

Chapter 11

Selected African Universities Community Engagement Work for Poverty Reduction

Wapula N. Raditloaneng

11.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses community service and engagement and student service learning in the process of poverty reduction. ITMUA was a Pan-African action research study funded by the Association of African Universities between 2010 and 2011 involving the University of Calabar in Nigeria, Universities of Botswana and Malawi and the National University of Lesotho. The aim was to explore the extent to which university community service missions were addressing, and could be developed to address, national priorities in relation to the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were agreed in the year 2000 by most countries around the world as global targets to be reached by 2015.

The ITMUA project aimed to investigate ways in which community service can complement teaching and research activities in responding to diverse community and national development needs. In this chapter we discuss two projects that typify community service and engagement for poverty reduction. First is the experience of BA ISAGO University College training project in partnership with Kellogg Foundation in the implementation of the Community Based Planning Programme that was based on the ZOOMING APPROACH in the D'kar Community and its surrounding resettlements areas, which are occupied by the minority San Tribe. The ZOOMING APPROACH is a participatory and interactive engagement approach to local development, developed and refined by the WKKF's Africa Programme on the basis of lessons and experience from its work in the region. Another project given as an example of best practice is the ITMUA project which studied two cases of community engagement.

The main argument posed in this chapter, using the two university projects mentioned above, is that community service is, compared to teaching and research, (first

W. N. Raditloaneng (✉)

Faculty of Education, Department of Adult Education, University of Botswana,
Gaborone, Botswana

e-mail: Raditloa@mopipi.ub.bw

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and second missions) expected of university academics so that they can work with communities struggling to make a transition out of poverty. However, this third mission of universities and their engagement with communities is usually underdeveloped because of the high level of attention paid to teaching and research in promotion criteria applications.

To revitalize this mission the project built on and adapted the framework so it more effectively addressed the MDGs and African contexts. The ITMUA project was the brainchild of a desire to understand how selected African Universities were engaging with communities, with the ultimate motive of illuminating and promoting best practice in community service and engagement.

The ITMUA regional collaborative project which informs this chapter consisted of an African partnership network of four universities. The network was funded by the Association of African Universities and Department for International Development between 2009–1. The network conducted small scale case studies, in association with the University of Glasgow, into the effectiveness of non-formal education (NFE) for poverty reduction. The ITMUA action research project built on those findings to explore the potential role of NFE (as a key aspect of community service) in higher education on a wider scale. The project was sponsored by the Association of African Universities and Department for International Development 2009–2011.

11.2 ITMUA Project Methodology

Major research questions included:-

1. How is the university's third mission being developed and implemented?
2. What role do the Millennium Development Goals play in influencing the university's third mission?
3. To what extent and in what ways are national and regional policies on poverty reduction having an impact on university regional activities to relate teaching and research to community service?
4. To what extent and in what ways can universities enhance and integrate their existing activities (research and teaching linked to community service) to accommodate MDG priorities in their region?

To answer the four questions above, ITMUA took a 4 phase, qualitative, action research approach as follows:-

PHASE ONE: internal audit of CS programmes and activities



**PHASE TWO: stakeholder
Discussions on the role of MDGs in the third mission**



PHASE THREE: case studies to illuminate and promote best practice in CS



**PHASE FOUR: policy briefs
and stakeholder feedback and carving the way forward in greater university
engagement**

Source: Adapted from Julia Preece (2011) *Universities, community service and African contexts*. In Preece Eds., *Community Service and Community Engagement in Four African Universities* (pp. 37–48). Gaborone: Lentswe La Lesedi. ISBN 978–99912-71–48-4-(print edition); ISBN 978–99912-71–47-7-(eBook)

An action research, phased approach to the study was used. Action research is a recognised strategy in educational research where participation and dialogue are combined with a process of application and review (Stringer 2004). There were four phases: an initial audit of relevant policy literature and existing activities that could be classified under the banner of community service; a consultative phase with four stakeholder groups—academics, civil society, postgraduate students and government ministries—to examine how the university roles in relation to the MDGs and surrounding communities were perceived; a third phase where two case studies per institution piloted a multidisciplinary approach to community service/engagement alongside in-depth qualitative evaluation; and finally a reporting phase back to the wider academic community and the consultative stakeholder groups. This included the production of policy briefings on how to improve the university’s contribution to national and local development needs.

The studies were analysed country by country, then comparatively across countries (Nampota 2011), drawing on qualitative data from interviews, observations and focus group discussions, in order to identify patterns and context specific issues for a better understanding of what works where, how and why.

The eight cases studied through the phases above took place between January 2010 and August 2011 while the ITMUA project lasted. There were also questions specific to the case study art of the research which were about how the project operated. The questions for the two case studies per country were as follows:-

Research questions

- What do you think are the aims of the university's involvement in this project?
- Were these aims met—in what way?
- Who was involved in the project?
- How did the university engage with the community project?
 - In terms of negotiations, consultations, decision making, educational input
- How did the community project gain/benefit from the university's involvement?
 - In terms of poverty reduction; health and self sustainability; new skills knowledge and understanding
 - How did university students and staff gain/benefit from the involvement?
- In terms of personal growth; new skills, knowledge and understanding
 - In terms of enhanced understanding of their university curriculum
 - In terms of enhanced understanding of real world issues
- Who else benefited and how?
- How could the university develop this involvement:
 - a. In terms of contributing to community development needs/MDG focus
 - b. In terms of integrating this activity into the university research and teaching missions
 - c. In terms of improving the quality of what has been done
 - d. In terms of involving more people/organisations
 - e. In terms of continuing the partnership over the next few years [if this is possible]
- How is the wider community gaining from this involvement?
- Do you know of other communities who would be interested in similar partnerships?

Action plan questions for feedback on the projects were as follows:-

- What have you thought about the project since the first ITMUA workshop? What is/was your particular role in this project?
- What were your needs or expectations about this university-community project?
- What have you learned or gained on an individual basis from your involvement with the university/the community?
- What has been your previous experience of universities working with their communities?
- What have been the challenges for you in setting up this university-community partnership?
- What are the potential benefits—for students, communities, staff, and the university as a whole when universities, other institutions and communities work together?
- What continuing needs/expectations do you have now this phase has ended?
- What do you understand 'community service' to mean in the context of universities working with their communities?

- Should there be a university/government policy for community engagement or community service?
- If so, what needs to be done to develop a university and/or government policy for community service/community engagement?

Interpreting Community Service Terminology

[Questions asked to university staff who were involved in case study]

- What do you understand ‘community/regional engagement’ to mean in the context of universities working with their communities?
- Have you heard of the term ‘service learning’ used in Southern African universities?
- How might service learning differ from community/regional engagement or community service?

11.3 Findings from Policy Briefs and Case Studies

Each of the four universities that participated in the ITMUA project studies selected two cases in their respective countries to show- case best practices in community service and engagement. A criterion was drawn on cases that promoted best practise for each country. Community engagement was defined as earlier mentioned, and treated as a more meaningful form of service as it involved regular and prolonged contact with communities rather than showing up for specific one-time events.

Botswana’s case studies were selected on the basis of their potential for multi-disciplinary involvement and ability to build on existing and prolonged university engagement. A Community Based Planning Programme based on The Self-Drive Mindset of communities, using the “Zooming Approach” was undertaken by Ba Isago University College in partnership with W K Kellogg Foundation. The setting is D’kar and surrounding resettlements in Ghanzi, occupied by a minority group in Botswana, the San Tribe. Efforts to sustain projects once the donors completed their term within these communities failed. The aim is to build local capacity and empower communities to reduce poverty and improve their livelihood, building the leadership systems and capabilities needed to provide a favourable environment, confidence and resources to lead their own social and economic transformation. They said “*we have no skills to reinvent profits ... many people buy on credit and never pay*”. They needed skills in identifying income generating projects, the basics of small business management, entrepreneurship, and effective financial management, marketing cultural products, bookkeeping for small businesses, good leadership and governance.

The Lentswe–La-Oodi Weavers project, a cooperative owned predominantly by women, had operated since 1973. With little marketing exposure, their assorted artwork sat, unsold, in their store due to lack of publicity. There was no skills transfer and training, goods were sold only in Oodi, and there was need to create an outside market. The women needed business, management, entrepreneurial, marketing and accounting skills to sustain the project. UB developed a support project run by students at its Business Clinic with support from faculty.

The university staff members also gained new understanding. For example, one said: *The project translated theory into practice positively; in fact the office/lab and practice are not the same. Practice is needed to be carried out in the field.*

However, concerns were raised about the need for long term engagement before communities could become self-sufficient, including time for networking and constant follow up of individuals within the community and university. Furthermore, there was need to give credit to the learning that students acquired during their involvement.

Lesotho projects were selected on the basis of changes that had been observed as a result of communities engaging with the NUL. The projects indicated that universities are changing. They can no longer afford to remain ivory towers in splendid isolation from their communities or other knowledge producers. The University of Malawi (UNIMA) has a strategic commitment to contribute to the country's development priorities, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), through its community service mission. An initial audit of existing community service activities within the National University of Lesotho (NUL) highlighted a women's organization in one of the highland regions of Lesotho, called Mohoma Temeng. One NUL staff member had independently initiated Mohoma Temeng in response to expressed local concerns about orphans and vulnerable families in the vicinity. From there she engaged a Canadian university and students to help the organization with practical needs during the long university vacation. At the time of the ITMUA project's implementation Mohoma Temeng was already established and was undertaking a range of self-help initiatives ranging from home based care to income generating projects and orphan support. Mohoma Temeng was 'adopted' by ITMUA as a case study to explore how different departments at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) could work together to facilitate Mohoma Temeng's ongoing development needs.

Qacha's Nek is a remote mountain town in the Qacha's Nek district in the South East of Lesotho, only 2 km from the South African border, but 5.5 hrs. drive from the university and approximately 1980 m above sea level. In summer the average temperature only reaches 17°C and in winter temperatures drop to zero. The district is serviced by 11 community councils. The town itself is one of three constituencies in the district with a population of approximately 8000. It provides a government hospital and also a church owned hospital some 40 km away. The main languages are Sesotho and English, though some speak Xhosa and Sephuthi (Wikipedia 2010).

The Sehlabathebe National Park is just 105 km northeast of the town. Qacha's Nek is a significant border and tourist town and is a point of entry into Lesotho. International bus services exist between Qacha's Nek and South African cities and there is a twice daily bus service to and from Maseru. Public transport, in the form of minibus taxis, is also widely available in the vicinity. The town serves seven surrounding villages, of which Ha Mpiti, a few kilometers away from the shopping centre, is the central location for the Mohoma Temeng project.

The Mohoma Temeng project uses a small community building which is sandwiched between a primary school, some arable land and a river. It is accessible by tarred road all the way from Maseru but there is no electricity and cellular phone

connectivity is limited. In this area all toilets are pit latrines, water is accessible from wells or standpipes, all farming is subsistence and labour intensive. Mohoma Temeng (translated as ‘educating to feed ourselves’) is a youth and community grassroots project formally established in 2004. It has a core of 17 volunteers, almost entirely female, which include teachers, members of the food security and nutrition unit, people who are HIV positive, orphan caregivers and farmers. It aims to bring together rural farmers, primary school children, educators and researchers to improve the nutritional health of children and promote food security by educating people on indigenous methods of sustainable food production, improving sanitation and access to clean water within rural, poor and vulnerable communities. By educating, motivating and inspiring children, youth and communities to care for and respect their land and environment it aims to improve their total wellbeing and strengthen and expand Mohoma Temeng’s level of community and international engagement as well as develop bilateral and multilateral partnerships with universities. The project has local links with the neighbouring school, hospital clinic, youth organization, Ministry of Forestry and Community Council and international links with the University of British Columbia in Canada.

There are four interrelated projects for Mohoma Temeng. These are as follows.

Safe Water, Improved Sanitation and Education Since 2006 Mohoma Temeng has successfully provided over 3000 people with access to safe tap water from mountain springs, in six under-serviced villages (Ha Nqhoaki, Ha Tlali, Ha Mphahama, Matikareng, Kebakile and Ha Jobo). Villagers initially received training from the Qacha’s Nek Department of Rural and Water Supply on how to maintain clean water systems and hygiene. Ongoing needs are for education on water safety, sanitation and hygiene, including the need for ventilated pit latrines for approximately 15 primary schools.

International Engagement with University of British Columbia (UBC) This is a pilot project which aims to develop and enhance community service learning for students at UBC. Formal working relationships have been established with UBC to this end. The long term plan is also into involve NUL students in the service learning concept (Bringle and Hatcher 2007) and to organise workshops and networking opportunities between the universities and Mohoma Temeng with a view to integrating international service learning into existing academic programmes in both countries. In 2009 students from UBC and NUL were involved in building some Ventilated Improved Pit-latrines (VIPs).

Poverty Reduction Strategies Mohoma Temeng has four nutrition and income-generating units. These are i) dairy and ii) layers to provide milk and eggs to approximately 25 orphans and women who are HIV positive; iii) piggery and iv) organic horticulture with school orchard to support a local primary school with two acres of farmland, thus benefiting between 350 and 400 school children, of whom 25% are orphans. The farmers grow food for children in the school, using indigenous farming methods that are environmentally friendly. Teachers are then expected to teach these methods as part of the curriculum. Although the primary goal of these

activities is to improve nutrition, small income generated from sales of surplus milk, eggs, meat and vegetables is used to support: secondary education for eight orphans; transportation to hospitals for people affected by HIV/AIDS; life skills and HIV/AIDS workshops targeting youth; and overall sustainability of the project's activities.

Education for Sustainable Development Programmes Since 2004 Mohoma Temeng has commemorated the UN World Food Day through tree planting projects to increase access to firewood and fruit. People in seven villages have been organized in rural Qacha's Nek to plant approximately 2000 trees. As part of Dr Tsepa's environmental education teaching at NUL she has made community service a core component of her course so that in 2008 her third year Diploma in Agriculture Education students planted about 1500 trees in the community of Setleketseng, Ha 'Mamenyane. She partnered the initiative with the Ministry of Forestry, Bana Pele Youth and Community Centre and Setleketseng community.

The Pensioners' project in Lesotho was a pilot scheme to explore the possibilities of stimulating interest in adult education during the days when 700 pensioners collect their pension from the Roma Post Office. It was a partnership between the university, business, government agencies and the university's local community in the Roma Valley.

What the 7 months of workshops showed is the enormous demand for this form of community education and engagement amongst the elderly attending the monthly distribution of the pension. But, the role of the university must be in helping those public and private groups responsible for facilitating the access of the elderly to their Human and Constitutional Rights and entitlement to services to use the NUL Roma ITMUA project to organize this in collaboration with their old people

There were a number of organizations who could be interested in rolling out the pilot across Lesotho. Every one of the 280 pay points is in a community that could be mobilized to supply the help and advice given in the Roma pilot. Almost all will have clinics, an agricultural extension office, a few retired professionals such as civil servants, teachers etc. who, through the university's Departments of Non-Formal and Community Education could be trained to help pensioners use their pensions more effectively.

Immediate needs are to continue the Roma project by the university handing it over to the community, perhaps in the form of the locally elected Community Council. Then, in collaboration with Government ministries, business and existing NGOs the University would create a process to provide this kind of project around Lesotho. It probably needs a five year development plan to extend the system throughout the country with the development stage funded by domestic and foreign donors and NGOs. But, since at present there is no national structure through which the needs of the elderly can be put on the political agenda it is not clear yet how this can be done.

Starting immediately the university should talk with the Government Departments, local government bodies, business, NGOs and donors (especially the UNDP and the European Commission) to get their responses in principle to these ideas.

The EC has expressed interest in the support of under-represented sectors such as the elderly. HelpAge International the world's leading NGO promoting the Human Rights of the elderly has contacted the ITMUA team in Lesotho to say that the Roma project is unique as an example of using the mechanism of the pension delivery to also deliver Adult Education and improve the social and economic welfare of this group.

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) and National Education Sector Plan (NESP) highlight priorities in line with the MDGs, including poverty reduction, food security, education and lifelong learning, improved health and reduction of HIV/AIDS. The university's own vision statement provides a complementary platform for these policy documents, with the aim of 'providing relevant world class education, research and services for sustainable development of Malawi and the world' (UNIMA 2004, p. 12).

An example of good practice was a travelling theatre project whereby students visit a site to identify issues and some possible solutions. Then the drama group composes activities that pass on relevant information about the problems the community is experiencing and some of the possible solutions. In general most activities were either funded research projects or were projects that had been initiated on an individual basis. The most active departments and individuals often involved external national and international partners. Examples of curriculum innovation included the Fine and Performing Arts Department Theatre for Development Course; Faculty of law practical legal studies course to enable students deal with specific cases at the Zomba prison; and Home Economics Department Theory and Practice in Early Childhood Care to enable students to appreciate issues of nutrition and health in local communities. However, recommendations for improvement included the need for collaborative planning and implementation with communities and employers, more community based research and wider dissemination of research findings to improve service delivery and community livelihoods.

The University of Calabar (UNICAL) has a strategic commitment to contribute to the country's development priorities, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), through its community service mission. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Vision 2020 and Nigeria's National Policy on Education (2004) highlight priorities in line with the MDGs, including poverty reduction, food security, education and lifelong learning, improved health and reduction of HIV/AIDS. The university's own vision statement provides a complementary platform for these policy documents, with the aim to 'maintain the highest form of excellence in publications, teaching, research and service' (UNICAL Strategic Plan 2002, p. 10). Strategic goals of the National Policy aim to promote 'community service', and 'national and international understanding and interaction' (2002, p. 36).

A 2-day stakeholder discussion meeting in March 2010 attracted 11 senior university academics, 9 civil society organisations 3 ministry representatives and 5 graduates.

Whilst the concept of community service was understood it was recognised that much more work was needed to integrate community service with teaching and

research. Examples of NUL visibility included agricultural feasibility studies and advice on sustainable land management, building of toilets in five riverine communities to use urine and human faeces for crop production and incorporation of indigenous knowledge in conservation processes.

However, recommendations for improvement included the need for collaborative planning and implementation with communities and employers, the introduction of internship programmes for NUL students, more community based research and wider dissemination of research findings to improve service delivery and community livelihoods.

The university audit carried out in 2010 showed that their involvement in community service was faculty based. Lack of central coordination or monitoring of activities meant that staff were not aware of what each department was doing and were unable to capitalise on each other's expertise in contributing to community needs.

Nearly all activities were linked to student training programmes. Although the university was made up of 9 faculties and 3 Institutes, only 4 faculties were found to be undertaking activities that may be likened to community service

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Examples of good practice included talks by Clinical Sciences in churches and mosques on management of safe child delivery; encouraging childbirth practices in a clinic or hospital where support can be given by a doctor or trained nurses; and development by Science of an information bank on biodiversity resources for the region.

The study found that students and staff who took part in the projects benefitted from the context specific experience of putting theory into practice, while community members acquired skills, knowledge and understanding that they were able to put to immediate use.

It also found that needs analysis and multidisciplinary engagement were critical to supporting communities effectively. But long term involvement was desirable to ensure self-sufficiency.

Multidisciplinary approach and university senior management support: keys to successful delivery of the third mission of universities in Africa.

11.3.1 A Comparative Analysis of the Cases Studied

The conceptual relationship between community ‘service’ and ‘engagement’ has evolved considerably over a relatively short space of time. For instance, Lazarus et al. (2008) trace the shift in terminology across South African policy documents over a period of ten years from ‘community service’ to ‘knowledge based community service’ to ‘community engagement’ and now to a ‘scholarship of community engagement’ (p. 61). Inman and Schuetze, as recently as 2010 highlight the changing perceptions around university-community-regional relationships. During the timescale of ITMUA itself, the distinctions between these two concepts became blurred.

Nevertheless, university mission statements and strategic goals across the partner universities tend to refer to ‘service’ rather than ‘engagement’ but often within wider policy contexts of commitment to national development.

The Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) highlight priorities in line with the MDGs, including poverty reduction, food security, education and lifelong learning, improved health and reduction of HIV/AIDS. The National University of Lesotho’s own vision statement provides a complementary platform for these policy documents, with the aim to ‘be a leading African university responsive to national socio-economic needs, committed to high quality teaching, lifelong learning, research and community service’ (NUL 2007, p. 4). Strategic goals embrace ‘strengthening partnerships’, addressing the MDGs and ‘producing relevant and responsive programmes’.

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) and National Education Sector Plan (NESP) highlight priorities in line with the MDGs, including poverty reduction, food security, education and lifelong learning, improved health and reduction of HIV/AIDS. Malawi University’s vision statement includes the phrase ‘research and services for sustainable development of Malawi and the world’ (UNIMA 2004, pp. 12). Strategic goals address MDG issues such as HIV and AIDS and human rights (p. 39).

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Vision 2020 and Nigeria’s National Policy on Education (2004) highlight priorities of poverty reduction, food security, education and lifelong learning, health and reduction of HIV/AIDS. Calabar university’s vision statement and strategic goals also include the words ‘community service’ (2002, pp. 36).

The Botswana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and University of Botswana Strategic Plan (2007) highlight concerns with poverty reduction, food security, education and lifelong learning, and reduction of HIV/AIDS. The university’s strategic goals include the strengthening of engagement with different communities, access and participation.

During the startup phase of attempting to produce some common understandings of the terminology for the project it became apparent that there is no universal definition of either ‘community’ or ‘community service’. Hall (2010, p. 23) states that community:

Can be taken as a cluster of households or an entire region, as an organization ranging from a provincial government department to an NGO, as a school, clinic, hospital, church or mosque or as part of the university itself... communities are loosely defined as social organisations. But community also functions as an adjective, as a qualifier that indicates work that is socially beneficial.

Although the University of Botswana does have its own definition of community service, for the purposes of auditing community service activities across the partners the following definition by Lulat (2005) was adopted as:

[An] extension of university expertise to the world outside the university, the community, in the service of improving the quality of life of the community and which is effected through a university model in which community service is integral to all aspects of the university: mission, structure and organization, hiring and promotion, curriculum and teaching, research and publications etc. (p. 262).

In this definition it is apparent that Community service (CS) should be applied within a whole institutional strategy. It is also seen as closely aligned to the notion of community work as 'a process of creating a shared vision among the community (especially the disadvantaged) and partners ... in society' (Hall 2010, p. 25). In general, it is associated with doing public good. CS, however, needs a process of participatory dialogue in all its activities. It is now recognized as requiring a more collaborative, needs-led approach where learning is seen as a two way process between higher education and community (Keith 2005). Furthermore it has potential for much more integration with the university's other core missions of teaching and research so that CS can contribute to knowledge production as well as knowledge dissemination.

As a result of this more elaborate vision, community engagement (CE) is now the more popular term. With engagement, the notion of partnership with a range of agencies within and around the community is implied. Schuetze (2010, p. 25), for instance, states that:

Community 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.

The term community engagement therefore takes us beyond simply addressing communities of need and encourages us to think of a wider resource of partners within communities and regions. It encourages the notion of reciprocity and knowledge transfer in multiple directions. This was the approach that the ITMUA project attempted to address throughout its research.

11.3.2 Phase One

An internal audit of existing activities was benchmarked against international standards of community engagement. Examples of existing practice were collected from each university. Their community service activities were then measured against a

benchmarking tool (Charles and Benneworth 2009) that was adapted from a global project called PURE (Pascal Universities and Regional Engagement). Features of this benchmarking tool were selected and re-worked to accommodate the MDG focus of the ITMUA project. The benchmarking tool classified the universities' involvement in community service across five levels. Level one indicated that the main form of activity was through isolated individuals: 'acting from a mixture of altruism and desire to access resources'. Level three indicated: 'some institutional commitment but tends to be restricted to key departments and focused around core research roles'. Level five would indicate:

Strong institutional commitment with wide-ranging involvement from across the university including students. University is a key stakeholder in the initiative and seeks to enroll other agencies and facilitate collaboration across traditional boundaries. (ibid: 4)

The level of activity in each university, in benchmarking terms, ranged from level one to level three. The ITMUA aspiration was to move towards level five.

11.3.3 Phase Two

Following this audit each university carried out the consultation phase in the form of workshops with the four stakeholder cohorts. Although each country context demonstrated different degrees to which CE activities were operating, the overall findings were remarkably similar. In total 26 postgraduate students, 58 university academics, 21 representatives from civil society organisations and 11 people from government ministries took part. In their analysis of current university activities, most people could cite examples of university responsiveness to, for example, MDG 1 (poverty reduction) MDG 2 (universal primary education), MDG 6 (HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness) and MDG 7 (environmental awareness). Examples of university visibility in Lesotho included farming activities and services to local communities, collaboration with the Ministry of Education regarding monitoring of free primary education provision, the institution's own HIV/AIDS policy and 'know your status' campaigns by Health Sciences.

In Malawi examples of curriculum innovation included the Fine and Performing Arts Department Theatre for Development Course; a Faculty of Law practical legal studies course to help students deal with specific cases at the Zomba prison; and a Home Economics Department Theory and Practice in Early Childhood Care course to enable students to appreciate issues of nutrition and health in local communities. Examples of Calabar activities included agricultural feasibility studies and advice on sustainable land management, building of toilets in five riverine communities to use urine and human faces for crop production and incorporation of indigenous knowledge in conservation processes. Examples of the University of Botswana activities included its contribution to the HIV/AIDS scourge through the Students Against Aids initiatives and by the counselling services provided at the university clinic.

However, whilst the concept of community service was broadly understood it was recognised that much more work was needed to integrate community service with teaching and research. Unlike the other three partners, the University of Botswana does recognise community service in its promotion criteria for staff, and this became a recommendation for all the partners. Other recommendations for improvement, which were articulated across the stakeholder groups, included the need for collaborative planning and implementation with communities and employers, the introduction of more internment programmes for students, more community based research and wider dissemination of research findings to improve service delivery and community livelihoods.

11.3.4 The Case Studies

Following these audits and discussions each university selected two case studies for in-depth monitoring with a view to examining the challenges and practicalities of what worked where, how and why. The criteria for selecting projects included their potential for multi-disciplinary involvement and their involvement in a collaborative needs-analysis to ensure that the university was responding to community identified needs, rather than initiatives that had been decided solely by the university. In each case the following questions formed the focus for the monitoring and evaluation stage:

- What processes were involved in conducting the community service activity?
- What were the perceived benefits to community, university, and other providers?
- What were the main challenges in terms of organisation, addressing the community problems?
- What were the recommendations for improving and sustaining the university's community engagement?

Lesotho identified one remote, rural project and a second one closer to the main campus. The Mohoma Temeng project in a remote mountain area of Qacha's Nek caters for orphans and vulnerable children across 40 scattered villages. Members required skills in managing income generation projects, looking after livestock and supporting the care needs of their surrounding villages. The Roma Pensioner project was a response to earlier studies into the ways in which pensioners use their monthly stipend of approximately \$ 38. A needs analysis revealed a range of education and health care needs from nutrition to gardening, to managing abuse from families, to how to make their pension funds stretch further. Pensioners wait for several hours during collection days, providing a window of opportunity for health and other interventions. Participating disciplines in both projects included the Faculties of Agriculture and Health Sciences, Adult Education and Business Management, along with students from a counselling course in the Department of Theology and external contributors such as the police and NedBank.

For Malawi the Nyanya Group Village Headman project located about 4 km from Chancellor College (CC) and consisting of 18 villages was the main case study. A needs analysis conducted in the community revealed a range of education, nutrition and healthcare needs including irrigation farming in order to reduce hunger, skills for combating and mitigating HIV and AIDS, and meeting their other needs of large population size, alcohol and drug abuse and general poverty that impacted on schooling of children. Participating students included those involved in a Theatre for Development (TFD) project to raise awareness of exploitation and decision making issues in the community. The Muula Community Based Child Care (CBCC) project had originally been developed by one Masters student in the Home Economics Department in response to the community's nutrition and early childhood education needs. ITMUA evaluated this project and reviewed its current curriculum implemented in order to identify issues for training the project care givers.

Calabar identified two new projects. The sex workers' project in the Atakpa area of Calabar addressed the needs of 12 female sex workers. They required awareness raising about sexually transmitted diseases, training in vocational skills and skills in managing income generation projects in order to provide them with the means to ultimately abandon sex work. The Departments of Adult & Continuing Education and Nursing, in addition to two civil society organizations whose mission is reduction of HIV/AIDS infection, were involved in this project. The women farmers' initiative in the Uwanse area of Calabar sought to make farming and particularly, vegetable farming, a cheaper venture through training in compounding of organic fertilizer. The project taught basic principles of book keeping and sought to equip women farmers with marketing strategies appropriate for both their farm products and the area of Calabar. Departments of Crop Science and Adult and Continuing Education as well as two civil society organizations whose mission includes women concerns were involved in this project. The needs analyses that preceded the establishment and running of the two projects, revealed a range of education and health care needs; the sex workers emphasized sewing as preferred vocational skills while female farmers showed great appreciation for the ability to prepare their own fertilizer using local materials.

Botswana selected a remote project in the far west of the country and an established local community initiative that required an injection of skills support. For the remote rural location a Community Based Planning Programme based on the self-drive mindset of communities, using the "Zooming Approach" was undertaken by Ba Isago University College in partnership with W WK Kellogg Foundation. The location was D'kar and the surrounding resettlements in Ghanzi, which were occupied by a minority group, the San Tribe. Efforts to sustain projects once the donors completed their term within these communities had previously failed. The zooming approach aim is to build local capacity and empower communities at source, to reduce poverty and improve their livelihood by building local leadership systems and capabilities needed to provide a favourable development environment, sustain individual confidence and resources for communities to lead their own social and economic transformation. The participants needed skills in identifying income generating projects, the basics of small business management,

entrepreneurship, effective financial management, marketing cultural products, bookkeeping for small businesses, good leadership and governance. The Lentswe-La-Oodi Weavers project, a cooperative owned predominantly by women, had operated since 1973. With little marketing exposure, their assorted artwork sat, unsold, in their store due to lack of publicity. There was no skills transfer and training, goods were sold only in Oodi, and there was need to create an outside market. The women needed business, management, entrepreneurial, marketing and accounting skills to sustain the project.

In almost all the case studies, leadership came from academic staff, though students were often involved. In the Lentswe-La-Oodi Weavers project, leadership came almost entirely from a group of students who had established themselves as a voluntary business advisory clinic as part of their degree studies. In most cases student involvement was voluntary, though in the Malawi Nyanya group village headman project, students were also assessed on their involvement as part of their coursework.

The case studies were comparatively analysed in relation to the different ways in which the universities and communities engaged with each other, their ability to address the MDGs, the learning articulated by students, academics and community members and some of the challenges associated with this kind of work. The table below summarizes the results of community service and engagement, and impacts:

Country	Major results of Cs and engagement	Major impacts of CS and engagement
Botswana	Networking with university on selected case studies on income generation and entrepreneurship projects Concerns about the need for prolonged engagement as imperative	Translation of Cs and engagement theory into practice with university partnership for entrepreneurship and income generation projects
Lesotho	Projects on poverty reduction, improved nutrition, curbing HIV/AIDS and strengthening partnerships initiated in response to expressed needs of communities	Expansion of knowledge, skills and intension to promote best practice in nutrition, and income generation, and community education for pensioners
Malawi	Documentation of donor funded and individual projects that address some MDGs; HIV/AIDS, health poverty reduction, improved nutrition and curriculum innovation	University expert assistance with poverty reduction strategies, possible solutions from the lens of beneficiaries
Calabar	Documentation of research findings on commercial sex workers and vegetable farming projects	Raising awareness on STIs, HIV/AIDS and the importance of breaking the chain through healthy income generation and farming that can replace commercial sex work

Jointly, the above community based university assisted projects served to impact on the following:

Illumination of what counts as community service; revitalised networking, local and global partnerships; sensitization on understanding and respond to the call to serve communities (CS); team building, leadership and management; illuminated role of the Millennium Development Goals in influencing the university's third mission; formulation of national and regional policies on poverty reduction, universal access to primary education, and sustainable development.

11.4 The Process of Community Service Engagement and Learning

The experiences of these projects reveal differing approaches to community engagement that can be plotted on a continuum from 'outreach' activities to 'community engagement with service learning'.

'Outreach' represents one extreme end of the continuum, usually referring to a one-off activity conducted by the university to help address community needs. A somewhat more progressive concept is 'community service' which is reflected in the mission statements of the four universities.

Both 'outreach' and 'community service' concepts are criticized for their one-dimensional relationship—universities providing knowledge and resources to address a community problem. Schuetze's concept of 'community engagement' (Schuetze 2010) departs from this understanding and emphasizes collaboration between the university and the community for mutual exchange of knowledge and resources. Other researchers have added the concept of 'service learning' to community engagement. 'Service learning' incorporates the notion that students should be assessed for the learning they undergo in the process of collaborating with the community (Bringle and Hatcher 2007).

The community service continuum could thus appear as follows:

Outreach → Community service → Community engagement → Community Engagement with Service learning

One general observation from implementation of the case study projects is that the partner institutions did not conduct their activities in isolation. Rather, different groups of people collaborated in the implementation of the projects in all the four countries. In some projects whole departments were involved while, in others, only a few individuals took an active part.

Two projects involved academic staff only. In other cases local and international stakeholders played a part depending on the needs identified. In general, it is noted that collaborations were necessary in the implementation of all the projects. Whilst some of the collaborations increased funding opportunities, other collaborations enhanced the process of addressing varied but interconnected needs faced by the communities. It is clear therefore that a multidisciplinary approach to community service is a must if the development needs of communities are to be addressed meaningfully.

11.4.1 Student Learning

The findings showed that students and staff who took part in the projects benefitted from the context specific experience of putting theory into practice, while community members acquired skills, knowledge and understanding that they were able to put to immediate use.

The TFD students in Malawi learned more about the problems of their neighbouring communities and how TFD theories can be applied to real life situations. In addition, the students learned how to gain entry into the community as well as how to arrive at shared meanings with community members. These skills were particularly necessary for the TFD students who were interested in having the community open up to them:

We had a lot of problems to get village headmen understand our goals and give us the right people for our activities. Initially they just gave us their relatives because they thought that we are there to give presents to some people and these had to be their relatives. (FGD 1 with TFD students)

The community members thought that we had come to spy on them so they initially did not mention the challenges they face to enable us work out possible solutions with them through theatre. It took several visits and talking to different groups of people for us to get the rapport that was necessary for us to work. (FGD 2 with TFD students)

11.4.2 Community Learning

Community members in general mentioned the irrigation farming skills and techniques they had learnt and put into practice as their academic benefits.

One major benefit mentioned by all groups of respondents was greater understanding of their own problems. This is exemplified by the following quote from two groups of community members in Malawi:

The activities have helped us to understand our own problems... sometimes you think they are not your problems, or indeed that they are not problems at all. But through theatre, we realised that some of the issues we experience are problems—if we fall sick after drinking water from the river, it is a problem. (Community FGD)

That the poor yields result from our own practices, the money we get from selling land finishes quickly but the poverty that result from the selling of land lasts forever. (Community FGD)

Botswana community members emphasised their appreciation of the consultation process:

We had a gathering of leaders and community members where there was consultation ... everything they did they consulted with us. (Councillor)

They also mentioned learning a number of practical skills. The training programme in D'Kar, for example, included strategic planning forums, technical skills training workshops, demonstrations, look and learn tours, engagement with Government of

Botswana departments in Ghanzi District and participation in practical development projects:

The project provided special leadership skills to the traditional and elected leaders running the Trusts, who needed to provide visionary leadership in future projects. (Focus group discussion)

I gained a lot from training on good governance ... as a Board member I was able to put the knowledge into practice and applied it in handling critical issues at board meetings ... it enlightened me a lot (Board member);

I learnt how to manage my profits, how to sustain my business so that it does not suffer ... how to market myself ... where I can go to seek assistance. (Workshop Participant)

Learning was not confined to workshop participants only, the project Director had this to say:

As the Director of the project I have benefited immensely from working with the community, Kellogg and D'Kar Trust. I had been told that in D'Kar things are impossible, I have seen that things are possible to do with the community ... there is need for persistence, and understanding and patience.

And this was echoed by university staff:

The College has benefitted by engaging the services of many highly qualified consultants to run workshops, produce modules, which are now owned by the college and can be used to improve its curriculum. (Ba Isago staff)

I have widened my knowledge on how communities differ in involvement of different projects. (Training facilitator)

Addressing the MDGs

Several MDGs were met by the Roma in Lesotho project:-

MDG 1—Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger—The elderly were provided with skills such as in financial management, saving and using the pension for the development of income generation projects, better home gardening techniques.

All the projects addressed MDG number 1—reduction of poverty and hunger, linking to MDG number 2 -Education and MDG number 6—HIV and AIDS. However, other MDGs were addressed, arising largely from the needs of the communities in the different countries and reflecting the varied range of development challenges which the African continent faces (Oyewole 2010).

In terms of poverty, in addition to income generating skills, issues of freedom and capability for agency (Sen 1999) were addressed. The latter feature includes knowledge or skills to act independently for productivity or personal welfare consumption.

MDG 6—Halt the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases—provide the elderly with basic knowledge competencies, assessment techniques and advice in terms of HIV/AIDS and other basic health needs that they can use to make their increasing household care responsibilities more effective, particularly those for Orphans and Vulnerable Children and other family members infected or affected by HIV and AIDS.

HIV/AIDS and its multiple impacts are a major concern. Lesotho has the third highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the world, at approximately 23% though this

increases to 30% for the 15–50 age range (Lesotho.gov 2004). There are several orphan headed households in the Qacha's Nek district which, the project revealed, are not necessarily known to the authorities. In other households families have lost their 'breadwinner' and children often do not have funds for school fees or regular meals.

Botswana's Zooming project also had an HIV/AIDS prevention and care component.

MDG 7—Ensure environmental sustainability—provide the elderly with guidance on better home gardening, care of livestock and other farming needs of their households.

MDG 8—Ensure the development of global partnerships.

In Lesotho, there were several partnerships between the NUL and other stakeholders:

- Ministry of Communications. Staff of Roma Post Office facilitated the use of post office land for holding the workshops.
- Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. Pension distribution team at Roma Post Office collaborated in synthesizing the pension distribution procedure with the organization of the pension-day workshops.
- Nedbank head Office Maser and Roma branch. Contributed to work shop on using the pension for saving and investing in household development. Financial support sponsorship of Stakeholder dissemination event.
- Thusanang (NUL) a university-organized, Netherlands funded charity that has provided free food parcels for the Roma elderly since 1970. Financial support for incidental expenses. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. Provided the site for the demonstration "keyhole" garden for the elderly, to be built adjacent to the Post Office. Local officer gave seeds and plants for demonstration garden.
- Lesotho Mounted Police Service Roma police station. Implemented the workshop on the safety and security of the elderly
- Popa Ha Maama Burial Society. Helped with provision of tent for workshop,
- NUL Office of Student Affairs. Lent chairs for workshop,

The pilot project proved very popular with pensioners, staff and students in terms of raising awareness, new knowledge, and information on knowledge about health service entitlements, use of local banking services and rights of the elderly to their safety and security. But, as shown when hospital referrals as a result of health checks done at the workshops required referral to the local hospital this was very disappointing since the local hospital/clinic did not have medication that pensioners were entitled to.

In Botswana the Oodi project had local and international partnerships with the stakeholders represented at the workshops, and SIDA, (which expired due to donor fatigue) while the Zooming approach had links with Ba Isago University and Kellogg Foundation.

11.4.3 Challenges of Community Service and Engagement

There were also challenges, particularly in relation to how far the university was raising expectations for ongoing support against a concern to avoid setting up a dependency relationship between community and university. The responses were similar across all the case studies. In Botswana, for instance, there were still indications that the dependency mindset had not disappeared completely. Some participants were finding it difficult to break old habits of waiting for things to happen for them:

We needed information, new knowledge about running a business ... we expected money to enhance our businesses or start one ... for the garden a lot of items are needed, such as electricity for pumping water, tractors and ploughs, forks for digging the ground ... we need farm implements. (Focus group discussions)

In all the communities there was evidence that the knowledge and understanding gained from the training had a direct effect and made a difference for some participants. The information gained enabled some participants to immediately start their small businesses using the insights gained from workshops. However, a change in mindset is a process that would occur over a period of time.

11.5 Conclusions

It was concluded, on the basis of the cases studied, and action plans, that community service and engagement take place in different forms in African universities. In all the four partner institutions the reward systems for faculty involved in community service work were not clearly stated. In addition, staff observed that the recognition of community service work in the strategic plans and policy of the partner institutions did not appear to be fully recognized in the organization structure of the institutions.

Indeed, globally there is growing interest in developing community engagement as a university strategy to meet national and regional development needs—as evidenced in the UNESCO 2009 World conference on *Higher Education: The New Dynamics of HE and Research for Societal Change and Development*. However, the findings from these case studies indicated that the current university approach is usually ad hoc, poorly documented and uncoordinated, making it difficult to market, disseminate or promote institutional activities to the nation or funders.

11.6 Recommendations to Promote Best Practice

The stakeholder feedback phase consisted primarily of reporting back on project findings and discussion of recommendations arising out of the comparative analysis. These recommendations centered on ideas for institutional improvement.

There are baseline requirements for implementing an effective institutional engagement mission. They are summarized here as mission and leadership; faculty involvement, promotion, tenure and reward systems; policy; budget allocation and organizational structure.

A centralized, coordination strategy for each institution is therefore recommended. In the process of institutionalizing community engagement the project partners also felt that it was important to emphasize how CE work enhances the teaching and research core missions of universities. University policy should therefore be used to encourage staff to use CE as an integrating thread to university work.

Centralized coordination would require a dedicated management position for third mission work. Associated activities would then include regular curriculum review to ensure relevance to national development priorities, and recognition of staff and student involvement through credit and promotion structures.

Community engagement consultation strategies should be built into policy frameworks to reflect initiatives such as needs analyses, university dissemination and marketing of their work and regular consultations with external agencies and ministries to ensure a holistic and collaborative contribution to development.

One suggestion for ensuring institutional implementation of policy change was that universities should request their government to provide ring-fenced funding that was specifically targeted at the community service or engagement mission as an institutional policy.

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