



Lentšú La Sechaba

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Editorial letter

Community Engagement (CE) partnership is founded on the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and expertise between universities and communities. The latter has proved to be a good practice since it benefits the University, the community and the students. Before embarking on developing partnerships which eventually contribute to social justice and the development of people and communities a great deal of planning takes place. The UP and its communities together construct a shared future for everyone's mutual benefit through their commitment to maintaining effective CE partnerships that have a visible impact. Given the resource constraints, CE partnership is structured in such a way that it focuses on designated areas in order to optimize impact and rigorously channel resources. In essence it is the responsibility of the partners

to learn about and contextualise the engagement within the broader social and political framework. CE partnership is based upon engagement for the reciprocal benefit of the Institution of Higher Education (IHE) and the community, which is confirmed by means of existing scientific research.

This issue of the Newsletter highlights the significance of mutually beneficial CE partnerships. The UP is making its mark by facilitating broad University-Community interventions that involve the transfer of skills, address social injustices and meet partners' expectations and real needs. The 2019 USR week (7 to 10 October 2019) presented an opportunity for Faculties and community partners to showcase projects that are of mutual benefit to all partners. On Monday 7 October Prof Gerrit Stols, Director



Prof Norman Duncan:
Deputy Vice-Principal: Academic

of the Department for Education Innovation, officially opened the USR exhibition, which was attended by UP staff members, students and community partners. Prof Stols acknowledged the contributions that individuals and teams make towards the success of CE projects.

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Prof Gerrit Stols: Director of the Department for Education Innovation



Gernia van Niekerk: Manager Community Engagement

When delivering the keynote address, Prof Norman Duncan, Deputy Vice-Principal: Academic, indicated the UP is one of the 14 founding University Social Responsibility Network (USRN)-affiliated universities worldwide and currently the only African USRN-affiliated institution. Prof Duncan further reported that the UP is presently engaged in recruiting another African university to join the USRN. This is consistent with UP's spirit of skills transfer, knowledge-sharing and mutual benefit.

Gernia van Niekerk, Manager: Community Engagement, closed the session with a vote of thanks. She pointed out that the worldwide recognition of the success achieved by the CE programme at the UP is due to the institution's culture and ability to respond to change and be socially responsive. The progressive, energetic culture that exists at the UP is powerful due to collaborative efforts and a shared vision to co-create a better future for all. The UP annually contributes more than R60m in working hours to the local community through its CE activities, which are valued at more than R6b. This involves the curricular CE work of about 29 000 students (45% of all students) in collaboration with community partners. Gernia also thanked Faculties and community partners for their role in facili

tating a successful USR exhibition. Gernia mentioned in conclusion that the posters that were used for the exhibition will be converted into e-book format, which is to be updated annually and shared with the international community. Please read more about the diverse CE interventions that are aimed at development, addressing social injustice and creating an integrated society.



Dr Eugene Machimana
Senior Education Consultant:
Curricular Community Engagement

Baking project teaches valuable skills

Sarah Jones (Fordham University in New York: Part of the UBUNTU programme – Involved in Community-Engaged learning at Kamcare Kameeldrift Social and Training services in Kameeldrift, under the supervision of the Department of Social Work and Criminology)

Every Wednesday afternoon, Sarah Jones teaches a baking class at the after school care centre at Plot 275, an informal settlement in Kameeldrift. A large group of about 20 learners, boys and girls, enthusiastically attend each week. This baking class aims to help the primary school-aged learners with their English (both reading and speaking) in an informal and fun way, as well as to provide them with a better understanding of baking and to supplement their mathematics instruction with hands-on application. It also provides them with a skill they can use to generate income.

During Sarah's initial contact with the community, the community members indicated to her that the after school care programme needed more programmes for the learners. While they provide homework assistance, many of the learners who receive a meal at the after school care centre leave immediately to go to their homes. The baking class is an appropriate solution for this need because it allows the learners to learn new skills and expand on con-



cepts that they are learning in school, while also enjoying themselves. Sarah teaches them to bake something new every week. She uses traditional South African recipes and also introduces them to typical American delicacies. She also teaches them a new skill every week, demonstrating different methods of preparing treats. The learners' social skills develop as they learn to work together. They learn the discipline that recipes have to be followed according to the requirements and steps indicated. The staff members at the after school care centre have also demonstrated an interest in learning how to bake and attend the classes. Their enthusiasm will play an essential role in the sustainability of the project. Adding to this, she is collecting all of the recipes to leave copies of a recipe book at the after school care centre to sustain



the project when she leaves at the end of May 2019.

Sarah reflects on her own experience: *"I have really enjoyed getting to know the students through my project. Many of the same learners come every week, and they look forward to seeing me, which fills my heart. It has also given me immense pleasure to see the learners' improvements every week. While at the beginning of my class many of the learners struggled to use measuring cups, to follow the directions, and to recognise how much of each ingredient needed to be added, many of the learners are now one step ahead of me during our class. It is thrilling to see their skills improving to such a degree, especially because I enjoy baking so much, and I know that the skills a person learns in the kitchen are valuable."*

Progressive artistic change is possible

Meryke Mouton (Art Education, Humanities Education, Honours Degree in Educational Psychology)

The Christian Progressive College community engagement project started with the goal of integrating art in various subject areas and within the community. The end goal is to enable and empower learners to take on their futures creatively.

I was introduced to the project in 2016, during my final year of teaching, and I was still involved as a mentor dur-

ing 2017. By participating in this project, my outlook on the teaching environment and methods has completely changed. My experience of the time spent participating in the project was groundbreaking with regard to building my own teacher identity.

At the start of this project, I was shocked when I realised the conditions in which teachers needed to teach the curriculum. I was placed in the Afrikaans class, where the majority of my learners could neither speak nor understand the language. Integrating art elements with language

The Community Park - Phase 1: Serving the Hatfield District

Altus Bisschoff

(Joint Community-Based Project [JCP] Project Manager)

Community-based learning is a form of experiential learning that aims to accomplish tasks that meet genuine human needs, as well as executing tasks that serve as an educational and learning tool that helps students to acquire several essential life skills. Since 2005, the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology at the University of Pretoria has implemented a new compulsory module, Joint Community-Based Project (JCP), for all undergraduates. Since its inception, the numbers of students taking the module has grown drastically, and the impact the module has on communities is immeasurable.



This year it was no different. The Department of Facilities Management acquired the land opposite the entrance to the Sport, Exercise Medicine and Lifestyle Institute (SEM-LI) at the Hillcrest Campus. Part of the newly acquired land was an existing communal park that had been neglected and was in an awful state. The Department of Facilities Management realised that this provided them with a golden opportunity to give back to the community and aid in improving the Hatfield district by revamping the park. The main aim was to create a mixed-use park that was multi-generational and would serve the community of Hatfield.

The JCP module coordinator, Dr Martina Jordaan, was consulted to determine whether there were students that would be willing to take on the challenge of renewing and refurbishing the park. Dr Jordaan accepted the challenge without hesitation. Dr Jordaan appointed final-year Mechanical Engineering student Altus Bisschoff as Project Manager to oversee the JCP students and ensure the work completed was of a standard acceptable to the University of Pretoria.

A total of nine groups, amounting to 45 students, signed up for The Community Park - Phase 1 project and were



principles motivated the learners to participate in classroom discussions and illustrations. Allowing learners to associate artistic elements and methods with learning and understanding foreign concepts proved successful at the end of my teaching period, with learners' marks increasing and learners using Afrikaans language terms in social environments.

Looking back, I am still touched by the learners' enthusiastic response when they realised the fun of involving art and imagery in learning. Learners exclaimed that they wanted my classes to continue for the rest of the school day. This approach enabled learners to build their confidence in the classroom and in the academic environments, where they started to believe in their own capabilities and knowledge. Returning as a mentor, I was overwhelmingly welcomed by previous learners rushing to hug me and exclaiming that I was supposed to teach them again.

This project enabled me to identify weaknesses within the teaching and learning environment and use art to strengthen the bond between self-expression, academics, and building knowledge and experiences. This enables learners to use their current environments and experiences to enhance artistic expression integrated with learning material.



An unexpected experience

Klara von Wielligh
(Professional Art Practice [VIT] 100, First year BA Fine Arts)

I had the most unbelievable experience during our trip to Kgosi Mampuru II Correctional Centre, an experience that I would not have had, were I not studying at the University of Pretoria. Even though my time at the Correctional Centre was short, my heart was stirred by the life inside the prison, and it inspired me to want to go back.

When we arrived there, we immediately saw prisoners in their orange overalls doing gardening. I was shocked because I had never seen a prisoner in my life before. Seeing a prisoner in real life made me realise that they are not actually monstrous or any different from the people that I see every day. They are ordinary people; they just have a very different living environment than ordinary people do. When they saw us, they seemed very intrigued and almost happier than we were. I believe this is mainly because they are so glad to see people from the "outside world" because their lives consist of working, eating and sleeping in a cell. This made me feel very sorry for them. Even though I know that according to the law it is what they deserve, it just still does not feel right, no matter how wrong they were. They are still people; they just made bad decisions in their lives.



To me prisoners are almost like another species that society does not want to know anything about, but after this experience, I am drawn to this place to learn and be more involved. It has truly given me so much perspective on my life. We are in such a rush every day to get everything done and achieve our goals, but these prisoners cannot work for anything because they are stuck, they do not have anything that rushes them. It made me also realise that we need to just slow down a little bit in life; life is not going to run away from you. Stop for a while and take it all in and accept where you are.

My plans for the future are definitely to return to one of the two prisons and be part of any work that the university is doing there. This experience has definitely made me a richer person, and I would recommend it to anyone willing to open up their hearts to new environments and difficult circumstances.



ready to take on the challenge set by the University. Phase 1 of the project included constructing and paving the entire walkway of the park with sensory walkway elements, including repainting the perimeter fence, building and installing additional play equipment and renovating the existing play equipment.

The project ran from March 2019 till the opening of the park on 15 October, with groups working throughout the timespan and the bulk of the work happening during the June/July recess. The project challenged the students on many levels, and they had the opportunity to grow in their skills and learn new things, not only about themselves but also about other students and project-specific matters.

At the opening ceremony, all the various stakeholders were present, as well as the JCP students who did all the hard work. Children from Hatfield Montessori Preschool were also invited to attend the opening ceremony and play on the newly installed and renovated play equipment.

The project will continue in the future, and new play equipment and features will be added to improve the park even more. The JCP students are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have a lasting impact on the Hatfield district.



Addressing the administrative needs of Excellence Day and Night Care Centre in Mamelodi West

Hayley Boks (BAdmin: Public Administration: Public Practices – PBP 320)



As final-year students in Public Administration at the University of Pretoria (UP), we were tasked as groups to select a community beneficiary site and make a contribution to that particular community. Our group approached Dr Eugene Machimana and Mr Albert Matlheketa of the Unit of Community Engagement to help us identify a suitable community beneficiary site. With their assistance, we came into contact with the owner, Ms Agnes Maluleke, of Excellence Day and Night Care Centre in Mamelodi West. The centre provides services such as early childhood development, and the care and feeding of children between the ages of six months and five years old. As a team, we visited the centre on 29 July 2019 for the first time, and we received a warm welcome from Ms Maluleke. We gave Ms Maluleke a platform to discuss her needs and to explain the shortcomings of the business to us. She was very approachable and honest about her business, and we proceeded to take notes of the discussions. Afterwards, Ms Maluleke accompanied us on a tour through the centre, and we could observe that she has a passion and love for her business. Hence, we identified where we would be able to impart our knowledge, transfer skills and give support while addressing the shortcomings and needs that we identified, to help her grow her business.

After the introduction phase, the actual work started. Our group held

weekly meetings to plan and determine how we would address the critical skills that the business was lacking. The particular needs that were established, linking to the course objectives of Public Administration, included:

- A proper filing system;
- Business documents such as logos, letterheads, application forms and business cards (hard copies and digital);
- Procedures to conduct effective committee meetings; and
- Applications for funding.

Consequently, we decided to facilitate a skills transfer workshop to address these needs. The workshop was held on 21 September 2019 at the UP Mamelodi campus from 10h00 to 12h00. As a team, we interactively presented the business document templates, examples of filing systems and the procedures of conducting productive committee meetings. The workshop was a huge success, and the attendees were very thankful and appreciative of our efforts, especially for the new skills that they acquired on the day. As a group, we will value and cherish the experience we had to actively engage with the community through service, learning and knowledge sharing.

Group members:

1. Hayley Boks
2. Carol Bosch
3. Mmankopane Dawn Chaba
4. Rosa Da Costa-Bezuidenhout
5. Lillith Holworthy
6. Madithakong Emily Mantsi



UP taking hands with community HIV Counsellors: Circle of Life

Sarah Shkaidy (Manager: Circle of Life)

A significant challenge in all workplaces is staff performance, which is in most cases related to the psychological state the staff member is in at the moment. Most companies are not equipped to support their staff adequately. With this in mind, Dr Eugene Machimana from the Unit of Community Engagement reached out to the non-profit organisations (NPOs) in Eersterust. Dr Machimana presented an opportunity for SKL 320 Community Psychology students to facilitate Life Skills workshops at local organisations/a local organisation.



UP students and Circle of Life Counsellors

We continuously hear of people being victimised and how much stress staff endure in their workplaces. There is no happiness in the workplace, and no assistance is given from the organisation's side. No life skills workshops are being arranged these days as, I suppose, the bosses do not want to spend money or time on these types of training.

The management and staff members at Circle of Life in Eersterust received the Community Psychology third-year students with open arms to present 14 Life Skills workshops. Before the scheduled date and time of their presentations, the students met with the manager to discuss the topics and the outcomes of the talks. The talks were scheduled from Monday 7 October to Monday 14 October 2019 at the offices of Circle of Life.

University of Pretoria Law Clinic: Providing access to Justice through Clinical Legal Education

Lourens Grové (Attorney), Eddie Hanekom (Director: UP Law Clinic) & Edna Pitsi (Attorney)



Training and case discussion

While the South African Constitution and the country's laws guarantee many rights, vulnerable and indigent members of society often do not have access to legal representation and the legal system - a far cry from the constitutional goal of access to justice for all.

Through the University of Pretoria (UP) Law Clinic, final-year law students get the opportunity to translate the theoretical knowledge they acquired over the first few years of study into practice. The Law Clinic presents the final-year elective module Practical Law (PRR), where students work on real cases with live clients, under the strict supervision of practising attorneys. Through the methodology of clinical legal education, they gain practice-based skills and confidence, while being exposed to diversity and the dire need for access to justice in the vulnerable sectors of the community.

While the UP Law Clinic and Practical Law have a direct and visible impact on the clients of the clinic - many of whom have exhausted all other avenues of assistance by the time they reach the Law Clinic - the impact does not stop there. Some further examples include the profession inheriting better students in terms of ability, experience and values; law students acquiring transferable legal and personal skills and being sensitised to the plight of the vulnerable members of society, and the University gaining opportunities for research in context and improving teaching, learning and assessment strategies.

Legal services are delivered to the community through the student and civil litigation sections in Hatfield and Hammanskraal (the latter in co-operation with Legal Aid South Africa). The civil section comprises candidate attorneys who are busy with their practical vocational training. They too assist clients with little to no income, and they represent them in court cases. The law clinic also has a criminal law section that played a groundbreaking part in the original implementation of community courts in South Africa. This section represents members of the community in the majority of the cases heard in the Hatfield community court. Accused from the Brooklyn, Villieria, Eersterust, Boschkop and Garsfontein police stations who cannot afford private legal representation may approach the Law Clinic for assistance. The criminal law section may then assist such accused on a pro bono basis, mainly dealing with charges of theft, housebreaking, robbery, fraud and similar offences.

Different life skills will indeed be more or less relevant at different times in one's life. Therefore, we chose the following topics:

Relationships, Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Team Work, the Uplifting Power of Work, Responsible Sex Behaviour, Effective Communication, Problem Solving, Time and Anger Management, Conflict Resolution, Goal Setting, Friendliness, and finally Perception and Self-Esteem.

We had so much fun with the students, and the staff members were committed to taking part in the discussions with each group session.

Some comments of the staff members:

- *"Wow, what a topic! I did not even realise the time. This kept my mind gripped".*
- *"This was a good and informative session".*
- *"One does not realise what your attitude or just a smile can do to the next person".*



Life Skills workshop on Friendliness



Presentations in Hatfield Criminal Court

Health Awareness Day: Educating Caregivers on Childhood Development skills

Kaylee Green (Occupational Therapy IV)



On the morning of 23 June 2019, final-year occupational therapy students conducted a health awareness event on children's developmental milestones for caregivers at Stanza Bopape Clinic II in Mamelodi East.

The students spoke to a large group of mothers with babies of all different ages about the various milestones babies should attain at certain ages:

0-3 months old, 3-6 months old, 6-9 months old, 9-12 months old, 12-18 months old and 18-24 months old. Included in this information session were warning signs that the mothers should look out for at each age. They were informed that if any of the warning signs are present, they need to bring their baby into the clinic to have a check-up to try preventing developmental delays.

The occupational therapy students also presented sessions on "Tips for parents" and "Things to do with your baby" to help the babies reach these milestones. All the information came from childhood development brochures issued by Gauteng Health, which were also handed out to the caregivers. Early childhood development is a key focus area of the Department of Health, and early identification of problems is vital to minimise the effects of delays in school.

A visit to Freedom Park

Nkosi Faith (Senior Research Assistant: Vectors and Vector-borne Research Programme – Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases)

Veterinary Professional Life 200 is part of a broad module taking place over five years in the Bachelor of Veterinary Science degree. In the second year, the curriculum covers the societal roles and responsibilities of veterinarians, cultural diversity and group skills, and stress management. The second-year students visited Freedom Park for the cultural diversity component.

Freedom Park is a place that is rich with South African history, culture, heritage, indigenous knowledge and spirituality. It is divided into two parts: the //hapo – Freedom Park Museum, which showcases the earth, ancestors, peopling, resistance and colonisations, industrialisation and urbanisation, nationalism and struggle, and nation-building and continent building) and the Garden of Remembrance (Skhumbuto and Isivivane).

The students toured the place and then discussed cultural diversity, privilege, power, and how South Africa has been transformed. They had an open discussion about their experiences, how they feel and what changes they would like to see going forward in the democratic South Africa. These discussions were a crucial eye-opener to the students. They helped raise awareness of the surroundings the students find themselves in and were a small step to equip these students for challenges they may face in the outside world.



Matters Of Interest

Casual Day will be celebrated on Friday, 4 September 2020

Visit the University of Pretoria' online Community Engagement Management System (CEMS) for updates on community project opportunities.

Submit Your CE Activity

The Unit for Community Engagement invites you to report on community engagement activities by submitting articles of not more than one page for publication in the next newsletter (Autumn 2020).

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