigorous human capacity development, affirming everyone as an agent of change
- Rituals, narratives, spaces and disciplines that sustain action, foster community, name death and celebrate signs of life
- Ability to tell stories of good news
- Capacity to participate in public processes, sharing good practices, and informing, shaping and changing policy
- Creating studios of action, reflection, dialogue and research

Third sector organisations that have reimaged themselves, conscious of their own agency, as innovative and entrepreneurial in engaging some of society’s most pressing challenges, deeply reflective and self-critical of their own practices, continuously articulating what they are learning, and drawing deeply from the abundance of assets in their vicinity, are well-positioned to create and offer studios of action, reflection, dialogue and research (see Textbox 5.1), rooted in and benefiting local communities directly (De Beer 2013a; De Beer 2013b:4).

It is such a reimaged third sector that enables the reimaging of the engagement between the third sector, HEIs and local neighbourhoods.

3. REIMAGINING THE ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE THIRD SECTOR, HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

In the second part of this chapter I would like to explore a reimaged engagement between the third sector, HEIs and local neighbourhoods. The emphasis “is on recognising that knowledge production is a two-way process and no longer the prerogative of universities” (Preece, Ntseane, Modise & Osborne 2012:140). A reimaged engagement “should be seen as a mutual, reciprocal and collaborative relationship between a university and external partner” (Modise & Mosweunyane

2012:56). This echoes Wallis's (2006:2) view that "'community engagement' is now better defined as a two-way relationship leading to productive partnerships that yield mutually beneficial outcomes". Is it possible to reimagine the engagement between HEIs, third sector organisations and local neighbourhoods as a relationship marked by mutuality and reciprocity, fostering agency, innovation and sustainability, being rooted in a paradigm of shared abundance?

3.1 Enabling reciprocal knowledge

An important shift in understanding the engagement between universities, third sector organisations and local neighbourhoods is a shift towards enabling reciprocal knowledge. Enabling *knowledge* refers to the processes of sharing, generating and transforming knowledge, while *enabling* knowledge (with a different emphasis) refers to the outcomes or impact of a kind of knowledge that is not simply abstract and theoretical but one that enables local change and transformation.

This type of knowledge is referred to in literature as Mode 2 knowledge, which is knowledge not just for its own sake, but for the sake of social change and transformation in the communities with which it engaged: "Mode 2 knowledge, particularly in African contexts, has been highlighted as a relevant feature of engagement scholarship because it allows for practice-based knowledge that develops in context and is not confined to disciplinary boundaries" (Preece 2012:224; Gibbons 2007). It is such knowledge that relates to the purpose of this chapter: practice-based, socially transformative, contextually appropriate and inter- and transdisciplinary.

The Kellogg Commission of 1999 (Modise & Moswuenyane 2012:57) proposed that:

[T]he academy should shift from its one-way, ivory-tower, discipline-based, episodic relationships with its broader communities to engage with complex societal problems. This would increase universities' public relevance, and enhance their role as partners in building stronger regions and communities.

Enabling reciprocal knowledge refers to the locale of knowledge no longer being restricted to universities alone, but also to the nature of the relationship between the various partners. It no longer thinks only in terms of universities engaging communities on their own terms, but also in terms of third sector organisations and communities engaging universities in ways that will involve mutual benefits and impact. Schuetze (2010:25) notes that "[c]ommunity engagement is defined broadly, namely as the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity".

In this definition the locale of knowledge and resources is identified as both the institutions of higher education and the larger communities in which they are hosted or with which they engage. It is no longer disembodied knowledge but knowledge marked by and generated through embodied engagement (Müller 2011). It offers the possibility for communities, third sector organisations and institutions of higher education to be re-remembered to each other (De Beer 2013a), and for knowledge generation thereby to become not only locally embodied but also contextually appropriate and mutually transformative (regarding both knowledge and context).

3.2 Exploring transdisciplinary spaces: Local neighbourhoods as sites of engagement

Based on the above-mentioned intention of reimagined engagement between universities, third sector organisations and local neighbourhoods, exploring local neighbourhoods as sites of engagement for transdisciplinary work becomes an exciting possibility.

3.2.1 Local neighbourhood as site of engagement

The local neighbourhood, as a smaller unit within the city, could start to express what a learning city could look like in practice. According to Kearns, McDonald, Candy, Knight and Papadopolous (1999:6) “[a] learning city unites all the diverse providers of learning to meet the needs and aspirations of its citizens. Through the range of local resources they bring together, learning cities can provide local solutions to local challenges”.

Local neighbourhoods, particularly in inner city, urban township or informal urban settlement communities (in the South African situation) present challenges ranging from water and sanitation, land and housing, economic development and social infrastructure, to public spaces, safety and security, access to basic health care, educational infrastructure, leadership and governance. This provides a rich context for action, reflection, dialogue and research.

Knowledge generation in local sites of engagement can simultaneously learn from “the needs and aspirations” (Kearns *et al* 1999:6) of local citizens and work in partnership with local agents of change, that is, third sector organisations and residents, “to provide solutions to local challenges”.

3.2.2 Inviting local knowledges

One of the greatest weaknesses of university community engagement programmes is often the denial of local knowledges, thereby minimising the potential learning experience.

Building innovative models of engagement asserting mutuality and reciprocity would require a humble entry and companionship by the university, confident participation by local organisations and residents offering their experiences and knowledges, and deliberately creating welcoming spaces for local knowledges to be heard, gathered and shared. As noted by Modise and Mosweunyane (2012:54; Yang, Zhang & Wang 2006) “this requires a reversal of the colonising plans that are built on the assumption that local people are unenlightened. The universities, just like civil society, should counter the plan to force them to obey the moralities and values set up by their external rulers”. What is required is indeed the creation of indigenous, innovative models of engagement, committed to the generation of transforming knowledge.

3.2.3 University as equal partner

“[U]niversities in Africa have adopted attitudes from the political north, where universities generate knowledge *for* communities instead of *with* them, thus maintaining the traditional university attitudes that offer expertise rather than appreciation of indigenous knowledge” (Modise & Mosweunyane 2012:51). Universities have often failed to even embrace community engagement as such; the deeper conversation of how engagement should happen for it not to be generating knowledge for but with communities is often a non-existent conversation.

Community engagement is often not well embedded in universities, affected by the tension universities face between being globally competitive and financially sustainable on the one hand, and locally relevant to goals of social transformation on the other. Where community engagement or service learning projects do occur there is often little interaction between universities and their host communities or placement organisations, mitigating against optimal learning experiences for the students and reducing the potential impact for local communities (utilitarian versus based on mutuality). Institutionally, community engagement is given a subordinate role to teaching and learning, often demonstrated by low budgets, very limited infrastructure, and poor coordination of community engagement projects in many universities (Preece *et al* 2012:18-19). Some would also say that new languages are used for old models, but little has really changed a “vocabulary of engagement ... [that] gives credence to activities that are merely rhetoric rather than real practices for collaboration and change” (Preece *et al* 2012:19). But, say Franklin, Sandmann, Franklin and Settle (2008:218), “[w]hen universities engage with the complex problems in their communities, there are gains in terms of scholarship, teaching and learning. Interdisciplinary efforts gain academic vitality and public relevance that synergistically benefit each other”.

This chapter argues not only for the central position that community engagement should have in universities, particularly where they are located in postcolonial contexts of great economic and social disparity, but also that such engagement should take the form of equal partnerships with host communities and third sector organisations, instead of universities presumptuously seeking to generate knowledge for communities of which they know little.

3.2.4 Transdisciplinary spaces

This chapter proposes local neighbourhoods as sites of engagement, but also, more particularly, as sites for transdisciplinary engagement. Transdisciplinary spaces are spaces for interdisciplinary inquiry, generating knowledge in close collaboration with local communities: “The core idea of transdisciplinarity is different academic disciplines working jointly with practitioners to solve a real-world problem” (Klein, Grossenbacher-Mansuy, Häberli, Bill, Scholz, & Welti 2001:4). The challenge, and beauty, of this approach is in how it enables various disciplines to work together collaboratively with local communities, reflecting on local urban challenges and experiences collectively.

De Beer (2013b:2) argues that in transdisciplinary spaces “[l]ocal urban communities would not merely be hosts for the different possible engagements, but would also serve as research partners, teachers, and collaborators in articulating local challenges, research questions and proposed solutions”. In such circumstances the agency of local partners is affirmed from the onset in the very design of the engagement process. In transdisciplinary spaces knowledge is generated “not in insulated spaces but in the ‘real-life’ contexts of local urban communities, in close partnership with urban community practitioners, citizens and residents” (De Beer 2013b:2).

De Beer (2013b:2) refers to the quest for generating (and) transforming knowledge:

The new knowledge generated would have a possible transforming effect on students and researchers, communities of research, community practitioners and the communities or issues being researched. As such it would not only be knowledge that can transform but it would also provide spaces for existing knowledge to be transformed, deconstructing and exposing assumptions, myths, dominant constructs that are oppressive, and so forth.

3.2.5 Inner city of Tshwane: Imagining an embodied engagement

In this section I would like to locate a specific embodied engagement in the inner city of Tshwane, in the form of a so-called urban studio (De Beer 2013b).²

The inner city of Tshwane (or Pretoria) has experienced dramatic transition over the past 20-25 years. It has experienced typical inner city transition, different from one neighbourhood and street to the other, and sometimes from one piece of land to the next. Disinvestment, reinvestment, racial transition, immigration, slum formation and gentrification are all forces playing themselves out on a daily basis in these neighbourhoods. The socio-economic and socio-political dynamics, cultural composition, religious diversity and environmental challenges all provide fertile soil for local engagement, practising learning and generation of knowledge.

Different third sector organisations have created significant responses to the changing dynamics, being and/or representing locally embodied citizens' organisations, residents' groups, and particularly vulnerable populations. Faith-based organisations, NPOs, local community forums and residents' associations have over the years held their ground; sometimes in an *ad hoc* manner, and other times in more consistent, rigorous and sophisticated ways.

It is against this background that an urban studio was proposed, as a space in which the learning, experiences and experiments of the past and the present can be used for learning and reflection. "The *Urban Innovation Hub* (now Urban Studio) would offer transdisciplinary spaces – ie spaces for inter-disciplinary action, reflection, learning and research – for generating knowledge in close collaboration with local communities" (De Beer 2013b:2).

The Urban Studio as proposed would be hosted by a local third sector organisation, the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, based in the inner city for more than 20 years, and working in conjunction with the Centre for Contextual Ministry at the University of Pretoria. It would also host other researchers, students, departments and centres based at the University of Pretoria and at the two other institutions of higher education in the city, as well as visiting scholars, students and researchers.

The vision of local community learning hubs, as articulated by the University of Botswana (2004:5) in their reimagining of how to engage local communities, describes what the urban innovation hub also seeks to achieve, namely "to link local

2 Initially conceptualised as an 'urban innovation hub', this innovative space between the university and the city will in future be known as an 'urban studio'. Situated in the Centre for Contextual Ministry of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria, it forms part of the broader Capital Cities Research Project of this university.

communities and the university [or universities] and provide learning opportunities covering different areas of interest for various interest groups and to function as a community resource for innovative ideas”.

The Urban Studio is an ideal space in which to foster agency, innovation and sustainability, drawing from the abundance of resources available in the creation of such a collaborative. It has the potential to contribute to knowledge generation that is socially transformative.

3.2.6 Feast@UP: A pilot project of the Urban Studio

An example of the kind of activities the Urban Studio is embarking on is the Feast@UP. Feast@UP is a collaborative of students and academics at the University of Pretoria, working in partnership with the annual community festival of the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, the Feast of the Clowns. The Feast of the Clowns is a festival celebrating the city, fostering community, and creating awareness for social justice issues. Feast@UP is partnering with the Feast of the Clowns to foster a consciousness for social justice within the academic community, using the inner city as a classroom and the community festival as a space for encounter which includes action, reflection, dialogue and research.

In 2014 the activities of Feast@UP included semester courses in various departments being aligned to the festival, and students were required to reflect on their course work through the lenses of the inner city. Courses such as Community Law, Church and City, Power and Wealth, and Branding for Change, were participating in this process. The departments of visual arts and social work designed and hosted a very interactive one-day workshop for university students, community leaders, refugees and homeless people, and inner city children, entitled “Design for social justice”. Students and academics also participated in workshops on homelessness, greening the city and human trafficking.

An academic colloquium entitled “The clown, the university, the city: (un)shackling liaisons” invited papers to consider the clown as metaphor for exploring the relationship between the university and the city, particularly in the contexts of freedom and shackles. A mini-march of the clowns took place on campus, seeking to create awareness for social justice issues; the Law Faculty held their annual faculty festival exploring the same theme of “(un)shackled”; and many students and academics participated in the march of the clowns through the city streets on the Saturday.

Feast@UP offers a creative space in which students, researchers, community practitioners and inhabitants of the inner city – particularly vulnerable individuals

and groups – participate to name and analyse urban challenges, to imagine possible alternatives, and to conceptualise possible actions to embody such alternatives.

4. FOSTERING A NEW IMAGINATION: ON SCARCITY, ABUNDANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Behind the language of this chapter are basic assumptions: We live in cities and towns where vulnerability and scarcity keep the majority of residents from sharing at the table of resources. At the same time the resources of the world are abundantly adequate to overcome vulnerability and to build sustainable and resilient communities. Often the mentalities of third sector organisations, local communities and universities alike are embedded in scarcity paradigms, and therefore little sharing of resources, knowledges, experiences and people takes place.

This chapter proposes the fostering of an abundance mentality, in which sharing will be the dominant practice, and mutuality and reciprocity a given. It presupposes a reimagined third sector; shared agency in and between local communities, third sector organisations and universities; mechanisms to allow such agency to construct innovative and contextually appropriate solutions; and ensuring all of these in ways that will mediate sustainability over vulnerability for generations to come.

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PART TWO

FOCUS ON THE THIRD SECTOR

6

PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGIOUS FAITH AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS AS ENABLING FACTORS IN THE FUNCTIONING AND SUSTAINABILITY OF FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS IN THE THIRD SECTOR

Kirna Hellmuth

ABSTRACT

The religious faith factor in faith-based non-profit organisations plays a critical role in the motivation of an organisation, and in enabling the organisation to help community members by providing much needed social services to them and by assisting communities in developing in various ways. These non-profit organisations rely mainly on their religious faith in the management and decision making of their organisations, and they often struggle to maintain healthy, balanced functionality and sustainability.

This chapter seeks to explore the religious faith factor as an enabling aspect in the functioning and sustainability of third sector organisations, in particular the faith-based non-profit organisations, by initiating a dialogue to gain new perspectives on the topic. While respecting the religious faith foundation and values of faith-based non-profit organisations, the overall goal is to enhance the opportunities for reciprocal partnerships with higher education and other training institutions which can assist these organisations by sharing knowledge about appropriate management skills and governance practices.

It is argued that both religious faith, on the one hand, and management skills and knowledge provided by higher education and other training institutions, on the other, should guide faith-based organisations of the third sector in order for these organisations to be fully functional and sustainable.

1. INTRODUCTION

Religion plays a significant role in third sector faith-based non-profit organisations (NPOs), but a question is sometimes raised about how well they are managed and governed (Fernando & Jackson 2006:23).

NPOs that are mainly faith-based and mission- and ministry-focused rely heavily on their religious faith to manage and govern their organisations (Bor & Jones-Eversley 2013:1). Religious faith is understood as the need which human beings have to make contact with a spiritual power beyond themselves, in which they find their strength, comfort and passion. 'Non-profit organisation', however, is a very broad term to denote different organisations providing a service to the community. Swilling and Russell (2002:11-12) explain that NPOs "can be categorised in crude terms as developmental, oppositional, and survivalist". Developmental NPOs are those which are engaged directly in improving the social, cultural and economic well-being of the community. Oppositional NPOs help people by organising and mobilising them for various purposes, while survivalist NPOs can be understood as NPOs that focus on communities where the majority of people can barely survive. They serve people with basic needs (Swilling & Russell 2002:11-12). Most of the NPOs in South Africa are examples of a combination of all three categories.

Faith-based NPOs can be defined as religious in nature and they hold faith as a core value that affects their management, governing structures and decision making in order to serve and develop the community (Claassens 2004:25). Most of these faith-based NPOs that rely mainly on their religious faith in their organisations' management and decision making struggle to maintain a healthy, balanced functionality and sustainability. Swilling and Russell (2002:x) affirm this by saying that "the vast majority of employees entering the [faith-based NPO] sector are not particularly suited to civil society agencies, and do not have the required skills for efficient functioning in them".

The 'management' concept itself is very difficult to define, but to fully understand the struggle for sustainability, a basic definition is needed. A broadly applicable definition for management as used in this chapter is that management is "a set of activities, including planning and decision making, organizing, leading, and controlling, directed at an organization's human, financial, physical, and information resources, with the aim of achieving organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner" (Griffin 1990:6). It is important to keep in mind that management is both about "managing things, or resources, where techniques and methods are the primary tools used toward efficiency" and managing people to identify and develop their capacity, skills and inner selves (Oberholster 1993:11).

Considering that management, or the managers of an organisation, play a key role in the success of an organisation, faith-based NPOs will have to rethink and further develop their religious faith frameworks in order to enhance the functionality and sustainability of the organisation and cultivate persistent passion (Miller & Ewest 2007:5). A possible source of knowledge to assist them in this regard, which will receive attention in this chapter, is to engage with higher education institutions (HEIs) in particular; however, access to management skills could also be obtained from other training providers. For faith-based NPOs to use this source of knowledge, they first need to determine to what extent religious faith influences the management of a variety of role-players in and features of the organisation such as the volunteers, beneficiaries and the structure of the faith-based NPO. A faith-based NPO also needs to define its core identity clearly and, in the final instance, it must be willing to grow in its religious faith framework without becoming secular (Holder & Rollins nd:1).

Having said this, it must be made clear that the importance of religious faith in a faith-based NPO should not be lost in the process, for to them “[f]aith is very important if you must build a successful business” (Martins nd). Religious faith creates the foundation of the organisation and gives the faith-based NPO’s directors, board members and staff the grounding and persistent passion to persevere. The impact of this grounding foundation is explored later in this chapter.

Against this backdrop, this chapter explores the gaps in terms of religious faith and management, between faith-based NPOs from the third sector and HEIs, with a view to reaching the point where it can be accepted that both religious faith and higher education management skills and knowledge should provide guidelines to the third sector. In that way the functioning and sustainability of faith-based NPOs might be improved and a reciprocal partnership between these NPOs and HEIs might be created.

In this chapter the research context is presented followed by a discussion of the findings related to the religious faith factor in faith-based organisations.

2. RESEARCH CONTEXT

Research was conducted to explore the impact and influence of religious faith on the decision making and management of faith-based NPOs. Managers of five faith-based NPOs in the immediate vicinity of the researcher were interviewed individually using an interview guide of 17 questions to gain first-hand and in-depth knowledge to supplement the information collected from the literature.

The five managers were chosen randomly. However, these faith-based NPOs are connected as reciprocally sharing partners in knowledge, food and clothing resources and filling gaps where needed. These NPOs, which are situated in Bloemfontein in the Free State province, will be referred to as NPO#1-5. NPO#1 focuses on providing clothing and food to people living in rural areas in the Free State. NPO#2 provides shelter to the homeless in Bloemfontein. NPO#3 provides a variety of services to the children, elderly and disabled in a township outside Bloemfontein. NPO#4 focuses on decreasing the number of children living on the streets in Bloemfontein. NPO#5's focus is on the vulnerable people living in the inner city of Bloemfontein by caring, serving and developing the community. The research in general will be called 'the Bloemfontein study'.

These organisations are very diverse in their management styles and have different ministry foci. The major challenge faced in the research process was that although there are books and other publications on the operations of faith-based organisations, literature on the actual management of such organisations was difficult to come by.

3. THE RELIGIOUS FAITH FACTOR

In referring to Berger (2003) and Tyndale (2006), Moyer, Sinclair and Spaling (2011:4) note that

[faith-based organisations] are motivated by a distinctive set of values, have particular modes of operation, and hold a unique place within communities and the larger society. They also tend to adopt an approach which goes beyond basic economic advancement or environmental protection, incorporating the social, the environmental, the spiritual, and the ethical in one complete package.

In conducting and analysing the interviews with managers of the five NPOs, it became clear that the motivations and values of the religious faith factor were the major driving forces in all the organisations. This observation is confirmed by the confession of the managing director of NPO#3: *"My faith is the carrier of our vision, to give hope, to give attention to the children, the elderly, to everything, my faith helps me to see the need in Mafora"*. To a greater or lesser extent religious faith plays a role in each of the five faith-based NPOs' core foundations.

To comprehend the essence of the religious faith factor in these NPOs the participants were asked to what extent their faith had influenced the establishment and the core foundation of their organisations. The participants were subsequently asked questions about the management, the structure and daily programmes of their organisations. The third part of the interview shed some light on the role of the religious faith factor

in how these NPOs dealt with volunteers, donors and beneficiaries from religions that differ from their organisation's core faith, or with non-religious volunteers, donors and beneficiaries. The three aspects discussed are referred to as three elements of a faith-based NPO.

The following diagram (Figure 6.1) depicts the elements of the faith-based NPOs that were involved in the research.

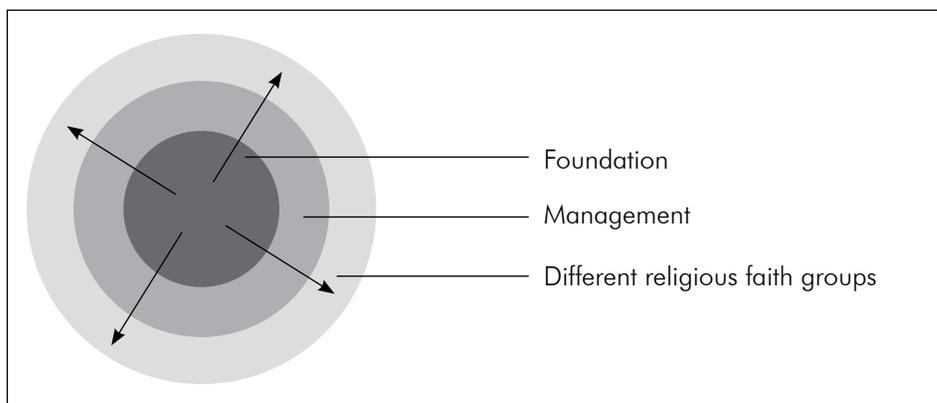


FIGURE 6.1 Three elements of the faith-based NPO

The foundational core is the most important element that infiltrates the other sectors. These three elements are discussed.

3.1 The religious faith factor in the foundation of faith-based NPOs

In the establishment of the five different organisations the founders noted that in their immediate environment there was a great need for help and hope. These organisations emphasised that they all care for people and want to help by serving and empowering people. They also emphasised that this need to help and create hope is solidly based on their personal religious faith.

A street worker from NPO#4, who had been a street child that had been assisted by a religious grouping during his time in prison and was thus able to make more of his life, is a good example of how his faith influenced his need to help and create hope for street children. He emphasised the great need street children have for security, attention, food, clothing and health. For him the persistence to make a difference and help street children is not external, but driven by his personal experience and his personal faith. The managing director of NPO#5 also stressed this point by saying: *"Yes, I care about people, but my care of people comes from my faith"*.

The personal and inner religious faith factor that drove the founders to establish these faith-based NPOs are also supported by scriptures, passion and intervening or a calling from their god (Moyer, Sinclair & Spaling 2011:15). The managing director and founder of NPO#3 believes that her god gave her the name Matshidiso, meaning 'giving hope to people', with a purpose. This purpose was to establish an organisation that focuses on helping and giving hope to people who are suffering from HIV and Aids, children who are orphans and vulnerable, old people and families affected by poverty.

The impact of the founders' religious faith is vital in the establishment of their organisations, for, as Martins (nd) states: *"Every great business venture is preceded by an undying faith on the part of the entrepreneur. Without faith it is impossible to go beyond mediocrity"*. This view was supported by participants in the Bloemfontein study, who claimed that their faith prompted them to begin these organisations and is also the motivation for them to keep going no matter what happens. Their faith was the driving force for these organisations to endure and advance in their work. The manager of NPO#1 confirmed this with his words: *"We as God's children have the responsibility to be like him (God), who is good and perfect, so in our work at [NPO#1] we must strive to be good and perfect in everything we do. We have to live and act according to his word, which asks everything of us"*.

The major role faith played in the establishment of each of these organisations became the foundation, the core of the organisation on which the organisation is based. This faith foundation has an impact on the rest of the organisation's management and how people from different religious faith groups or people with no faith are managed.

3.2 The religious faith factor in the management of faith-based NPOs

The term management refers to the way the organisation is managed, the structure and the daily programmes of the organisation. This is the second element which is directly influenced by the faith foundation of the organisation.

In researching this sector, three groups or categories of organisation types emerged from the Bloemfontein study. The first group comprises the organisations of which the establishment and foundation are solely based on the founder and managing director's religious faith. This implies that there was no or very little assistance from

HEIs in either a direct¹ or indirect² way to establish or lay the foundation of the organisation. This group currently also has no management guidelines or structures. In this group relevant interest groups from within HEIs, which might be able to assist in providing management guidelines and structures, are not involved. Two of the five organisations that formed part of the interview study are part of this group, which focuses mainly on praying and trusting that their god will provide. But there is little evidence of structures or management skills that can support or carry the vision and the mission of the organisation.

This tendency to focus mainly on the religious faith factor is risky and could result in the organisation having to close down; thus, such “organisations should be managed according to basic management principles and practices” and not just rely on the religious faith factor (Sebastian 2010:85). This group can be referred to as solely faith-based organisations, with no room for anything else (Miller & Ewest 2007:27).

The establishment and foundation of the second group of organisations from the Bloemfontein study are more balanced between the religious faith factor and good management guidelines and structures, but the main focus remains on the faith factor. The organisations that form part of this group have management guidelines and structures, and relevant HEIs interest groups were involved, directly or indirectly, in the establishment of these organisations. Staff members of two HEIs with relevant management expertise are also currently assisting this group of organisations at different levels. But still, this group’s safety net is perceived as their religious faith, not good management guidelines and structures. Two of the five organisations in the Bloemfontein study can be categorised as belonging to this group. In the literature this group is referred to as the faith-safe group, which has a more balanced approach but falls short of totally embracing the needed management skills and knowledge that can be gained from secular training (Miller & Ewest 2007:27).

In the third category, which is the smallest and consists of only one of the organisations in the Bloemfontein study, management guidelines and structures, as well as the religious faith factor, are practically integrated in the organisation. HEIs are also more involved in the organisation and initially formed part of the process of establishing and building the foundation of the organisation. Thus there is a

1 A direct influence is evident where an HEI as an institution or faculty is formally part of the process of founding an organisation.

2 An indirect influence is evident where HEIs are not formally or primarily part of the process of founding an organisation, but individuals who are currently or were previously part of HEIs, are part of the founding process of an organisation.

healthy balance between good management guidelines and structures as well as the organisation's core religious faith.

The NPO representing the last category demonstrates through their formal contract-based and informal partnerships with HEIs that there is a formal structure and well-defined management guidelines. In the study a good example was observed: the religious faith factor and higher education knowledge worked together well in the organisation that comprised this last category. Some members of the organisation's board of trustees, which are all driven by their religious faith, are also well qualified in different fields such as law, arbitration and financial management, and are staff at HEIs.

Thus, this last category demonstrated that both the religious faith factor and the relevant knowledge gained from HEIs have a role to play in enabling the organisation to have a better functionality and sustainability. The article "Closing the skills gap through integrating faith and learning", by Weber and Houghton (nd) confirms that faith, and knowledge and skills to be obtained from training providers such as HEIs are needed for a faith-based NPO to succeed in the 'business' or economic world.

The exceptional factor that was found to play a decisive role in all the faith-based NPOs that were interviewed is the inner motivation derived from their religious faith to manage the organisations in the best way possible and manage it according to their religious values. This principle was substantiated by the managing director of NPO#5: *"My personal faith and belief that made me who I am today, asks of me to manage [NPO#5] according to the best of my ability by developing and managing a variety of processes and interventions whereby vulnerable people can realise, through the grace of God, their god-given dignity"*. This view echoes Fernando and Jackson's (2006:24) claim that "the significant role that religion plays in shaping some leaders' desire to make 'right' decisions" is prominent.

3.3 The religious faith factor and different faith groups

In all the interviews there was agreement that all people are welcome and that the organisations will respect people's personal religious faith or other faith-related choices. 'People' can be divided into three main groups, namely beneficiaries, volunteers and donors.

Beneficiaries from a different or no religious faith are welcome at all the organisations which were interviewed and respect from both the organisation and the beneficiary plays a critical role in their acceptance. However, in the Bloemfontein study three of the five organisations' managers also saw an opportunity to proclaim the

organisation's religious faith to the beneficiaries from a different or no religious faith. This tendency was confirmed by the manager of NPO#2: *"Every person coming through the doors of [NPO#2] is an opportunity to pray for them and to teach them about God"*. NPO#1's manager strongly agreed with NPO#2's manager with his comment: *"It is our mission to proclaim the word to all the nations. We must sow the seed"*.

Volunteers from a different or no religious faith are also welcome as long as these volunteers do not proclaim their faith or lack thereof. Thus, volunteers from a different or no religious faith will be asked to show respect for the organisation's religious faith and not to make attempts at proselyting the organisation's beneficiaries. Therefore, these organisations will first have a conversation with volunteers to determine their main reason for wanting to help or assist the organisation.

The money and material donated by donors from a different (or no) religious faith are accepted by all the organisations which were interviewed, unless these donors are prescriptive about how these donations should be used. Although all the organisations agreed that they would accept such a donation, they agreed that this might be a very complex situation, especially if donors would want acknowledgment and to benefit from making a donation.

The religious faith factor that forms the core of the foundation thus also has a major impact on how these faith-based organisations manage people from a different or no religious faith.

4. THE IMPACT OF THE RELIGIOUS FAITH FACTOR

There are always two sides to every matter. Thus, both the positive and negative effects that the religious faith factor has on third sector faith-based NPOs were explored.

Faith-based NPOs have a firm foundation grounded in their religious faith identity. This religious faith identity is put "into practice in different ways, with different strengths, through different partners, with different visibility and with different results" (James 2011:110). The motivations of faith-based NPOs are reflected by their "faith-based values, such as equity, compassion, tolerance, dignity, helping the poor, and caring for creation. These values can be derived from the organizations' understanding of God" (Moyer *et al* 2011:15). Therefore, the religious faith identity of faith-based NPOs gives them the necessary fuel to start serving and developing the community.

These faith-based NPOs' religious core pushes them to get out of their comfort zones and serve where the need is felt most. Accordingly, these organisations "often serve

remote and rural areas where governments have the greatest difficulty in attracting and retaining health workers” (CapacityPlus nd:1).

Where the government and other organisations struggle to address new needs or to change course in order to serve the upcoming needs of the community, faith-based NPOs have a history of flexibility and innovation in management (CapacityPlus nd:1). Faith-based NPOs’ core business is to serve and care for people. This core business, to serve and to care, was emphasised by all of the managers who formed part of the study in Bloemfontein. This was emphasised by a street worker at NPO#4: *“To serve and care for the community, especially for these street children, is my calling. My faith calls me to serve and care for these children”*. As most NPOs are rather small in size, they can more easily adjust and renew their strategy to serve and care for the community more efficiently (CapacityPlus nd:1).

In serving the community, faith-based NPOs also focus on the importance and omnipresence of religious faith to have *“holistic approaches which incorporate the spiritual, the physical and the communal [that] correspond with the African psyche and worldview”* (Moyer *et al* 2011:26). This creates more functionality and sustainability of development in people and in the environment, especially in the African traditional worldview and culture (Mbiti 1991:15). Therefore, it can be rightfully said that faith-based NPOs *“are communicating with people on a plane which touches them deeply and which resonates with their way of engaging with the world”* (Moyer *et al* 2011:28). NPO#2’s manager accentuated the omnipresence and importance of religious faith by stating: *“People are so lost and broken when they come to us, for [NPO#2] is the last place you get to, before you go to sleep on the street and then people need something to hold on to and that is faith. Faith gives them security and hope, to pick up the pieces of their life and try again”*.

A final strength for both the staff members and the beneficiaries of these faith-based NPOs is that religious faith gives hope. This is confirmed by all of the managers who took part in the Bloemfontein study. The managing director of NPO#5 confessed: *“[W]ithout my faith I would not have been able to endure and cope with all the situations that the brokenness of the inner city presents”*. Hope is something that no one can take away, for it is a gift, and it changes both the staff member and the beneficiary from the inner identity of a person to where it manifests in that person’s daily life. This unflinching hope helps with maintaining sustainability in the faith-based NPOs’ staff and management, for *“this sense of calling and purpose, the knowledge that the work is not being done by human power alone, and the powerful bond of communal prayer serve as defences against despair and sources of hope, enabling people to persevere”* (Moyer *et al* 2011:29).

Most important is that people's everyday lives are influenced by organisations that are based on faith, because it results in transformation of their lives by shaping their values, beliefs, behaviours and self-understanding. By shaping people's values, beliefs and self-understanding, they are enabled to gain knowledge about themselves, about the broader society and, as the manager of NPO#1 said, *"to become people that have a positive impact on society"*. Therefore, these organisations serve as a source of knowledge on various issues that affect society (Muturi 2007:308-309). Hope, meaning and purpose are facilitated in people by faith-based NPOs that make a significant contribution to the development of individuals (James 2011:111, 113). In discussing the change they had seen in community members with whom they work, the staff members from the faith-based NPOs in the Bloemfontein study were in agreement with Emmons (2003:134), who argues that *"people construct a life story often rooted in religious ideology that gives a unique meaning to their life"*.

Consequently, faith-based NPOs, as well as the organisations forming part of the Bloemfontein study, have the potential to add value to the community. They strive to do this by providing efficient development services, reaching the poorest in their environment, having a long-term and sustainable presence, being legitimate and valued by the poorest, providing an alternative to a secular theory of development, eliciting motivated and voluntary service, and encouraging civil society advocacy (James 2011:111).

To summarise: religious faith in faith-based NPOs can enable and provide the required inner motivation to endure and overcome all challenges and failures. The religious faith factor has the impact to *"break through obstacles"* and help faith-based NPOs to achieve their goals by knowing that *"with faith nothing is impossible"* (Martins nd).

Unfortunately there is another side to this matter. Faith-based NPOs often greatly lack basic management and governance skills. The occurrence of this problem results in inadequate funding to carry out projects and programmes effectively, struggling to attract qualified personnel and building a sustainable and growing organisation (Sebastian 2010:7; CapacityPlus nd:2). In the researcher's personal experience most faith-based NPOs are founded, managed and governed by people who have little or no experience in managing and governing staff, other people, beneficiaries and resources. They also lack the required knowledge of management, governance and basic business skills, because their primary focus is on serving and caring for people, since their religious calling urges them to do so. In this study conducted in Bloemfontein all of the organisations that participated displayed this tendency. This

creates an additional problem as such organisations often fail to deliver regarding accountability to their donors.

Other problems of poor management are a lack of skilled personnel, low literacy levels and remuneration levels that demand voluntarism to a certain extent (James 2011:111). Volunteers also struggle to serve as efficiently as required, often because of a lack of involvement, structures and effective communication from the organisation's management (Claassens 2004:113). This leads to another concern, for volunteers make up 47% of the workforce in NPOs (Swilling & Russell 2002:18). To add to this concern, there are also only a few faith-based NPOs that have sufficient monitoring and evaluation systems for personnel, volunteers and the overall structure and governance of the organisation. None of the organisations that were interviewed had sufficient monitoring and evaluation systems to enable the organisation to sustain and function to satisfaction. All these organisations, to a lesser or greater extent, trust in their religious faith to pull them through.

Besides these problems, faith-based organisations also have limited collaboration and partnerships with governmental organisations and HEIs, which might enhance their efforts (Muturi 2007:316) through provision of assistance and training. Four of the managers who took part in the Bloemfontein study affirmed that there were no formal or informal partnerships with governmental organisations. Although there are generally better collaborative partnerships between faith-based NPOs and HEIs (ie in cities where HEIs are present), these are not nearly as efficient as they could be, for most of these partnerships are not formal contract-based partnerships. The Bloemfontein study confirmed that all of the organisations have some sort of informal partnerships with HEIs, but only two of the organisations had formal contract-based partnerships with some of the faculties at HEIs. The relationship in such a partnership is often inherently limited. Therefore, many faith-based NPOs, including all of the organisations that formed part of the Bloemfontein study, are still left with deficiencies and a lack of formal partnerships that could enhance the organisations' performance and add value to the organisations. All of the managers in the Bloemfontein study stressed that their organisations are based on collaborative partnerships and would profit from formal contract-based partnerships with governmental organisations, and especially with HEIs and other training providers.

These deficiencies firstly include that many faith-based NPOs "do not routinely prepare and share publications highlighting their accomplishments, results, and lessons learned" (CapacityPlus nd:2); therefore, many faith-based NPOs do not seize the opportunity to make an important contribution to global knowledge and promising practices. Secondly, on account of these limited partnerships, faith-based

NPOs are unable to scale up production to meet growing demands and therefore struggle to overcome challenges such as inadequate numbers of personnel, and lack of space and resources (CapacityPlus nd:2).

Moreover, religious faith is seen as a negative force by many individuals; especially if the religious faith of the individual and the organisation differs. James (2011:110) explains five reasons for the negative view of religious faith by saying that religious faith first brings division and conflict between parties of different religious faith orientations. Second, in some instances religious faith maintains and promotes regression and injustices such as colonialism, segregation, and caste and gender inequalities. Third, religious faith can be irrelevant in the development of communities where the communities' core foundations are not based on the same principles and values as the religious faith of the faith-based NPO. Fourth, faith-based NPOs often have the conviction that their personal religious faith is the only viable faith and therefore they may be insensitive to other cultures, religious faiths and worldviews. The last matter builds on the previous one and goes to the next level, where the religious faith factor encourages the faith-based NPO's personnel to seek to convert others to their faith, which limits people's choice and violates their dignity.

This trend to seek converts was strongly visible in most of the organisations that formed part of this study. First, three of the managers said that the beneficiaries from a different or no religious faith must convert to the organisation's religion. Second, four of the organisations' policies are that volunteers are not allowed to be of a secular persuasion, or of a religion that differs from the organisation's. However, four of the managers confessed that they would accept a donation from anyone, including donors that are from a different faith than the organisation or from no religious faith. Thus, there appears to be a tendency to discriminate against people from a different or no religious faith, except where donations and donors are concerned. This creates difficulties to develop and serve the community, and it also tends to create a false or misleading perception to donors about the religious disposition of an organisation which might not be what a specific donor wishes to be associated with.

Given this trend, faith-based NPOs have to rethink their management and governance situation, but in this process of rethinking there is not a one-size-fits-all solution (McClusky 2007:540). In finding solutions for different organisations, a variety of aspects should be taken into account, but all of these organisations need to focus on management and governance, on planning effectively, securing resources, developing strong internal management and governance structures, networking and

building collaborative partnerships, as well as providing the necessary information to the beneficiaries, volunteers and donors (Sebastian 2010:82-83).

5. FILLING THE GAPS BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS FAITH FACTOR AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS

As seen in the previous section, the religious faith factor can be enabling in the functioning and sustainability of third sector faith-based NPOs, but these organisations tend to have a lack of appropriate and sufficient management skills and knowledge.

One of the options that were explored during the interviews was the existing partnership between the faith-based NPOs and HEIs. All of the NPOs that were part of the Bloemfontein study have a direct or indirect collaboration with HEIs, which creates the opportunity for both the religious faith and higher education management skills and knowledge to make a contribution regarding guidelines for the management of these organisations. For NPOs to use this source of knowledge they need to stand firm in their core religious faith foundations, define their mission and vision, and set achievable, specific short- and long-term objectives. After doing that, these NPOs should seek to identify what they need to achieve these objectives and goals by planning effectively, securing resources, developing strong internal management and governance structures, and networking by building on already existing collaborating partnerships with HEIs and other training providers (Sebastian 2010:82-83).

The existing partnerships that the interviewed NPOs have with HEIs should be amplified by making use of the resources and knowledge these institutions might be willing to offer. These resources and knowledge will have to be focused specifically on capacity-building, giving training and emotional support to NPO personnel, helping to create meaningful systems to highlight the accomplishments and results of the organisation and lessons learned, and creating a structure to secure sustainable and functional balance and growth in the organisation.

One of the requests from the managers who participated in the study was for students and staff of different faculties and departments at HEIs, such as theology, psychology, economics, management, business, marketing, health sciences, agriculture and engineering, to share knowledge of their fields and get involved by volunteering on a regular basis at the organisations. This would build capacity for the organisations and give the students and staff of the HEIs practical scope and experience of their theoretical work, which could also result in NPOs reaching higher levels of management and governance efficiency. In turn, NPOs can add value to the HEIs by creating research and service learning opportunities in different study fields.

HEIs could provide the management skills and knowledge that faith-based NPOs need. One example is the provision of management development programmes (MDP) by the University of the Free State Business School in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. This is a one year part-time course and some of the modules are offered as a short learning programme or certificate course. The knowledge to be gained through this course includes: general management and communication; financial management and cost accounting; entrepreneurship and innovation; project and programme management; economics and banking for managers; business and information technology; and developing internet marketing strategies. It also focuses on skills such as people management; strategic and change management; formulating a strategic vision and mission, as well as long-term objectives for a business; marketing; leadership development; effectively managing diversity in the workplace; labour relations; operations and logistics management; and ethics and governance (Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences nd).

In my opinion such courses could fill the gap in lack of management and other skills and knowledge for faith-based NPOs. Unfortunately the cost of these courses is often very high and thus unreachable for faith-based NPOs whose budgets might already be very tight.

A specific example of where an HEI is involved in assisting NPOs in gaining management skills and knowledge is the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities in the United States and Canada with its particular Christian faith-integrated approach in a Master of Business Administration (MBA) course (Ridington 2010:96). Ridington (2010:97) states that this MBA addresses the faith-based NPO's "mission-related needs for faith-integrated personnel as well as the importance of religious understanding" in their workplaces and contexts, in addition to a wide range of skills required for the management and administration of NPOs in particular.

My contention is thus that collaborative partnerships between faith-based NPOs and HEIs could contribute to filling the gaps and address deficiencies in management and governance, and in doing so enable such organisations to be sustainable and functional within their religious faith framework without having to become secular (Holder & Rollins nd:1).

6. CONCLUSION

Faith-based NPOs provide critically needed services in communities and also assist with basic required community development. In fact "50% of health and education services in sub-Saharan Africa" are rendered by faith-based NPOs (James

2011:112). As mentioned previously, the majority of employees entering this sector do not have the required skills for efficient functioning, which creates a “serious problem, especially when one takes into account that civil society agencies employ more people than the major economic sectors” (Swilling & Russell 2002:x).

A considerable challenge during this research was an apparent lack of literature and other publications on the operations of faith-based NPOs, on the impact of the religious faith factor on these NPOs, and how this affects the management of such organisations. It is evident that there is a great need for further research in this field.

Faith-based NPOs “have both potential strengths and inherent weaknesses through their relationship with religions, but more contentious is the notion that more than being just the institutional vehicle, faith provides a spiritual fuel for development” (James 2011:113). Although faith is the constant stimulus and retaining factor in faith-based NPOs’ existence, relevant literature and experience have shown that no organisation can operate effectively and efficiently without sound management and governance structures and skills.

The struggle to manage and govern such organisations will only be resolved if faith-based NPOs urgently and seriously consider the fact that both their religious faith and sound management skills are required to provide them with guidance and guidelines towards becoming fully functional and sustainable.

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7

VIEWS FROM INSIDE A NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION

FACILITATING RECIPROCAL RELATIONS BASED ON A SHARED VALUE SYSTEM

Patrick Kaars & Burneline Kaars

ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses the importance of the non-profit sector to be cognitively aware of, prepared for and involved in all the processes of engagement with higher education institutions. We reflect on the contextual framework of leaders and staff members of non-profit organisations who are also service providers on behalf of corporate and public sector funders. We also represent the voice of the community as beneficiaries, and at times victims, of community engagement and service learning projects. We argue that the partnerships with higher education institutions should be built on reciprocal relations, dictated by clearly defined and shared values. However, it requires both transactional and transformational leadership qualities from both sides to successfully steer the partnership through the murky waters of unrealistic expectations.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Any coin has two sides” and “it takes two to tango”.

These two well-known slogans illustrate the dynamic present in any relationship. This dynamic can also be illustrated in the gift analogy; most people love to receive gifts. When the gift is wrapped in gift paper, it heightens expectations and we become more excited. Sometimes the wrapping adds to our frustration because it poses a challenge to unwrap the gift. The wrapping could be so tight that you might need a pair of scissors or any sharp knife to cut it open. In trying to open the gift, you might even cut or injure yourself. The process of opening the gift holds a certain element of risk, effort and uncertainty. You could also be pleasantly surprised or very disappointed at the discovery of what the package holds. When starting any relationship or partnership, it is like opening a wrapped package. You are not sure what to expect and will approach it with either enthusiasm or reservation.

The partnership referred to in this chapter is the relationship between the role-players in the third sector, specifically non-profit organisations (NPOs) and higher education institutions (HEIs). In partnerships of this nature there are sometimes uncertain expectations. In this chapter we focus on a reflection of our experiences as the third sector partner in a knowledge enablement project. We therefore endeavour to highlight and reflect on experiences from our NPO context and link these reflections on the relationship to various theoretical perspectives. We explore how to share and apply this practical and theoretical knowledge and turn it to real change, the scholarship of possibility and enablement. We refer to the context of leaders and staff members of NPOs who engage with institutions of higher and further education and training, and who also provide services on behalf of funders from both the corporate and the public sector. We therefore also represent the voice of the community as beneficiaries of the ‘gift’ from these role-players.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the positioning of both the HEIs and the third sector to mitigate and negotiate their desired outcomes pertaining to the intervention in a mutually constructive way. We describe the ideal scenario where HEIs and the third sector share their learning, ideas and experiences. First, we provide the background of our NPO, followed by a discussion of the higher education mandate. The novel angle provided in this chapter is an insight into the perspectives from the third sector partner in the knowledge project. We argue that the negotiating of a shared value system could facilitate reciprocal relations between HEIs and the third sector.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION

Our organisation is based in a typical South African community that is plagued with societal ills such as economic, health and political issues, and educational and infrastructural challenges. In an effort to address these issues, we are positioned and registered as an NPO that renders social services and developmental interventions to the community. Thus we are clustered under the third sector.

The leaders and staff of the organisation are sometimes community members who contribute with passion and commitment. The notion exists that these leaders and staff members may not have had equal opportunities to attain formal further education in the past.

There are a number of formal and well-established NPOs, but equally so there are also numerous informal and grassroots-level organisations that are rendering services to communities. These organisations are small and might seem insignificant, but the sheer total volume of these organisations amounts to an important contribution made for the greater good in society. Generally the governance and leadership would consist of passionate, caring and honourable members of society, but many of them would only possess indigenous knowledge and wisdom that come from years of experience and have been carried over from previous generations. They affectionately state that they are coming from 'the school of hard knocks'. They subscribe to an unwritten code of values, such as Ubuntu and respect. HEIs should not underestimate this form of knowledge and wisdom. There needs to be a cognitive valuing of civil society and the community's contribution and worth, and their ability to co-address their societal challenges.

However, it could pose a challenge to some community and organisational leaders to interact in the contextual world of Westernised theories and models. Some of these NPO staff members also perceive the people representing HEIs as the advantaged and privileged echelons of society. HEIs, on the other hand, interact with communities and service providers through their community engagement and service learning interventions. These interactions are sometimes typically marked by a 'we know it all' attitude on the part of the academics. They also tend to come from a theoretical perspective with a too narrow focus on appropriate application. The community consists of many role-players that bring and debate their subjective viewpoint and possible solution with regard to a dynamic communal challenge. A theoretical model or blueprint often does not provide the desired outcome, as every situation is uniquely different. A 'one-size-fits-all' approach often proves to be more detrimental than beneficial.

These two parties (HEIs and the third sector) get together to give and receive whenever a service learning or community engagement project is initiated. It is thus important that expectations be clarified through the communication of a possible shared value system which will ensure mutual enablement.

3. THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION'S MANDATE

The contention also exists that the HEI and its leadership have limited knowledge of the NPO sector, and *vice versa*. Several HEIs have recognised that knowledge should serve humankind and purposefully make provision for interventions that make inroads into social transformation. This design of intent should take place on a (macro-) level where strategic direction and policies and procedures are determined and developed. Both the third sector's and HEIs' governance must learn how to regulate and formulate policies in ways that enable shared values rather than working against such an approach. Documents such as the *Education White Paper 3* (RSA DoE 1997) and the *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997* are prime examples. These documents also state that our HEIs' academic expertise and infrastructure are national assets that should be retained in the country's restructuring process and must be made available for the common good. Therefore, HEIs should produce graduates who can contribute to nation-building and the development of a more just and humane society (especially given the country's history of apartheid), and who will apply their knowledge and skills to uplift society. In effect, universities should respond to the social, political, economic and cultural needs of society through their lecturers, students and academic programmes. This is where the idea of service learning as a specific form of academically based community engagement in higher education began (Petersen & Osman 2013:4).

4. THIRD SECTOR AND HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

In the context of third sector and higher education partnership, facilitation, relationships, reciprocity and shared values are relevant to discuss.

4.1 Facilitation

Unwrapping the 'gift' calls for a carefully calculated, deliberate action, otherwise unexpected 'hurt' could occur in the form of disappointments, betrayal of trust and the like. The 'unwrapping' or, in other words, facilitating or negotiation of reciprocal relations is primarily the responsibility of the leaders and governance of both sectors.

Maxwell is well known for his writings on leadership development and his favourite quote is undoubtedly: "Everything rises and falls on leadership" (1998:225). In

his book *21 Irrefutable laws of leadership* he places the success or failure of any organisation squarely on the shoulders of the leader. The ability of the leader to implement and 'obey' these laws will determine the effectiveness and results of the organisation. These laws of leadership include some of the qualities and personal traits that leaders in any organisation should have. These include aspects such as influential leadership determining the levels of effectiveness, as people look for someone to follow who is stronger than they are. A true measure of leadership is that when a leader speaks, people listen. Strong leaders provide a vision, offer motivation for achieving it, encourage accountability and are willing to give away power in order to reproduce leaders. Such a leader displays characteristics such as inner strength, sensitivity, intuition, trust and respect, and is a good listener. Maxwell further contends that leadership is an incremental process and builds up momentum with those around, as the focus is on the process and priorities and not necessarily on activities. The law of solid ground implies that trust is the foundation of leadership and is strengthened by character. A secure leader raises others up and empowers other leaders and so gets their buy-in; first into the person as a worthy leader and then into the vision as a worthy cause. Hence, the leaders of both the HEIs and NPOs have a very important role to play to facilitate and negotiate the 'terms and conditions' of this give-and-take process which must take place to ensure a good partnership. It is also vital for the leadership to be able to transact in both the NPO and academic worlds. Leaders should thus operate in the transformational leadership context which require them to think creatively and in a visionary way to catalyse social transformation and the reinvention of true enablement. We have come to realise that two of the important aspects of facilitation between these sectors are transformational leadership and the concept of boundary spanning.

4.2 Transformational leadership

The concept 'transformational leadership' was initially introduced by leadership expert and presidential biographer James MacGregor Burns. According to Burns (1978:20), transformational leadership is evident when "leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of moral and motivation". Through the strength of their vision and personality, transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions and motivations to work towards common goals. The Burns (1978) model also includes an ethical dimension, by focusing on morality and values. Echoing this view, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999:181) argue that to be truly transformational, leaders must be grounded in ethical and moral considerations. In this style of leadership the leader identifies the needed

change, creates a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executes the change with the commitment of the members of the group.

Such an example was the leadership of the late Nelson Mandela who made this statement at his inauguration as president:

The time for the healing of the wounds has come. The time to build is upon us. The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come. The time to build is upon us ... We have triumphed in the effort to implant hope in the breasts of millions of our people. We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity – a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world (Mandela 1994:1805).

He was able to inspire South Africans to unite around the possibility of a peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy.

Mamphela Ramphela writes in her book *Conversations with my sons and daughters* (2012:209):

We need to stretch our imaginations beyond the comfort zones of today's realities. We need to root out those approaches and practices that hold us back from openness to new and different ways of tackling our ongoing challenges. First and foremost we need to change our mindsets and embrace the values of our democracy and learn to live them out in our daily encounters: at home, in our communities, in our workplaces and wider society. The "I am because you are" – Ubuntu – should be the touchstone of our social relationships and we should distance ourselves from those who use Ubuntu as a slogan to market themselves in both the private and public sector without any intention of living its values.

Leaders and students of such calibre, vision and tenacity are needed to take on the challenges that our society is facing today.

In an article on Jonathan Jansen and transformation at the University of the Free State, Mandy de Waal (2011) from the *Daily Maverick* wrote the following:

"I went in June one afternoon to try to figure out the place", says Jansen explaining how he had been mentored to listen. "I was trained by someone who himself was trained by Milton Friedman and Theodore Schultz, Nobel Prize winners of economics". As part of his instruction Jansen was advised to not speak when moving into a new organisation, but rather to just listen, taste, hear and feel for the first six months. Eventually Jansen, whose notion of leadership is servant leadership, asked them a question that he would continue asking students, staff, alumni and the community surrounding the university for six months. The question was: "What do you want me to do for you?"

When reflecting on the past years of colonialism in the country, Jansen further contemplated how the process of transformation happens. He noted that transformation is “not an arrival, it is a journey” (De Waal 2011). He also noted that setbacks and difficulties are part of organisational change and the nature of social changes in society – especially in the South African context. He furthermore highlighted that if change is needed in an organisation then two things are required: one is to make firm decisions about difficult issues and to make good moral choices; the second is to love the people you lead unconditionally. He noted how vital it is to make sure the people you lead feel central to the process (De Waal 2011). The same is true for leadership that contributes to transformation in society. The above-mentioned visionary South Africans set an example to leaders in the country. In the context of this study, our organisation has recently undergone an administrative transition which severely tested our ability to initiate and manage visionary change. In any process of transformation, the leader could play the role of boundary spanner.

4.3 Boundary spanning

A boundary spanner is viewed as someone who is building bridges between organisations and external agents, and in the case of this chapter between campus and communities (Friedman & Podolny 1992:706). These spanners negotiate power and balance between the organisation and external agents to achieve mutual objectives, and they also represent the perceptions, expectations, and ideas of each side to the other. Such spanners facilitate teaching and learning functions to promote mutual understanding among the institution and community organisations. The HEI facilitated opportunities for capacity building and networking with other NPOs, with the aim of reciprocal sharing of knowledge and experience. At the organisational level boundary spanning roles may be more accurately viewed as composite entities that subsume multiple types of relationships with external agents (Friedman & Podolny 1992:708). Therefore, boundary spanning is not confined to an individual job description; rather, it refers to broader institutional strategies to engage with external partners. Furthermore, Friedman and Podolny (1992) suggest that boundary spanning is a complex activity not confined to a single entity in an organisation and that it may manifest in multiple ways to reduce conflict and facilitate spanning goals. This is therefore not only a managerial task performed by the leaders of the collaborating organisations and institutions, but also a role that could be played by anyone who is involved in the relationship and, ultimately, the fully-fledged partnership.

These spanners are the 'glue' that do not only bring the players together, but literally keep these relationships in tact.

5. RELATIONSHIPS

The question that needs to be asked about the HEI and a third sector partnership is: Who are we relating to in this partnership and how are we doing it? Considering the aspect of power is crucial as it influences both the community response and the role of the gatekeepers in the relationship.

5.1 Community response

Knowledge is power. Power and knowledge are interrelated and mutually dependent on one another (Babbie & Mouton 2011:40). At times the community members who also from part of the third sector (NPO) might feel powerless, as the students and lecturers from the higher education partnership come with a theoretical background which gives them a position of power. The question then could be asked by the community members: Do we as the community really know what we need? Or is it a matter of the doctor (in this case the HEI) who best knows the cure? How could the doctor make a diagnosis without getting the symptoms from the patient? People's cognitive participation (Berger 1973) – their perception and knowledge of the problems – may be dismissed as irrational (Chambers 1983). In many cases HEIs endeavour to create platforms for mutual conversation, but the community falls short in the engagement process due to their own inadequacies in the form of emotional, mental and verbal restrictions.

Petersen and Osman (2013:11) make an important assertion in reference to the higher education students: "Our learning may remain inadequate, insufficient and too one-sided to help us to prepare properly for the challenges of our fields. Moreover, it may prevent us from recognising hegemonic social structures and practices." Gramsci (1971) discusses the concept of hegemony and how power is maintained in society. He notes that through hegemonic relations, one group can promote ways of operating as if it is common sense or part of the natural order. In this way groups are excluded from discussions. Petersen and Osman (2013:11) further note that this process reinforces unequal structures in society (intentionally or unintentionally), so perpetuating the oppression without people realising they are being oppressed.

There is a further element of shame which is relevant to this discussion. People in communities are ashamed of the stories and labelling of poverty, HIV/Aids, crime, substance abuse, illiteracy, unemployment, child abuse, domestic violence, teenage

pregnancies, school drop-out rates, and other societal ills. All of the above can contribute to the internalisation of shame (Bradshaw 1988:48). To add fuel to the fire, communities are also facing failure of the local government in terms of service delivery. These negative sentiments – and sometimes truth – infringe the power to negotiate what services and interventions the community can bargain for.

Community members may feel bad about who they are and then they think they are not deserving of good things; they become very negative about themselves and feel small, flawed, and never good enough. It is like when a hungry person is offered food. He or she 'should' be happy with whatever is offered and pickiness would be perceived as ungratefulness on the side of the receiver. Shame encourages the 'handout' mentality and breaks down the sense of self-worth, dignity and identity of people in the community. Shame can also turn into anger and resentment and bitterness, which sometimes lie at the core of our community's 'cancer', for which there seems to be no cure.

There is a saying that goes "once bitten, twice shy". Communities that have been disappointed in the past by researchers who made empty promises are very sceptical of being subject to and participating in action research and service learning projects, especially, when fear and anger are mixed and evoked by historical racial connotations. They do not want to feel as if they are being 'experimented on', as if they are guinea-pigs. Development research, for example, is frequently what Chambers (1983) calls extractive. The researchers extract information from people who merely act as passive reservoirs of information, with no role in designing the research agenda or in the research process. Members of communities are in such distress due to the sociological, emotional and economic challenges they have to face from day to day, that it seems to be an extra burden to them to assist the academics with their agenda as well. In our South African context we also have a divide between the uneducated poor and the educated rich. The marginalised communities consider individuals with a university degree as part of the elite of society. Some community members perceive academia with high expectations to have all the means to their disposal to 'save' the community from their misery. Other community members treat them with indignation and animosity, perceiving students and academics as part of the problem and refer to them as capitalists. These perceptions can be challenged and positively changed by the transactional and transformational role that could be played by leaders from both HEIs and NPOs.

We have found that NPOs and communities can derive value from the partnership with the HEIs. We have experienced that opportunities for networking facilitated by collaborative partnerships have improved the profile of these NPOs. The impact

of the contributions and involvement from the HEIs improved the capacity of the NPOs to provide better quality services to the needy beneficiaries. The fact that our organisation has close relations with the HEIs also contributes to the higher levels of confidence that corporates and other funders display towards us. This association indicates the relevance of services and interventions provided by the NPO, due to the knowledge acquired by research and benchmarking done by HEIs.

5.2 Gatekeepers

NPOs' leaders and staff are sometimes faced with a double dose of the same challenges: their own and those of the people they serve in the community. Typically in our situation we act as gatekeepers to the community and have to coach staff and students regarding community sensitivities, use of language, and behaviours appropriate for the partnership. After orientating institutional partners and students, we have to make introductions into the community and provide continuing guidance on how to do community-based work. In addition to these roles, we demystify research among community partners and guide the process toward the articulation and understanding of the collective needs of the neighbourhood. This is achieved through university representatives and community partners who have the well-being of the community at heart. These university representatives and community partners help local organisations to participate in the partnerships as well as to increase their own capacity for learning. Community and university partners indicate that these leaders are crucial to the success of such partnerships. In our experience it is vital not only to create platforms for dialogue, like discussion forums, but to facilitate real action and interventions that will move the partnership forward. This should result in communities that participate in looking for solutions for their particular challenges with the support of the relevant HEI. It should be the goal of the partnership to move from dependency to interdependency.

6. RECIPROCITY

It is vital that the notion that everything has a currency applies regarding reciprocity. Both the third sector and HEIs have needs and challenges. Furco (2002) developed an institutional self-assessment rubric to assist higher education leaders in measuring the progress of service learning institutionalisation efforts on their campuses. One key dimension of Furco's rubric addresses the degree to which community partners are aware of campus goals for service learning. His rubric also gauges the extent to which campus and community partners are aware of each other's needs, timelines, goals and resources. HEIs might perceive societal needs as a burden and a cost

to their institutional success – such as distracting their human capital towards ‘irrelevant’ projects, involving financial implications (for instance travelling costs) and heightening their risk accumulation. It is also true that HEIs have commendably taken on the challenge to demonstrate social responsibility and make available expertise and infrastructure for community service programmes in the commitment towards the common good. They are committed to promoting and developing social responsibility and awareness among students, and to enhancing the role of higher education in social and economic development through community service programmes. HEIs strive to engage students in various projects and programmes that will prepare students for their future roles in society. Over the past few years our community centre has hosted students involved in service learning and community engagement in various fields of study like medicine, nursing, optometry, psychology, education, agriculture, human movement science, architecture, as well as economic and management sciences. Students are also exposed to the realities of the social and human dynamics in our communities. Addressing these societal ills does have the potential of bringing value to the HEI arena, if approached in an innovative manner.

Participation is vital for reciprocity in the relationship between the third sector and higher education. The principle of participation means inclusion, not merely in the electoral process or in endorsing decisions, but in deciding the agenda for debate and decision; it means inclusion in the processes of defining the problems to be solved and how to solve them. We witnessed instances where equipment and projects were more or less dumped at NPOs with ‘good’ intentions, but without proper consultation and support towards implementation. At a more important level, it means countering the domination and repression of positivist reason in its various manifestations, be it the state, the scientised politics, the industrial production process, or the culture industry. It thus is important to look at the underlying values in the partnership.

7. SHARED VALUES

Shared values are what engender trust and link organisations together. Shared values are not social responsibility, philanthropy, or even sustainability, but a new way to achieve societal reform, and should be at the centre and not on the periphery of what the HEIs and the third sector are doing (Porter & Kramer 2011).

Establishing collaborative relationships is not always easy, particularly when people have different backgrounds and viewpoints. However, when there is a shared basic set of values or standards, collaboration becomes easier. Both parties begin with a common understanding. Both hold the same expectations for how they will be treated and how they will treat others. Discussions begin from a shared knowledge of how

problems will be addressed. When both parties hold the same values, collaboration works more effectively, relationships grow stronger and everyone benefits: the organisation, the community and the HEI.

Therefore, we need to know what our values are and keep in touch with them. These values will guide us in making the right choices and help us not to get lost along the way. Passion is only the fuel for the journey, but values guide towards the destination. Shared values create communities out of individuals. Values enable transactions to take place and bridge the intergenerational divide (Serageldin 2011). We constantly ask ourselves what we value from the opportunity of engagement and whether we can apply it. In the context of our organisation, we had to learn to ask hard questions when the benefits for the organisation and the community were not always crystal clear. Determining whether any project was really feasible and sustainable or not proved to be quite challenging. We need to be able to say “no” when we don’t want to be involved in a particular project.

We can create shared value by reconceiving the intersection between ‘performance factors’ and all sectors of society. Yet our recognition of the transformative power of shared value is still in its genesis. Realising shared value will require leaders and managers to develop new skills and knowledge – such as a far deeper appreciation of societal needs, a greater understanding of the true bases of knowledge creation and sharing, and the ability to collaborate across profit/non-profit boundaries. Governance must learn how to regulate in ways that enable shared value rather than shy away from collaboration. The concept of shared values recognises that societal needs, not just conventional economic needs, also define markets. It also recognises that societal harms or weaknesses frequently create internal costs for firms – such as wasted energy or raw materials, costly accidents, and the need for remedial training to compensate for inadequacies in education (Porter & Kramer 2011). Addressing societal harms and constraints does not necessarily raise costs for firms, because they can innovate through using new technologies, operating methods, and management approaches – and as a result increase their productivity and expand their markets. In the context of the third sector–HEI partnership, various values are important to note: trust, service, partnership, ownership and integrity.

The value of *trust* is illustrated by the notion that only through respectful, honest, loyal and healthy relationships can mutual trust be built in any partnership. Development of effective university–community partnerships in these settings requires a high degree of trust and the development of sustained relationships (Maurrasse 2001; Miron & Moely 2005; Zlotkowski 1998). Trust is the belief and confidence in the integrity, reliability and fairness of a person or organisation. Trust is an essential human value

that quantifies and defines our interdependence in relationships with others. Trust is a choice we make toward someone when we are convinced that they have either earned our confidence or are by some other means worthy of it. It is difficult to acquire, and when fractured even harder to redeem, so perhaps the lessons of trust are not how to earn it, but what it takes to keep it. And perhaps the greatest value of trust is not the accomplishments we make with it, but rather what trust accomplishes in us in our quest to become people who are worthy of receiving it.

The value of *service* is illustrated in the statement: ‘Strive to do things right the first time and value all clients and partners’. This value is applicable to the service that both the HEIs and the third sector are rendering to the greater good of our society.

The value of *partnership* has been amply alluded to in this chapter. Society is a network of relationships and initiatives must be based on sustainable, structured partnerships among institutions and organisations. It requires that any conflict should be handled appropriately and be quickly resolved to enhance overall effectiveness. Both parties should seek to maximise individual and collective wins. We were afforded an opportunity to travel abroad for networking, whilst doing research and fact-finding with the HEI. Various other fruitful partnerships were formed during this trip.

Ownership is a value that is important in the community setting. It is imperative for communities to be involved in decision making and in taking responsibility for their own decisions. Furthermore, communities should own the outcome and do whatever it takes to get there, by showing a determination to deliver and never giving up, despite obstacles. They should also be encouraged to take the initiative, not wait to be asked or told, but to identify what needs to be done. This value is also contrary to the rising phenomenon of a false sense of entitlement where communities believe they are entitled to have whatever they want when they want it, without regard to what is fair or reasonable to others.

Finally, the value of *integrity* lies in always knowing what the right thing to do is, and then doing it; striving to maintain the highest ethical standards of conduct, and pursuing and advancing professional responsibility in everything we do. We saw this in action when a Fulbright student was placed at our community centre via the HEI, and his involvement led to the US Embassy funding a major initiative in the community, which led to other projects as well.

8. CONCLUSION

We experienced our partnership with the university positively and pleasantly surprising as we journeyed together through uncertainty, excitement and, increasingly, fulfilment.

As Henry Ford once said: “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success” (Managed Integrity Evaluation 2013). The question can then be asked: How do we keep working together?

We refer to the quotes in the introduction to this chapter: “It takes two to tango” and “any coin has two sides”.

The tango

In couple dancing, there are two roles: that of the leader and that of the follower. The leader, who is traditionally the man, decides what steps to do, shows the follower what to do via body cues, navigates around the room, and usually moves forward in a counterclockwise direction around the dance floor. The follower, traditionally the woman, allows the leader to direct the couple around the room, performing the steps requested by the leader.

The tango is a couple dance in which the two people remain facing in a circular embrace during the entire dance. It consists of walking steps, turning combinations and footplay (contact between the feet and legs of the couple). Although there are many styles of tango, the space is so limited in most dance clubs that usually people dance a body-to-body style with small steps, many short turns, rock steps and pauses.

Partner connection is the heart of the tango. It is probably the biggest source of enjoyment in this dance. Good partner connection opens the way to an unlimited evolution of this dance, while inefficient partner connection creates some of the biggest corruptions of it. Leading and following are the basis of the language of tango. Good leading and good following keep this dance honest and spontaneous. Transcending leading and following is possible at higher levels of mastery.

Closeness of the connection and individual freedom of movement may at first appear to be in conflict with each other, but ultimately turn out to serve each other. Closeness of the embrace may be sacrificed for training purposes, but is ultimately a necessary attribute of evolved tango dancing. The main challenge in partner connection is to unite as fully as possible with the partner, while at the same time keeping the freedom and the integrity of individual body movement.

Good partner connection progresses in the direction of effortless. Good partner connection is balanced. Any leaning on or pushing against each other is a gross (and unfortunately all too frequent) corruption of the dance. Good connection has a quality of stillness. Good partner connection is synchronised, which means that the partners’ rhythms and transfers of weight are attuned to each other (Wartluft 2002).

Bringle, Officer, Grim and Hatcher (2009) refer to relationships as follows:

We posit that relationships become partnerships as their interactions develop closeness. Closeness ranges from unaware through transformational and is a function of three components: frequency of interaction, diversity of activities that are the basis of the interactions, and strength of influence on the other person's behavior, decisions, plans, and goals.

We experienced how our staff, the volunteers, the children at the centre, their parents and siblings in the community, students and staff from the university were reciprocally enabled by sharing knowledge and values within partnerships where both unity and personal freedom were respected.

Both sides of the coin

As both sides of any coin are equally important, the same can be said when each partner plays an equally important role to ensure reciprocity. The quality of equity exists, even when the inputs and outcomes are unequal, to the degree that outcomes are perceived as proportionate to inputs and those ratios are similar. Equitable relationships are also more satisfying relationships (Hatfield, Utne & Traupmann 1979). Morton (1995:28) suggests that relationships with high levels of integrity possess deeply held, internally coherent values, match means and ends, describe a primary way of interpreting and relating to the world, offer a way of defining problems and solutions, and suggest a vision of what a transformed world might look like.

The principle of shared values involves creating benefit in a way that also creates value for society by addressing its needs and challenges. We suggest that we could benefit from revisiting our values, and having a thorough knowledge and understanding of values in order to apply them effectively. Higher education institutions and the third sector must reconnect their success with social progress. We believe that this can give rise to the next major rejuvenation of social reform.

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8

ENABLING CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR¹

Deidré van Rooyen & Willem Ellis

ABSTRACT

The third sector plays a vital role in service delivery within communities. In the Free State this sector is largely disempowered and the applied research on this sector is minimal. Any party wanting to interact with non-profit organisations must have an informed understanding of the third sector. By means of telephonic interviews, focus group sessions and face-to-face interviews with provincial government officials and non-profit organisations in Mangaung and Matjhabeng, this research provides insight into co-creating developmental solutions for challenges in South Africa through knowledge enablement in collaboration with higher education. It elaborates on the background of the state and format of the third sector in the province of the Free State, reviewing issues such as non-profit governance, staffing, sources of income and income-generating activities.

¹ Information gathered and reproduced in this chapter partially stems from a research project conducted by the Centre for Development Support (CDS) for the International Labour Organization (ILO) culminating in a publication entitled "The potential of non-profit organisations in the Free State Province to adopt a social enterprise approach". The report was published under the auspices of the SME Observatory of South Africa.

1. INTRODUCTION

The cliché “to know me is to love me” is in all probability not applicable to the third sector in South Africa, but does contain a kernel of truth in that the higher education sector needs to know those with whom they interact in order to increase the possibility of a mutually satisfactory relationship. Since the South African third sector plays a crucial role in addressing the needs of vulnerable groups in society, and in helping government deliver appropriate services, any party wanting to reciprocally interact with it must have a well-rounded knowledge and understanding of this sector in all its permutations. For higher education institutions (HEIs) engaging with this sector, through the avenues of teaching, research and community engagement (including service learning), this is even truer.

The scope of the third sector, especially service rendering non-profit organisations (NPOs), is often greatly underestimated. The Deputy Director of the NPO Directorate states: “Stable community organisations have been found to increase efficient service delivery as well as improve market performance and economic growth” (RSA PCAS 2003:27). According to the Department of Social Development (RSA DoSD 2009), the NPO sector in South Africa was worth R14 billion in 2000. The Department of Social Development (RSA DoSD 2011a) noted that at that stage there were 76 175 NPOs listed in the national database. The majority (34%) of sectors in which NPOs work are classified as social services, with development and housing the second largest focus (21%). With reference to the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Study (cited in Salamon, Anheier, List, Toepler & Sokolowski 1999), Swilling and Russell (2002:16) note that the non-profit sector employed 645 316 full-time workers (of which about 50% are volunteers). Total employment in the non-profit sector in 1999 exceeded the number of employees in many major economic sectors; therefore, this sector forms a fertile area for cooperation and reciprocal partnerships for HEIs or any other role-players involved in rendering social services.

Even though the third sector in South Africa has been extensively researched and commented upon in general (RSA DoSD 2011a; Nzimakwe 2008; Swilling & Russell 2002; Taylor 2010), the same cannot be said of all provinces. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the NPO environment is, to some degree, disempowered and most NPOs are struggling for financial sustainability and are threatened by ongoing funding cuts from both the state and their traditional donors (Ellis 2013). The dearth of applied research regarding the third sector makes it problematic for any stakeholders, especially HEIs wishing to enter into partnerships with it, to do so.

This chapter thus aims to paint a picture of the third sector and its numerous contributions, using a snapshot of the Free State third sector environment as a

case in point. We argue that knowledge of the third sector provides insight into its role in co-creating developmental solutions for challenges in South Africa through knowledge enablement with higher education. In this chapter we therefore attempt to elucidate these aspects of the provincial third sector, reviewing issues such as third sector governance, staffing, sources of income and income-generating activities. We conclude by reflecting on the HEI engagement that the research was based on – being a contract research assignment undertaken by the Centre for Development Support (CDS) on request of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The role that CDS played in this engagement is also briefly considered.

2. BACKGROUND ON NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Maximising the delivery of developmental social services to the people of South Africa is a process that requires an interrelated, intersectoral and integrated service delivery model. This process demands participation, cooperation and the strengthening of good working relations and partnerships with many sectors, such as all three spheres of government, NPOs, civil society in general and the private sector (RSA DoSD 2011c:29). NPOs have played and continue to play a significant role in providing social services and addressing social problems in South Africa (Conradie 1999:291). Currently, there are approximately 30 000 various categories of social service professionals servicing the population of 50.17 million (RSA DoSD 2011c:11). The partnership between the government and NPOs can be described as a relationship rooted in the acceptance by both parties of their shared vision, principles and responsibilities for the delivery of services within the accepted policy framework. The Departments of Social Development and Health provide the public with a call for service plans and undersign a memorandum of understanding with each of the organisations for the funding that they receive to render welfare services to the population. In these service agreements the organisations agree to provide each such department with progress reports (including statistics) of their activities for monitoring and evaluation purposes. This process has elicited various challenges and therefore in Chapter 5 (Social development) of the *Provincial budget expenditure review 2005/06-2011/12* (RSA National Treasury 2009) the National Treasury highlighted the need for the social development sector to strengthen its partnership with the NPOs through the review of the *Policy on financial awards to service providers* and the development of the financing arrangements.

Registered NPOs are classified in terms of the nature or scope of their services or the sectors in which they operate. Table 8.1 indicates the number of NPOs operating in different sectors in South Africa and in the nine provinces. This information is also available for the Mangaung and Matjhabeng municipalities in the Free State because the study further deals with these areas.

TABLE 8.1 Non-profit classification sectors

REGION	SOUTH AFRICA		FREE STATE		GP		EC		KZN		LP		MP		NW		NC		WC		MANGAUNG*		MATJHABENG**	
	#	% Reg	#	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	% Reg	#	% Reg	#	% Reg	#	% Reg
Business and professional associations, unions	402	0.5	14	0.3	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.8	6	0.5	1	0.3	
Culture and recreation	4 069	5	168	4.2	6.6	3.3	4.1	3.4	4.7	5.8	6.8	8.1	8.1	4.7	5.8	6.8	8.1	8.1	8.1	50	4.0	6	1.8	
Development and housing	15 797	21	768	19.1	18.2	22.1	22.5	23.7	19.1	22.1	21.1	22.2	22.2	23.7	19.1	22.1	22.2	22.2	22.2	252	20.2	59	17.6	
Education and research	8 655	11	466	11.6	10.6	15.6	10.5	12.6	12.1	9.7	11.5	10.6	10.6	12.1	9.7	11.5	10.6	10.6	10.6	76	6.1	20	6.0	
Environment	918	1	42	1.0	1.1	0.9	0.8	1.4	1.1	1.2	0.8	2.8	2.8	1.1	1.2	0.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	12	1.0	4	1.2	
Health	8 723	11	534	13.3	8.9	11.5	12.2	14.6	16.8	14.3	14.8	8.3	8.3	16.8	14.3	14.8	8.3	8.3	8.3	153	12.2	40	11.9	
International	53	0.06	1	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0	1	0.3		
Law, advocacy and politics	1 605	2	89	2.2	2.4	2.2	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.8	2.1	3.5	3.5	1.3	1.8	2.1	3.5	3.5	3.5	19	1.5	5	1.5	
Philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion	912	1	23	0.6	1.4	1.0	1.1	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.3	3.3	3.3	0.3	0.6	0.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	14	1.1	4	1.2	
Religion	8 839	12	353	8.8	16.0	6.2	12.0	6.3	8.9	8.2	9.6	12.1	12.1	8.9	8.2	9.6	12.1	12.1	12.1	150	12.0	34	10.1	
Social services	26 199	34	1 5543	38.7	33.8	36.8	34.9	36.0	35.3	35.8	32.4	28.1	28.1	35.3	35.8	32.4	28.1	28.1	28.1	578	41.4	162	48.2	
Total (number of NPOs and percentage in country)	76 175	100%	4 012	5.2%	24 442	6 592	15 555	8 037	4 454	3 943	1 733	7 407	7 407	4 454	3 943	1 733	7 407	7 407	7 407	1 250	100%	336	100%	
						8.7%	20.4%	10.6%	5.8%	5.2%	2.3%	9.7%	9.7%	5.8%	5.2%	2.3%	9.7%	9.7%	9.7%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

* These are still figures for the Motheo District Municipality; this area has now been renamed the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.
 ** These figures have been processed from information for the Lejweleputswa District Municipality. The towns included are Welkom, Odendaalsrus, Virginia, Allanridge, Ventersburg and Henneman.
 # Reg – Number of registered NPOs; % Reg – Percentage of registered NPOs
 Province: GP (Gauteng); EC (Eastern Cape); KZN (KwaZulu-Natal); LP (Limpopo); NW (North West); NC (Northern Cape); WC (Western Cape)
 Source: RSA DoSD (2011b:14).

As has been mentioned before, the Department of Social Development (RSA DoSD 2011a) noted that there were 76 175 NPOs listed on the national database in 2000. Of these, 95% were voluntary associations, 3% were section 21 companies (non-profit companies under the *New Companies Act 71 of 2008*) (RSA 2008), and 2% were trusts (these types are also discussed later in the chapter). The majority (34%) of sectors in which NPOs work are classified as social services. Development and housing is the second largest focus with 21% of NPOs involved nationally. Registered NPOs in the Free State contribute to 5.2% (4 012) of the total registered NPOs in the country, which makes it the province with the third lowest (after North West and the Northern Cape) number of registered NPOs (RSA DoSD 2011b:2).

Furthermore, in the Free State more than 45% of NPOs work in social services, and 98% of NPOs are registered as voluntary organisations. This means that those supporting the development objectives of such an organisation should have the opportunity to join in its activities as partners in development (Nzimakwe 2008:91). Trusts make up 1% of this total, while section 21 companies comprise only 1% (RSA DoSD 2011b).

Table 8.1 indicates that the percentage of registered NPOs in each sector is very similar for all the provinces. However, the Free State Province stands out with the highest percentage (38.7%) of NPOs in the social services sector. This percentage is even higher in Mangaung (41.4%) and Matjhabeng (48.2%).

3. SNAPSHOT OF NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS IN THE FREE STATE

In order to obtain an overview of the NPO environment in the Free State, the CDS² developed a two-page questionnaire and conducted interviews with NPOs that work in the Free State. The data collected relate to the number, type and size of active NPOs; the employment levels/number of jobs in the NPO sector (formal and informal jobs) disaggregated by gender and by sub-sector/type of services being provided by an NPO; the services provided by NPOs and their clients' contractual basis; and the existing income/revenue sources of NPOs. The contact information of these NPOs was obtained from various sources like the GreaterCapital network of NPOs (such as Tshikululu Social Investments and GivenGain), the Free State Consultative Welfare Forum and Sangonet. It cannot be guaranteed to represent an accurate replica of the non-profit sector in the Free State, but at least it provides a

2 CDS is a development studies research and teaching centre within the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of the Free State (UFS) with the aim of promoting sustainable human development in the Southern African society broadly and in central South Africa in particular.

good picture of the environment and creates a snapshot of the composition of the sector and the issues with which it struggles.

Telephonic structured interviews were conducted with 115 organisations of which almost 65% were in Mangaung, 11% in Matjhabeng, 13% not physically based in the Free State but doing work in the Free State, and the other 11% in other parts of the Free State. Only three (2.6%) of the NPOs interviewed were not registered. Surprisingly, 65.2% of these NPOs were also registered in terms of section 18A of the *Income Tax Act 58 of 1962*. Acquiring the status of a public-benefit organisation (PBO) is a difficult task, given that this act does not define with any certainty what it means by ‘public benefit’. This lack of definition leaves the onus on the NPO to prove that its work provides a public benefit, with many NPOs not having the time and energy to engage in this effort – often leading to the NPO not optimising the benefits to be derived from applicable tax legislation.

Table 8.1 also indicates that the percentage of NPOs registered in the Free State in each sector is similar to that in Mangaung, but the percentage of NPOs working in the social service sector is even higher than in the Free State as a whole (almost 39% in the Free State and 41% in Mangaung). Furthermore, the Department of Social Development (RSA DoSD 2011b) notes that the trend concerning the total number of registered NPOs is consistent with that of the total number of applications received from the districts within the Free State. The Motheo District Municipality (DC17³) had the highest number of registered NPOs at 31%, followed by Thabo Mofutsanyane (DC19) at 26% and Lejweleputswa (DC18) at 20%. Xhariep (DC16) had the lowest number of registered organisations at 8% and was surpassed by Fezile Dabi (DC20) at 16%.

3.1 Types of services

Table 8.2 illustrates the distribution of the NPOs interviewed according to the type of service rendered.

TABLE 8.2 Types of services rendered by NPOs in the Free State

Services	Number of NPOs	Percentage (%)
HIV/Aids	20	17.4
Education and training	15	13.0
Youth development	9	7.8
Community development	8	7.0
Mental health and education	7	6.1

3 DC = district code

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Services	Number of NPOs	Percentage (%)
Community-based care and support (frail care)	7	6.1
Children's homes and places of safety	6	5.2
Social welfare services (child)	5	4.3
Social welfare services (general)	5	4.3
Social welfare services (disability)	4	3.5
Victim empowerment and counselling	4	3.5
Social welfare services (aged)	3	2.6
Family support	3	2.6
Environmental (animals/wildlife)	3	2.6
Drug abuse and prevention	2	1.7
Other	2	1.7
Total	115	100%

Similar to the pattern in South Africa, the registered NPOs working in social welfare services (20.8% = total percentage of sectors shaded in grey in Table 8.2) outnumber the other sectors. Some of the organisations also covered various services. The majority of beneficiaries of these NPOs were children (26.5%), the youth (16.9%), the aged (14.7%) and people with disabilities (14.4%).

3.2 Management/governance structures and staff

Table 8.3 shows the number of members in the governance structures in the various categories as well as the staff in each of the type of employment opportunities that NPOs offer. The table indicates the minimum, maximum and average number indicated by the NPOs interviewed.

TABLE 8.3 Management/governance and staff of NPOs in the Free State

Governance/management structure	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Total governance/management structure	1	17	7
Number of members of the board – external	1	9	5
Number of members of the board – internal	1	16	5
Number of members of the board – males	1	9	4
Number of members of the board – females	1	13	4
Staff	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Total number of staff	1	150	20.74
Number of staff – male	1	35	4.26
Number of staff – female	1	115	14.51
Total number of staff – administrative/technical staff	1	24	2.50
Total number of staff – project manager/coordinator	1	10	2.25

Staff	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Total number of staff – social workers	1	12	2.67
Total number of staff – health professionals	1	15	4.56
Total number of staff – auxiliary workers	1	9	2.65
Total number of staff – care workers	1	42	11.27
Total number of staff – volunteers	1	100	19.60
Total number of staff – trainees	3	5	4.00
Total number of staff – other skilled workers (teachers, councillors)	1	30	5.00
Total number of staff – drivers	1	4	1.50
Total number of staff – other unskilled workers (gardeners, cleaners, cooks)	1	4	1.50

From Table 8.3 it is clear that the non-profit sector employs many people at various levels, from unskilled workers to professionals such as social workers and project managers. At each of these levels, the number of employees differs drastically among the organisations, but when one looks at the averages, the numbers start telling the true story. The members of boards are almost equally divided between external (4.62) and internal (4.75) members and between females (4.38) and males (3.60). The number of staff also shows that more females (an average of 16.35 per organisation) are employed in the non-profit sector. It should be noted that this sector also depends heavily on volunteers (an average of 19.60 per organisation).

3.3 CHALLENGES

According to Nzimakwe (2008:90), globalisation has brought so many unexpected changes to the functioning of governments that NPOs now provide many of the services which governments are sometimes unable to fulfil. South African NPOs have done sterling work in improving the lives of ordinary citizens, according to President Jacob Zuma at the National NPO Summit in Johannesburg in August 2012. Zuma stated that the non-profit sector should remain an indispensable partner to government as it pursues the development agenda (Khumalo 2012).

It is a well-known fact that the non-profit sector faces specific (sectoral) challenges, and this often comes across in the media and is mentioned during everyday conversations. The main issues that emerged from the research can be summarised in the following points (often utilising the exact utterances of the contributors).

3.3.1 *Lack of coordination and concerted effort*

The services available in the Free State are not equally spread across the province. In large parts of the rural Free State there are no local organisations which can

be contacted for services. Even though the Free State is small and there are fewer NPOs, the organisations do not network among themselves because, according to the participants, they are all *“fighting for a piece of the same small cake”*⁴ (for financial means as well as beneficiaries they serve). Clients also play off organisations against one another for their own institutional gain. It is therefore suggested that the NPOs should start collaborating and working together to improve the lives of all the beneficiaries and to make their work easier.

Integration and coordination between different government departments are often lacking. According to government officials *“double-dipping”* becomes a problem where money is wasted, because various government departments are covering similar targets (like the Department of Social Development and the Department of Agriculture assisting the same project).

There is a lack of transparency between the government and NPOs. Consistency in terms of parameters (for example, how many staff members per beneficiary) is needed. It is difficult to build relationships between public officials and NPOs because of the turnover rate of staff.

3.3.2 *Lack of good governance and management*

Governance and management structures are often not in place, or the importance of sound governance is underestimated or misunderstood. There tends to be a lack of management skills within the organisations as well as within the relevant government departments.

NPO staff members have not been trained for the skills that are needed in these financially difficult times. In many cases, they are not sufficiently business-oriented. Reporting is often a problem, with NPO management lacking the necessary skills or with the reporting process remaining inconsistent.

According to the participants in the study, people working with and for NPOs are often *“narrow minded”* in their views of the potential that their important work holds in terms of assisting the sustainability of their organisations. Because the non-profit sector has been *“blessed with the mentality of charity work”* by the community as well as employees, the organisations are prepared to perform work as *“cheap labour”*. For NPOs adopting an entrepreneurial approach to the rendering of services could have a number of important implications for their structure and governance, relating,

4 All the words in double quotation marks and italics are an exact transcription of what was reported by the participants (either during interviews or focus-group sessions). The participants' utterances and comments form part of the text so that the context can be reflected. These comments do not reflect the opinions of the research team.

for example, to their public-benefit status. In the cases where NPOs decide to set up a trading entity, the responsibilities and financial liabilities of managers and board members will change. There generally is insufficient awareness and information around this matter within the NPO community.

3.3.3 Lack of resources

Organisations do not always have enough human and physical resources to be able to cover the demands (statutory services⁵) of the community and therefore case loads are excessive, with cases not attended to as effectively as necessary. There seems to be a perception among the public that NPOs should be providing these services instead of the government, but the NPOs are merely complementary to the work of the government in delivering the services, and their resources are insufficient to cover all of the population in need.

As a matter of caution, it must be made clear that not all aspects of NPO activities could and should become business-oriented. NPOs depend heavily on volunteers, and their contributions cannot always be seen simplistically. The value of volunteerism should be respected and valued as a social good that has its place in building and strengthening communities. According to one of the NPO managers *“in the white community, the volunteers are aged and cannot always cover all aspects of what the organisation depends on. On the other hand, in the black community, there are younger volunteers who are actually looking for jobs”*. They want to provide a service but are discouraged when there are no stipends for the purposes of their own survival. Well-trained volunteers are often lost when they find employment that puts food on their family’s table. NPOs also report a trend where government employs NPO workers or volunteers because of their relevant work experience.

3.3.4 Financial constraints

Financial management is critical to the economic sustainability of an NPO (Pajas & Vilain 2004:342), and the current reduction in available funding has highlighted the importance of financial management for the sustainability of NPOs in a difficult economic environment (York 2009:1). Financial management is one of the most challenging areas that managers of NPOs have to deal with. The greatest challenge experienced by most of the NPOs is financial constraints and that is why, according to the participants of the study, NPOs *“come and go”*. The funding received, mostly from the Department of Social Development, is never enough and is normally between 40% and 50% of their income. NPO managers who were part of the focus

5 Services that have to be provided (by law) to communities, such as social welfare (services to children, the aged, the disabled and the frail).

group furthermore noted that not all organisations disclose all their means of income for the fear that *“the subsidy will be decreased”*.

There is an ongoing critique that salaries are low in NGOs and that benefits are not always in place. In other words, NPOs constitute a ‘decent work deficit’ (Webster *et al* 2008). This is the case because they often do not have the funding in place to offer higher salaries – either on a project basis or for the ‘core’ tasks of the NPO – and then use casual or subcontracted workers or even volunteers. The government’s subsidy cycle is also only issued on an annual basis, and therefore continuity, sustainability and planning for the NPOs are difficult. The working conditions also contribute to problems with the retention of staff. In the NPO environment employees are often forced into difficult conditions and are overworked. Funding and donations are not always consistent. If this financial support is withdrawn, the organisations that do not have reserves in place may not be able to continue. This also cause NPO employees (at all levels) to leave NPOs in search of better remunerated positions in the public or private sector.

NPO participants commented that many of the NPOs are trying all they can to obtain some money. This means that they are often *“selling their souls”* and deviating from their mission to be able to access certain grants or funding in order to survive. According to Boschee (1998:2) *“social entrepreneurs are non-profit executives who pay increasing attention to market forces without losing sight of their underlying missions, to somehow balance moral imperatives and the profit motives – and that balancing act is the heart and soul of the movement”*.

The Department of Social Development has not been able to monitor and evaluate the funded organisations consistently. They have also not valued the importance of follow-up visits to the small organisations in order to establish whether they are still on the right track in terms of financial and organisational management. Furthermore, no exit strategy for sustainable livelihood projects⁶ in particular has been established. According to government officials this has in some cases led to the establishment of a state of dependency where funding continues endlessly, and NPOs struggle to continue once the project has been completed. However, this is not always the case as services are often delivered to communities by an NPO in cases where the state is unable to provide it themselves. In this way, the state can outsource some services knowing that NPOs are closer to the target population and are providing a service

⁶ Core principles underlying *sustainable livelihood* approaches are that poverty-focused development activities should be people-centred, responsive and participatory, as well as multilevel, conducted in partnership, sustainable and dynamic (Ashley & Carney 1999:7).

that needs essential resources that only the state can provide. In this case the NPO should be accountable and prove their worth to the state.

3.3.5 Sources of income

Just like any business, NPOs often have to obtain income from various sources to survive. Organisations can no longer depend only on grants and funding from a single source because of the inconsistency of funding cycles, the availability of funding from different sources and the struggle for limited resources. In the Free State the Department of Social Development is the largest source of funding for NPOs. Their total approved payments to a total of 1 683 organisations/programmes for 2012/13 was almost R325 000 000. The Thabo Mofutsanyane district received the highest percentage (26.3%) of the allocation, followed by the Motheo district (23.5%) and the Lejweleputswa district (18.7%). Many of the organisations also obtain funding from the provincial office and not from their districts. The majority of the programmes funded in this way (9.2% of the 12.5%) are also situated in the Motheo and Lejweleputswa districts. Therefore the bulk of the funding (51.4%) from the Department of Social Development is distributed in these two districts.

During the snapshot of NPOs in the Free State, organisations were asked to indicate from which sources they received the bulk of their income. Table 8.4 illustrates this breakdown.

TABLE 8.4 Percentage breakdown of NPO income

Source	Percentage (%)
Government subsidy	40-50
Proposals and grants	30-40
Religious organisations	20-30
National Lottery	20-30
Fundraising	10-20
Income-generating projects	10-20

Most of the NPOs indicated that their income was obtained from donations, from government funding by the Departments of Social Development and Health, and from the National Lottery (see Table 8.4). The organisations also specified that other sources of income included international funding, national federations, religious institutions and their own fundraising. During the focus group sessions this issue was further discussed in terms of a percentage breakdown of an organisation's income. This figure varies among the organisations. Certain NPOs (that deliver statutory services, for example) are very reliant on the funding from government (80-100%) and others (working with HIV and Aids orphans) obtain international funding or

donations (90%). There are particular types of organisations (religious and small) that have to generate all of their income themselves. The percentage breakdown of income is generally discussed in the following section.

3.3.6 Income-generating activities

The need for NPOs in the Free State to increase their income-generating activities came across as essential during the scan. Officials from the Department of Social Development noted: *“This is what we want ...”, “... the [NPOs] should become more sustainable ...”* and *“... not depend on our funding”*. NPO participants, on the other hand, stated their position on the matter as follows: *“The need for our services from the community is increasing, and the funding opportunities and government money is depleting”* and *“[t]he belt is tightening and our organisation needs to stop acting like a charity but more like a Donald Trump [business]”*. Participants concluded that NPOs *“need a mind shift”*. Often the NPOs do things for free, but communities that can afford it are usually willing to pay for services (such as health care, therapy, counselling, training and background knowledge).

During the overview of the NPOs the organisations had to give their opinion on generating their own income. Sometimes two or three ideas were shared. These opinions (as per the words used during the interviews) are summarised in Table 8.5.

TABLE 8.5 Opinions on generating own income

Opinion	Percentage (%)
<i>It is challenging and hard work.</i>	52.1
<i>Teaches us independence to become sustainable and a necessity.</i>	17.9
<i>It is easy because it is part of everyday work/get money from public.</i>	13.2
<i>Funding proposals not extensive enough and therefore not accepted.*</i>	8.4
<i>Not enough human resources to do social service and raise funds.</i>	5.3
<i>Generate no income – need help from government.</i>	3.2
Total	100%

* This is seen as part of income that is NOT obtained from the government. It is hard work to put together funding proposals

Table 8.5 represents the opinions acquired from the NPOs on income-generating activities. The message is strong that it is a challenging aspect (52.1%), but that in this way NPOs can become more sustainable and independent (almost 18% shared this view). There are several obstacles to overcome, such as proposal writing (8.4%) and human resources (5.3%), but there are organisations that are already entering into this mode (13.2%). Yet some NPOs still depend on government funding (3.2%). This dependence is due to the fact that certain welfare services are not

necessarily designed to generate income, and some NPOs would rather concentrate on providing services for the beneficiaries that they already serve and not venture into other avenues of generating income (see Chapter 11 in this regard).

While income generation and sustainability have become the latest buzzwords in non-profit circles, it is clear that some NPOs are more willing and able to become more self-sustainable than others, because of the effort that this takes at the beginning of an endeavour. Successful income-generating activities are usually run or closely advised by entrepreneurially minded individuals implementing fully fledged business models to provide solutions to pressing social challenges. In this context traditional NPOs that provide much needed, welfare-type services to the most vulnerable in society do not consider making a profit to be part of their business, nor do they have the skills to apply market-based principles to running their organisations.

While the socio-economic challenges in South Africa (seemingly even more concentrated in the Free State) continue to exist, the pool of funds available for NPOs is shrinking, and the competition for those funds is increasing (RSA DoSD 2011c:15).

4. CONCLUSION

The NPO sector plays a crucial role in the community. In the Free State this sector is largely disempowered and the applied research in this sector is minimal. Therefore this chapter endeavoured to paint a picture of the third sector and its numerous contributions, using a snapshot of the Free State non-profit environment as a case in point. The research completed thus contributes to enabling constructive engagement and co-creation of developmental solutions with this sector. Such engagements can now be founded upon a firmer knowledge base and a clearer understanding of the sector, its makeup and dynamics. Primary among those wishing to partner with the third sector are HEIs who will continue to do so using various forms of engagement – ultimately attempting to benefit both the higher education institution and the third sector.

The Centre for Development Support (CDS), as a research unit in the field of human development, often engages in research endeavours aimed at informing and capacitating decision makers and policy formulators. The research done on request of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in this instance is one such example and necessitates a concise reflection on the background of the collaboration between the CDS and the ILO in this regard. The study was undertaken against the background of an emerging partnership between the UFS, the ILO and the Free State Department of Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs (DETEA) – concretised in a project entitled the Small and Medium Enterprise

Observatory of South Africa. The aim of the Observatory is, among other things, to collate research for the purpose of information-based decision making by policy formulators in relevant Free State provincial government departments in their effort to optimise service delivery, both to the citizens of the province and to the NPOs⁷ involved. It is against this background that the CDS as a department in a higher education institution endeavours to ensure the strengthening of various actors in the field of human development through knowledge enablement – in this instance having governmental decision makers and policy formulators as initial benefactors, with the NPO environment and citizens supported by improved policies and service delivery stemming from improved governmental approaches.

7 These services include funding as well as support with registration and empowerment programmes

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9

FACTORS THAT PROMOTE OR HINDER THE VOICE OF THE THIRD SECTOR IN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

PERSPECTIVES ON THE BATHO PELE PRINCIPLES

Pulane Pitso

ABSTRACT

Although Batho Pele ('People First') principles are central to public service transformation, they are not being implemented adequately at present. Improving public services, which requires authentic dialogue with a balanced voice from all sectors of civil society, is critical. However, the third sector has received little attention in this regard. The qualitative research design of the study reported in this chapter constituted a focus group discussion among eight managers from seven non-profit organisations as part of the third sector and representatives of the citizens. The implementation of and compliance with Batho Pele principles by public servants remain challenging, partly due to a lack of supervision and accountability within government. Change in the organisational culture of the public service is therefore crucial. Moreover, a joint effort from diverse sectors within civil society could yield even better results. Non-profit organisations continually seek to interact with government on the challenges experienced by citizens, to advocate for community interests and needs, and to hold government accountable. It is suggested that internal weaknesses and operational challenges within the system be removed, while government shifts from perceiving citizens, and non-profit organisations in particular, as 'mere' sources of information. Instead, they should be regarded as active partners in improving service delivery.

1. INTRODUCTION

Authentic dialogue marked by a balanced voice from all sectors of civil society is crucial to improving public service. The traditional concept of public administration is gradually shifting from a system of distinct sectoral boundaries (public, private, non-profit, higher education) toward distributed governance with the different sectors as partners, including non-profit organisations (NPOs) as one of the bodies in the third sector (Choudhury & Ahmed 2002:562).

This chapter focuses on the importance and value of the third sector's voice on service delivery, with specific reference to the *Batho Pele* principles. In South Africa, the imperative for the delivery of quality public service is rooted in the eight principles espoused in the *White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service* (RSA DPSA 1997), namely consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money. The *Batho Pele* principles imply that all citizens are provided with public services based on certain 'people attributes', and with accountable and transparent governance (Mulaudzi & Liebenberg 2013:142). Failure to implement the *Batho Pele* principles is at the heart of poor service delivery (Hesma & Roberts 2007:12; RSA DPSA 2008:3). Since 2004 South Africa has experienced an unprecedented wave of public protests against poor service delivery (Idasa 2010:2), with the Free State province also affected (Coetzee 2005:154). Despite intense endeavours directed at improving service delivery, significant challenges remain (Luthuli 2009:460).

Reasons for the protests include a lack of consultation and communication between the citizens and government (Napier 2008:172), a lack of transparency on processes and information (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Ababio 2006:392), insufficient attention to the views and needs of the citizens, and a lack of public participation (Coetzee 2010:84; Idasa 2010:3-4), indicating government's failure to implement the *Batho Pele* principles. Although government is primarily responsible for addressing service delivery challenges, extensive collaboration with various sectors (including higher education institutions and the third sector) is more likely to yield better results. However, the literature shows that the third sector as an emergent global institution has received little attention thus far (Choudhury & Ahmed 2002:581).

Third sector organisations are representatives of the people at grassroots level and their primary voice in the fight for social, economic and political justice. Although they often work in partnership with higher education institutions and the private and public sectors, they operate outside the confines of such bodies; therefore they have unique insight into those sectors. The voice of the third sector can therefore not be undermined, and NPOs in this sector should be given the platform and opportunity

to voice their challenges and find solutions for effective and sustainable development in public service delivery.

This chapter reports on a study aimed at identifying the factors that either promote or hinder the voice of the NPOs. The participating NPOs in the third sector were allowed to express the challenges they face and to voice their experiences, their needs and their expectations in terms of the *Batho Pele* principles. The purpose of giving such NPOs a voice is to enable government not only to be fully responsive to the needs of NPOs as both partners and clients, but also to address its own challenges based on contributions from the NPOs. This reciprocal sharing of knowledge between the NPOs and government is indispensable for mutual enablement and empowerment. It is therefore argued that by identifying the factors that either promote or hinder the voice of the third sector regarding service delivery, a platform for authentic dialogue can be created to enhance the collaborative relationships between the third sector, the public service sector and other stakeholders.

The remainder of this chapter contains the literature review of the citizens' voice in participation, as well as a description of the context of the study. The chapter concludes with details of the findings of the focus group discussion in this qualitative study highlighting factors hindering and promoting service delivery.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are a number of enablers for improved public service delivery (Ngowi 2009; Nyamukachi 2004; Wilkins 2001); however, the focus here is on the *Batho Pele* principles as a central component of public service transformation. The *Batho Pele* initiative redirects the focus of the public service to the needs of the citizens. The focus of this initiative on the citizen makes it a crucial enabler towards improved public service delivery, because the government is about serving the people.

However, insufficient attention to the voice of the citizens is a barrier to improved service delivery (Coetzee 2010:84; Idasa 2010:3-4). Therefore, the literature review focuses on the significance of the citizen's voice in authentic service delivery related dialogue.

2.1 Significance of the citizens' voice in authentic dialogue towards improved public service delivery

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act no 108 of 1996 (RSA 1996) upholds that the provision of decent public service is a rightful expectation of all citizens, thus the state of public service delivery in South Africa has constitutional and human rights

implications. Consequently, it is crucial for public service delivery to be improved and it needs to be expedited in a dynamic and ongoing process (Kroukamp 1999:329). Ghaus-Pasha (2004:33) emphasise that an “inclusive partnership-building strategy” is required. This strategy implies that representativeness of the needs of all sectors of civil society is essential for the efficient transformation and improvement of public service delivery (Choudhury & Ahmed 2002:562; Mubangizi 2005:633; RSA DPSA 1997).

In fact, whether the third sector is engaging with the public sector or with higher education, with reference to the overarching theme of this book, authentic dialogue marked by a balanced voice from all sectors in the engagement remains crucial. Consequently, the importance of authentic dialogue in all third sector engagements with higher education cannot be overemphasised. The mission of creating an enabling platform for both higher education and the third sector, through reciprocal knowledge sharing and collaboration, cannot be completely accomplished outside the context of fully fledged authentic dialogue.

Furthermore, there seems to be certain dilemmas in terms of the third sector voice, particularly in the public service (Choudhury & Ahmed 2002:581; Macmillan 2010:6-7). These dilemmas are not, however, limited to the public service. Even within the South African higher education sector there often seems to be a limited understanding of third sector organisations, as well as their functioning, the challenges they face, and the forms of capacity building they might require. The limited understanding regarding third sector dynamics suggest, *inter alia*, that the voice of the sector, with particular reference to NPO staff and community members they serve are often less audible (Alperstein 2007; Du Plessis & Van Dyk 2013; Nduna 2007). Therefore, although this chapter focuses on engagement between the third sector and public service, the findings of the study may shed some light on – and even raise awareness of – other sectors in society involved in various forms of engagement with the third sector, particularly with regard to factors that could hinder or promote the voice of third sector organisations.

Moreover, authentic dialogue during higher education–third sector engagement efforts is essential, as higher education institutions in many countries, and particularly in the South African context, rely largely on collaboration and partnership with organisations within the third sector of society as sites for academic student service placement, as well as community-based contextual research (Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo & Bringle 2008:227-228). However, the strength of this partnership and engagement between the third sector and higher education is dependent on mutual enablement and authentic dialogue where the voices of both sectors are heard.

This chapter contributes towards placing higher education in a better position to take precautionary measures in terms of factors that could hinder the voice of the third sector. Simultaneously it places higher education in a position to seek ways of strengthening and deepening engagement between higher education institutions and organisations of the third sector, by focusing on the factors that could promote the voice of the third sector.

2.1.1 Citizen participation as a constitutional imperative

The voice of the citizens as an integral part of civil society in respect of service delivery is indispensable (RSA DPSA 1997; World Bank 2004:1). Moreover, citizens – as the clients of government – experience the resultant effects of the services delivered and therefore can contribute considerably towards propositions related to public service improvement. Citizen participation is enforced by the *Constitution* (RSA 1996) and is regarded as one of the cornerstones of good governance (Mutahaba 2006:282; Napier 2008:166). Therefore, notwithstanding the dilemmas of citizen participation, which include citizen ignorance, low literacy levels and unwillingness to participate (Kroukamp 1999:330-333), it remains a constitutional imperative and cannot go unheeded.

2.1.2 Dilemmas of citizen participation

While the voice of the citizens is deemed essential to improved public service delivery, the participation of the citizens, especially at grassroots levels, is often neglected (Coetzee 2010:84; Idasa 2010:3-4; World Bank 2004:9). They experience the lowest level of consultation, redress, openness, relevant information and courtesy (Hesma & Roberts 2007:14), since they often have limited opportunities to voice their concerns and experiences in terms of service delivery. This calls for alternative interventions towards strengthening the voice of the citizens, especially those at grassroots level (Ghaus-Pasha 2004:30; World Bank 2004:8). This call becomes even more critical to a democratic government of a developing state such as South Africa, as it is characterised by its ability to provide a space for the voice of all, including the poorest of the poor.

2.2 The third sector as representative of the voice of the citizens

One of the means of stimulating the emergence of an active and reflective citizenry, especially in the implementation of *Batho Pele* principles, is by reinvigorating the third sector's participation and voice (Ghaus-Pasha 2004:30; Mubangizi 2005:646; Sibanda 2011:815).

Such a *Batho Pele* initiative by itself cannot address problems such as poverty, crime, social injustice and unemployment; and institutional reforms on systems, structures and policies are not sufficient to guarantee effective transformation and improvement of public service delivery. Therefore, in principle, an improvement in public service delivery requires sufficient attention to both the hard enablers (such as sector-specific mandates, systems, structures and policies) and soft enablers (*Batho Pele* principles) towards an effective and efficient administrative machinery. In this instance a wide range of the reasons given as justification for public protests against poor service delivery reflects a lack of implementation of the *Batho Pele* principles. Hence, one of the aims of the chapter is to make the voice of the third sector (as representatives of marginalised clients) heard on the *Batho Pele* principles.

2.2.1 *Distinct role of the third sector in the social environment*

Taking into account the diversity of sectors in a civil society, the question may be posed: Why the focus on the third sector? The third sector as an institution outside the realm of government and distinct from other sectors (Mubangizi 2005:646) seems to have certain comparative advantages in dealing with social, political and environmental issues. It is closely connected to the communities it serves; it has a relatively strong relationship with the people at grassroots level and is perceived as having gained the trust of the citizens, which is not always the case when it comes to government. Furthermore, the third sector is a critical contributor to, and participant in, the social and economic development of communities (Ghaus-Pasha 2004:9), playing an intermediary role between government and the citizens (Ndou 2013:192) and promoting the principles of good governance (transparency, openness, responsiveness and accountability) (Ghaus-Pasha 2004:3), thus possessing 'moral authority' in society (Ghaus-Pasha 2004:25; HM Treasury Report 2007:5). In response to the question posed earlier (Why focus on the third sector?), it is evident that the significant role and position of the third sector in the civil society place it in a favourable position to act as the representatives of the people at grassroots level.

2.2.2 *Dilemmas of the third sector 'voice' in public service delivery*

Over the past three decades the third sector has played an increasingly influential role in public service delivery, particularly in developed countries and especially through the formulation of public policy at both domestic and international level. In contrast, however, the role of the third sector in developing countries (eg South Africa) is seen as being restrained, undermined and given little attention (Choudhury & Ahmed 2002:581). Traditionally, the third sector focused on the delivery of services at the expense of its 'voice', driven by a developing agenda to transform public

service by utilising broader suppliers of a mixed economy (Macmillan 2010:6-7). The constraints encountered by the third sector in developing countries, *inter alia*, financial, technical and capacity constraints, narrow agendas and exclusive memberships (Ghaus-Pasha 2004:18, 33), could prevent the voice of the third sector from being heard.

Interventions that could promote the voice of the third sector, on the other hand, include an enhanced consultation process in line with greater government transparency and responsiveness, investment in capacity building support, the review of the nature of funding arrangements that may limit the third sector's independence, the creation of a new advisory structure for the third sector to express its voice, and the enforcement of policies, acts and regulations advocating the voice of the third sector in social society (HM Treasury Report 2007:17-19).

Kroukamp (1999:335) defines citizen participation as the mobilisation of the voice of the citizens by creating a platform for them to share their views, challenges and needs in terms of public service delivery. However, that voice becomes more effective when information is shared, when participation outcomes affect decision-making processes (Napier 2008:166; World Bank 2004:8), and all sectors are prepared to be objective and learn from one another (Clark 1993). To promote the voice and bargaining power of the third sector, Ghaus-Pasha (2004:24, 27) recommends sound partnerships, the amalgamation of resources, and the coordination of efforts among different bodies within the third sector. In addition, Clark (1993) emphasises the importance of inclusive membership in government forums focusing on service delivery issues.

3. CONTEXT OF STUDY

The research was of an exploratory nature, which necessitated the use of a qualitative research design in the gathering of data. The qualitative method involves an in-depth study using face-to-face techniques to collect data from people in a natural setting (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:321).

3.1 Data collection method

The focus group discussion (FGD) was employed as a qualitative data collection method to collect in-depth data about the participants' insights. FGD is an enabling tool designed to create a better understanding of people's feelings and perceptions about a particular issue (Greeff 2005:299; Nieuwenhuis 2007b:90). More profoundly, focus groups create a platform to not only listen to people, but also to learn from others (Greeff 2005:300).

Greeff (2005:299) contends that participants in a focus group are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the phenomena under study. In this study, the inclusion criteria were based on the participants’ participation in an NPO that is considered to be an institution close to the community it serves. Being geographically situated in Bloemfontein in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality area (Free State province), all the NPOs also had a relationship of some sort with the University of the Free State. A description of the participants in the relevant FGD is provided in Table 9.1.

TABLE 9.1 Description of participants in the focus group discussion

Participant	Position	NPO	Primary focus area	Relationship with government department(s)
Participant 1	Manager	NPO#1	Homeless people	No direct or indirect relationship
Participant 2	Manager	NPO#2	Inner city residents, street children and families	No direct or indirect relationship
Participant 3	Manager	NPO#3	Community (mainly youth)	Department of Social Development Department of Education
Participant 4	Manager	NPO#4	Drug and substance abuse	Department of Social Development Department of Education Department of Correctional Services
Participant 5	Manager	NPO#5	Legal assistance	No direct or indirect relationship
Participant 6	Manager 1	NPO#6	Home-based care	Department of Health
Participant 7	Manager 2	NPO#6	Home-based care	Department of Health
Participant 8	Manager	NPO#7	The elderly (aged 60 years and upwards)	Department of Social Development Department of Health Department of Education

Five of the seven selected NPOs had a relationship with one or more government departments, with the Department of Social Development and the Department of Education being the most prominent. Those NPOs classified as having no direct or indirect relationship with a government department participated as clients of government in their own right, but also as the voice of the citizens they serve.

Since most qualitative methods rely on purposive sampling (Greeff 2005:304; Nieuwenhuis 2007b:90), purposive sampling was employed to allow the researcher to select participants with specific knowledge of the phenomena being studied (Berg 2009:50-51; Creswell & Plano Clark 2007:112; Maree 2007:178; McMillan & Schumacher 2010:138).

3.2 Procedure

A focus group script was developed, after which the FGD took place. Approximately 120 minutes in duration, the interview was conducted according to the following procedure:

- A study information document and informed consent form were developed, and all participants were guided through the documents and given an explanation of the aim and purpose of the FGD.
- All participants signed and submitted informed consent forms, confirming their voluntary participation in the FGD.
- Participants were seated in a circle, giving each an equal opportunity to participate fully.
- A focus group script, with specific questions focusing on the views and experiences of the NPOs, was used to guide the discussions. A funnel structure format or a questioning route strategy was used, as described by Greeff (2005:308), Krueger and Casey (2009:38-41) and Nieuwenhuis (2007b:91), whereby the researcher commenced with a broad and less structured set of questions to put the participants at ease. The concluding section was narrow, covering questions pertinent to the phenomena under study.
- The FGD was electronically recorded and transcribed verbatim directly after being concluded.
- During the FGD, a tape recorder operator and an assistant facilitator were present to record their own observations in order to enhance the credibility of the study (Nieuwenhuis 2007b:93).

3.3 Analysis of data collected

The data from the FGD conducted with the NPOs were analysed, classified and summarised on the qualitative content analysis. Corbin and Strauss (2008:66) and Nieuwenhuis (2007a:101) explain content analysis as a process identifying themes in the text in order to understand and interpret the raw data. In this particular study, data were analysed by commencing with an initial reading of the text, dividing it into segments based on the study's objectives, and then creating codes and themes (Creswell 2005:238).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The dominant themes emanating from the FGD with the selected NPOs were identified during the qualitative content analysis, and these are presented and discussed in the subsequent section. These themes related to the implementation,

promotion of and hindrances to *Batho Pele* principles. Verbatim quotes are used where applicable, and only significant remarks are presented as recorded.

4.1 Views of non-profit organisations regarding the implementation of *Batho Pele* principles by public servants

The categories related to implementation range from consultation to information provision, openness and transparency.

4.1.1 Consultation

Although, as certain participants indicated, it is “*mandated by law*” and an “*obligation of government*” that citizens be consulted about the level and quality of public service, this is apparently seldom the case. Many participants claimed that “there is absolutely no consultation” between government and the citizens. Some of the challenges related to consultation are expounded below.

One of these challenges is that there is no feedback loop on changes. There are even more negative implications for NPOs when amendments are made to policies or funding without any consultation. One participant commented:

We would like to know if there is a change in the policy or in the amount of money that they [government] are going to subsidise. Our experience is that we just hear that they [government] have decided and then you see in the amount that you get.

Poor planning by NPOs was a further challenge. The participants highlighted that lack of consultation on the part of government poses a challenge, especially when it comes to proper planning and internal control measures to address any financial adjustments or policy changes by government. In general the participant’s description of consultation as a one-way communication channel from government is contradictory to the view of consultation as a constitutional imperative (RSA 1996) and one of the cornerstones of good governance (Mutahaba 2006:282; Napier 2008:166).

All the NPOs considered themselves to be in partnership with government, with the expectation of a balanced voice from all partners (Choudhury & Ahmed 2002:562; Mubangizi 2005:633; RSA DPSA 1997). This relates to the concept of inclusive partnership building, as referred to by Ghaus-Pasha (2004:33). As such, this implies that there is a need for government to make an effort to hear and understand the voice of the citizens and not only impose solutions and decisions. When there is no regular consultation with the citizens or where there is only one-way communication,

authentic dialogue characterised by a participative and collaborative relationship between government and the citizens will remain a challenge.

4.1.2 Service standards

Lack of awareness of citizens' rights, public ignorance, fear of victimisation by public servants, and lack of supervision and accountability were identified as some of the contributing factors towards the challenges related to service standards in the public service.

The first of these challenges was lack of awareness of citizens' rights. The provision of information on service standards involves government "informing the community of the powers and the rights they are entitled to" as noted by one participant. However, in reality there seems to be a lack of openness and transparency when it comes to providing citizens with information on service standards.

Public ignorance or, as Kroukamp (1999:330-333) states, citizen ignorance is one of the dilemmas of citizen participation. Although service standards are on display at certain service points, citizens have a tendency to ignore the information:

I have seen it so many times that [Batho Pele] principles are put there on walls in certain places and not everywhere but the people don't take to heart and they don't challenge the service standards.

Fear of victimisation by public servants influences consultation. In cases where public servants deviate from the promised service standards, citizens are often unwilling to challenge the situation due to fear of victimisation:

The thing is if you stand up and say you are supposed to give me this service then they victimise you and treat you even more badly.

Lack of supervision and accountability may be problematic. Officials in key positions do not always hold public servants accountable for their actions, and strengthening the role of management appears to be a possible solution:

They [public servants] don't get supervision so they are on their own, they do as they please, no checks, they don't send reports. But if supervisors who enforce [Batho Pele] principles and say you treat a client or a member of the public as follows and he or she must know there are ears and eyes watching them.

Discrepancies between the stipulated service standards and the actual performance of public servants may point to certain challenges in terms of the competency levels of public servants. Should this be the case, it implies that government has a role to play in employing officials who are capable of meeting the required standards.

4.1.3 Access

Access to public service remains a significant concern for citizens. Poor planning, shortage of staff, judgemental attitudes or discrimination on the basis of colour, race, gender or age, lack of adherence to official working hours, and lack of supervision at the coalface of service delivery were pointed out as some of the contributing factors to access related challenges in government.

4.1.4 Courtesy

The seemingly indifferent attitude of public servants in their interaction with citizens appears to be a major concern. In this instance the participants made comments such as: *“We have a lot of rude service providers, blatant[ly] rude”,* and *“their approach is the breakdown of humanity and dignity”*. It is therefore important to recognise that in the South African context, failure to safeguard the human dignity of citizens will always pose a challenge in the successful transformation of public service delivery. Shortage of staff and low morale of the public servants were highlighted as having negative effects on their attitude.

There seems to be a shortage of staff and the poor treatment often experienced by citizens may reflect the fact that public servants are generally overloaded with work and dissatisfied, and therefore express their feelings of stress in their interaction with citizens:

If government can hire many nurses especially at the clinics. We have so many patients who default medication and the rate for TB increases as a result. This is caused by shortage of nurses at the clinic where the patients wait for many hours at the clinic and leave without the medication.

The shortage of staff leads to low morale and *“public servants need a way to be encouraged to produce better work”* was an opinion expressed by some of the participants. To improve the morale of public servants certain internal mechanisms need to exist within government, which in turn calls for a change in the organisational culture of government departments. Government must take the lead in ensuring an effective response to the needs of public servants, to the ultimate benefit of service delivery. When the morale of public servants is low, their approachability and the ease with which they may be contacted remain in question. When this is the case, the principle of accessibility of services, as well as the sense of openness, transparency and courtesy, might seem non-existent.

As a contribution towards improved attitude of the public servants, some participants emphasised that the behaviour of public servants needs to be monitored regularly, and the supervisors have a vital and consistent role to play. Moreover, various sectors

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in society also have a role to play in instilling sound values and principles in children, especially in their early years ('charity begins at home'). This view is captured in the following comments:

If it [good principles and values] does not come from your home, if you don't see this with your parents how on earth is the university going to change that?

I think we should start small like training children in schools about good manners and about integrity and values ... because if you are valued you will also value [others].

4.1.5 Redress

Openness and transparency, the provision of information in terms of the complaints procedure, and accountability and feedback from government in cases where a complaint has been lodged, seem to be insufficient or even absent. There is also an immense power struggle between public servants and citizens, as articulated by a nurse in one clinic:

I have the power and you have nothing so you will do what I tell you to do.

4.1.6 Information provision, openness and transparency

The provision of information and the existence of openness and transparency were identified as being closely linked to the principle of access.

In conclusion, the perceptions and experiences of the NPOs regarding public service delivery confirm that the implementation of and compliance with the *Batho Pele* principles by public servants remain a challenge (Coetzee 2010:84; Hesma & Roberts 2007:14; Idasa 2010:3-4; Napier 2008:172; RSA DPSA 1997:12; Vyas-Doorgapersad & Ababio 2006:392). The *Batho Pele* principles were adopted as a framework to establish a new service delivery ethic in public service, in line with the human rights as entrenched in the *Constitution* (RSA 1996). Non-implementation of these principles translates into non-compliance with those human rights, and therefore with the *Constitution* (RSA 1996) itself.

4.2 Views on factors promoting the voice of non-profit organisations in service delivery related dialogues

Choudhury and Ahmed (2002:581) describe the role of the third sector in developing countries (such as South Africa) as being predominantly restrained, undermined and ignored. Similarly the participants confirmed that only a limited platform for dialogue with government is created for the NPOs.

In cases where NPOs are given the opportunity to voice their concerns with regard to government services, it is often on an individual basis, and non-response from government is reported. There seems to be a tendency by government to endlessly deliberate on service delivery issues rather than to translate the identified solutions into actions. Job-hopping and nepotism (or 'baantjies vir boeties' as one participant referred to the latter) also contribute to poor feedback from government.

There are seven factors identified by the participants and backed up with literature that promote the voice of NPOs. Open channels of communication is an important factor. An open-door system, which allows NPOs to access the right people at all times, would go a long way towards promoting their voice.

Redefinition of the work partnership is useful. Participants noted that the government must realise the value of the NPO sector and its contribution towards public service delivery. One of the participants commented:

If you look at America ... in 2001, a big shift came from donors as well as the government, which is actually putting in more resources and money into NPOs because they know that the NPOs have a bigger basis foundation, a stronger foundation and a purpose, and the sustainability of the NPOs is much longer.

Provision of information is a further factor. The provision of information by government on the rights of NPOs, the complaints management procedure and the relevant contact persons according to the line of command is essential. Although NPOs do not seem to have much of a voice in service delivery related dialogues with government, their voice within the NPO sector itself is much more prominent:

I think we are promoting our voices among other NPOs very well because we network very well ... and the relationship with them is good.

In addition, the collective voice of the third sector is a promoting factor. The coordination of efforts among different bodies within the third sector is a recommended means of promoting its voice as supported by Ghaus-Pasha (2004:24, 27).

The tripartite relationship through building of sound partnerships is an important factor in promoting the voice of the third sector:

I was actually thinking of linking the government with the university with the third sector starting to infuse those.

Making provision for non-profit organisations in legislation is also important:

As we are the third sector ... I think there must also be a law that states that a certain portion of that same money that SARS is getting should go to NPOs and make sure that the allocation is correct.

There needs to be a shift from non-profit organisations to social enterprises. The advantage of social enterprises is that they seek ways to generate their own funds and become less dependent on government, hence NPOs could promote their voice by transforming into social enterprises. In contrast, the focus in the subsequent section is on the factors highlighted by the participants as hindering the voice of NPOs.

4.3 Views regarding factors that hinder the voice of non-profit organisations in service delivery related dialogues

There are numerous factors hindering the voice of the NPOs. Lack of funds is a key factor. One of the defining features of a successful organisation is the ability to effectively and efficiently generate its own revenue and thus remain operational. As such, one of the participants asserted:

[W]e don't have a voice because we don't have money ...

Lack of funds causes the NPOs to become more vulnerable, more dependent, less autonomous and generally submissive to their funders. Confirmatory to the literature review, a lack of financial autonomy was thus also highlighted as one of the contributing factors hindering the voice of NPOs (Ghaus-Pasha 2004:18, 33).

Lack of openness is a further factor as illustrated by the following comment:

There is no openness from both sides of the government and the NPOs – you have to have both.

In addition, misinterpretation of the government–NPO relationship was noted to hinder the voice of NPOs. This is illustrated by a participant's comment:

It seems as if we are working against each other – the NPO against the government. I think that mind-shift must take place with government. Government must understand that this is actually the wing of society that is helping us most or to a great extent.

The lack of buy-in from government was also noted:

Maybe [government] can buy in on the objectives or some of the objectives of the NGO and then they can take it from there, not working against each other but to take hands and partner with them on programmes.

Furthermore a lack of visibility of government departments is illustrated by one participant who stated:

What about the visibility of the departments with the NPO? [government departments] must be more visible, they must reach out to the NPOs.

Public servants are generally seen to be unapproachable and impolite, making NPOs reluctant to voice their concerns. Lack of building capacity is an additional hindering

factor. This is supported by Ghaus-Pasha (2004:18, 33) who identified capacity constraints as one of the factors that weaken the voice of the third sector. Capacity building emerged as a major concern among several participants. Government involvement in programmes and the provision of training are mechanisms to be used to build capacity. Capable NPO managers could play a major role in improving government accountability and strengthening the voice of citizens in the effort to improve government service.

Lack of engagement by non-profit organisations in decision making processes was also noted. A communication gap exists between NPOs and government. This may lead to the objectivity levels in the decision making processes being compromised. Thus, lack of objectivity and lack of mutual sharing of information between the sectors (third sector and government) could also prevent the voice of the third sector from being heard (Napier 2008:166; Osborn 2010:3; World Bank 2004:8).

5. CONCLUSION

The provision of public services as a basic right of the citizens of a country remains the core business of government. It requires consistent efficiency and effectiveness on the part of government in order to respond to the needs of the citizens. Although there are pockets of success in public service delivery, the research findings reveal that more effort from within government structures is needed to improve the overall system. Moreover, a joint effort from various sectors in an increasingly complex world is critical to improved public service delivery. The transformation of public service delivery should be underpinned by principles of inclusive and authentic dialogue, where the voices of all sectors are valued.

However, the voice and current level of participation by NPOs as one of the emergent partners in service delivery related dialogues remain low. NPOs as central to the effort to raise the living standards of the poor and promote the principles of good governance in partnership with government should not be seen as being marginal to the process of public service development and improvement.

In summary, the participants identified several factors that play a role in promoting the voice of NPOs. By creating an open channel of communication, redefining the work partnership and ensuring the provision of information, government can make a major contribution to promoting the voice of NPOs. Higher education can contribute by engaging in reciprocal knowledge sharing and collaboration with both government and the third sector. For their part, NPOs can stand together to serve as the collective voice of the third sector, and be a positive participant in tripartite relationships. Finally, if sufficient provision is made for NPOs in the legislation, and

there is a shift from NPOs to social enterprises, the voice of the third sector could indeed be made even more audible and their influence will be felt.

Just as there are certain factors that promote the voice of NPOs, so there are certain factors that may have the opposite effect. A lack of funds, resource constraints, a lack of openness, misinterpretation of the government–NPO relationship, a lack of buy-in from government and a lack of visibility of government departments can silence the voice of NPOs and negatively affect the relationship between the third sector and government. Inability of government to instil a two-way consultation process, a lack of approachability and capacity building, along with a lack of engagement of NPOs in decision making processes, particularly in matters directly affecting the citizens, can create further obstacles for NPOs in their endeavour to find their voice and engage in a meaningful and mutually beneficial relationship with government for the ultimate good of the citizens. One of the underlying obstacles leading to the lack of implementation of the *Batho Pele* principles is the absence of supervision and accountability within government. This calls for an urgent change in the organisational culture of the public service sector. The intention of the research project reported in this chapter was therefore to raise awareness of the *Batho Pele* principles as central qualities that serve to focus public service on the needs of citizens. Higher education partners can take note of the factors identified in this study and seek ways to collaborate with the partners for sustainable authentic dialogue in the future.

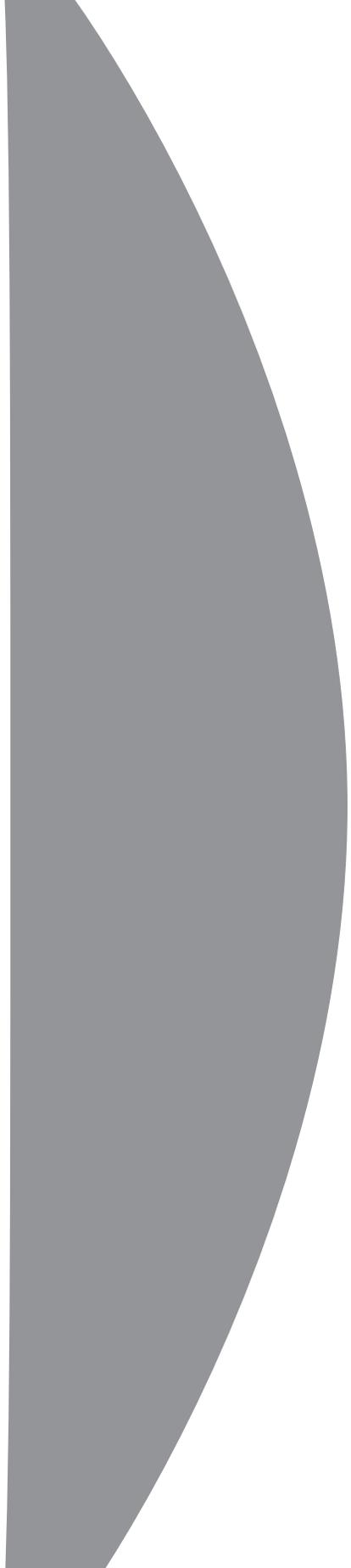
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PART THREE

CASE STUDIES AND
NEW APPROACHES

10

“LET’S KEEP IN TOUCH!”

EXPLORING THE CONNECTEDNESS OF THE THIRD SECTOR AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

Elene Cloete

ABSTRACT

As higher education institutions become more invested in community engagement, they establish partnerships with third sector organisations. These partnerships result in an intricate web of social relations, or social networks, through which higher education institutions and the third sector can address challenges and needs collectively. Such collaboration not only raises the effectiveness of individual organisations, but also the success of community engagement initiatives. Additionally, scholars have found that social networking is an effective means to distribute knowledge resources among individual organisations. This chapter is concerned with the nature of these interorganisational networks, in particular those between the third sector and higher education institutions. To gain information on such networks, and subsequently gain a deeper understanding of third sector dynamics, this chapter proposes the method of social network analysis. By means of a case study, it is shown how social network analysis sheds an alternative light on the relations and degree of interaction between third sector organisations and higher education institutions. Such information can enable higher education institutions to evaluate their community engagement initiatives and subsequent position within the third sector.

1. BACKGROUND

At the 4 o'clock coffee break at the annual convention for local non-profit, non-government and public organisations, attendees exchange their thoughts over the day's proceedings and the 'way forward'. They ponder over their role as third sector actors; they celebrate reached objectives, and compare their respective organisations' stumbling blocks. Parting statements range from "Can I have your card?" to "let's keep in touch!"

Whether consciously or unconsciously, these individuals are expanding their list of contacts; in essence, they are broadening their social network. According to Guo and Acar (2005), this is by no means uncommon among third sector organisations as they frequently network among one another to form alliances, collaborations and partnerships. In the process, organisations develop interorganisational networks through which they share knowledge and resources, and become more responsive, connected and creative (Gilchrist 2004). These interorganisational networks enable organisations to pursue shared goals, address common concerns and attain mutually beneficial ends (Kapucu 2005:35) – all of these providing more than enough reason for our third sector workers to exchange cards.

Interorganisational networks are intricate social systems, comprising a web of dynamic social relations. To analyse such relational dynamics, researchers can rely on social network analysis (SNA), a methodology derived from social network theory and focused on the interaction between persons, organisms, or organisations that are all active within a particular social context (Kenny, Kashy & Cook 2006). Social network theorists typically interpret social systems as a network comprising actors and ties. An actor can be any defined entity, such as an individual, organisation, even country, whereas a tie represents the relationship between the different actors of a network (Ennis & West 2012). Since SNA is primarily focused on the characteristics of relationships, it can help researchers gain a deeper understanding of interorganisational networks.

As in the case of South Africa, interorganisational networks among third sector organisations often include additional outside members, such as higher education institutions (HEIs). In fact, these institutions prioritise community partnership building. This is in light of the Department of Higher Education's *Education White Paper 3* (RSA DoE 1997) mandating HEIs to become involved in their communities, demonstrate social responsibility and commit to the common good (Lazarus, Erasmus, Hendricks, Nduna & Slamet 2008). Consequently HEIs are increasingly becoming members of

the third sector's interorganisational networks, and partaking in relational processes of sharing knowledge and resources.

Information pertaining to interorganisational networks is highly beneficial to HEIs who want to understand, justify, and improve their role within the third sector. HEIs can use such information to evaluate their community engagement strategies and, if need be, adjust their contribution to a particular third sector social network. As Lazarus *et al* (2008:62) argue: "Involvement through community engagement is a rather big investment". Research shedding light on the nature of such engagements and the relationships in which they are enmeshed is therefore greatly warranted. That being said, research pertaining to the interorganisational social networks among third sector organisations and HEIs seems to be non-existent. How can we respond to this current gap and gain a deeper understanding of the social networks found between the third sector and higher education?

In what follows, I argue that SNA is an innovative method by which to understand the degree of interaction, collaboration, and consequently also knowledge sharing, between third sector organisations and higher education. Furthermore, SNA can shed light on the role of individuals within the third sector, deepen our understanding of how this sector functions, and also shed light on the role of HEIs in communities.

The rest of this chapter is divided in two sections. In the first section I briefly elaborate on SNA, discussing its analytical functions and its role within the context of interorganisational networks. In the second section I demonstrate how SNA can provide us with an alternative analysis to understand the interaction between non-profit organisations (NPOs) from the third sector and HEIs, in particular their levels of collaboration and knowledge sharing. Using three NPOs and one HEI from urban South Africa as case study, I illustrate how SNA depicts the structure of the network in question, and the centrality of individuals with regard to collaboration and resource sharing.

2. SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

Social network analysis for interorganisational application as well as the analysis thereof is relevant.

2.1. Social network analysis for interorganisational networks

Interorganisational networks are essential to the well-being of third sector organisations. According to Galaskiewicz, Bielefeld and Dowell (2006), the relationships and consequent network formed between organisations – that is interorganisational

networking – have a direct influence on their individual performance. In fact, the manner in which third sector organisations are embedded in a larger system directly affects their survival rate (Uzzi 1997). Their survival is mostly tied to an NPO's dependency on funds and donations. In economic climates where funding is not necessarily expanding at the same rate as the societal needs NPOs attend to, these organisations find themselves, often competitively, stretched for funds (Eng, Liu & Sekhon 2011). In response to this social and economic climate, NPOs collaborate with other organisations to coordinate services, collectively obtain resources, and deal with governmental agencies (Johnson, Honnold & Stevens 2010:499). Forging innovative and increasingly complex linkages with one another provides these organisations with a sense of security.

The internal and social functioning of organisations, such as the above-mentioned collaboration strategies and interorganisational interaction, point toward a social dynamic worthy of scholarly attention (Fisher 1997). Such research will “enrich our understanding of local and translocal connections that enable and constrain flows of ideas, knowledge, funding and people” (Fisher 1997:441). Moreover, a greater in-depth understanding of the internal and network dynamics of third sector organisations challenges “reductionist views of NGOs as fixed and generalizable entities with essential characteristics” (Fisher 1997:442).

As a research method focused specifically on the relational dynamics of networks, SNA supplies both the researcher and third sector organisations with empirical data to describe and, if needed, alter their social relations with other organisations. Two studies in particular, those of Johnson *et al* (2010) and Moore, Eng and Daniel (2003), illustrate how SNA can be applied within the third sector. In their recent study Johnson *et al* (2010) explored the viability of SNA by introducing it to 52 NPOs, all within a bounded geographic area. Johnson *et al* (2010:495) show how NPOs who include SNA in their research agendas can “better compete for scarce resources, meet funding requirements and advance their interests through policy”. These researchers conclude that SNA provided these NPOs with a deeper understanding of their particular interorganisational network. The NPOs got a sense of where they stand in relation to the fellow organisations, identified organisations who might be future partners, recognised which organisations within the network needed assistance, and which organisations within the network are best situated to supply them with information. Such information, Johnson *et al* (2010:509) argue, helps an organisation “negotiate a stronger position for itself within the network”.

Whereas Johnson *et al* (2010) advocate for the use of SNA by third sector organisations, Moore *et al* (2003) illustrate how SNA can link the organisational

qualities of the third sector with its outcomes. In reference to the 65 NGOs active during the 2000 Mozambique flood disaster, Moore *et al* (2003) investigated the correlation between effective aid distribution and the characteristics of these NGOs' organisational network. Since "the success of humanitarian aid operations ultimately depends on the ability of organisations to work together" (Moore *et al* 2003:316), learning more about the structure of these organisations' networks can inform aid administrators how best to distribute resources. Using primarily SNA's measures of centrality, Moore *et al* (2003) conclude that those organisations which have the highest degrees of centrality within their particular aid network reached the highest number of beneficiaries. The qualities of a third sector network, in particular with regard to measures of centrality, inform scholars and organisations alike on its communal effectiveness, accountability and impact.

Similar to Moore *et al* (2003) and Johnson *et al* (2010), Provan, Fish and Sydow (2007) accentuate the role of SNA in illuminating the dynamics of the third sector. Provan, Veazie, Staten and Teufel-Shone (2005), however, extend this view to include public organisations. They regard such interaction as being quite logical since collaboration allows different organisations to "draw on the broad range of resources and expertise provided by the other organisations in the network and subsequently improve the well-being of their communities" (Provan *et al* 2005:603). These authors recommend SNA as an appropriate method to understand interorganisational interaction, specifically between community and public organisations. Furthermore, as Provan *et al* (2005:604) argue, SNA can show managers "where their organization fits within the structure of the network, based not just on their own perceptions, but also on the experience of the other network participants". Knowledge pertaining to the inherent dynamics of organisational networks allows managers to adjust their individual, as well as organisations', positions to improve their impact and address communal needs better.

As public institutions increasingly engaged in partnership building and community engagement activities, South African HEIs fall comfortably within Provan *et al*'s (2005) range of organisational partnerships. Additionally, seminal authors on higher education community engagement, Bringle, Clayton and Price (2009:3), state that "civic engagement and service learning activities principally involve interaction between persons ... each person in civic engagement activities is a candidate for the term 'partner' and the many relationships between and among them can all be examined, evaluated, and studied". Since SNA provides researchers with methods to analyse social interactions and their corresponding quantifying aspects (Kenny *et al* 2006), we can extend SNA's scope to the South African context, and

in particular the social relations between the country's HEIs and their local third sector partners – NPOs in particular. Not only will this illuminate the workings of a particular interorganisational network, but it will also illustrate the place of HEIs within such a network. If this place is of particular importance to the functioning of the overall network, we can argue that HEIs play a significant role among third sector organisations. In turn, such an argument moves toward justifying the involvement of HEIs in the third sector.

2.2 Analysing interorganisational networks

An analysis of the social network of a third sector organisation and an HEI can inform us on the interaction occurring within such a network. Such information can help determine the extent to which HEIs are involved in their community, and subsequently such engagement initiatives can be evaluated. We can gain this information by looking either at the network's overall structure or by investigating the role of a network's individual members. Both these foci can shed light on the role of the HEI within a community.

A network's structure is subject to two properties, namely cohesion and shape (Borgatti, Mehra, Brass & Labianca 2009). Cohesion refers mainly to the number of connections within a network, but can also include properties such as density and fragmentation (Blanchet & James 2012): the denser a network and the higher its levels of cohesion, the tighter its connections among individual actors. A high degree of cohesion, for example, indicates that contact exists among most of the network actors. On the other hand, a loose-knit network attests to a lesser degree of contact. Close- and loose-knit networks have both advantages and disadvantages. Whereas a close-knit network allows for a wide and free distribution of information, ideas and resources, a loose-knit network grants greater privacy to its members. Contrary to the high solidarity among the members of a close-knit network, a loose-knit network is less likely to mobilise collective support. A loose-knit network's members might, however, be more likely to accept new ideas from outside sources and make the subsequent changes to their network (Hill 2002).

In addition to cohesion, we can also derive relational information from a network's particular shape. In this regard, shape denotes the overall distribution of ties and in the process distinguishes between core and peripheral actors (Borgatti *et al* 1990). The latter actors would be those who exist on the outskirts and are connected with the rest of the network by means of weak ties. With such information at hand, HEIs and their third sector partners can make the necessary adjustments toward a better functioning interorganisational network. Granovetter's (1973) seminal theory on

strong and weak ties depicts strong ties as being 'clumsy', since they merely recycle the same information. In contrast, weak ties, as Borgatti *et al* (2009:893) explain, can easily 'be unconnected' from the rest of the network and thus open the network up to novel information. Therefore, understanding where a network's weak ties are might grant an actor access to new resources. Such information can be especially pertinent to young third sector organisations eager to establish their place within a community and network.

A second focus of analysis pertains to the actors within a network. Actors can either be in the core of the network, thus highly connected, or peripheral due to loose connections with actors. The position of actors within the network also influences the flow of information. Some actors act as 'knowledge brokers', obstructing or constructing knowledge flow within a network (Blanchet & James 2012). SNA and its measurements can capture such positions, answering questions such as "who is important in the network, who makes things happen in the network or holds the network together in times of distress?" (Prell 2012:96). By knowing which actors are at the core of a network, organisations can recognise their role *vis-à-vis* the overall network and subsequently provide them with the necessary support.

One approach to analysing an individual's role within a network is through the concept of centrality. First developed by Freeman (1979), this concept unpacks, among other things, an actor's degree of centrality to illuminate that actor's function within the network. According to Prell (2012), measures of centrality are among the first, and consequently the most popular, attempts of social network analysts to better understand the place of individual actors within a network. Consequently, social network analysts have devised a great array of degree measures, all contributing to the analysis of social networks. These include, among others, measure of degree centrality, betweenness, closeness, and *eigenvector*. Degree centrality, in particular, "is the number of ties of a given type that a node (actor) has" (Borgatti, Everett & Johnson 2013:165). A high degree of centrality denotes a greater access to resources, information, and even power over the network (Moore *et al* 2003). Knowing more about the positions of individual actors, especially those that channel resources, sheds light on a network's overall functioning and levels of knowledge sharing. SNA and measures such as degree centrality can help us come closer to such information.

3. THE CASE STUDY

Case studies are highly appropriate to analyse and subsequently understand the dynamics of social networks (Provan *et al* 2004). It was therefore decided to use

a case study to illustrate how SNA highlights the interaction between third sector organisations and an HEI. The University of the Free State's School of Nursing staff and three community partners, all of whom are active within the same geographical area, were chosen for the study. For the purpose of this chapter this interorganisational network will be referred to as the NPO–HEI network.

The UFS has thus far launched numerous community partnerships to fulfil its community engagement commitment. These commitments came about in response to the Ministry of Higher Education's 1997 *Education White Paper 3* (RSA DoE 1997) that urges HEIs to become more invested in their surrounding communities. In addition to individual community projects and resource allocation, the community engagement commitment of the UFS also entails the translation of social and civic responsibility into the teaching and learning facet of its different academic programmes. The pedagogy of service learning has been one of the UFS's main mechanisms for accomplishing this objective. One such example is the School of Nursing's postgraduate module entitled *Nursing Education Practical*. Typically, students enrolled in this module are registered nurses who wish to further their career in the field of higher education. Students work alongside community partners in the learning environments of pre-registered nursing students to develop nursing curricula in response to immediate community needs and challenges. These nursing education students are also expected to perform clinical demonstrations to pre-registered nursing students and community health workers. To realise its teaching and learning outcomes, this module requires a community-based component. In this regard, partnerships between the UFS and third sector organisations (NPOs) are of vital importance. One might argue that these partnerships bring the pedagogy of service learning, and ultimately the UFS's community engagement commitments, to fruition.

The coordinators of the nursing education module work closely with three local NPOs. Concerned with the social welfare of the community, these NPOs are for the most part active within the Heidedal suburb of Bloemfontein. This includes caring for abandoned children, attending to the social needs of vulnerable children, and supplying home-based care to the ill and elderly.

For the purpose of our case study, the UFS and these NPOs form a complete network with a predetermined network boundary. Unlike an ego-network interested in the immediate personal networks surrounding each research participant, a complete network refers to an entire set of actors, in this case organisations, and the ties linking them together. A network boundary refers to "the boundary around a set of actors that the researcher deems to be the complete set of actors for the network study"

(Prell 2012:66). Depending on the study's parameters, the researcher establishes the boundary of his/her study. The nursing education module is not the School of Nursing's only service learning module, and only one of several UFS service learning modules. Furthermore, the UFS's list of community partners far exceeds the three NPOs used in this study. Nevertheless, it was decided to use this particular academic module and its corresponding NPO partners as a case study as it supplied both a network active within a bounded geographic area and a network size adequate for the scope of the research reported in this chapter.

3.1 Methodology

The SNA was used to understand both the overall structure of an NPO–HEI network and the degree of interaction between the members of the network's respective organisations. This pertains more to the interaction between organisations than the networking happening within each individual organisation. Additionally, it was decided whether and to what extent the organisations share resources among one another. This includes the network's tendency to share knowledge among its different organisations. Since issues related to resources and interorganisational communication mostly concern the administrative rather than the functional facet of organisations, only the managerial staff (N=11) within the network was recruited. This included the directors, financial managers, secretaries and/or communication/liaison officers of the organisations. Similarly, with regard to the university, only the coordinators and overseeing department head (N=3) of the nursing education module participated in the study.

I obtained the data by means of a concise electronic survey. The survey consisted of two sections: the first asked for demographic detail, such as age, gender, and the number of years each individual had been working at his/her respective organisation. The second section covered aspects related to the NPO–HEI social network. With this section I first wanted to gauge the degree of collaboration among network members,¹ and next to establish the extent to which resources are distributed within the NPO–HEI network in question. In this regard, resources refer to

¹ Question 5: Approximately how often, if at all, do you collaborate with each of the following individuals on matters related to your organisation(s)/institution(s)?

knowledge individuals might have on funding prospects² and personal development opportunities such as workshops.³

Prior to distribution, I pre-tested the survey on individuals who were familiar with the NPO–HEI context. This was to ensure the clarity of the survey questions. To answer each question, participants were presented with an alphabetic list of all 14 participating actors. In reference to different topics, participants were asked to rate how frequently they interacted with every individual on the list. The participants could choose between *every day*, *once a week*, *once every six months*, *maybe once a year* *at a workshop*, *I know this person but we never talk about this issue* or *I do not know this person*.

I used UCINET, an SNA software tool designed by Borgatti, Everett and Freeman (2002), to analyse the data obtained from the electronically distributed surveys. This analysis included the calculation of the network's degree of centrality measures (see Figures 10.2 and 10.4.) The social network graphs were constructed with the help of Netdraw (Borgatti 2002), visualising software bundled with UCINET.

Network members from the same organisations were assigned the same sign and colour. To protect the identity and privacy of the NPOs and their staff, I used the letters A, B and C to represent their respective organisations. The letter U represents the participants from the university. Additionally, I assigned numbers to each of the NPO–HEI network's individual members. For example, organisation A's members were labelled A1, A2 and A3. These letters and numbers were assigned randomly and do not denote any hierarchical or nominal value. The size of the member's individual signs, however, represents his/her degree of centrality. For example, with a total of 13 ties, member U2 (see Figure 10.1) had the highest degree of centrality in the NPO–HEI collaboration network and consequently the biggest sign.

3.2 Results and discussion

In the following section and in reference to Figures 10.1, 10.3 and 10.4, I elaborate on the nature of the NPO–HEI network with regard to its degree of collaboration and level of knowledge sharing. I focus specifically on the network's structure and the centrality of the network's individual members.

2 Question 7: Approximately how often, if at all, do you talk with each of the following individuals about funding and/or grant opportunities that are available to your organisation(s)/institution(s)?

3 Question 8: Approximately how often, if at all, do you inform each of the following individuals about workshops and/or personal development opportunities that would professionally benefit them and their organisation(s)/institution(s)?

3.2.1 Collaboration

Figure 10.1 captures the participants' responses with regard to their perception of the level of collaboration occurring within the NPO–HEI network. From the structure of this network – that is, the density of the ties, the distribution of the individual actors, and the shape of the overall network – we can regard organisation A as being rather peripheral in relation to the other organisations. In comparison with organisations B and C, organisation A's primary form of interaction occurs internally. According to Prell (2012), peripheral actors can move power away from more centrally located actors. This can be positive, causing power to be more equally distributed throughout the network. On the other hand, collaborative actions toward a common goal might suffer due to outlying network members. Judging by the limited number of ties connecting organisation A to other actors, we can also argue that this organisation is connected rather loosely to the rest of the network. This can either be read as independence from the rest of the network or the presence of Granovetter's reference to weak ties (see discussion above).

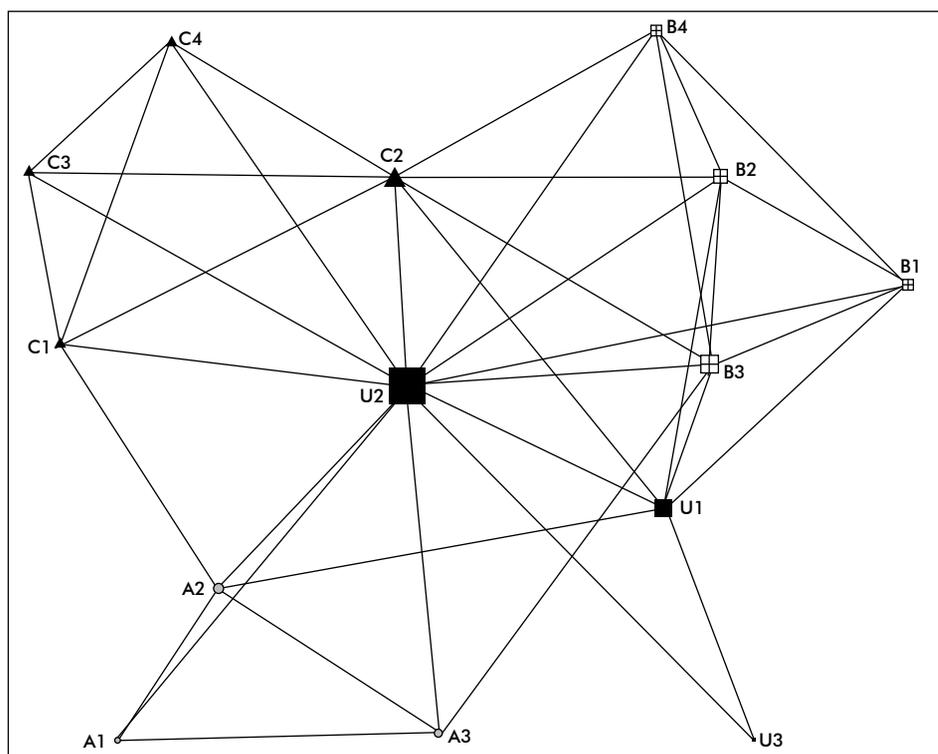


FIGURE 10.1 NPO–HEI collaboration network

As far as individual actors are concerned, one can safely say that actors U2, C2, U1 and B3 are essential to the network’s level of collaboration. These actors have the highest measure of degree centrality with 13, 8 and 7 respectively (see matrix in Table 10.1). Organisation A is the most peripheral with regard to the rest of the network and organisations B and C are only connected through actor C2. Possibly this places pressure on actor C2, because without him/her the network will deteriorate, causing lower levels of collaboration. Overall, actors U2 and C2 play central roles in keeping the network together and, due to their central positions within the network, allow for the distribution of information and resources.

TABLE 10.1 UCINET degree centrality matrix for NPO–HEI collaboration (symmetrised)

		1	2	3
		Degree	NrmDegree	Share
4	U2	13.000	100.000	0.167
10	C2	8.000	61.538	0.103
2	U1	7.000	53.846	0.090
8	B3	7.000	53.846	0.090
7	B2	6.000	46.154	0.077
5	C1	5.000	38.462	0.064
6	A2	5.000	38.462	0.064
9	B4	5.000	38.462	0.064
3	B1	5.000	38.462	0.064
14	C4	4.000	30.769	0.051
12	A3	4.000	30.769	0.051
13	C3	4.000	30.769	0.051
1	A1	3.000	23.077	0.038
11	U3	2.000	15.385	0.026

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

		1	2	3
		Degree	NrmDegree	Share
1	Mean	5.571	42.857	0.071
2	Std Dev	2.583	19.872	0.033
3	Sum	78.000	600.000	1.000
4	Variance	6.673	394.880	0.001
5	SSQ	528.000	31242.604	0.087
6	MCSSQ	93.429	5528.318	0.015
7	Euc Norm	22.978	176.756	0.295
8	Minimum	2.000	15.385	0.026
9	Maximum	13.000	100.000	0.167
10	N of Obs	14.000	14.000	14.000

Since U2 and U1 are HEI actors we can clearly see that the university plays an important role in this particular network. If the HEI actors were to be taken out (see Figure 10.2), it is clear that this would affect the rest of the network adversely. Since the involvement of U2 and U1 in this network is directly linked to the coordination of a service learning module, it is safe to say that the pedagogy of service learning does serve as an effective “entry point for community engagement” (Lazarus *et al* 2008:64).

A commonly held claim against HEI–third sector partnerships is that “such partnerships are assumed to be in place, yet what is happening on the ground may not in fact represent a quality partnership” (Netshandama 2010:70). As is evident from our case study, SNA can assist researchers in putting such claims to the test.

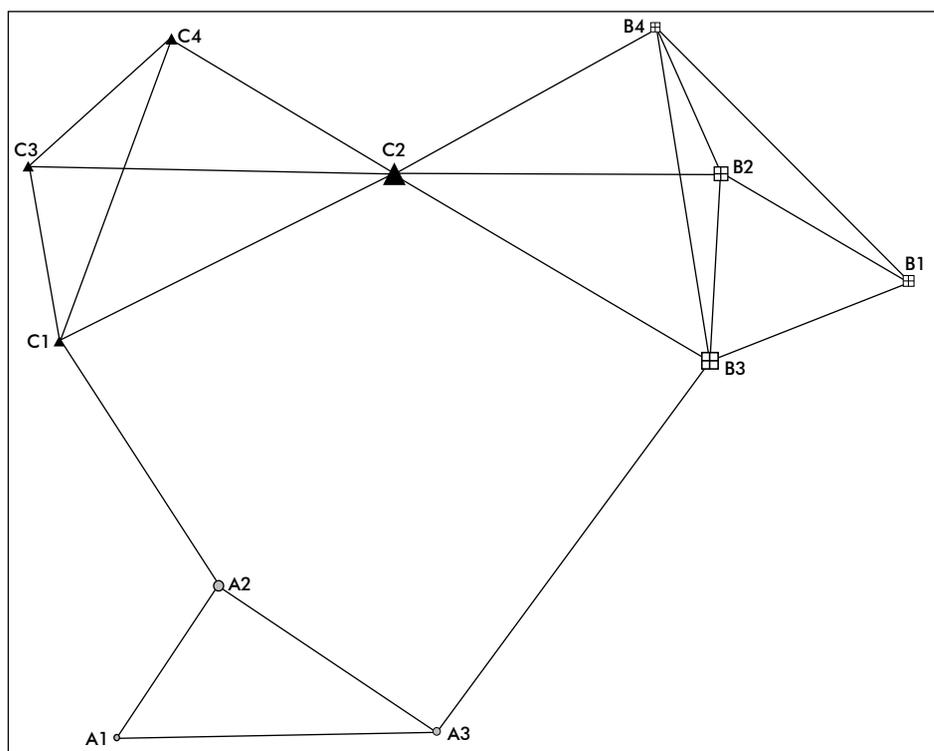


FIGURE 10.2 NPO–HEI collaboration network without university actors

3.2.2 Knowledge sharing

The sharing of resources, such as knowledge on funding or professional development, is an important function of social networking. In reference to NPOs in particular, Eng *et al* (2011:1106) maintain that organisations can “benefit from interaction with

members in the network communities by gaining necessary knowledge and expertise to improve [their] operational competence”.

To understand the degree and nature of knowledge sharing within our NPO–HEI network, it was necessary to differentiate between different types of knowledge. In one case study, participants were asked to first rate their level of interaction as far as the sharing of knowledge on funding resources were concerned and then to provide more general workshop information. As figures 10.3 and 10.4 illustrate, one can see a slight difference between the two types of knowledge sharing. Not surprisingly though, the network on sharing funding resources (Figure 10.3) is less dense than that of workshop information (Figure 10.4). This denotes a lesser degree of interaction among organisations. That being said, and in contrast to the other organisations and their actors, organisation B’s actors are more centrally located. Even though the literature informs us that knowledge sharing is one of the key qualities of social networks, third sector organisations are particularly wary regarding the amount of knowledge they share about funding resources. This is most likely due to the limited number of such resources available (Eng *et al* 2011). Responses to Question 7 that pertains to knowledge sharing about funding and/or grant opportunities yielded networking results as shown in Figure 10.3 and Table 10.2.

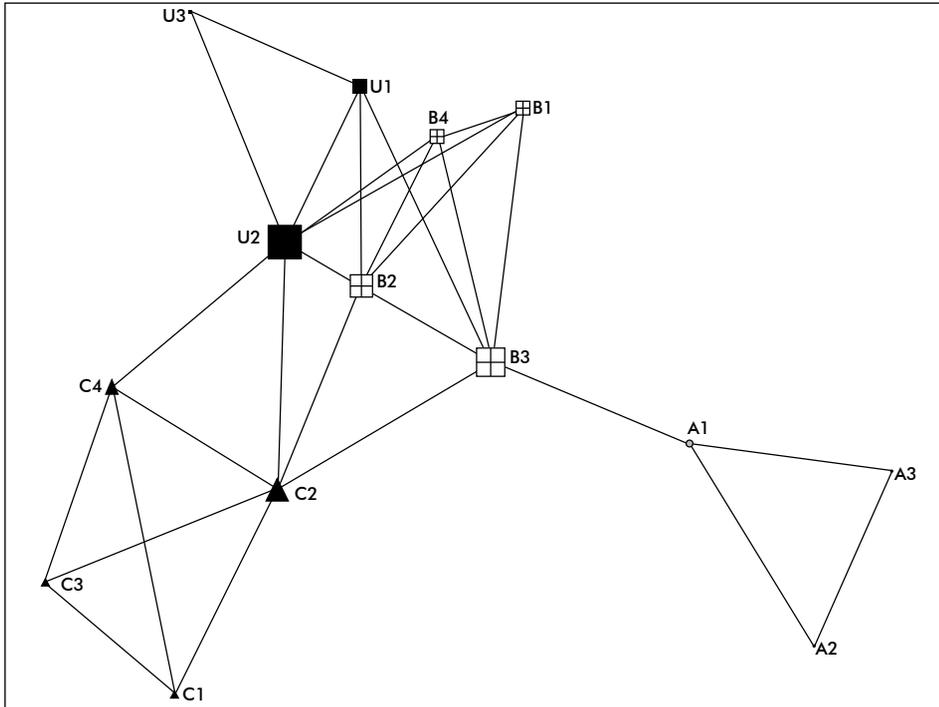


FIGURE 10.3 NPO–HEI knowledge sharing network (funding and grant opportunities)

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TABLE 10.2 UCINET degree centrality matrix for NPO–HEI knowledge sharing (funding) (symmetrised)

		1	2	3
		Degree	NrmDegree	Share
4	U2	8.000	61.538	0.138
8	B3	7.000	53.846	0.121
10	C2	6.000	46.154	0.103
7	B2	6.000	46.154	0.103
2	U1	4.000	30.769	0.069
14	C4	4.000	30.769	0.069
9	B4	4.000	30.769	0.069
3	B1	4.000	30.769	0.069
5	C1	3.000	23.077	0.052
13	C3	3.000	23.077	0.052
1	A1	3.000	23.077	0.052
12	A3	2.000	15.385	0.034
6	A2	2.000	15.385	0.034
11	U3	2.000	15.385	0.034

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

		1	2	3
		Degree	NrmDegree	Share
1	Mean	4.143	31.868	0.071
2	Std Dev	1.846	14.201	0.032
3	Sum	58.000	446.154	1.000
4	Variance	3.408	201.666	0.001
5	SSQ	288.000	17041.420	0.086
6	MCSSQ	47.714	2823.331	0.014
7	Euc Norm	16.971	130.543	0.293
8	Minimum	2.000	15.385	0.034
9	Maximum	8.000	61.538	0.138
10	N of Obs	14.000	14.000	14.000

Responses to Question 8 that pertains to sharing of information about workshops and/or personal development opportunities yielded results as depicted in Figure 10.4 and Table 10.3.

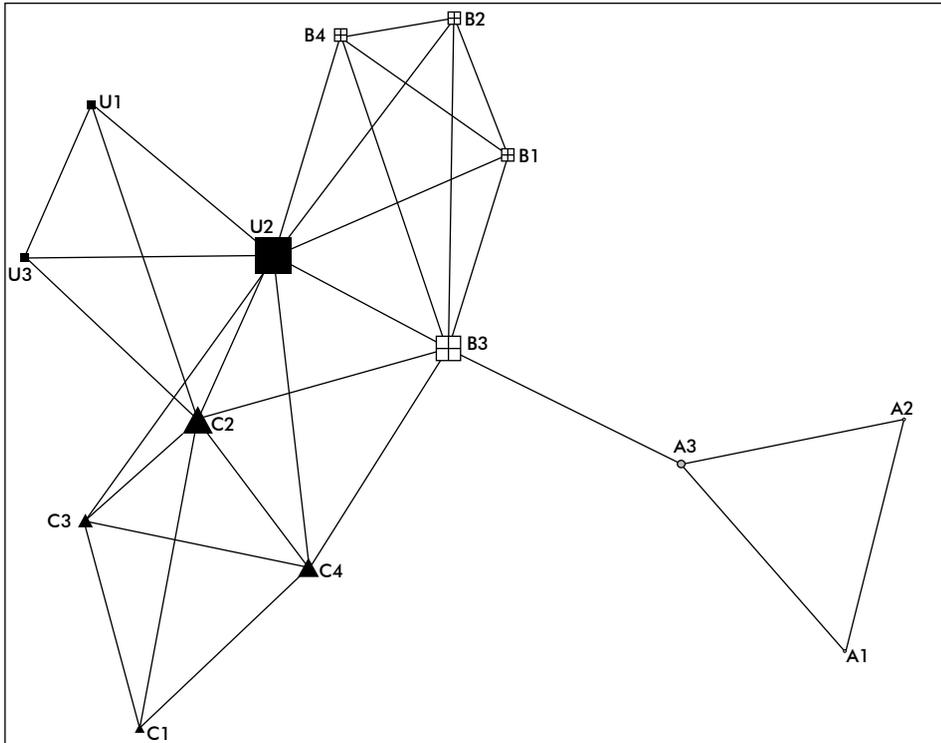


FIGURE 10.4 NPO–HEI knowledge sharing network (workshop and personal development information)

TABLE 10.3 UCINET degree centrality matrix for NPO–HEI knowledge sharing (workshop information) (symmetrised)

		1	2	3
		Degree	NrmDegree	Share
4	U2	9.000	69.231	0.150
10	C2	7.000	53.846	0.117
8	B3	7.000	53.846	0.117
14	C4	5.000	38.462	0.083
9	B4	4.000	30.769	0.067
7	B2	4.000	30.769	0.067
13	C3	4.000	30.769	0.067
3	B1	4.000	30.769	0.067
5	C1	3.000	23.077	0.050
2	U1	3.000	23.077	0.050
11	U3	3.000	23.077	0.050
12	A3	3.000	23.077	0.050
6	A2	2.000	15.385	0.033
1	A1	2.000	15.385	0.033

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

		1	2	3
		Degree	NrmDegree	Share
1	Mean	4.286	32.967	0.071
2	Std Dev	1.979	15.227	0.033
3	Sum	60.000	461.538	1.000
4	Variance	3.918	231.856	0.001
5	SSQ	312.000	18461.537	0.087
6	MCSSQ	54.857	3245.985	0.015
7	Euc Norm	17.664	135.873	0.294
8	Minimum	2.000	15.385	0.033
9	Maximum	9.000	69.231	0.150
10	N of Obs	14.000	14.000	14.000

In both networks, organisations A and C are peripheral. Even though actor C2 was central to the collaboration network, he/she is less involved as far as resource sharing goes. Even though not as prominent as actor C2, actor U2 is also less involved. In both networks actor U2 still has the highest degree centrality (see the matrices in Tables 10.2 and 10.3), meaning that he/she is still pertinent to the overall network and a prominent knowledge broker.

A position with high degree centrality is strategic, especially as far as resource sharing is concerned (Prell 2012). Actors in such positions can channel the flow of resources from one organisation to another, but on the other hand, if actors abuse their position of power they can obstruct the flow of resources from the rest of their own organisation as well as from the rest of the network. In both knowledge sharing networks actors B2 and B3 are in such strategic positions. If they wish, they can obstruct the flow of knowledge from or to organisation A. Knowing about the position of actors within a network can allow organisations to ‘connect better’, that is, position themselves more closely to resource-rich actors.

4. CONCLUSION

Universities the world over are developing smart partnerships with their communities ... however, all too often, there is a tendency in academia to use the idea of engagement as an ‘aerosol’ term, sprayed over any interaction between a HEI and the community to give the relationship a politically correct facelift (Netshandama 2010:70).

To what extent do the card swapping third sector workers, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, ‘keep in touch’? Furthermore, to what extent do universities, which so eagerly engage in community partnerships, honour such commitments and become

actively intertwined in the interorganisational networks of the third sector? As Buys and Bursnall (2007) argue, seeing such partnership commitments through is not only vital to community growth, but allows organisations to reach more people without duplicating the same initiatives. Moreover, well-functioning partnerships allow the free flow of resources to reach an even greater population; therefore organisations should network, as this can have a positive impact on their effectiveness.

Social networks are central to society. Judging from the amount of electronic social networking captivating society on a daily basis, Castells (2000) is not far off the mark when stating that we live in a network society. In this regard we should not hesitate to incorporate networks into our research agendas, questions and analysis. As I have argued throughout this chapter, methods such as SNA can help us unpack the intricate web of social networks. But, more importantly, and in line with the overarching theme of this book, SNA can provide us with an alternative tool to investigate the relationship between third sector organisations and higher education institutions. In the process, we can determine whether such engagements are merely of the sprayed on superficial type, or whether they are deeply embedded in existing networks, committed to communal needs and social well-being.

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11

HIGHER EDUCATION

ENABLING A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH FOR THE THIRD SECTOR

Willem Ellis & Deidré van Rooyen

ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship could possibly be a solution to the lack of financial sustainability that many South African non-profit organisations currently experience. The following methodology was adopted for purposes of gaining insight into the potential of non-profit organisations in the Free State to embrace social entrepreneurship: By means of telephonic interviews, focus group sessions and face-to-face interviews with provincial government officials and non-profit organisations in Mangaung and Matjhabeng, a snapshot of the third sector environment in the province was developed by the researchers. Due to the paucity of academic contributions on this topic, the researchers highlighted the challenges facing the third sector in its endeavour to adopt a social entrepreneurial approach. It is suggested that higher education could play a facilitative role in the shift towards this approach (for the public, private and third sectors) through reciprocal knowledge enablement.

1. INTRODUCTION

The third sector in South Africa is likely to encounter serious capacity problems in the longer term due to a decline in state sponsored social welfare spending and its ongoing reliance on funding generated from external sources. The resulting lack of adequate and reliable external funding threatens the sustainability of many non-profit organisations (NPOs) in the third sector and, therefore, their capacity to continue delivering necessary services to vulnerable communities (Le Roux 2005:351).

This gloomy reality has come as a wake-up call for many of these NPOs who now realise that they are rapidly required to adopt a more entrepreneurial and business-like approach to generate funding needed to address social problems. Enter the social enterprise!¹ Even though the concept currently defies exact definition, the social enterprise has been hailed as a solution that allows organisations to meet social needs while generating a profit. A social enterprise is often an NPO that earns at least 50% of its income from the entrepreneurial provision of goods and services (as opposed to receiving grants or donations) (ILO 2011a:20). A social enterprise approach to funding generation is gaining traction due to the possibility that the third sector will be able to sustain itself through self-generated revenues in the longer term, therefore being less dependent on grants and donations from traditional donors and sponsors.

Social entrepreneurship is a growing part of the debate on entrepreneurship in the countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as this approach assists in improving the well-being of people by reducing inequalities and increasing social cohesion (Noya 2006:9). Although social enterprises have collectively established themselves as a viable and productive sector in many countries, Visser (2011:239) notes that traditional NPOs in South Africa have not yet embraced social entrepreneurial activities.² Understandably, South African NPOs are reluctant to venture into untested waters, and they cannot be blamed for this reluctance, considering the number of challenges they already face on a day-to-day basis. However, with financial challenges continuously becoming

1 For the purpose of this chapter, 'social entrepreneur' will refer to the individual involved in an entrepreneurial undertaking; 'social entrepreneurship' to the approach followed; and 'social enterprise' to the social entrepreneurial entity created.

2 Information gathered and reproduced in this chapter partially stems from a research project conducted by the Centre for Development Support (CDS) for the International Labour Organization (ILO) culminating in a publication entitled *The potential of non-profit organisations in the Free State province to adopt a social enterprise approach*. The report was published under the auspices of the SME Observatory of South Africa.

more serious, NPOs might need to jump in at the deep end (Centre for Development Support and GreaterCapital 2013).

We decided to probe social entrepreneurship in South Africa from the perspective of the third sector in reaction to the paucity of academic contributions (Urban 2008; Visser 2011) in applied research. The primary aim of this chapter is to highlight the challenges facing the third sector in South Africa in its endeavour to become more sustainable through the adoption of social entrepreneurial approaches. We contend that taking note of the challenges can guide higher education institutions (HEIs) to play a facilitative role in the shift towards social entrepreneurial approaches by the third sector through knowledge enablement.

In this chapter we address the problem by elaborating on the challenges through reviewing current literature on social entrepreneurship within the third sector. The literature review is complemented by a case study of social entrepreneurial approaches in the third sector as encountered in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality and Matjhabeng Local Municipality in the Free State. Recommendations are made regarding the potential facilitative role that HEIs can play.

2. ENTER SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

As mentioned previously, a debate regarding the merits of social entrepreneurship as a lifeline to NPOs is currently raging in South Africa, and is picking up momentum with more and more actors in the private, public and third sectors becoming involved. It is prudent first to review the concept of social entrepreneurship and the debate around it by means of a literature review before gauging whether the HEI sector can play a facilitative role in encouraging a shift to social entrepreneurship by third sector actors. The literature review does not purport to be comprehensive in any way, but is deemed to be sufficient in the context of the chapter and its aim.

2.1 Defining social entrepreneurship

Researchers, policy makers and members of the NPO community are taking a critical look at the traditional model of NPOs, which are largely dependent on grant funding for their survival. While they acknowledge that the sustainability of many NPOs is threatened, they also point out that more entrepreneurial and business-like approaches could be adopted.

Forming part of a dynamic social economy, social enterprises have been hailed as an integral solution that allows organisations to meet social needs while generating

a profit. During the 2009 ILO Global Jobs Pact Conference, 'the social economy' was defined as

a concept designating enterprises and organisations, in particular co-operatives, mutual benefit societies, associations, foundations and social enterprises, which have the specific feature of producing goods, services and knowledge while pursuing both economic and social aims and fostering solidarity (ILO 2009).

Although there is no globally accepted definition of the term 'social enterprise', the UK government's definition of social enterprise will be used throughout this report. It is hereby given as "business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners" (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills 2011).

Social entrepreneurship could therefore benefit communities through the possible creation of decent jobs for marginalised or excluded people, and reintegrates people with disabilities or those unable to work full-time in the labour market. The skills needed in social enterprise create employment opportunities for the jobless and unemployed (Edes 2013).

In addition to generating an income for themselves, entrepreneurs around South Africa are establishing businesses that educate children, improve HIV awareness, protect endangered species, provide access to affordable health care and vital services, and build affordable housing. Such businesses are what we call social enterprises. They are attracting increasing attention from funders and policy makers alike by providing sustainable market-based solutions to social problems. Traditionally, NPOs focus on their mission first; that is to say, their social mission is fundamental to their work and guides their activities. On the opposite end of this spectrum are commercial companies where increasing the profit margin is the principal purpose. A worry often voiced by NPOs is that by taking on income-generating activities they would stray from the focus of their mission.

However, becoming a social enterprise does not mean that an organisation has to convert to a fully fledged traditional business, but rather that it should become a financially sustainable organisation. Becoming social enterprises also does not guarantee the sustainability of NPOs. If not well prepared for this mission shift, NPOs will continue to face financial challenges. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to becoming a social enterprise, and the majority of NPOs will require capacity building in business management to enhance their skill in strategic planning, communication and funding strategies in order to succeed. The following continuum (Table 11.1)

profiles the different types of organisations according to their core purpose or bottom line and the space where social enterprises exist.

TABLE 11.1 Continuum table of organisations according to their core purpose

Social purpose organisations					Commercial purpose organisations				
Social value first		Blended societal and financial value					Financial value first		
Impact only		Impact first				Finance first			
Charities		Revenue-generating social enterprise			Social purpose business	Traditional business			
Grants only: No trading, includes traditional philanthropy	Trading revenues and grants	Potentially sustainable social enterprise: Some income in trading revenues	Break-even: All income from trading revenues	Profitable social enterprise: Surplus reinvested (no dividends to shareholders)	Profitable social enterprise: Surplus profit distribution	CSR/CSI/CSV* company	Company allocation of a percentage of profits to charity	Mainstream market company	

* CSR/CSI/CSV = Corporate Social Responsibility / Corporate Social Investment/ Corporate Social Venture [Reproduced with the kind permission from the publisher. Source: Balbo, Hehenberger, Mortell and Oostlander (2010:18)]

With 95% of South African NPOs registered as voluntary associations, the majority would fall into the charity category in Table 11.1 above. Social enterprises can operate in different areas of this continuum according to the portion of their entire income that they are able to generate through trading activities. However, it is generally accepted that a social enterprise has a social and/or environmental objective as its main reason for existence, in contrast to traditional businesses, the primary objective of which is profit maximisation.

2.2 Social entrepreneurship in South Africa

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) identified the lack of understanding of the concept of social entrepreneurship among the reasons for the low prevalence of social entrepreneurship in South Africa (Visser 2011:236). Johnson’s (2000:10) speculation that there are few institutional mechanisms in place to provide a framework, context, space and place to support social entrepreneurship in South Africa is therefore correct. There are furthermore no accurate figures for the number of social enterprises, mainly because there is no widely accepted definition or legal structure for them. The first global study on social entrepreneurship that South Africa participated in was the 2009 GEM report (Notten 2010). When it comes to social

entrepreneurship, South Africa's performance on the global stage is average. With respect to social entrepreneurial activity in early-stage businesses, South Africa's rate is 1.8% of all entrepreneurial activity social in nature. Uganda, the only other African country in the survey and a much poorer country than South Africa, had a rate of 2.2% (Notten 2010). Social entrepreneurs provide solutions to social, employment and economic problems where traditional market or public approaches fail (Urban 2008:347). Yet, despite these achievements government in SA appears reluctant to engage directly with social entrepreneurship endeavours, viewing social entrepreneurs as innately risky maverick endeavours. In South Africa social entrepreneurship has unequivocal application where traditional government initiatives are unable to satisfy the entire social deficit, where an effort on the reduction in dependency on social welfare/grants is currently being instituted, and where the survival of many NGOs is at stake (Urban 2008:347).

While social entrepreneurship is still an under-researched area, a number of significant pieces of research have been produced in the last three years, aiming at providing practical tools that can guide the development of social enterprises in their financial and legal formats (ILO 2011b; 2011c).

New forms of finance are also gaining momentum. Government is currently working with the Industrial Finance Corporation (IFC) in setting up a fund especially dedicated to financing social enterprise initiatives. Impact investing is also attracting increasing interest by private investors who are looking for alternative options to achieve financial returns, diversify risk and align themselves with responsible investment policies. For the great majority of NPOs in South Africa, which are voluntary associations dedicated to the provision of social services, access to these new forms of finance is restricted unless they develop financially viable businesses to sustain their operations. Aligning their income generating strategy to their primary social mission might prove particularly challenging for organisations that are often providing services to vulnerable and poor groups in society, since people are unlikely to be able to afford the essential services they are currently receiving at no cost.

2.3 Higher education institutions and the shift to social entrepreneurship

Since teaching and learning and research are the most important focus areas of higher education institutions (HEIs), interventions related to these areas often take precedence over community engagement interventions. To our knowledge this is also the case as far as social entrepreneurship-related interventions in South Africa

is concerned. The University of Cape Town (Bertha Centre for Social Innovation),³ the University of Pretoria (Gordon Institute for Business Science),⁴ the University of Johannesburg (Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Social Economy)⁵ and the University of the Western Cape, through an advanced seminar at master's level, are taking the lead in setting up teaching and learning interventions aimed at strengthening the understanding of social entrepreneurship, especially in the business environment.

Visser (2011:245) noted that once HEIs invest in human and physical resources to accumulate a body of knowledge, awareness of new concepts such as social entrepreneurship is developed in the media as well as at policy level. This is the reason why the Centre for Development Support (CDS)⁶ at the University of the Free State has also initiated a Free State-based entry into this contested environment through research cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and GreaterCapital, culminating in a research report entitled *The potential of non-profit organisations in the Free State province to adopt a social enterprise approach* (Centre for Development Support and GreaterCapital 2013). As reflected in the title of the research report above, the purpose of this applied research project was to create awareness around the social entrepreneurship concept and to gauge the mentioned potential among NPOs. The research project did not intend to create a long term engagement with this sector but rather a once-off knowledge enablement exercise.

The CDS has taken the conscious decision to concentrate more on the problems of NPOs attempting to increase their financial viability by becoming more entrepreneurial in nature. This has led it to concentrate its research efforts on the NPO sector and to introduce a strong community engagement focus – going as far as advising NPOs on organisational change management interventions aimed at making the shift to social entrepreneurship.

3. THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The ultimate objective of the research was to determine the potential for NPOs in the Free State to take up a social enterprise approach. This research used triangulation as a social inquiry process of collecting and analysing both qualitative

3 <http://www.gsb.uct.ac.za/s.asp?p=389>

4 <http://www.gibs.co.za/programmes/certificate-programmes/social-entrepreneurship-certificate-programme-secp.aspx>

5 <http://www.uj.ac.za/EN/FACULTIES/MANAGEMENT/DEPARTMENTS/CSE/Pages/home.aspx>

6 <http://www.ufs.ac.za/cds>

and quantitative data (Creswell 2003:210). According to Du Plooy (2001:39), the main reasons for applying both approaches are to test theoretical assumptions in more than one way, and to increase the reliability and validity of the observations, analysis and findings. Maree and Pietersen (2007:145) define quantitative research as a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup of a universe (or population) to generalise the findings to the universe that is being studied. In order to obtain the required information, CDS developed a survey instrument and conducted 115 telephonic interviews with NPOs that work in the Free State. Included in the broader questionnaire utilised for information gathering (as per Chapter 8) were two questions related to the ability of a sample of Free State NPOs to adopt a social entrepreneurial approach to rendering their specific services or products. The contact information of these NPOs was obtained from various sources such as the GreaterCapital network of NPOs (including Tshikululu Social Investments and GivenGain among others), the Free State Consultative Welfare Forum and Sangonet.

Kelly, Clark, Brown and Sitzia (2003:287) comment that qualitative researchers want to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations, or phenomena as they occur in the real world, and therefore want to study them in their natural setting. CDS designed an interview guide to consult provincial officials from the Free State Departments of Health, Social Development, Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, and Education to gain a public sector perspective concerning the need and potential for increased income/revenue generation. Officials in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality and Matjhabeng Local Municipality were also interviewed. Qualitative interviews often seek rich and detailed information (Neuman 1997) and can be seen as a two-way conversation (Nieuwenhuis 2008), probing for further clarification. Ideas, views and opinions observed through the eyes of the participant are valuable sources of information.

Similar questions were posed to managers and/or board members of a selection of NPOs during two focus group sessions held in Bloemfontein and in Welkom. Focus group sessions were used because this approach makes it possible to explore a topic in depth (Bryman & Bell 2007:512) and participants are able to build on each other's ideas (Nieuwenhuis 2008). It allows the researcher to determine how individuals collectively make sense of a phenomenon and construct meanings around it.

It was decided that organisations already involved in income-generating activities be invited. These turned out to be the larger, more stable organisations that were registered NPOs. The reason for this selection was that the governance structures and the financial management of these organisations are monitored and in place.

Smaller community-based organisations probably still need to develop, without having to struggle with an entrepreneurial approach.

The findings from all information collected was also shared and verified at a roundtable of stakeholders in both municipalities.

4. FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented below. They are broken down in two subsections: the anticipated move towards an enterprising NPO and the importance of sectoral relationships in effecting a move towards a social entrepreneurial approach.

4.1 Moving towards an enterprising non-profit organisation

Even though the non-profit sector can start making a profit from certain services they provide, and this money could be used to provide services in the disadvantaged communities, NPOs noted that government should still take responsibility for providing communities with essential (statutory) services. Income-generating activities and social enterprise development should be a means of independence and should allow an organisation to grow out of a “*survivalist mode*”⁷ and serve the community effectively, not having to depend on funding to be able to do the essential work they do.

Understandably, NPOs cannot be blamed for their reluctance to venture into untested waters, taking into consideration the number of challenges they face on a day-to-day basis. However, the financial challenges are continuously becoming more serious, and NPOs need to jump in at the deep end and “*try and try and try again*”. Entrepreneurs often fail a number of times before achieving success, and therefore social enterprises “*have to take the leap and just do it*”. Many NPOs have several ideas and ideals, but do not always know how to make the leap or do not have the financial investment to do so. A range of important issues needs to be addressed in their leap.

A “*mind shift*” should take place within the non-profit sector. This will allow them to devise plans that are more sustainable and not dependent on funding or grants. The initial difficulty would be to convince the staff and board members to all take the step together. The board members are often cautious for the NPO to move

7 All the words in double quotation marks and italics are an exact transcription of what was reported by the participants (either during interviews or focus-group sessions). The participants’ utterances and comments form part of the text so that the context can be reflected. These comments do not reflect the opinions of the research team.

into social enterprises as they are financially responsible for the NPO and may not be willing to take any risks. The governance of a social enterprise, if incorporated well, helps safeguard the mission of the enterprise while allowing the management team to meet the demands of various stakeholders such as investors, employees, clients and beneficiaries and to comply with public policies and regulations (Noble & Mayer 2012). Yet few social enterprises use governance as a means to reach their highest potential. No one governance mechanism fits all social enterprises. Rather, governance should be dynamic and adapt to the changing needs of the management team, the operating and regulatory environment and the larger goals and vision of the social enterprise throughout its lifespan. It is recommended that specific training be designed to educate NPO managers and board members about the implications of taking on income-generating activities and/or changing their legal structure to adopt a social enterprise approach, especially from the point of view of governance controls and financial liabilities.

Such an approach will also enable the public (beneficiaries and donors) to notice that the non-profit sector *"means business"* and will support their endeavours. A government official mentioned that *"the ideology of an NPO should be changed because people should start seeing a crèche as a business that can make money but still focuses on its main mission"*. The mind shift does not only have to take place within the organisation, but general awareness that NPOs are becoming more entrepreneurially inclined will have to be created.

The importance of NPOs is especially felt when they get into financial difficulty and are forced to cease operations, with the associated detrimental effect on those who benefited from their work and those who worked with the organisation (Conradie 1999:291). If funding and donations, which are not always consistent, are withdrawn the organisations that do not have reserves in place may not be able to continue. If there is proper diversification of funding and not reliance on a couple of funders (especially on government), organisations should not collapse. They might need to reorganise, shrink or put future programmes on hold (which is not ideal, but explains the aspiration to generate income), but for well-capacitated organisations this should not become a problem of survival. Information sharing regarding access to funds is essential. Government could incentivise income generation among NPOs through policies, training and support programmes.

Training and exposure are also critical. A government official from the Department of Social Development commented that the concept of social entrepreneurship should be introduced early, and that the *"youth are ready for fresh ideas"*. This 'ideology' or mindset should already be encouraged at school by promoting social enterprise

days and not only entrepreneurship days. This could be done by providing skills training in terms of business modelling, project management, writing proposals and seeking funding; as well as ways to solve problems, but in entrepreneurial manner. NPOs could also learn from one another, and sharing examples and good practice experiences would show these organisations that there is hope and a way forward. Some of the NPOs suggested that social enterprise development should be promoted and that skills to move in this direction should be advocated and enhanced. By understanding this concept and allowing the format to be legally acceptable, more of the people working with this sector will acknowledge it as a “*way to approach the future*”.

“*Starting small but thinking big*” is the answer that came from the emerging social entrepreneurs within the NPO sector in the Free State. Social enterprises should be approached in the same way as an entrepreneur deciding on his/her next venture, in addition to solving the social problem. Research in a community is essential – if there is no unique need and relevance for a product or service, it will not sell (“*demand and supply*”). This can be seen as a feasibility study of what the organisation has available, what is needed in the community and what the organisation can then do to bridge this gap.

4.2 Sectoral relationships: Government versus non-profit organisations

The NPO managers in the focus groups commented that the “*re-engineering and reorganisation*” of the community and cooperation between government departments would be a step in the right direction. Municipalities should of course also become involved in this collaboration because they are closer to the people and networks on the ground as far as relationships with business and community are concerned. Government actors should not try to centralise power, but should make use of people that are on the ground – “*use the people that work in the communities like the NPOs*”. Municipalities should play a key role in the provision of services and access for large businesses to use their corporate social responsibility in order to strengthen the social enterprise approaches of NPOs.

In the Free State 98% of NPOs are registered as voluntary associations and most of them work in social services. While the sectoral focus of these organisations is an advantage to access partnership opportunities with government, the skills pool found among staff members of NPOs working in welfare often lacks the financial acumen needed to run a social enterprise. Business development and support services need to be made accessible to assist such organisations that wish to make the transition into an enterprising venture. It is also essential that NPOs be trained

in those business skills that are truly lacking in this sector. Even though some NPOs may decide not to venture into becoming a social enterprise, they will all benefit from adopting some dimension of business management, such as strategic planning and funding strategies.

Only when the private sector has also been included in a triad of partners will the move towards a social enterprise approach be fully inclusive and effective. Adding the unique capabilities and approaches of HEIs to this effort multiplies the possibilities of successful reciprocal enablement.

5. PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are based on the findings above, with special reference to an anticipated move towards becoming an enterprising NPO and the importance of sectoral relationships in effecting a move towards a social entrepreneurial approach. Table 11.2 elaborates on the recommendations that can be made in assisting important role-players in order for NPOs to become more entrepreneurial in nature.

TABLE 11.2 Recommendations to improve the process of social entrepreneurship in the third sector

Public sector	Civil society sector	Private sector
Relationships and networks		
Government should oversee the accountability and functioning of NPOs, but respect and promote the independence of civil society.	NPOs should strengthen their transparency and accountability, especially in the area of financial compliance, by making this information more widely available to the public.	Business should build long-term relationships with local NPOs and social enterprises because they know what the real needs of the local community are and what complementary services/products can be provided by the business.
Set up a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform where all stakeholders in social entrepreneurship could iron out problems that everybody is experiencing.	Set up a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform where all stakeholders in social entrepreneurship could iron out problems that everybody is experiencing.	Set up a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform where all stakeholders in social entrepreneurship could iron out problems that everybody is experiencing.
Provide support and easy access to information for NPOs in the areas of economic opportunities, tendering processes, as well as training in relevant legal, governance and business management matters.	Build relationships and partnerships with government (especially the Department of Social Development and Department of Health).	Businesses and business development services need to understand the context in which NPOs work.

Public sector	Civil society sector	Private sector
Nurture relationships and partnerships with NPOs who are extensions for the statutory work that needs to be undertaken by government.	Build an understanding of what is needed and what the NPO sector can provide to government.	
Make more use of NPOs venturing into social enterprise activities when procuring.	NPOs should ensure that their procurement status is up to date and that they adhere to all criteria in this regard.	Make more use of NPOs venturing into social enterprise activities when procuring.
Municipalities should build relationships with local NPOs and social enterprises to enable collaboration in the community and meet social needs more effectively.	NPOs and social enterprises should build relationships with local municipalities to enable collaboration in the community and meet social needs more effectively.	
	Partner and build networks with local businesses to build business skills and access business contracts that are not within the reach of NPOs.	The private sector could be enticed to 'adopt' NPOs in order to share their business acumen with them. NPOs should also join business forums in order to interact with businesses.
Towards enterprising NPOs		
Change the mindset regarding NPOs to encourage self-sustainability. Provide training on legal, governance and business management matters that empowers NPOs to explore income generation and social enterprise models.	Change the mindset regarding NPOs to encourage self-sustainability, not charity cases.	Change the mindset regarding NPOs to encourage self-sustainability so that they do not fall into the mindset of being charity cases. Teach them business acumen.
	NPOs should diversify and not only rely on funding from specific funders.	
A communication campaign should be co-developed by all sectors to enlighten government officials and the public about social entrepreneurship.	A communication campaign should be co-developed by all sectors to enlighten NPOs and the public about social entrepreneurship.	A communication campaign should be co-developed by all sectors to enlighten business and the public about social entrepreneurship.
Government officials need training to obtain a deeper understanding of what social entrepreneurship is and how the government can better assist these types of NPOs.	NPO managers and board members need training to obtain a deeper understanding of what social entrepreneurship is and how NPOs can become more enterprising in their current activities.	The business sector needs training to obtain a deeper understanding of what social entrepreneurship is and how they can better assist these types of NPOs.

HIGHER EDUCATION: ENABLING A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH FOR THE THIRD SECTOR

Public sector	Civil society sector	Private sector
Social entrepreneurship days should also be launched at schools, not only entrepreneurship days.	NPO managers and board members should be enabled to use business skills in enhancing the organisations' sustainability.	Social entrepreneurship should be encouraged among the youth – not only 'traditional' entrepreneurship.
Government should be encouraged to develop an infrastructure for service provision to support enterprising non-profit organisations.	NPOs should be encouraged to start small with enterprising ideas, but grow into more activities as their organisation becomes larger.	Initiate enabling interventions supporting social entrepreneurial NPOs from their Corporate Social Investment (CSI) or Corporate Responsibility (CSR) focus areas.
Government should make all relevant information available to NPOs that want to conduct feasibility studies for social enterprise development within their communities.	A feasibility study should be done by the NPO to research what the community needs are that they will be able to cover in terms of their enterprise – just as an entrepreneur will experiment with a new venture.	Businesses should make all relevant information available to NPOs that want to conduct feasibility studies within their communities for social enterprise development; not in competition with such businesses, but rather complementing them.
Relevant government departments should make all relevant information available to NPOs that want to initiate social enterprise development in the areas of waste management, tourism and agriculture.	In the Free State NPOs are encouraged to become involved in waste management, tourism and agriculture where the potential for social entrepreneurship is positive.	Businesses should make all relevant information available to NPOs that want to initiate social enterprise development in the areas of waste management, tourism and agriculture, where such enterprises are not in competition with these businesses.

6. CONCLUSION

Dees (2007:31) best summarises the above-mentioned challenges: "We need to provide the right support and we need to address fundamental questions". Taking into account the myriad of challenges facing the third sector in the Free State identified in the research, support for their endeavours to move towards social entrepreneurial approaches is crucial. Referring to the role of higher education institutions in facilitating the shift towards social entrepreneurial approaches by the third sector through future knowledge enablement, this statement could not be truer. Higher education institutions could contribute to this process in the following ways:

- Playing a leading role in sensitising all sectors involved (in affecting the "mindshift") regarding the possibilities of social entrepreneurship and the vital role of partnerships in its actualisation.
- Acting as hubs, facilitating communication and the optimal utilisation of multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms between partners (sectoral cooperation). Higher education institutions, in general, have the resources and legitimacy needed to broker and strengthen relationships between partners of different sectors.

- Utilising their inherent research capacity to generate information utilised in knowledge enablement interventions.
- Applying the specialised capacity necessary to conduct training and other related skills development for partners from all sectors.
- Optimising their procurement policies to advantage non-profit organisations in their quest to follow social entrepreneurial approaches.

It is vital that higher education institutions grasp their potential as agents of change and enablers of all sectors in this regard. Higher education institutions who are already geared towards such endeavours through community engagement interventions should strive towards optimising their participation in the field, while those not yet actively engaged should take serious note of the findings and recommendations of this research. Efforts to address pertinent conceptual issues and practical implications of becoming involved in knowledge enablement exercises should be prioritised with special emphasis on the recommendations for higher education institutions provided above. Above all, it is critically important to pursue enablement through reciprocity among all partners.

In participating in this research project, the authors, stemming from the Centre for Development Support (CDS) at the University of the Free State, have endeavoured not only to generate knowledge, but to practically illustrate the possibilities of reciprocal relationships between relevant actors in the field of social entrepreneurship.⁸ In the case of CDS its collaboration with the International Labour Organization and GreaterCapital, both actors in the field, illustrates one of the many permutations of

8 Also refer to Chapter 8 in this book.

reciprocal relationships aimed at informing and capacitating decision makers and policy formulators.

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12

WORKING WITH NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS DURING AN INTERNATIONAL FIELDTRIP

REFLECTIONS ON EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RECIPROCAL RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

International field class teaching provides an opportune moment to turn experiential learning into a process of knowledge enablement and knowledge transfer. This chapter reflects on the experience of an international field class by development geography students from the United Kingdom who visited South Africa in March 2013. Critical reflections address the ways in which the course was adapted to increase the service learning and knowledge enablement outcomes of the field class, and the benefits and challenges faced by students and host non-profit organisations in this process. Key challenges identified include clarity and quantity of communication among stakeholders in the designing of research projects and concerns over students being a burden to the host non-profit organisation. At the same time, benefits to students' learning outcomes as well as to strengthening non-profit organisations' practices are identified, along with a number of simple measures that could enhance the reciprocal outcomes of such engagements.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role and contribution of the university sector to society remains in the spotlight – whether in relation to the ‘impact’ and accessibility of academic research on the general public, the type of citizens shaped by universities, the political and social responsibilities of academics, or driving economic growth. The framings of these agendas and imperatives vary over time and by national context. In the United Kingdom (UK), these debates have been driven by a neo-liberal agenda of ‘impact’ and reaction against it, which prioritises a more critical and activist role for the academy (Massey 2004; Williams 2012). South African government policies and initiatives provide a grand vision for the role of higher education in developing the post-apartheid nation (Lazarus, Erasmus, Hendricks, Nduna & Slamati 2008) that resonates with an existing culture of practice in which developmental and social justice concerns are entrenched in South African intellectual identities (Connell 2007; Parnell 2007). Among human geographers, this culture of practice emphasises collaboration with local communities and draws from earlier engagements with anti-apartheid civil society campaigns to inform efforts to contribute to post-apartheid nation building and development (Oldfield 2007, 2008; Oldfield, Parnell & Mabin 2004; Parnell 2007).

Within human geography, field class teaching and research provide an opportune moment in which to critically engage with these concerns and seek to involve staff, students and local organisations or communities in reciprocal relations of co-learning and knowledge co-production (Driver 2004; Herrick 2010; Malam & Grundy-Warr 2011). Building on these concerns, and acknowledging the influence of postcolonial approaches to research practice (Simon, Mosavel & Van Stade 2007), this chapter reflects on the possibilities for pursuing co-learning and knowledge co-production afforded by an undergraduate development geography fieldtrip from the UK to South Africa during which students from the University of Sheffield worked with non-profit organisations (NPOs) in Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa.

The chapter begins with an overview of experiential learning within human geography as a mechanism for developing research and teaching with non-academic partners. We then outline the philosophy behind and logistics of the fieldtrip before reflecting on the successes and challenges experienced in designing and delivering a collaborative learning experience to benefit students and host NPOs.

2. SERVICE LEARNING, GEOGRAPHY FIELDTRIPS AND ‘IMPACT’

Community engagement has developed as a core concern in university research and teaching, often embedded in service learning activities (Lazarus *et al* 2008;

Reed, Jernstedt, Hawley, Reber & DuBois 2005). Service learning can be defined as participation in an activity that meets community needs and involves student reflections upon such an activity. Advocates of service learning argue that this approach provides students with skills development, enhanced understanding and a platform through which to link theory to experience, while potentially transforming students' worldviews and daily practices through engagement with social problems (Braunsberger & Flamm 2011; Lazarus *et al* 2008). In addition to improving the students' educational experience, service learning is recognised as fostering and developing a democratic community, increasing civic engagement and providing a basis for education for social transformation (Braunsberger & Flamm 2011; Saltmarsh 1996). While service learning contributes to the development of students as informed and engaged citizens, it also promotes community engagement and draws students into the role of knowledge transfer facilitators and participants in reciprocal learning experiences (Oldfield 2008; Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo & Bringle 2011).

Community engagements within service learning approaches are based upon ideals of equality and participation, including that educational objectives and community partner needs are aligned through a process of mutual negotiation "to enhance, among other objectives, reciprocal learning" (Thomson *et al* 2011:214). The benefits of reciprocal learning – of sharing knowledge, ideas and skills – can assist NPOs in strengthening their capacity and realising specific targets and goals, while also contributing to broader social development, poverty alleviation and transformative agendas (Parnell 2007; Stanton & Erasmus 2013). To realise these outcomes, strategies of consultation and negotiation are needed to ensure that partner organisations are valued and respected and are not placed in a position of being in service to a university course and student needs (Oldfield 2008). These practices, which resonate with postcolonial approaches to development research, serve to address the power inequalities often implicit in the designing and conducting of research – processes that are led by academics or students with little cognisance of the needs or priorities of host organisations or communities. Instead, service learning approaches seek to involve host communities or organisations in consultations around the formulation of research ideas and design of research projects to ensure robust and sensitive research that is relevant, useful and accessible to different stakeholders (Simon *et al* 2007).

These engagements contribute to an ongoing process of reflexivity and critical thinking throughout the research process and a heightened awareness of the influence of the positionality of the researchers over their research practice and findings. This recognition of the influence of previous emotional, ideological and

intellectual experiences on our engagement with the field, allied to awareness that our presence as researchers influences the context and practice of knowledge production, allows us to recognise that knowledge is co-produced through a process involving both the researcher and participants (Kaufmann 2002). Understanding the mutuality of knowledge co-production further underscores the need for a strong ethic of reciprocity within research practice and efforts to deliver on the ideals of fieldtrip teaching in a way that benefits both students and host communities/organisations.

Although human geography fieldtrips cannot be equated with service learning pedagogy, many such trips do draw upon similar ideals and practices. Fieldtrips and fieldwork are viewed as crucial components of a geography degree that offers experiential learning opportunities to students that prompt deeper learning, critical thinking skills and a chance to question the politics and merits of knowledge production and acquisition (Fuller 2012; Hill & Woodland 2002). However, the practices and outcomes of fieldtrips vary dramatically depending upon the disciplinary and pedagogical underpinnings, geographical location and subjective focus, and the duration and style of participation involved.

The University of Sheffield's fieldtrip to Bloemfontein discussed here cannot be positioned as a 'true' service learning project, but it can be considered as a short-term engagement infused with postcolonial principles and the ethos of service learning. To this end efforts were made to ensure that both students and host NPOs were involved in the design of the research projects, that the focus of the research would be of benefit to the individual NPOs and that students' findings would be provided to their hosts in appropriate ways in order to ensure a reciprocal relationship between the student and host NPO. Furthermore, underpinning the pedagogical approach to the fieldtrip and specified learning outcomes are concerns to provide students with an experience that links education (and theory) to experience and everyday life and that such experiences encourage and foster democratic practice and deeper social engagement and transformation – all of which resonate with Saltmarsh's (1996) key outcomes of service learning. Overall, the fieldtrip resonates with a form of short-term service learning and can be recognised as providing (albeit in a limited way) a means of promoting a sense of social responsibility and increasing a sense of the meaningfulness of university education (Reed *et al* 2005).

3. THE FIELDTRIP

The reflections in this chapter are based on an 11 day development geography fieldtrip to South Africa in March 2013 involving 30 final year honours level

students accompanied by three staff members from the University of Sheffield. All three staff members had visited South Africa before, but only the course leader had conducted research in the country and visited Bloemfontein previously. The students were generally from middle-class backgrounds with a mixture of previous travel experience; some had travelled extensively and independently to domestic and international destinations; for others the fieldtrip was the furthest they had travelled and for some it was the first time they had travelled overseas.

The fieldtrip involved a range of teaching and learning activities in Johannesburg, Pilanesberg and Bloemfontein, including experiential learning activities that could be characterised as involving autonomous observation (self-guided tours of the Apartheid Museum), dependent observation (a staff guided 'Cook's tour' of Bloemfontein), and autonomous participation (student-defined interactive data gathering during research with the host NPO) (Herrick 2010; Panelli & Welch 2005). Bloemfontein was the primary fieldtrip location. Here, students were provided with a day of orientation activities before spending three days working in small groups (five students per group) with one of six local host NPOs to conduct a small-scale research project. The findings and experiences of this research formed the basis for an individual research report, a group policy brief and mapping product (to be shared with the host NPO) and a reflective essay on development research practice.

The host NPOs were identified as potential partners during a pre-fieldtrip planning visit in August 2012 when the fieldtrip leader made contact with the Head of Service Learning (HoSL) at the University of the Free State. Through a series of meetings and site visits a shortlist of potential host NPOs was identified and invited to host a small group of University of Sheffield students. Conversations with the host NPOs addressed concerns relating to the design of the students' research projects, their activities during the visit, as well as the provision of findings and products to the host organisations. From these conversations, and discussions with the HoSL, it became clear that the NPOs would value a mapping product that would either assist in their daily practices and/or provide a material resource that could be used in efforts to secure funding and support for their work. This request was driven, in part, by an expectation that students would be proficient in and have access to basic Geographic Information System (GIS) tools, as well as by dominant views of geographical studies outside of academia.

This request was discussed by the fieldtrip teaching team to identify how to integrate the relevant output in the students' work. It was decided to embed the mapping exercise within the assessment materials for the module, specifically as a required component of the group policy brief output. The decision to include the mapping

product in the module's assessment reflected our concerns that although the fieldtrip participants were an engaged group of final year students, there was a significant risk: If the mapping exercise were positioned as an activity which did not bear credits, it would either not be completed or it would be completed at a minimum level. Once the decision to include the mapping project was reached we also amended aspects of the pre-fieldtrip teaching to ensure that students received training in various mapping techniques and appropriate technology. Therefore, in order to embed the NPOs' request in the module, alterations were made to the module assessment and teaching content.

Prior to the fieldtrip, the students had all undertaken at least one module on development geography and had attended a series of lectures for the fieldtrip module providing an introduction to the socio-political context of the fieldtrip, as well as training on research methods. Students had also been instructed to correspond with their host NPO prior to the fieldtrip in order to develop their research projects in collaboration with their hosts. During the research each student group was accompanied for some time by a member of the academic staff, but the students retained leadership of their research projects and practice. Upon completion of the fieldtrip, students were required to submit a short research report, a reflective essay on a component of their fieldtrip experience, a policy brief and mapping product. Students shared the policy brief and mapping product with their host organisation, and a number also provided copies of their research reports to the NPOs.

The reflections presented in this chapter are drawn from two of the academic staff, four students and three NPOs. All 30 students were invited to collaborate in producing this chapter, with seven initially agreeing to participate. However, only four students eventually provided reflections and inputs. All six host NPOs were approached for feedback on their experience of the fieldtrip, with four providing comments.

4. INTEGRATING PARTNERS INTO THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND ACHIEVING RECIPROCITY

As noted, the design and conduct of the fieldtrip was intended to ensure the participation of host NPOs throughout the research process and that the students' research findings would be shared with the host NPOs. In reflecting upon these experiences, we discuss various challenges, positive outcomes and memorable experiences, and ways in which the fieldtrip improved learning outcomes and sought to use the knowledge developed during the research as a beneficial, enabling product for the host NPOs.

4.1 Negotiating access and collective understanding

The philosophy of service learning and postcolonial research approaches emphasise the importance of engaging host organisations throughout the project's lifespan in order to identify research needs and appropriate research activities that will benefit both host organisations and service learning students (Oldfield 2008). The initial contact and discussions among the course leader, a local gatekeeper (HoSL) and the host NPOs were essential to establish links, access and common understanding. However, one of the biggest challenges to the fieldtrip (and to the generation of research outputs of benefit to host NPOs) related to clarity of communication and understanding of the purpose and scope of the fieldtrip. Although this is an issue for all researchers, it is heightened in relation to student engagement: Whereas experienced researchers may anticipate and pre-empt challenges arising from a lack of communication or a rapidly changing research context and think ahead to provide briefing notes or other outputs to host organisations as a professional courtesy, this professional practice is not integral to student experience and expectations.

In part, these difficulties arose from the fact that this was the first time, both in terms of geographical location and structure (ie working with host NPOs), that this fieldtrip had occurred. As a consequence, the entire process of preparing and running the fieldtrip was a learning experience for all involved, resulting in a lack of specificity and detail to certain requests or information provided by the course convenor to both host NPOs and students. Compounding this situation was wide variation in both the quantity and detail of communication between student groups and their host organisation prior to our arrival in Bloemfontein. As a result, some groups struggled to identify suitable projects to carry out, while other students struggled to place their research in the context of the field trip location. At the same time, despite a wealth of existing literature covering the issues likely to be encountered during the fieldtrip, many students found these links much more difficult to make than academic researchers and often focused solely on the specifics of the research site from the outset, rather than engaging research from similar contexts and applying this to their research design. The following are excerpts from the students' responses:

A major challenge of the whole research experience was having to define an area of research interest with minimal contact with the host organisation before arrival. We were not able to identify major challenges to the [NPO] until initial conversations with NPO management (Andrew).

Another challenge was the miscommunications with the charity of what our research entailed. As they didn't quite understand that we were conducting research they provided little opportunity to gain any relevant interview data from them (Jennifer).

Due to limited contact from the host organisation prior to the research experience, the research topics had to be broad to allow for flexibility. Although our group had a rough plan of the questions and topics we wished to cover, we could not formulate a specific plan of action as we weren't able to fully assess the research environment until we spoke with the host organisation and had a clearer idea of the participants (Siân).

Thus, while the course leader and students attempted to ensure that the NPOs were actively engaged throughout the research process and that the work done by the students was relevant to and useful for the host NPOs, this process was only partially successful and at times frustrating (Simon *et al* 2007).

For a number of students, the uncertainties regarding the specific focus of their work were exacerbated by their lack of previous experience of research in the field, contributing to feelings of nervousness and insecurity. While preparatory work and reading is essential to provide a foundation for the fieldtrip, this does not fully convey the intricacies and visceral nature of field experience. As two of the students noted:

The biggest challenge that I noted from the research experience was that no matter how much research you do about the topic in question that you're going to study in the field, it will not prepare you for what you are actually going to see and do out there (Jennifer).

After spending weeks naïvely assuring ourselves that we had planned for every possible eventuality we were likely to experience during our research project it was not until we actually met our host organisation that we became aware of some of the challenges we were likely to face (George).

While these experiences may have been discomforting and challenging, they contributed to accelerated learning and greater understanding of the realities of conducting development research, an experience that cannot be provided in the classroom. In working through these challenges, the students developed a range of research and other transferable skills while increasing their understanding not only of the local context and challenges, but also of the complexities of conducting development fieldwork (Braunsberger & Flamm 2011; Lazarus *et al* 2008).

The importance of negotiating access, research focus and research products of mutual benefit was a core feature of this fieldtrip – even if there were multiple challenges to these engagements. Not only did such engagements begin to recognise and mitigate continued power relations within development but they also – albeit partially – allowed participants a degree of control and power over the co-production of knowledge. To improve on these experiences, increased clarity and frequency of communication and expectations would be vital – for both NPOs and students (not least in managing their expectations and reminding them of the difference between

doing 'development' and doing 'development research') to ensure research findings and products are relevant and useful. In so doing, this would also help to maintain rapport and trust between external fieldtrips, local facilitators and host NPOs. This is further exacerbated by the generally naïve nature of student expectations, assuming straightforward and organised research settings within the framework of development research.

4.2 Time, logistics and 'being a burden'

Compounding the challenges noted above regarding pre-fieldtrip communication were a number of logistical factors that served to limit the possibilities for more engaged and long-term service learning practices. Time played a key role in this set of circumstances. The overall length of the fieldtrip (11 days) was largely dictated by precedence, timetabling limits and cost, while logistical factors and pedagogical outcomes of the fieldtrip as a whole determined the curtailed time spent working with host NPOs (3 days). The time factor is a complex issue, one with competing priorities and concerns. A number of students and host NPOs identified the need for more time to allow for useful findings to be produced:

I think 3 days was too short a time for them to get done what needed to be done, this also being the reason why things felt a little rushed (NPO 1).

A significant challenge of the research experience was the restriction of time. Only having a few days to speak with participants meant that, though our research needed to be flexible, it also needed to be well-planned to ensure we made the most of the time available to us. The time limit also meant that there was difficulty meeting with some desired participants due to their own availability and so we were required to prioritise our time. All of these challenges emphasised the importance of flexibility and ability to adapt to differing circumstances depending on the research experience (Siân).

At the same time, there was concern among the course teaching team and some students and NPOs about the burden placed upon the host organisations by the presence of the student groups. While the host NPOs commented on the benefits of hosting the student groups and of interacting and deepening understanding through participation in the projects, a degree of disquiet remained at times that staff and resources were diverted to hosting the student groups and away from the daily activities of the NPO. This dilemma was distilled by one of the students whose reflections on these complexities demonstrate this tension:

One of the major issues we were faced with was that we were very wary as a group of visitors that we didn't want to be a detriment to the day-to-day running of the NGO, which thus impinged on the limited time we had to collect data ... This potentially could have been alleviated had we initially had greater

communication with the host organisation and been able to provide them with more information of our aims and plans and for us to gain a better understanding of the day-to-day running of the NGO (George).

This concern is pervasive in much development research and underlines the importance of ensuring adequate and clear communication in the developing of such fieldtrips. Deeper understanding of the skills offered by the student groups and a clearer sense of what research would be both feasible and beneficial for the host NPO would help mitigate concerns about the burden placed on NPOs in hosting student researchers (Oldfield 2008). While all the NPOs were incredibly welcoming and hospitable to the student groups, there were times when some NPOs placed an unnecessary burden on themselves by ensuring that their staff or volunteers were always accompanying the students.

4.3 Enhancing (learning) outcomes

The decision to base the fieldtrip around a short, intense period of research with a host NPO was designed to enhance student learning – through the development of research skills and engagement with broader ethical and conceptual questions, both substantive and methodological – while seeking to ensure that the host NPOs also benefited from their participation. In this way, it was hoped that both student learning and NPO practice would be enhanced, while also avoiding the danger of a one-way process of ‘data mining’ or ‘data extraction’.

The students’ responses clearly indicate that their research and communication skills developed through the intensive fieldwork period:

The research experience built on a great number of research skills that are not often required when working on assignments using secondary evidence (Siân).

Having the freedom to employ a diverse array of research methods was another positive. After utilising more formal and conventional research methods throughout our course, having the liberty to collect data using more unorthodox methods, such as walking interviews, was a new and valuable experience. The informality of the walking interviews often led to far richer data being collected and often enabled the hosts to provide greater context (George).

As well as developing these skills, a process identified as a key benefit of experiential learning (Lazarus *et al* 2008), a number of students also commented on their realisation that their presence and interaction with NPO staff and clients opened up new conversations and avenues of communication and, in so doing, could provide another means for marginalised groups to be heard:

Being able to work as an informal platform where users could express their concerns with how the NGO was run meant the research provided an opportunity for some residents to speak openly about their experiences. Whilst this was very emotional for some, they insisted they must finish their story, and in the following days thanked us and told us they felt much better about life for being able to share their history (Andrew).

This realisation of the potential power and role of research was notable for several students, and fitted to a broader growth in self-reflection and development of critical thinking and awareness of civic and social citizenship and responsibility. This awareness was expressed most succinctly in George's observation:

The brief moments I spent in the house of a family whose daughter had had to drop out of school to support her parents who were both suffering from HIV/Aids is something that will stay with me. It was only then I realised how far-reaching the implications of the disease are. You are always simplistically taught in GCSE and A-Level classes² that education will solve poverty; however, I quickly realised that this young girl's education and life chances had been entirely surrendered so she could emotionally and financially support her ailing parents alongside her younger siblings (George).

It was surprising, however, that there was little in the way of critical reflection among the student group on the juxtaposition of the relative luxury enjoyed by the fieldtrip (in terms of the hotel, transport and food) and their encounters with poverty and deprivation during their work with the NPOs. Although the students mentioned this anomaly a few times, the matter was rapidly subsumed by the next social activity and was not subjected to sustained reflection. Such a tension is not confined to fieldtrips of this nature, but is a common feature of development research (and practice), and is an area that would benefit from greater explicit consideration in future fieldtrips.

For the host NPOs, a number of positive outcomes were mentioned as emanating from their hosting of the fieldtrip groups. Most prominent among these was a reflection that while hosting the students had placed a burden upon their organisations' time and resources, this had served to energise and enrich their staff:

Hosting the students took some energy from us. But, that [exposing people to our work] is one of our prime focuses. It's also very energising to think on the interesting questions students ask and try to come up with adequate answers (NPO 2).

2 GCSE is the acronym for General Certificate in Secondary Education, the examinations taken by all school students in the UK at the end of year 11 of schooling (usually at 16 years old). A-Levels are Advanced Level qualifications, gained at the end of year 13 of schooling (usually at 18 years old). For the students involved in this fieldtrip, GCSEs would have been the final compulsory year of schooling, with A-Level studies optional further study (prior to university).

It was a pleasure to have the students with us. The group assigned to us were a group of lovely young people who did their best during their time with us. They were really very considerate of our busy schedule and did their best to not be a disturbance for us. Overall a positive experience for all of us here (NPO 1).

Having the students with us was no burden: It is something you have to set time apart for and enriched your life and work experience (NPO 3).

The research that the students did about our organisation provided us with updated information on our environment that we do not always have time to get hold of for ourselves (NPO 4).

The roles played by the students, as researchers and intermediaries, not only meant that their findings through the research projects could help strengthen the work of the host NPOs (Stanton & Erasmus 2013), but also positioned students as knowledge transfer facilitators and participants in processes of reciprocal learning (Oldfield 2008; Thomson *et al* 2011).

In addition to these experiences during the fieldtrip, the NPOs received copies of research findings (policy briefs and mapping products) from the students. While previous development geography fieldtrips to Kenya had utilised policy briefs as a means of providing findings to local officials, the mapping product was introduced for this fieldtrip at the request of the local facilitator as something that would be useful for the daily endeavours of the NPOs. Although it was not a major undertaking, meeting this request did require rearrangement of the student assessment. While these products presented a challenge in identifying what to map (that would be beneficial to the NPOs), the creativity they demanded and conversations they prompted ensured that they were beneficial to both students and NPOs. The negotiation of the type and content of products served to ensure that they were relevant to the host NPO, and in some cases have been used as resources for professional development by the organisations. Assessment had to be the same for all students, but the mapping project lent itself more clearly to the work of some of the group projects than others. Although more than one of the NPOs suggested that clear communication was something they would benefit from, there was little or poor clarity of communication between the NPOs and student groups as to what they wanted. There was further tension in students' narrow understanding of the term 'mapping' and how this linked to the assessment. The concession in including this within the students' work was a source of negotiation between staff and some of the student groups while undertaking the research:

The host organisation told us of a conference they had planned and so we sent our research findings back to them before that date. Additionally we gave

feedback to the host organisation during our time with them to ensure they were aware of our progress whilst we were with them (Siân).

The research generated individual projects and a group policy brief. The group policy brief was used to identify what the NGO does, what restrictions are encountered, and what can be improved upon. They were very keen to receive the document to use as literature for potential future sponsors. The management also expressed interest into what users felt could be improved upon, and how we as researchers could identify issues that they were perhaps oblivious to (Andrew).

Our initial research topic was unsuitable for the charity. Therefore a new research topic had to be thought of which did not only benefit us as researchers. As part of our research project a map was created of the area that the charity worked in. Initially we thought it would be beneficial if we mapped the services in the area for the charity. However, upon completing a walking tour of the area it became apparent that they already knew where all the relevant services were. Again a rethink was needed. After several interviews and discussions with the charity volunteers and workers it was noticeable that one of the issues facing them was not knowing the distance which the children travelled to see them. A map was therefore created showing them the distances the children travelled and areas of concern and danger across the route in the hope that this may aid them in devising a walking bus scheme in order to help protect the safety of the children (Jennifer).

Overall it is apparent that the service learning inspired approach to this fieldtrip served to enhance the learning experience of the students while also providing beneficial outcomes and materials to the host NPOs. Central to realising these positive outcomes was the process of discussion and negotiation with the host NPOs as to areas of research and types of materials produced that would benefit them, as well as meeting the assessment needs of the students.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The experiences from this development geography fieldtrip indicate the continued importance and benefits of experiential learning for students. They also highlight the importance of careful pre-trip planning and preparation, and the key role of trust. The willingness of the host NPOs to welcome the University of Sheffield students was based upon their trust in and previous engagement with the service learning programme at the University of the Free State, which supported the Sheffield fieldtrip only after trust had been developed between the fieldtrip leader and the Head of Service Learning. Integral to gaining this support was a commitment from the fieldtrip leader to ensure that the host organisations were involved in the planning and design of the research projects and that outputs from the research would be designed for and provided to the host NPOs.

The positive reflections expressed by various stakeholders involved with the fieldtrip resonate with the broader literature advocating the benefits of service learning. For students, the service learning style of the fieldtrip benefitted their ability to link theory to experience; engage classroom learning with real-world encounters, thus prompting greater self-reflection; and develop a stronger recognition of the complex and multifaceted aspects to social problems and developmental challenges (Reed *et al* 2005). At the same time it is clear that there were weaknesses to this fieldtrip. If these weaknesses were to be rectified, the reciprocally beneficial outcomes of such engagements would be enhanced. Firstly, a change in emphasis and timetabling for the fieldtrip would be beneficial, thus allowing students and NPOs to work together for a slightly longer period in order to develop deeper understanding and more detailed research findings. Secondly, greater clarity and scope of communication between students and NPOs would have been mutually beneficial in ensuring that expectations were accurate, and that time and resources could be most effectively utilised. Thirdly, additional mechanisms to facilitate further communication and sharing of findings, including time for the student groups to provide preliminary findings to the host NPOs through an interactive forum during the fieldtrip, could further strengthen reciprocal learning outcomes.

Overall the collaborations built prior to and during the fieldtrip were a positive experience of knowledge enablement for the parties involved and have provided the foundations for further collaborative engagements. In the months since the fieldtrip, the course leader has been in negotiation with a number of the host NPOs to arrange long-term research placements for postgraduate students from the University of Sheffield to spend six to eight weeks with an NPO as part of their international development degree course. Again, the negotiations begin with a conversation around the willingness of an NPO to host students and for the NPO to lead the identification of topics or areas of research that would most benefit the organisation. Once the students are paired with the host NPO, both parties engage in an ongoing dialogue to design and implement a research project, the findings of which are both useful to the host NPO and assessed for the students' degree course. These developments show how a commitment to postcolonial values in development research and to service learning ideals can contribute to the evolution of ongoing, deeper and mutually beneficial relations over time.

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13

CREATING AN ONLINE COLLABORATIVE SPACE FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG SERVICE LEARNING PARTICIPANTS

Elanie Myburgh

ABSTRACT

Communication is the foundation of a successful service learning project. All participants should have a voice and input in the project. A mutual platform enables participants to share knowledge, address issues and reflect on the experience. Creating an online communication platform to enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing among the participants in a recent study is the main focus of this chapter. Such a platform was created for a service learning project in which students from the University of the Free State engaged with a non-profit organisation in Heidedal, Bloemfontein. With this platform all the participants had more equal access to information and various forms of knowledge sharing happened simultaneously. Knowledge sharing on the platform created an inclusive environment for participants. A finding was that proper planning and time management on the part of the university staff member are crucial for the successful functioning of the platform. During the development phase reported in this chapter students and community members, in this instance mainly the manager of the non-profit organisation, reported feeling empowered because they had a more equal voice than in most service learning projects and they were able to share their views openly with all the participants.

1. INTRODUCTION

A mutual, collaborative space for communication among participants in a community engagement project could contribute to creating inclusivity for all. In the context of community based research with its commitment to collaboration, shared power means that higher education institutions and community partners participate fully in shaping decisions about their work together. This is also true of service learning (SL) projects. Some communication problems in community partnerships are the by-product of bringing people from dramatically different professions and backgrounds together. Community participation in SL happens when the community is deliberately and actively involved not only in the execution of the services, but also in the conceptualisation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, maintenance and expansion of the services (Osman & Petersen 2013:68). Collaboration includes not only the exchange of information, altering activities and sharing resources, but also enhancing the capacity of other partners for mutual benefit to achieve a common purpose (Andress 1993:55). Through participation and collaboration among the SL participants, a sustainable and long-term reciprocal relationship can be formed. Al-Khafaji and Morse (2006) state that SL serves as a compelling model in teaching sustainability, emphasising the cultivation of a sense of civic responsibility, engagement and commitment to community.

Currently, community engagement partners, and SL participants in particular, only have access to fragmented traditional online communication platforms such as email, text messages and other social networks. There is quite often a lack of knowledge sharing because of limited coordinated communication among the SL participants. Learners only flourish if education adapts successfully to the needs and demands of the age (Barnard 2005:24). Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker and Donohue (2003:56) are of the opinion that web-based software, such as the mutual communication platform Blackboard, provides a useful forum for sharing information regarding the research or the SL project which includes written materials and meeting schedules. With the help of such a mutual platform, more communication, collaboration and knowledge sharing can take place. This means that if the non-profit organisation (NPO) representatives also have access to the platform, they will be able to communicate with the students and lecturers on a regular basis, and *vice versa*.

A mutual communication platform where all participants (NPO staff, students and higher education staff members) are able to communicate with one another on a daily basis would create a collaborative space for knowledge sharing. Working collaboratively on an SL project enhances the capacity to contribute for all the

parties involved. Students learn how to conduct research, and both the students and academic staff members learn about the community and the practical challenges confronting people in disadvantaged positions in the society (Strand *et al* 2003:22). The participatory nature of many community-based research projects also gives the community members the opportunity to share their knowledge and to acquire new skills or develop others by working with academics and students.

Two theoretical frameworks are discussed in this chapter. The relationship continuum diagram (Bringle, Clayton & Price 2009) and relevant literature explain the importance of good relationships between SL partners. The other framework is Salmon's online model (2000) that gives guidelines for successful interaction, knowledge sharing and communication on a mutual communication platform. Salmon's model is divided into five stages. The contention is that there could be a use for a mutual communication platform in community engagement projects as higher education staff members, NPO members and students involved in SL often feel there is not enough direct collaboration and communication among the SL participants. This can lead to a lack of the trust and respect among the participants that is crucial for relationship building. Through more effective communication and collaboration long-term relationships can be established that will form a firm foundation for collaborative activities.

The aim of this chapter is to report on the use of a mutual communication platform, more specifically the optimal use of a learning management system, to improve collaboration between NPO staff members, students and higher education staff members in an SL module/project. In this study the focus was on the first development phase of the module during which students communicated on the platform with the lecturer (the researcher) and NPO member (the NPO manager). The reason why only the NPO manager communicated on the platform was that the other NPO staff members did not have access to a computer or the internet.

The premise of this chapter is that enhanced communication and collaboration through a learning management system can lead to acquiring new skills and improved knowledge sharing among all the SL participants. Practical guidelines and tips are also shared to avoid pitfalls. If a mutual communication platform such as developed in this study is applied and used for knowledge sharing it can enable more effective collaboration between SL participants. Equal access to such a platform will enable SL participants to engage in more knowledge sharing. Online communication tools seem to best augment SL by providing a platform for tracking, sharing and assessing.

2. LITERATURE

In exploring the literature related to creating a mutual collaborative space for knowledge sharing, various concepts are relevant. In this review of the literature, the mutual communication platform is described, followed by a discussion of the theoretical frameworks and models used. Finally, enhancing collaboration and knowledge sharing is discussed.

2.1 Mutual communication platform

While courseware was once primarily used for distance education, hybrid courses are gaining more popularity. Hybrid courses are those in which students and instructors meet regularly in a traditional classroom setting, but also include online components on a mutual communication platform (Jackson 2007:458). In a SL context a mutual communication platform, such as Blackboard, makes it increasingly possible for participants, which could include NPO members, other external partners, lecturers and students to collaborate through access to information and instructions. Collaboration between the campus administrator, academic staff, students and external participants is essential to the successful incorporation of information into online courses.

Setting up a successful and interactive platform takes planning and dedication, especially from the university staff member who coordinates the project. A mutual communication platform should not just be a dumping site for information; if well-structured it affords academic staff members, external participants and students the opportunity to communicate, collaborate and share knowledge with one another. Mutual access to information on the platform can enhance the SL experience and knowledge sharing.

2.2 Theoretical frameworks and models used

Two theoretical frameworks are discussed, namely the relationship continuum and Salmon's five stage online model. These two models were used to enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing among SL participants.

2.2.1 Relationship continuum model

Bringle *et al* (2009:8) propose that practitioners in SL must be prepared to articulate a broad mission and particular goals to potential partners. They should know when relationships are mutually desirable (and know when and how to say "no" or "not now"). Furthermore, they engage in effective communication with diverse audiences, and have skilled staff in a centralised unit on campus to liaise between

the various constituencies (Walshok 1999). When starting a relationship, two tasks exist for each member of the potential relationship (Wright 1999). The first task relates to deciding the type of relationship to follow (if any). The second task involves conveying interest (or lack thereof) to the other party. Bringle and Hatcher (2000) suggest that both these tasks will be facilitated in civic engagement by accurate self-awareness, communication and self-disclosure by all persons (Duck 1988, 1994). Figure 13.1 indicates how SL relationships can grow over time through interaction and communication.

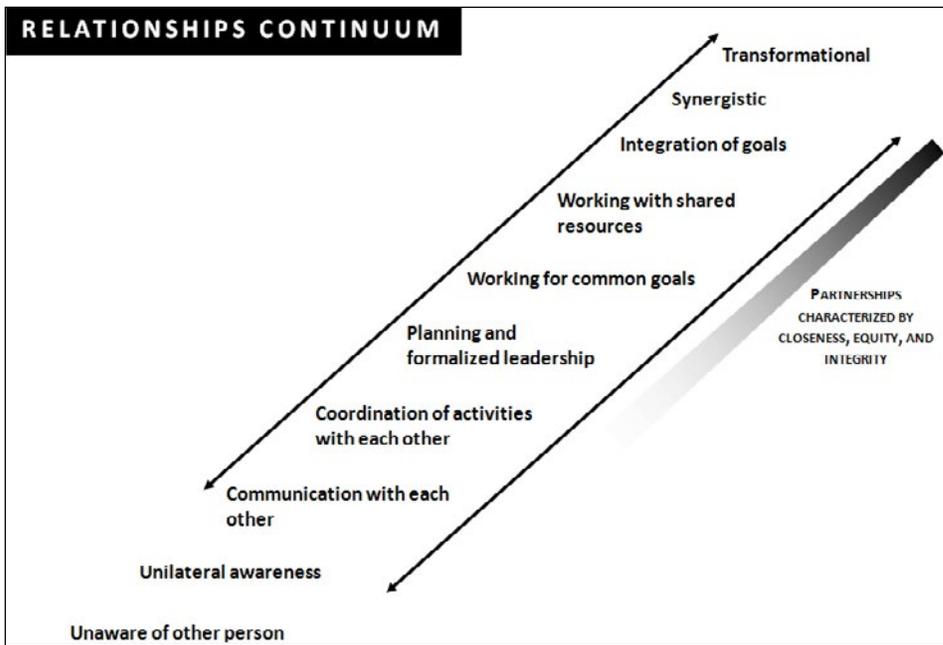


FIGURE 13.1 Different types or stages of relationships [Reproduced with kind permission from the authors. Source: Bringle *et al* 2009:4]

For the purpose of the investigation reported in this chapter, the above-mentioned relationship continuum provides a theoretical framework for tracking the progress of the relationships among the SL participants in the study. Indicators for enhancing collaboration that can be deduced from the continuum are reflected from the bottom upwards in the diagram from being unaware of the other to transformational. The arrows directed towards the 'transformational' end of the continuum represent the growth and direction of the relationship when proper communication and collaboration take place among the SL partners.

2.2.2 Salmon’s five stage online learning model

Salmon (2000:23) designed an online learning model that is divided into five stages. She maintains that online learning involves a series of stages, namely access and motivation, socialisation, information exchange, knowledge construction, and development. Her model illustrates the interplay between competence and affective factors such as growing confidence, motivation and group dynamics. The bottom line is that students are unlikely to be competent at learning in an online group until they are comfortable both with the tool and the group (see Figure 13.2).

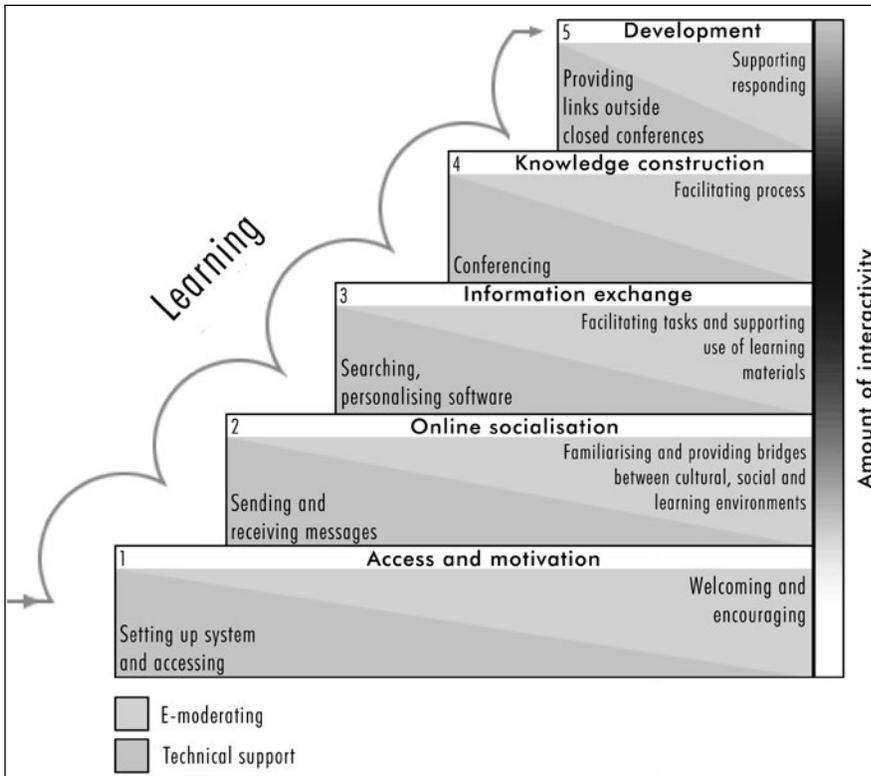


FIGURE 13.2 Salmon’s five stage online learning model [Reproduced with kind permission from the author. Source: Salmon 2011:31]

Each stage of the Salmon model requires participants to master certain technical skills. Training should be given to all of the participants involved in order to explain how the five stages would work (shown at the bottom left of each step). Each stage calls for different e-moderating skills (shown at the top right of each step). The ‘interactivity bar’ on the right-hand side of the flight of steps suggests the intensity of interactivity that one can expect between the participants at each stage.

During stage 1, participants interact only with one or two others. After stage 2, the number of other people with whom participants interact, as well as the frequency of interaction, gradually increases, although stage 5 often results in a return to more individual pursuits.

Stage 1: Access and motivation

For external role-players and students alike, being able to gain access to the mutual communication platform quickly and easily is a key issue at stage 1. The other key issue is being motivated to spend the time and effort. All the role-players should familiarise themselves with the new piece of software being used. Problems are often specific to a particular configuration of hardware, software and network access, or related to the loss of a password. Technical support is crucial at this stage. Stage 1 is when the moderator (lecturer or staff member) can expect to make first contact online with new students and also draw the external role-players into the discussion. Stage 1 is over when participants have posted their first messages (Salmon 2000:27). The following serves as an example of a very general question that works well as an icebreaker for this stage: *Do you prefer sweet or salty snacks, and why?*

Stage 2: Online socialisation

In stage 2 participants get used to being in the new online environment. Many of the benefits of a mutual communication platform in education and training flow from building an online community of people who feel they are working together at common tasks. However, establishing relationships is not inevitable, but depends on the participants' early experience with access to the system and integration into the virtual community. Mutual communication platforms have the potential to convey feelings and build relationships (Chenault 1998). A wide range of responses occurs. Some people are initially reluctant to commit themselves fully to public participation in conferencing, and should at first be encouraged to read and enjoy others' contributions to the content before taking the plunge and posting their own messages. Once participants feel at home in the online environment, and reasonably comfortable with the technology, they move on to contributing. The empathy developed through this stage of online interactions has proven to be an essential prerequisite for later course and knowledge related discussions (Preece 1999:63). Moderators should take the lead in promoting mutual respect amongst participants, defusing problems and counselling any apparent alienated or offended individuals. They should also try to help those participants with similar interests and needs to find each other. This stage has served its purpose and is over when participants start to share a little of themselves online (Salmon 2000:29). Questions that the students

had to answer during this stage include: *What was your first impression today at the NPO? How easy or difficult is it for you to express yourself in writing on the learning management system? How did you feel emotionally after your first visit to the NPO?*

It should be noted that the NPO manager could respond to what the students shared online and he was thus symbolically positioned at the same level as the lecturer. It was not expected of him to respond to questions put forward by the lecturer on the learning management system, and he could use his discretion about how and when he wished to join in the discussion.

Stage 3: Information exchange

A key characteristic of a mutual communication platform is that the system provides all participants with access to information in the same way. In stage 3 they start to appreciate the broad range of information available online. Information exchanges flow freely in messages, since the 'cost' of responding to a request for information is quite low. Participants require two kinds of interaction for learning to take place: interaction with the course content and interaction with people, namely moderators and other participants. At this stage, participants look to the moderator for guidance and direction on how to approach messages, and for encouragement to start using the most relevant content material. During this stage, motivation and enjoyment come from personal and experiential communication (Preece 1999). Participants must learn how to exchange information on the platform before they can move on to full-scale interaction in stage 4 (Salmon 2000:31).

At this point the participants had already become used to responding to one another's questions. Examples of questions that were used for students during this stage: *Tell me how these past weeks of service learning have changed your outlook on life. It can be positive or negative. What perceptions did you have regarding service learning and working with the NPO? Have any of your perceptions changed? Please explain. Did you experience any challenges during this week? If so, please elaborate.*

Stage 4: Knowledge construction

At this stage, participants begin to interact with each other in more exposed and participative ways. As participants communicate with one another, they engage in active learning, especially by widening their own viewpoints and appreciating different perspectives. Moderators have important roles to play at this stage. Feenberg (1989) coined the term 'weaving' to describe the flow of discussion and how it can be pulled together. The moderator undertakes the weaving; then pulls together the participants' contributions by, for example, collecting statements and relating them to concepts and theories discussed in the course. Moderators enable

the development of ideas through discussion and collaboration (Salmon 2000:33). Questions that were posed during this stage include: *Tell me about your experiences of working in a group. What skills do you think you have developed as a result of being part of this service learning project? What concerns do you have for the remainder of the project?*

Stage 5: Development

During stage 5 participants become responsible for their own learning through computer mediated opportunities and need little support beyond that already available. Rather different skills come into play at this stage. These skills include critical thinking and the ability to challenge the 'givens'. During stage 5 moderators and participants are essentially using constructivist approaches to learning. Constructivism calls for participants to explore their own thinking and knowledge building process (Biggs 1995). When participants are learning through a new medium such as the mutual communication platform, their understanding of the processes of using the software and the experience of learning in new ways is being constructed too. It is therefore common at this stage for participants to reflect on and discuss how they are networking, and to evaluate the technology and its impact on their learning processes. When the module is set up on the mutual communication platform, the moderator must be prepared to answer difficult questions that relate to social, ethical and technical dimensions. Stage 5 will be completed when participants are commenting on and writing about each other's work (Salmon 2000:36). For the last stage of the model the lecturer can include reflective questions. Reflective types of questions enable the role players to think back on where they started, what they have achieved and how they have developed. Questions included: *Tell me what you have learned during this service learning experience (academic, personal growth or service learning related). Tell me about any life lessons you have learned. Are there any changes that I as lecturer should consider for a similar service learning project for next year? Would you like to share anything else with your fellow students, the NPO manager and your lecturer?*

3. ENHANCING COLLABORATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG PARTICIPANTS

Communication and collaboration functions on a mutual communication platform are more effective when the learner interacts with the technology, a coach/mentor, or other learners. In addition to the self-study mode, the platform should provide the opportunity for learner collaboration, coaching by experts in the subject matter, and the creation of learning communities. Communication and collaboration are facilitated

through asynchronous and synchronous communications, shared whiteboards and group spaces, and on-demand tutoring components (Robbins 2002).

Academic staff members need to appreciate the demands inherent in the collaborative process. Although individuals have their own expectations of group work, they need to define one another's actions so that they work together to create a shared practice. Out of necessity or convenience, individuals coordinate their activities to achieve common goals that, in time, guide future shared actions (Weick 1995). The relevant role-players' shared history and context (Selznick 1992) eventually provide the stability and predictability that are crucial for meaningful collaborative work to occur (Weick 1995). Aligning acts to develop a group's practice requires the 'mutual engagement' of members (Wenger 1998). In fact, participants' engagement in the learning process gives them a sense of belonging, an essential element of any professional learning community (Weick 1995). Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) suggest that a learning community is a group of people who communicate on an ongoing basis to develop their knowledge of a common interest or passion by sharing individual resources and by engaging in critical dialogue. Although the learning generated from collaborative work depends largely on the ability of group members to establish a practice to achieve their common goals, such goals can be surprisingly difficult to identify (Weick 1979).

For purposes of the project that I am reporting on, a collaborative space was created on a mutual communication platform (Blackboard) where the pilot group (I, the NPO manager and the students) shared knowledge, worked towards a common goal and coordinated activities relating to the SL project.

4. RESEARCH METHODS

I used a mixed method research approach within an action research framework in the study. There was a blend of qualitative and quantitative data collected in the phases throughout the research process (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007:5; Ivankova, Creswell & Plano Clark 2007:261-262). However, due to the inclusion of open-ended questions and the emphasis on reflective journals more qualitative than quantitative data were used. In Salmon's five stage model there are overlaps with aspects of action research (Salmon 2000:25).

A pre- and post-implementation student questionnaire comprising open and closed questions were used to collect data. Furthermore, online activities were structured on the mutual communication platform according to Salmon's five stage model and included reflective journals and discussions regarding the SL project.

The pre- and post-implementation student questionnaires are compiled and distributed among students in all the SL modules at the University of the Free State (UFS). The pre-implementation questionnaire is used to determine the students' understanding and expectations of the SL module prior to its commencement. The post-implementation questionnaire, on the other hand, is used to gain insight into the students' experience and perspectives after completing the module in order to gauge students' development and to improve the module in future. These questionnaires were utilised for purposes of collecting data for the online SL project as well after relevant questions were added.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected by means of the pre- and post-implementation student questionnaires. Additional qualitative data were collected by means of the structured online activities that included the reflective journal entries that were posted on the mutual communication platform.

Purposeful, non-probability sampling was used as it involves selecting the most accessible individuals as respondents (Cohen, Manion & Keith 2007:113). It was important that the target population included people with knowledge or first-hand experience of using a mutual communication platform, as this would enable the participants to provide valuable information that would improve understanding of the topic at hand. In this case, it was the 350 first year students enrolled at the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences in 2012. A text message was sent to all these students to invite them to take part in the study voluntarily. In the end the sample group consisted of 20 undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 25 years. The NPO manager and I were the final two participants of the sampling group.

The theoretical framework of the relationship continuum (Bingle *et al* 2009), Salmon's model of online learning (2000) and the UFS definition of service learning (UFS 2006) with indicators were used to conduct a deductive analysis. The qualitative data were analysed by reading and coding the online activities on the mutual communication platform. Main themes looked for in the online activities were increased communication, knowledge sharing and enhanced collaboration. By coding the text segments in the reflective journals, I identified themes that may be interrelated to form broad generalisations. Both pre- and post-questionnaires were uploaded onto the mutual communication platform and were only made available for one week each. SurveyMonkey software was used for the questionnaires and descriptive statistics.

5. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Before the study could take place an appointment was made with the NPO manager to discuss the project and the use of a mutual communication platform. The NPO that was chosen for the study is situated in Heidedal in Bloemfontein. This NPO is involved in various service related activities in the community. As stated before, the students from the UFS were first year students in the age group 18 to 25 years. They were enrolled in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. The faculty consists of five departments, namely accounting, economics, business management, public management and human resources.

Before the first meeting with the participants the activities were set up on the mutual communication platform. Salmon's five stage model was used to assist with setting up the correct questions and reflective activities.

The first meeting with the students and NPO members was on the same day that access and training were given on the mutual communication platform. The training took place in a computer lab and it was arranged beforehand for the participants to be enrolled for the specific module on the platform. After the training the students and NPO manager were able to log in to the platform and perform the online activities.

The week after the training the students and I visited the NPO. The NPO manager presented the various projects to the students and he suggested that they divide into smaller groups and set up a plan of action. The students divided themselves into smaller groups according to the department in which they were registered. The first group was called the 'Marketing Ladies', the second group the 'Accountants', the third group the 'Telephone Ladies', and the last group the 'Library Chicks'. Each group had a chance to speak to the manager and other staff members at the NPO. When they left the NPO, each group had a clear plan of action. Each of the groups had specific tasks they had to complete. The 'Marketing Ladies' assisted the NPO with designing and drawing up of marketing material for the ten year celebration of the NPO. The 'Library Chicks' trained the staff in using a computer system for lending out books. They also reorganised the whole library according to a colour code system and books were categorised according to the alphabet. The 'Accountants' assisted the NPO staff members in drawing up a budget for the ten year celebration function and showed them how to price the items for the bakery. The 'Telephone Ladies' drew up a letter with the help of the NPO manager to approach cell phone companies to set up a community telephone at the NPO premises in order for community members to make use of it and pay a minimum fee for using the phone.

After every visit to the NPO, the students, the NPO manager and I were afforded the opportunity to complete the online activities and communicate via the platform.

6. RESULTS

First, the student responses to the pre- and the post-implementation student questionnaire were compared to establish to what extent the mutual communication platform enhanced collaboration among participants from a student perspective. Next, the data obtained from the online activities completed by the participants on the platform were analysed. The NPO manager, the students and I had access to the reflective journals and contributed on the platform.

The following broad indicators posed by Bringle *et al* (2009) were utilised to evaluate the relationship and the quality of collaboration: closeness, equity and integrity. In accordance with triangulation design principles, I endeavoured to join the two data sets (quantitative and qualitative results) in order to form a more holistic picture with regard to creating a mutual collaborative space for knowledge sharing among SL participants.

6.1 Results obtained from the pre-implementation student questionnaire

The results from the pre-implementation student questionnaire showed that 80% of the respondents wanted to communicate with the NPO manager on the mutual communication platform before their first visit to the NPO site. The reasons for communication before their visit ranged from *“getting a better understanding of what is expected”* from them to *“wanting to discover the role of the NPO manager in the community”*. They also wanted to be more prepared for the interaction in general.

6.2 Results obtained from the post-implementation questionnaire

The respondents had to answer specific questions regarding the use of the mutual communication platform. In response to one question, 93% of the respondents answered that the platform helped them to communicate better with the NPO manager. Communication was enhanced because it was easily accessible to all the participants. The service learning definition (UFS 2006) stipulates that a module requires a collaborative partnership context that enhances mutual, reciprocal teaching and learning among all members of the partnership. The evidence thus indicates that the collaboration among the participants, and thus within the partnership, has been enhanced through more effective, regular communication on the platform.

6.3 Results obtained from the activities on the mutual communication platform

Salmon's (2000) online model and the UFS definition of service learning (2006) created the analytical framework for the study. Every week some items of the relationship continuum of Bringle *et al* (2009) were achieved, and the participants progressed to new stages of Salmon's online model each week. Improved levels of closeness, equity and integrity were achieved and lifelong learning took place. Knowledge sharing among the participants (students, NPO manager and myself as lecturer) took place every time an online activity was carried out.

Stage 1 of Salmon's model – access and motivation – was reached before the first reflective journal entry because all participants of the pilot study had to log in to the platform during training. A trial question and answer session on the platform took place during the training. This familiarised participants with the setup.

Participants were asked about their concerns regarding the use of the mutual communication platform and whether they foresaw any problems. The theme that stood out was that the participants looked forward to being able to communicate and collaborate with other participants at any given time. No challenges were mentioned regarding the use of the platform, but rather that the pressure with their studies and schedules that could interfere with the project. A comment from one of the participants was:

The use of the platform will help us improve our computer skills and ease communication among all.

The relationship indicator – communication with each other – stood out in responses to the reflective journal question.

The aim of the second week's reflective journal was to reach stage 2 of Salmon's model, namely online socialisation. Participants commented on journal entries by fellow students, the NPO manager and me. Stage 2 was successfully reached.

The reflective questions the participants had to answer were whether they found it difficult to express themselves on the platform. A participant commented:

I am a very shy person but the platform gives me the courage to speak my mind without being criticised like in a classroom setting.

After the second journal entry an enhanced sense of closeness among all the participants was evident. The visit to the NPO was reported as being a humbling experience for the students. Reciprocal teaching took place because the students also started to learn from the NPO members. Indicators of the relationship continuum of Bringle *et al* (2009) that were achieved were working for common goals, planning and formalising leadership.

During the third journal entry the third stage of Salmon's model – information and exchange – came to the fore. Students, the NPO manager and I had to share and give information on the platform. The questions asked were on an emotional level and this helped to address certain indicators of the relationship continuum. Equity and closeness among the participants grew with each week's activities.

One participant wrote:

I thought that I was not going to play any significant role in this project, that I did not have what it takes to contribute something of value. These feelings decreased as we approached the second week because my fellow students, [the NPO manager]¹ and [the researcher/lecturer]² encouraged me and made me feel part of something bigger when they commented on my postings.

With regard to knowledge construction in the fourth stage of Salmon's model, the participants had to facilitate processes, for example plan to reach weekly goals. The processes they facilitated were done in their groups. Each group had a specific goal in mind and the journals helped them to understand and realise the role that each one had in the group. In terms of the relationship continuum the following indicators were achieved: coordination of activities with each other, planning and formalising leadership, integration of goals and synergism. All of the above-mentioned indicators enhanced the closeness and relationship building among the participants. A student wrote:

We communicate a lot on the mutual communication platform and it helps our group to stay focused.

During week 5 of the pilot study, I did not comment on any journal entries. The main reason for this was that I wanted to establish whether the platform really enhanced the communication among the other participants. By not communicating with the NPO manager and students, I could clearly establish whether the relationship continuum and Salmon's framework worked during the pilot study. At the beginning of the pilot study, the NPO manager and students were dependent on the feedback and communication from me, but as the weeks passed they became close to their group members and the NPO manager, mainly because it was so much easier to communicate on the platform where they also had equal access to information.

There were mixed reactions and feedback from the participants, as shown by these two responses:

1 The students used the first name of the NPO manager in the data set.

2 The students used the first name of the researcher/lecturer in the data set.

I was okay when [the researcher/lecturer] did not respond to my comments because my group members and [the NPO manager] did. I did not feel lost because I had other people to help me.

Every time I logged on to [the] platform I was looking for a reply from [the researcher/lecturer]. When I saw she was not responding to our questions I felt sad because her feedback and comments motivated me each week to become better.

The last stage of Salmon's online model stipulates that development should take place along with learning and interactivity. During the course of six weeks the NPO manager, the students and I commented on and replied to journal entries. Development of skills, enhancement of communication, and interactivity are just a few of the indicators that improved over the period. A question regarding the use of the platform was asked to all the participants to determine the success of the platform use.

The theme that emerged most from the reflective question was that participants could communicate and share ideas and knowledge on a regular basis without having to meet in person. It was a convenient and quick way for participants to communicate with other participants.

7. DISCUSSION

The discussion of results comprises consideration of reflective journal activities and communication among participants.

7.1 Reflective journal activities on the mutual communication platform

The reflective journal that was completed each week allowed the students, the NPO manager and me to discuss certain topics in a shared space. We all had access to all of the journals and could comment on a post. All of the role-players mentioned in their last reflective journal entry that it was much easier to communicate on the mutual communication platform because one could log in and post a new discussion or reply to a post. The group's response towards the mutual communication platform was positive. It saved them much time because they did not have to arrange a meeting that would suit everyone, and since they could use the mutual communication platform, communication did not cost them a cent.

It helped in the terms of communication with group members, [the researcher/lecturer] and [the NPO manager], to let the others know any important information and the platform made it more convenient for us to communicate without having to meet up.

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It is clear from the above comment that the platform was a convenient communication tool because it was easily accessible. The reflective journals on the mutual communication platform not only helped the students and NPO manager to communicate more regularly, but truly enhanced their SL experience. Participants could put their words and feelings in writing.

Figure 13.3 shows a screenshot of one week's reflective journal questions.

The screenshot shows a Blackboard Learn interface in a Windows Internet Explorer browser. The page is titled 'Reflective Journal' and is part of the 'EGAP PILOT' course. The main content area contains a post from 'FINISH AND KLAAR' dated Thursday, 20 September 2012. The post text reads: 'Congratulations on surviving the 6 week pilot study. I don't have enough words to express my gratitude and thankful ness towards each and everyone of you. Without your passion, dedication, commitment and hard work this pilot study would never have taken place. Thank you for your valuable contribution. Last journal entry:-) 1. Tell me what did you learn - (academic wise and service learning wise) during the last six weeks? Did you academic course at the UFS helped you to perform the tasks at REACH? 2. What changes do I need to make for next years group? 3. Have you learned any valuable life lessons? 4. Do you think Blackboard helped with the success of the pilot study? 5. Would you like to share anything with me... THANK YOU EVERYONE!! Looking forward to reading the last journal entry'. The interface includes a navigation menu on the left with options like 'Announcements', 'My Learn', 'My Courses', 'My Organizations', and 'Need Help'. The bottom of the browser shows the Windows taskbar with the time 02:56 PM.

FIGURE 13.3 Reflective journal screenshot

7.2 Communication among participants

Communication among the students, the NPO manager and me occurred on a daily basis during the pilot study period. The students valued the fact that the NPO manager took time out of his busy schedule to reply to some of their questions or concerns. Some students were shy, but felt that the mutual communication platform gave them a safe space in which to share their ideas. Once the shy students got a positive response from fellow students or the NPO manager they had more courage to share their ideas during the Friday meetings when everyone met. Not only did

the platform help with communication, but it gave all the participants an equal chance to contribute to their group and common goal. The indicators 'closeness' and 'equity' had been successfully enhanced.

I benefited a lot from the journal entries. In addition to that all the reflections from the members gave awareness of weighing the benefits of the project and concerns/request from the participants. By knowing each other better and our interest via the platform, this kept everyone in peace and harmony.

Equal access to information on the platform put all the participants on equal footing and this enabled the participants to feel more at ease with each other. Feedback from the NPO manager and me encouraged the students to communicate more frequently. The NPO manager has participated in SL projects for more than ten years but during this project it was the first time that he could 'speak' to the students and academic staff directly without having to wait for the weekly visit to answer questions or raise concerns about projects. In the past he also did not have direct access to students and their views. He found communication through a mutual platform both intriguing and enabling in terms of working towards reciprocity in the SL module.

Although the students, the NPO manager and I had access to a computer, only a few of the students own a computer. Most of them went to the library or computer lab to log in to the platform. Therefore I suggest that the NPO members and students should download the mutual communication platform application on their mobile phones for future use. By downloading the application on a smart phone they will be able to log in, comment or write journal entries while driving in a taxi, watching television or while being at home.

The screenshot in Figure 13.4 shows how the mutual communication platform can be utilised not only for reflective journals but also to communicate important information and share documents with all the role-players.

ONLINE COLLABORATIVE SPACE FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG SERVICE LEARNING PARTICIPANTS

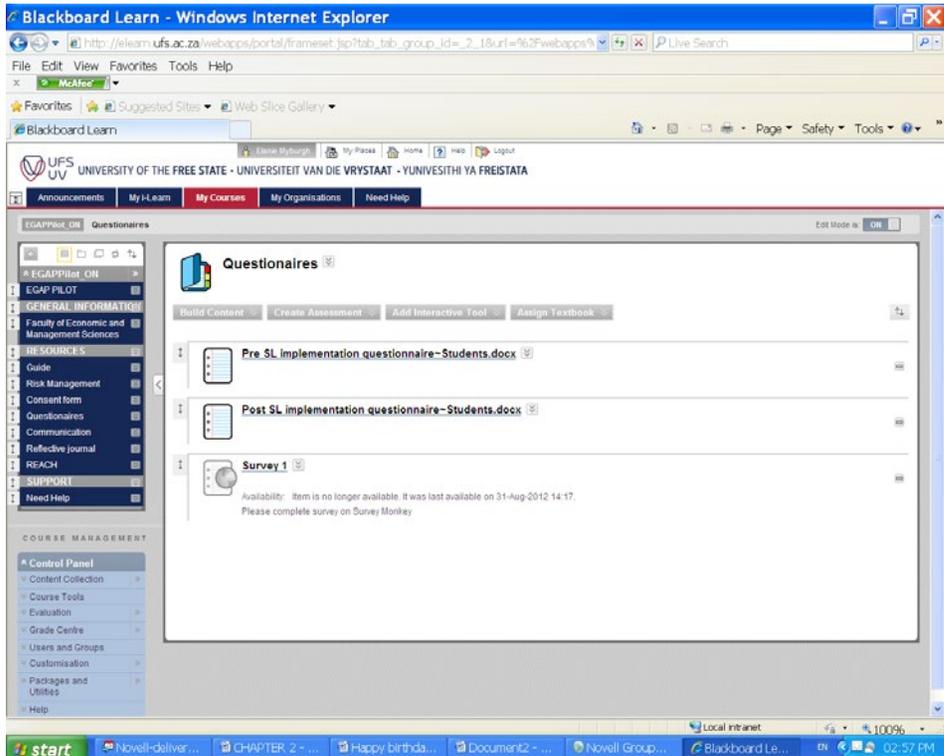


FIGURE 13.4 Role-player communication and sharing

8. CONCLUSION

Service learning projects can only be a success if there is proper communication. The collaborative space available on a mutual online communication platform enabled service learning participants to communicate openly and honestly. Knowledge sharing could happen throughout because the participants could reflect and share experiences. The mutual communication platform created a safe environment in which the participants could communicate and this assisted with relationship building and development of trust among all the participants. The use of such a platform enhances the service learning experience because the role-players have access to information about the NPO, the community, the project and the literature utilised for the project. In addition, sharing of information on the platform can assist higher education institutions and NPO partners in setting up a database for record keeping and for follow-up projects.

Just as participants learn how to communicate with each other across sociocultural divides, they also learn how to recognise and work around the challenges (Strand et

al/ 2003:36). Communicating on the platform can help them to identify challenges quickly, to get input from all the participants to address the challenges and to move forward with minimum delay.

For the successful development of a service learning module that makes use of a mutual online communication platform for collaboration purposes among academic staff members, students and NPO staff in future, good planning, time management and proper communication on the platform should be encouraged. The coordinating staff member should evaluate all comments, discussions or blogs on the platform to ensure that the content being discussed is relevant and helpful to the service learning project. Proper training should be given at the beginning of the module for the students and NPO staff members to familiarise them with the use of the platform. University staff members should have guidelines and procedures in place for ethical issues and problems such as racist remarks, swearing and bullying.

University staff members who coordinate such projects should continuously aim to add and improve the use of technology and mutual communication platforms in service learning modules in order to keep communication channels open among all the role-players. This study provided evidence, on a small scale, of the positive effect that a mutual, online communication platform can have on collaboration and knowledge sharing among service learning participants.

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14

THE ENABLEMENT OF SERVICE LEARNING CHAMPIONS

RECIPROCAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING FOR
ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE THIRD SECTOR
AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Karen Venter & Ielse Seale

ABSTRACT

While the remains of the apartheid legacy still challenge broader society, there are distinct possibilities for making constructive contributions when the third sector and higher education collaborate for democratic community engagement such as service learning. Knowledge sharing is a major driver in fighting social injustice in any society. Within our service learning community, which included partnerships that consisted of participants from the third sector, the higher education sector, the community sector and the global scholarly sector, we identified champions who were willing to 'rock the boat' in efforts to achieve societal change through reciprocal knowledge sharing. A qualitative research design within the constructivist paradigm was utilised. Semi-structured interviews were used to determine who the champions were and to explore the perceptions of the identified champions regarding the role of knowledge sharing in their development and enablement. We constructed a suggested framework of principles to guide the knowledge sharing process among current and future champions for the pedagogy of service learning.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Knowledge sharing between organised civil society (ie the third sector) and higher education is essential promoting community engagement. Community engagement became an integral part of higher education. Since 1999, community engagement has been implemented as one of the three core functions (with teaching and research) to enable transformation in higher education (Hall 2010:1). The appeal for social and educational change now urges scholars to determine whether engagement between communities and higher education institutions (HEIs) has advanced social and educational transformation (Albertyn & Daniels 2009:409; Hlengwa 2010:1; Stanton & Erasmus 2013:75). Through engaging with communities, researchers should aim to explore the value of community engagement as a crucial part of the South African research agenda (Hall 2010:27; Stanton & Erasmus 2013:84).

Community engagement has infused the teaching and research functions of academics within the ivory towers of HEIs with an expanded sense of context, relevance and application towards engagement. Academics are now urged and compelled to step out and connect with society. Community engagement as a scholarly activity is of critical importance in promoting dialogue through knowledge sharing between the various sectors of society and HEIs. For the purposes of this book the focus is on engagement between the third sector and higher education in producing knowledge that is relevant and useful in the South African context. Through a “scholarship of engagement” (Boyer 1996:148), academics and their external partners can create a partnership climate and collaborative space in which non-profit organisations of the third sector, HEIs and communities can share knowledge.

Service learning (SL), as a pedagogical strategy and curricular form of community engagement, facilitates the integration of community service with teaching and learning (Furco 2001:67; UFS 2006). The educational philosophy of SL is value-laden, synergist, dynamic, and highly complex, and enables individual and social change (Shumer 2000:77); therefore, SL researchers are challenged to find innovative ways of exploring the influence of SL on personal, social and academic learning development of students. In addition, enhancing the value of SL for HE staff and external participants also needs ongoing, focused attention from all concerned.

The study reported in this chapter was conducted within a SL community at the University of the Free State (UFS) where SL was influenced by global SL pioneers. Our SL community consisted of various groups who share knowledge within established SL partnerships, namely the non-profit arena within the third sector, the higher education sector and the community sector. A fourth group, the global scholarly sector, is included in this SL community to allow for benchmarking against

the expert champion voices. Within these partnerships, academic SL was used as an educational tool to facilitate reflective knowledge sharing in order to develop globally responsible citizens working towards social and educational enhancement at the local level. Leaders in the mentioned groups were identified as champions who tend to 'rock the boat' in an attempt to achieve societal change for the common good of society (Narayanan 2010). These passionate and committed leaders act as champions for SL and serve as role models for others in the SL field (Jordaan 2013:221). Champions seem to play a crucial role in the SL community. Erasmus (2007:110) points out that the champions of SL work "not only at the chalkboard but also at the coalface most of the time" as they "dare to venture into the – for South Africa – uncharted waters" of SL. We understand that knowledge sharing takes place within a partnership context; however, there seems to be a dearth in the literature regarding the role of knowledge sharing in the development and enablement of champions for SL. Therefore the aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of the role that knowledge sharing has played in the development of champions.

Thus, we argue that a better understanding of principles to guide the knowledge sharing process could contribute to the development and enablement of current and future champions for active engagement between the third sector and higher education. We set out to determine who the champions in our SL partnership were. We explored the perceptions of the identified champions regarding the role of knowledge sharing in their development and enablement as champions for SL and identified principles to guide the knowledge sharing process.

Rather than presenting a theoretical framework, findings are integrated with a discussion of literature related to knowledge sharing for the development and enablement of SL champions. We introduce the context of the study, which is followed by the methodology and the findings from the data generated through semi-structured interviews. The chapter concludes with recommended principles to guide the knowledge sharing process between the third and higher education sectors, as well as with suggestions for future research.

2. CONTEXT

Within our SL community, the non-profit arena within the third sector, the higher education sector, the community sector and – from a distance – the global scholarly sector collaborated in democratic engagement through reciprocal knowledge sharing (see Figure 14.1).

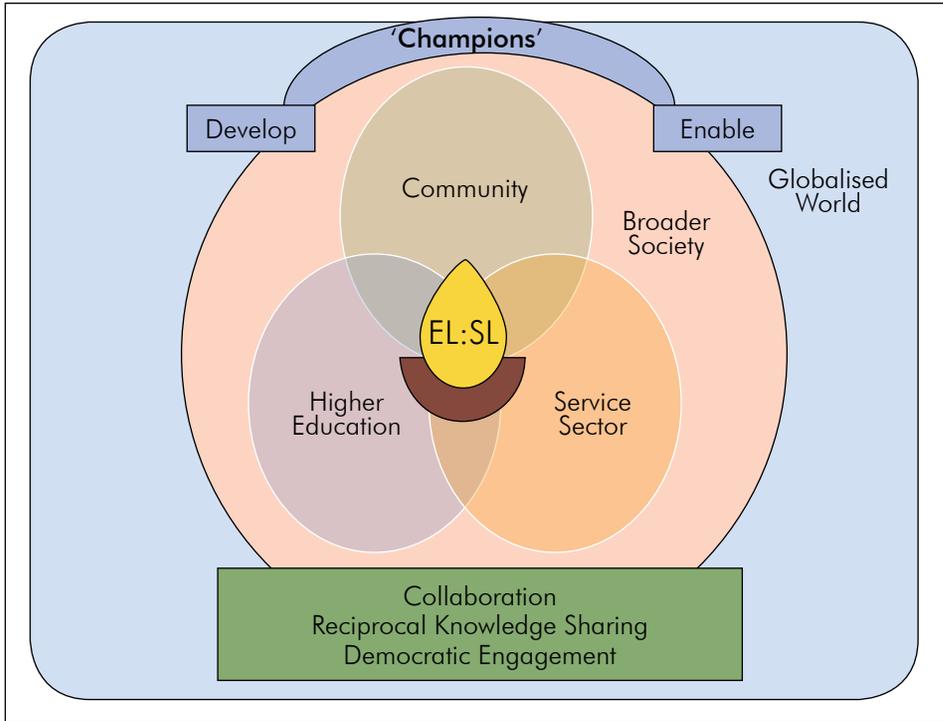


FIGURE 14.1 Broad context of the study

We used SL as a form of experiential learning (EL) to facilitate community engagement. Through reflective discussion we identified a definition of SL champions from participants from the four sectors. The contention was that champions developed and were enabled through reciprocal knowledge sharing to act as change agents who try to solve personal and societal challenges in broader society and the global world.

On a micro-level the study was conducted within a specific SL partnership context where professional nurses further their studies in nursing education at the UFS. The study population involved SL champions from the four sectors. This SL community reflected the well-known triad partnership model which was adapted to include the global SL champion community (Bender, Daniels, Lazarus, Naudé and Sattar 2006:93). However, for the purpose of this chapter we mainly report on the findings of the NPO voices as representatives of local communities as guided by literature urging researchers to get closer to the community voice (Alperstein 2007:59; Du Plessis & Van Dyk 2013:62, 73; Nduna 2007:69). The voice of one female academic engagement pioneer within our existing partnership was added, because this pioneer is an NPO member who has been actively engaged in NPO activities

and is an academic who serves at our HEI. Voices of global pioneers are added for benchmarking purposes.

Students and academics from the higher education sector participated in academic service activities aimed at addressing identified learning needs (mostly health and education related issues) of volunteer care workers who rendered service at various NPOs within the third sector. Thereafter, volunteer care workers shared their co-constructed knowledge among their own communities. Eventually, partners from all the sectors reflected on the SL experiences in order to gain a deeper understanding of the linkage between academic content and community dynamics, as stipulated in the *Community Service Policy* of the UFS (UFS 2006:9).

3. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research design, within the constructivist paradigm, was used (Mertens 2010:11, 226). Participants for the study were purposefully selected (Mertens 2010:320) to represent all the groups within our SL community. The sample included champions from four groupings: three leaders from the third (NPO) sector, one community representative, four SL academics (including an academic community engagement pioneer and two nursing education students from the UFS), as well as five scholarly pioneers who were interviewed during a SL conference abroad. The voice of one female academic engagement pioneer within our existing partnerships was added, because this pioneer is an NPO member who has been actively engaged in NPO activities and is an academic who serves at our HEI.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. A step-by-step analysis was conducted as advised by Mertens (2010:424-426). During the first step, all the data was reviewed and transcribed. Steps two and three occurred in synergy where data were explored and reduced. Initial and focused coding was done and the data were sifted. After focused coding was conducted, a framework for a layout of the reporting of the study was planned. Categories, themes and subthemes of the analysed data were identified. Credibility of the analysed data was ensured through member checking (with research participants) and peer debriefing (with two other researchers) (Mertens 2010:431, 257). Thereafter, the data were interpreted. Data triangulation involved the inclusion of perceptions from a diverse representation, where even the voices of the least empowered were not lost. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with identified champions who represent the third sector and the community (Mertens 2010:429). To ensure rigour, the principles for ethical practice (axiology) of qualitative research were followed as

advised in literature (Mertens 2010:16-18). Practice of privacy, informed consent, confidentiality, honesty, no harm and the maintenance of ethical standards were respected (Chapdelaine, Ruiz, Warchal & Wells 2005:10-11). Ethical clearance was granted for the study by the Ethics Board of the Faculty of Education at the UFS.

The findings of the study will now be discussed and integrated with related literature.

4. FINDINGS

The findings are organised into three categories related to the research questions, namely SL champions, knowledge sharing and principles to guide the knowledge sharing process. We report on the data gathered from three NPO organisations from the third sector, and one female academic engagement pioneer within our existing partnerships. The data from the five expert champions – hereafter called global pioneers (GP) – in the global scholarly sector are included to benchmark the findings of the other participants. Their data are included at the end of each section.

To indicate which participant is the source of the verbatim quotation gained from semi-structured interviews, the referencing system used is P1, P2 and P3 for the NPO participants and P4 for the academic engagement pioneer. Translated quotes are indicated with a **t*. For the global pioneers we use GP1, GP2, GP3, and so forth.

4.1 Service learning champions

The idea of SL champions has gained attention in the last few years (Erasmus 2007:110, 123; Jordaan 2013:221). They portray certain skills and personal characteristics that distinguish them from others, through which they take action and lead others in society. In being asked who the champions were, the participants did not only refer to the identified champions in their partnership context but presented defining characteristics as well.

4.1.1 Partnership context

The participants identified champions from the third sector, the higher education sector, and the community. Within the third sector, volunteer care workers in NPOs were identified as champions: *“Caregivers in the organisations are the champions, because they have the practical knowledge to take care of the community”* (P2).

In the higher education sector, academics and students were identified as champions: *“The fuse in the gunpowder barrel was literally Professor (A). Other people who made an actual impact were students”* (P1 **t*). Champions were described as *“people from*

the higher education institutions that are designing programmes” (P4). Champions also come from the community:

Without the community itself, one would not be able to implement those programmes and there are community members themselves that share and use knowledge. You need key people that will drive the work in the community – those would be people that are already participating in programmes (P4).

In summary, one participant stated:

[E]verybody can be a champion, it all depends on how far the person is involved, how knowledgeable the person is and, to be more specific, how prepared the person is to share knowledge. Everybody has knowledge – but you can only identify a champion from what the champion would be doing with it – in this case how far a person is able to share the knowledge; what type of knowledge that is and the benefit that comes out of that knowledge (P4).

In comparison to the other participants, the global pioneers also identified champions from the entire SL community. They also mentioned various names that represent early as well as young and upcoming academic pioneers in the SL field. The following was voiced by one of our global champions:

There may be big champions that have more profile, but everybody is a champion in their own backyard, and their own context. So if somebody in a small village in SA is making some change, they’re a champion. That is where the difference is made, not in the university classroom, not at the conference level, or when you are giving a keynote address, but when somebody does something with it. The local champions – they may do it in partnership with some bigger champions, but you always need the local champion (GP1).

After identification of champions, the second aspect, namely defining characteristics of a champion, is addressed.

4.1.2 Defining characteristics

The participants spontaneously elaborated on the defining characteristics of SL champions. According to the participants, the champions adhered to an excellent standard of practice which portrayed characteristics of high levels of self-development. The champions rendered SL practice through a ‘whole person approach’ that surpassed the behaviour of other groups of people in the partnerships.

Champions have the ability to adapt to a situation; answer to a calling; care; commit themselves fully (with their heart and soul); co-create knowledge; persevere; serve beyond duty; share knowledge and expertise; and take responsibility towards the transformation of society (summary P1-4). The champions portrayed a positive attitude in their SL practice, because they were deeply devoted, fair, friendly, honest,

passionate, patient, trustworthy, stable, humane, positive, loving, loyal and show integrity towards others. They committed themselves to lifelong learning in order to gain knowledge and share it with other citizens (summary P1-4).

We can thus reason that champions used a 'whole person approach' within their SL practice, while others merely observed everyday social and educational challenges in society such as poverty and the quest for widened educational access. The champions took responsibility and acted as change agents.

Another characteristic that gained attention was the self-development level of the champions. The participants revealed that the self-development level of the champions displayed aspects of excellence. The self-development level of the champions displayed selflessness, self-confidence, humble self-pride and self-respect (summary P1-4). Therefore we argue that the champions possessed a positive personal self-concept, positive social self-concept and high self-ideal. Again, to benchmark our findings, one of the global pioneers noted: *"I was 'star struck' by them! They were just so welcoming and there was just this sense of: This is an important field and we're all moving forward in this together"* (GP3).

The next category of our report relates to knowledge sharing within a SL community.

4.2 Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing is defined as a process of exchanging knowledge, skills, experience and understanding among different people (Tsui, Chapman, Schnirer & Stewart 2006:5). Our SL community provided an arena for such knowledge exchange, where the various groups shared knowledge, skills and experience.

Within the constructivist paradigm (Vygotsky 1978) the knowledge, ideas, attitudes and values within our SL community were shaped through democratic knowledge sharing among adult learners. Adults are self-directed learners (Knowles 1990). They gain learning from experience, mostly through solving problems. In real life, adult learning is self-directed towards coping with everyday life challenges. An adult wants to use new knowledge and skills right away in solving real-life issues (Hughes & Quinn 2013:23). We mentioned earlier that we used SL as a form of experiential learning in the study. Dewey (1963) described the importance of experience in knowledge sharing (learning). He integrated theory and practice through emphasising the use of reflection on action, and also proposed that learning is a social process, hence leading to individual and social transformation. In line with the thoughts of Dewey, learning is seen as being developmental and that good citizenship rests on knowledge sharing (Eyler & Giles 1994).

As mentioned previously, we noted in our study that knowledge sharing developed the SL champions as ‘whole persons’. Current learning and brain-based research found that experiential learning engages the ‘whole brain’. A recent study done by Nwokah and Leafblad (2013:92) found that SL, as a form of experiential learning, is one of the best ways to enhance ‘whole brain’ learning. They found that by providing challenges in real life, the whole brain was used to solve given challenges. The participants in our study revealed that SL champions could adapt to a situation, answer to a calling, care, commit themselves fully (with their heart and soul), co-create and share knowledge, persevere, serve beyond duty, share expertise and take responsibility towards the transformation of society (summary P1-4). These responses provide evidence regarding the development of the ‘whole brain’ of a SL champion who shares knowledge and solves problems through a ‘whole person approach’.

As engaged scholars in our SL community, we realised that we have co-constructed our own approach to knowledge sharing (as an element of learning). The approach invoked philosophical ideas linked to various well-known learning theories such as the adult learning theory (Knowles 1990), behaviourism (Skinner 1971), cognitivism (Piaget & Inhelder 1969), constructivism (Vygotsky 1978) and critical social theory (Merriam & Caffarella 1999:340). Our approach evolved into a possible ‘relational learning philosophy’ and is currently defined as follows:

In our SL community, knowledge sharing is an interactive process in a socially and culturally diverse context characterised by a collaborative, reciprocal, symbiotic partnership, driven by development and enablement of human abilities as reward.

Based on this philosophy, it was important to gain an understanding of the role that knowledge sharing played in the development and enablement of the knowledge sharers on themselves and others in their immediate community.

4.2.1 Role of knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing developed and enabled the champions to become responsible citizens. The acquired skills empowered the champions to become change agents who focus on solving real-life challenges in society. As a result of knowledge sharing, even the quality of the partnerships developed into a higher level of sustainability.

The role of knowledge sharing was categorised into two main themes: firstly, the development and enablement, and secondly the empowerment of champions.

4.2.1.1 Development and enablement of SL champions

Development and enablement of champions were classified under educational and human development as two subthemes that directed the knowledge sharing in our SL community.

In the introduction of the chapter, we stated that HEIs are compelled to create a learning environment which will facilitate the educational development and enablement of lifelong learning skills (Daniels 2013:193; Marjan & Peyman 2012:399). Therefore, lifelong learning skills were a focus area in our SL community, in order to develop and enable SL champions. These skills included critical thinking, analytical skills, communication, teamwork, and problem solving (Tempone & Martin 2000:3).

As a lifelong learner, a SL champion has the ability to integrate theory and practice: *“Knowledge sharing develops and enables champions to connect academic knowledge and practical experience”* (P2). Champions show expertise and are knowledgeable: *“A champion has experience and knowledge of their field”* (P3*t). Thereby a SL champion uses the whole brain as a cognitive knower to share knowledge. The findings regarding the SL practice and characteristics of the champions not only serve as evidence for the cognitive domain, but include the affective (attitude) and psychomotor (skills). It thus engages the whole person as referred to by Bloom (Hughes & Quinn 2013:107).

Human development of champions is evidenced by a change in their self-development and their ability to initiate social development. Self-development is depicted in the ability of a champion to change his or her behaviour:

There should be change in a person. When a champion’s personality, their attitude, their way of thinking and their emotions change, those are the things that will indicate to us whether there is development or not. Champions should prepare themselves for the unknown within reality (P4).

With the focus on self-development, SL develops the personal, intrapersonal, interpersonal and social responsibility of citizens (as evidenced in a study done by McMillan 2013:50, 51). SL has the potential to influence a person’s ‘being’ (McMillan 2013:34). The literature reports about development in students on personal, intrapersonal and interpersonal levels (Eyler & Giles 1999). In the light of knowledge sharing within our SL community, the same would apply to the personal transformation of identified champions. Therefore, they also developed the ability to initiate the social development of others in their immediate society. Social development is evidenced by the influence of knowledge sharing on social transformation in the following quote:

I think it satisfies those needs of one to share your knowledge and experience with others. There are three things that result from knowledge sharing: You grow in knowledge, and you learn to understand more about yourself – your response to people whom you serve – you learn to understand other people (P3).

Therefore, we posit that knowledge sharing influenced the champions to care about and contribute to the development of other human beings in society. Our champions understood and observed the influence of previous oppression and injustices from the past on society. They aimed to contribute to the development of the previously oppressed in society. The critical social theory validates our assumption regarding social development initiated by SL champions (Merriam & Caffarella 1999:340). This theory places emphasis on the role of the broader society in knowledge sharing, in order to develop a sustainable society. The goal of the champions was therefore to change society to a sustainable place for themselves and others in society; their wisdom became the solution and hope for those in despair.

The third subtheme that was classified was barriers in development relating to social justice. One of the participants voiced that *“you should know how it feels to be poor and have a vision to leave the circumstances of poverty. Education is the route out of poverty”* (P2). Participant 1 advised that *“We should not share knowledge in one direction”*. Participant 4 agreed that there should be balance in knowledge sharing: *“We should have an equilibrium which actually says we need each other: I can’t do it without you and you can’t do it without me”*. Participant 2 summarised the enabling solution towards social injustice with two words: *“reciprocal empowerment”*. Thus in our SL community we strove to render SL practice towards eliminating social injustice within our partnership context.

The last subtheme, classified under development and enablement of champions, was SL partnership development. To strengthen the argument of social justice, a champion voiced evidence of educational and human development: *“The contribution of academics in the partnership was of immense value to us. They share their occupational experience and academic knowledge in a practical way with the community”* (P1 *t). Additionally, Participant 2 suggested: *“Even if you are not with the others anymore, the legacy of the knowledge that you share should stay with them”*. Therefore one of our key challenges is to build sustainable partnerships that reflect knowledge sharing and mutual respect for each other. Sustainability of partnerships can be safeguarded through quality assurance indicators (Bender *et al* 2006:92-111). Quality indicators of effective SL partnerships include collaboration, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation, the future of the partnership and sharing through celebration.

Collaboration is the key quality indicator of partnerships. Roles, benefits and expectations are clarified by means of written memoranda of understanding. However, within partnerships there is an element of relationship building that does not only focus on operational matters. Participant 1 indicated the heart of collaboration: *"They did not only do it out of their obligation as lecturers or out of charity, they connected with us at a much deeper level because they displayed humanity and caring, they poured their heart and soul in the project"* (P1*t). In this sense we agree with Bringle, Clayton and Price (2009) that partnership relationships possess qualities such as closeness, equity and integrity.

Maintenance as a quality indicator can build trust among the partners through informal communication. Formal communication such as regular meetings with the service sector and community representatives must take place on an ongoing basis. Participant 4 referred to the importance of reciprocal trust and honesty to maintain relationships.

Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of knowledge sharing should be done rigorously through analysis of artefacts (eg minutes of meetings). Participant 3 mentioned the importance of continuous feedback regarding the SL project outcomes and stated: *"The university must not be scared to terminate a partnership if partners do not reach their outcomes and if the partnership does not thrive"*. Results can be utilised to plan the expansion or discontinuation of the partnership in time for the next cycle.

The value of celebration must not be underestimated as seen in the following quote: *"I don't know how we are going to thank them; it is as if friendships developed and that was so precious. It is as if they were angels sent from heaven"* (P1*t). It is clear that celebration as a formal appreciation and showcasing event, or as an ongoing event, is irreplaceable. Celebratory events facilitate deepened relationships and closure and provide an opportunity to network through discussion and reflection to shape the future.

The use of quality indicators can foster an enriched SL experience for partners within stable, flourishing partnerships embedded in an educational environment. We experienced that knowledge sharing in our SL partnerships contributed to the development of the partnerships at a deeper level. At the onset of our partnerships, all the sectors in the partnerships agreed to take responsibility as co-servers, co-learners and co-educators who engaged in relevant SL activities, therefore modelling democratic engagement is a fundamental aspect of SL pedagogy (Bender *et al* 2006:1-12, 31, 92-111). A participant commented that *"our partnership developed into a deeper level. We developed friendships and that was very precious to me"* (P1*t).

The second theme that was classified under the role of knowledge sharing was the empowerment of SL champions.

4.2.1.2 Empowerment

Knowledge sharing empowered the SL champions to become change agents towards educational equality, respect for human rights and sustainable community development as enablers towards empowerment. A champion believes that knowledge sharing is empowerment. The next subtheme of empowerment emphasises the importance of educational equality in a previously oppressed society:

*There is an old saying that states: Knowledge is power. If that power is transferred to the community, it would enable massive transformation. The previous years of oppression made us feel powerless. Knowledge empowered us to feel in control, because we could do something about the situation. You feel important, needed. However, I am sure this should not have been the case if we were not empowered with the necessary reciprocal 'free of charge' knowledge sharing within the relationship that we built with the university. Knowledge sharing prepared us to implement our knowledge in the community. That was more empowering than receiving money ... You should do something, even if it is small and seems insignificant, to initiate change in the correct direction to solve a problem (P1*f).*

Knowledge sharing brings empowerment, in a lot of ways – on a personal, educational and on a social level. I can take the knowledge and also empower my champions and it makes you a better person. My knowledge that I share within myself is coping. Knowledge makes me cope; the fact that I can know how to cope empowers me. (P2)

We used SL to create academic learning experiences in which students participated in service activities which were aimed at addressing identified service needs in community. For example, partners from all the sectors reflected on the service and learning experiences regarding health related issues, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the linkage between academic content and community dynamics. In essence, SL balanced service to society with academic learning in order to mobilise the champions, as advised by literature (Furco 2001). Community engagement has infused the teaching and research functions of academics within the ivory towers of HEIs, with an expanded sense of context, relevance and application towards engagement. As a higher education sector, we connected with the community.

Human rights equality emerged as another subtheme under empowerment of SL champions. A champion argued that we should understand the effect of oppression on society. This is illustrated by the following quote:

*There are definitely human feelings involved. I must say that knowledge sharing has really helped us as an organisation to heal in that respect. At the beginning we were antagonistic and worried, because we obviously come from an age where we are biased in our thinking. We were impressed about the way that the academic staff and students connected with us. There were no biases and assumptions that we will get hurt in the process. We could literally bury our old cows in the trench. I think SL has a very important role to play to promote diversity at the university. To place students of different groups in a diverse community is better than to sit in a class and theorise about these issues (P1 *f).*

Thus, we used dialogue through knowledge sharing between the third sector and higher education and aimed through this study to co-generate knowledge that is relevant and useful in the South African SL context. The goal of the collaboration went beyond the technical or individual development focus of most community projects, instead our goal was to focus on democratic engagement and lasting social change. It was important to one of the champions that his knowledge sharing should lead to sustainable changes:

*We should transfer the knowledge in such a way, that even when the project comes to an end – that the effect of knowledge sharing will remain successful, ongoing and sustainable. It is important that constructive tools are transferred towards the empowerment of the community (P1 *f).*

The acquired skills empowered the champions to become change agents who dream and visualise society as a place where equal access to education, respect for human rights, sustainable community development, and eventual global sustainability exist.

We want to go a step further and propose that cultural harmony or congruence, policy driven community engagement and the internet can be powerful enablers towards sustainable societal development. Striving towards cultural congruency could enable citizens to overcome the hurt from the past and empower the community. Thus, we suggest that cultural congruence could be a possible enabler towards social transformation. The dynamics within the learning community speak of an appreciation of diversity of culture and sensitivity for social differences.

The last subtheme connected to empowerment relates to sustainable community development. The *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (RSA DHET 2014:39) states that many of the community engagement initiatives that are conducted by HEIs are fragmented. In our opinion these initiatives cannot be measured as academic research projects. Thus future policies should aim to shape community engagement that leads to measurable community development through the integration of academic projects with research and community engagement. One of the policy objectives of this *White Paper* (RSA DHET 2014:39) states that

higher education should be responsive to the needs of individual citizens, employers in the public and the private sector, as well as broader societal and developmental objectives. Therefore, we should aim to meet these objectives.

One of the global pioneers emphasised the sharing effect in the development of champions: “I think the most important part of knowledge sharing is making other people aware of your experiences and your insights” (GP1).

Another global champion explained the dynamic influence of the SL field on the development of champions:

I think that knowledge sharing is both the biggest problem that SL can have and it is also the biggest opportunity. The knowledge sharing was always in one direction, from the experts at the university to the people in the community. So, SL, when it is done well, is knowledge sharing in two directions that we should honour. There was a whole community of knowledge out there that the literature didn't show (GP2).

Another global champion voiced the role of knowledge sharing as follows:

So the champions shaped my thinking around SL and made me feel as though there was something there in terms of my intuition that – this is something that I am excited about and there is actually a group of people thinking about it (GP3).

We learned from one of the global pioneers that the community plays an important role in the development of others in the SL field:

What we do in SL is all about the community; how we can integrate what we have learned from the community with community and to the community. I think SL is not talking about ourselves; it's talking about how we can share our knowledge. And then we create knowledge together (GP4).

The following section deals with principles to guide the knowledge sharing process.

4.3 Principles to guide the knowledge sharing process

The last category of the findings is that of principles to guide the knowledge sharing process.

We argued that if we understand the role of knowledge sharing among the champions within the SL community, it could contribute to the quality of current and future engagement between the third sector and higher education. Our knowledge sharing took place within a partnership context. Therefore, it is important to use the advice of the champions in order to establish quality knowledge sharing (See Textbox 1 for summary of quotes).

TEXTBOX 1 Third sector champions: Advice for quality knowledge sharing

- Start a relationship
- Do value clarification and work towards shared values
- Do a learning need analysis and clarify a common goal
- Have a mentor
- Share knowledge in different contexts: public, mentorship-apprenticeship
- Share your expertise
- Share guidelines to integrate theory and practice
- There should be balance in knowledge sharing
- Just use me as example, as a guide to create your own knowledge
- Act out knowledge to enhance change
- Evaluate the effect of knowledge sharing on sharer and recipient
- Evaluate the outcomes of set goals
- Recognise contribution

We used the findings of the study to shape our thinking, as advised by the third sector champions, literature and through reflection on our scholarship of engagement. Based on our co-constructed ‘relational learning philosophy’ we drafted our suggested conceptual framework of principles to guide the knowledge sharing process as illustrated in Figure 14.2.

If the knowledge sharing process in a SL community is guided by three main principles, namely connection, collaboration and continuous communication, it could lead to change towards reciprocal empowerment between the third sector and higher education. Connection entails the establishment of a SL network, either in the public domain or on a mentor–apprentice basis. The foundation of collaboration should be reciprocity and mutuality. Continuous communication through monitoring and evaluation shapes the knowledge sharing process where recognition of the knowledge contribution rewards all sectors in the SL community. The process can either continue if goals were not met, or can lead to reciprocal empowerment after change took place towards social justice for all in society. Therefore, these principles could initiate change towards the empowerment of a SL community characterised by mutuality and reciprocity between the third sector and HEIs. If we apply the suggested principles, we could then have the ability to build, share and utilise knowledge for mutual enablement and capacity building. Of essence is that we should all take responsibility to act as change agents towards the transformation of education, by

respecting human rights to work towards a sustainable society. Eventually, we can therefore contribute to global sustainability.

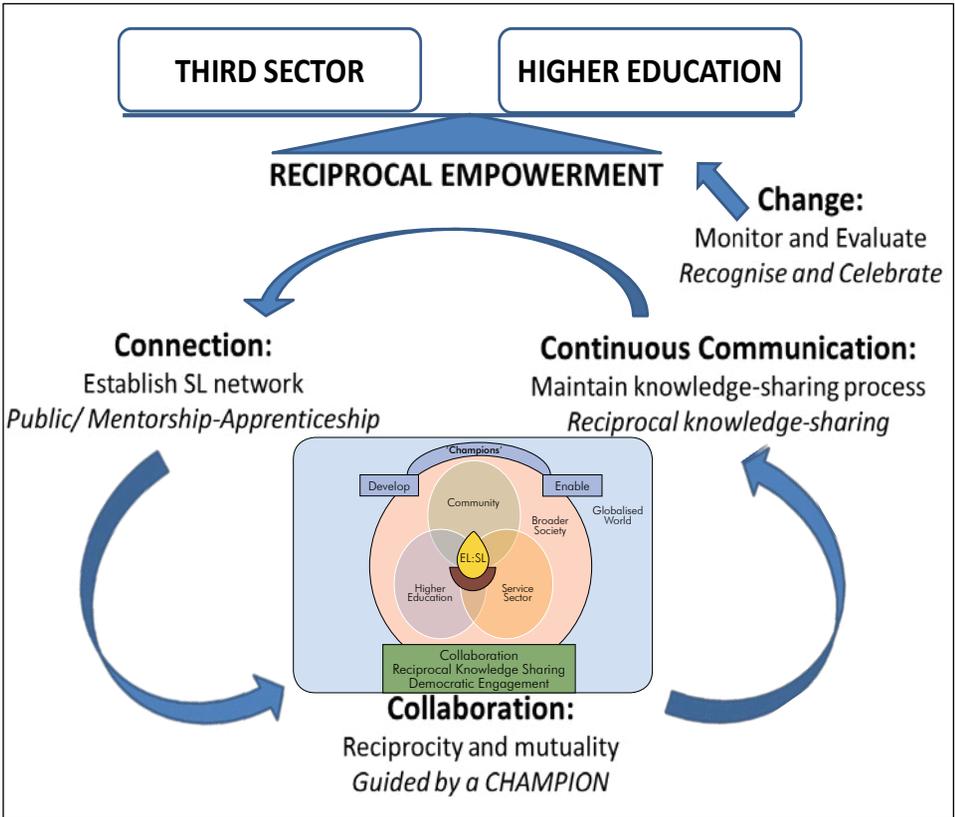


FIGURE 14.2 Conceptual framework of suggested principles

It was important to benchmark our findings regarding principles to guide the knowledge sharing process, because the global champions set the example by showing integrity and exceptional commitment in their practice. This was transferred from early pioneers to a younger generation. The following is a summary of their perceptions:

So the question people were asking was: How did you survive? How did you improve your practice? And every single person answered: Because we have a network. It was a sharing network, a knowledge sharing network (GP5).

Try to connect higher education, secondary education and community by sharing a topic. We need to learn from young people, they share knowledge from the international context (GP1).

We can have a local network, from local network we can have a regional network, and from regional network we can have an international network, somehow if we can make it a systematic development that will be very good for SL stakeholders (GP4).

We have to verify community knowledge and incorporate it into our own scholarship. The new knowledge we're producing is a synthesis of academic knowledge and community knowledge. So it is a co-production of knowledge (GP2).

There was earnestness. I think we hear more depth of knowledge sharing when that genuine connection is made. It's not superficial. It gets to a point of mentorship–apprenticeship kind of relationship that is going to stay for a long time (GP3).

5. CONCLUSION

We listened to the voices from the third sector and benchmarked our findings in relation to the perceptions of global pioneers, to gain a better understanding of who the champions in our service learning community are. They believe that champions can be found in the third sector, the higher education institutions and the community sector. It was clear that champions have distinct defining characteristics whereby they establish themselves as champions. A picture of a champion reflects an image of excellence; when champions participate in knowledge sharing, the service of champions surpasses those of others. They conduct service learning practices as a whole person and display characteristics that speak of excellence. They are inherently motivated to participate in knowledge sharing, driven by specific educational needs for the sake of social transformation. They also engage in knowledge sharing for the love of learning. Their participation in knowledge sharing leads to societal change and personal growth. When they deal with pressing challenges in society, they rely on their previous experience and shared knowledge.

When applying the recommended principles based on the voices of the champions in an attempt to overcome barriers that hinder the knowledge sharing process, we can contribute to the development and enablement of current and future champions for active engagement between the third sector and higher education. A global champion noted the following:

So to me they were the champions because they were really kind of lighting the path and welcoming people in the field. And I think to me, that's what is so important and I think that stayed with me too, as my own professional development has advanced and grown and deepened. I will never forget that, and so when people come into the field I feel that that is one of my responsibilities to say: "Come into the fray and join us and be part of this" (GP3).

Therefore, both the third sector and the higher education sector can share knowledge and expertise, with an integration of theory and practice from a shared 'knowledge bed'. The knowledge can then be transferred to and shared in close collaboration with the community sector.

We gained a better understanding of principles to guide the knowledge sharing process based on our democratic engagement and listening to the advice of champions in our context. Our suggested conceptual framework could enable reciprocal empowerment in this sector. The findings of the study reported in this chapter contribute to the fields of community engagement and service learning with an authentic South African identity.

If we use the advice of a global champion, we will carry the knowledge torch in the correct direction:

I guess I would say that the research that you are doing now – to embrace the concept of service learning to study knowledge sharing and make knowledge sharing more broad-based, not just to modern champions but to treat all of the people doing this as champions, because they are – that can enrich the way forward (GP1).

The study can also serve as point of departure for future action research, creating the possibility that repeated action research cycles could assist in streamlining relationships between knowledge sharers and enhance the sustainability of service learning partnerships.

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● ACRONYMS

CDS	Centre for Development Support
CE	community engagement
CES	community-engaged scholarship
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHESP	Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
CSI	Corporate Social Investment
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DETEA	Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs
DoE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoSD	Department of Social Development
EL	experiential learning
FGD	focus group discussion
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
GIS	Geographic Information System
GP	global participant
HE	higher education
HEI	higher education institution
HEIs	higher education institutions
HoSL	Head of Service Learning
IFC	Industrial Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISTR	International Society for Third-Sector Research
NPO	non-profit organisation
NPOs	non-profit organisations
NRF	National Research Foundation
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OT	Occupational Therapy
P	participant
PAR	participatory action research
ROC	Reach Our Community (ROC) Foundation
SoN	School of Nursing
SA	South Africa
SL	service learning
SNA	social network analysis
SU	Stellenbosch University
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
TS	third sector
UCT	University of Cape Town
UFS	University of the Free State
UK	United Kingdom
Unisa	University of South Africa
UP	University of Pretoria
UWC	University of the Western Cape

The chapters of this book are replete with the view that community-engaged scholarship enables community knowledge to emerge in the academic and scientific mainstream, through inclusive and collaborative ways that accommodate knowledge resident in both communities and the third sector that represents them. The research reported must find its way into the hands (and hearts and minds) of local and national government officials, non-profit organisations and other agencies in the third sector, and the management and community engaged scholars of higher education institutions. From these pages the aforementioned officials and scholars will glean how knowledge can (and does) enable; specifically through engagement between higher education institutions, the third sector and the communities in which this engagement unfurls. I am confident that further research about the intersection between higher education institutions and third sector organisations will be stimulated as a result of this publication.

Professor Darren Lortan

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The editors and authors of this book make a strong, substantive contribution to research and practice in community-engaged scholarship in South Africa and by implication in the wider world. Scholars and practitioners looking for an in-depth, thoughtful and critical review of relevant literature will find it here in the articulately presented introduction and following chapters, a number of which report on new, original research, which expands our understanding and discussion of important elements of practice. I especially applaud the editors for focusing our attention on the assets, roles and voices of third sector organisations, the often unsung and unheard partners in engagement work.

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