

Community Service in Higher Education

Final report

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PREFACE

Community service in higher education has the potential to contribute to the reconstruction and development goals of the new government. In South Africa and elsewhere well-structured and managed programmes have provided invaluable learning opportunities for students and faculty at higher education institutions and have delivered social services to large numbers of people. The benefits for students are not confined to the development of professional skills and knowledge. In many countries like Botswana and Nigeria community service programmes have contributed to the growth of civic responsibility and nation-building. Community service programmes have also influenced curriculum development and research, and in this way made higher education institutions more responsive to societal needs.

In 1997 the Ford Foundation provided JET with a grant to establish the Community Service in Higher Education Project. The first year of the project's research and consultation resulted in a concept paper by Helene Perold and Rahmat Omar. This was a valuable contribution to the debate on community service, and it provoked widespread interest and stimulated further research and consultation.

The year since the publication of the concept paper has seen considerable developments in government and higher education thinking and activities on community service. The Department of Health has introduced a programme of community service for doctors and dentists and the Department of Justice is considering ways in which law students can participate in community service activities. This final report to the Ford Foundation provides a timely update on developments in community service in South Africa.

Of particular interest in the report is the conceptual framework developed for considering and understanding community service in higher education and the conditions under which it might best operate in South Africa. This conceptual framework is supported by detailed analyses of the responses of higher education institutions to community service and of a variety of existing

programmes at these institutions. In addition, the project conducted, for the first time in South Africa, in-depth benefit analyses of six community service programmes. These provide interesting insights into the potential contributions of community service to national development goals. The publication also provides a description of the funding options for community service programmes both as they relate to financial aid for needy students and to the delivery of desperately needed services in remote and deprived areas. In these ways the publication has a great deal to contribute to the debate on community service.

Naledi Pandor

September, 1998

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Joint Education Trust established the Community Service in Higher Education Project with three aims: to promote public debate on community service, to assist different stakeholders to develop policy positions with regard to community service; and to strengthen existing community service projects and stimulate the development of new ones. The project was launched against a background of growing interest in the concept of community service in higher education, both in government and in higher education institutions.

The project was carried out in two phases during 1997 and 1998. Phase one aimed to clarify the concept of community service which has been used in many different ways in South Africa. It did this by establishing a small research team which designed a process of investigation, ultimately leading to the production in September 1997 of a report entitled Community Service in Higher Education: a Concept Paper. The work done in phase two examined more closely the impact of community service programmes on the process of institutional transformation in higher education (particularly in regard to curriculum reform), looked at their impact on the communities they are intended to serve, and located these initiatives within emerging government policy on community service. It also explored the perspectives of business and higher education institutions on community service.

This report develops the ideas raised in the concept paper. It offers a more detailed conceptual framework for community service in higher education. It then examines emerging policies and practices concerning service in higher education institutions, looks at the impact of community service programmes on institutions, students and communities, explores the financing of community service programmes and outlines how a number of government departments view community service in relation to national priorities. The report concludes by examining the actions that can be taken by government, higher education institutions and the private sector to contribute to transformation in South Africa through community service.

A conceptual framework

The debates on community service in higher education in South Africa are fairly new. On some campuses considerable thought has been given to the institutions' role in society and how community service contributes to that role. Some institutions or individuals have adopted the term 'service learning' as appropriate for their approaches while others call for the need for a new term altogether. Although the term 'community service' is understood in very different ways at higher education institutions in South Africa, it is widely used to describe student activity in community settings and has proved useful in this study in capturing divergent views and practices.

The transformation of South African society, particularly the drive towards nation-building and redress of inequality, provides a strong motivation for developing community service programmes which include a civic component and which combine this with service delivery and academic training. It seems that the professions hold the most promise for implementing programmes which provide an integrated experience in which the three main goals of community service can be met: academic training, service provision and the growth of civic responsibility. Ideally these form an integral part of all higher education professional training, but in some cases the theoretical and practical components are easier to integrate, in others the theoretical and the civic components can be integrated, but not the practical. Community service projects located in faculties outside the professions encounter a rather different set of problems. Where a civic component is successfully welded to the academic, the practical often becomes problematic. The application may be inappropriate to the subject under study, or may result in the discipline being applied in a contrived manner.

Whatever the nature and extent of problems in the implementation of community service programmes, it is apparent that those which are well-conceived and managed have the potential to change the civic consciousness of the participants towards more caring attitudes and collaborative activities. In a world characterised by high levels of fragmentation and alienation, this aspect of community service holds out the promise of helping to build a better future.

Policies and practices

A survey of their policies and practices has shown that South African higher education institutions see community service as part of their mission. However, most mission statements do not indicate whether community service is separate from teaching and research or whether it is integral to these activities. While institutions do not have general policies on community service, some faculties and departments require work in communities as part of the curriculum.

There are various community service programmes on South African campuses, some compulsory and curriculum-related, others voluntary and outside the formal curriculum. While most community service programmes draw on professional skills, such fields as engineering and commerce do not feature prominently in service programmes.

Most community service programmes at higher education institutions rely heavily on external funding. The institutions provide infrastructural and human resources and in many cases these are considerable. However, most institutions are unable to cost their contribution to community service programmes which makes it difficult or impossible to determine the scale of their investment in these programmes.

Higher education faculty and managers see potential benefits for students and for their institutions in community service, but regard a lack of human, financial and administrative resources in their institutions as the main constraints to the introduction of community service in higher education.

While the mission statements of higher education institutions suggest that they are responding to calls by government and the public to become more responsive to the needs of society, the present financial cutbacks facing institutions are likely to inhibit the introduction or extension of community service programmes. This is all the more difficult because of the time-consuming nature of much good community service work and the fact that, even where programmes do enjoy a close relationship with the curriculum, faculty members do not receive academic recognition for these initiatives.

The impact of community service programmes

The research programme has provided a great deal of information about the impact of community service programmes and has helped to establish the conditions under which the programmes benefit higher education institutions, students and communities.

It suggests that while professional training generally combines theory with practice, the introduction of community service into higher education curricula provides opportunities for a particular type of experiential learning. It suggests that the departments concerned are seeking to develop a socially responsive orientation to their teaching programmes in order to meet the challenges which derive from the application of their disciplines in poor communities.

The research shows that although the community service programmes could have considerable impact on the higher education curricula with which they are associated, their influence depends on the institution's orientation towards social responsiveness and the extent to which the programmes form part of curriculum goals. The case studies show that the investment made by higher education institutions in community-oriented programmes remains limited, with the result that the programmes tend to lack resources (both human and financial). Despite their potential to influence curriculum reform and innovation, they continue to depend on external funding and support, and in some cases it has taken years for small programmes within specific divisions or units to be recognised for the contribution they are making to the reorientation of the curriculum.

The benefit to students who participate in community service programmes lies in the opportunity to contextualise their training and to adapt their skills to the conditions of poverty experienced by many South Africans. Many students reported that they gained new perspectives on their academic work, experienced a deeper understanding of the social conditions in poor communities and in a number of cases changed their attitudes towards their future professional roles. Students also gained life skills needed for their future careers. However, community service programmes rarely provide opportunities for students to earn and it is not clear that they do enhance their chances of future employment. Three factors influence whether or not students gain maximum benefit from community service programmes: the nature of the programme, programme structure and supervision.

The community service programmes surveyed target disadvantaged communities and succeed in making services available to the most vulnerable groups within those communities: women, young children and older people. Although the scope of the programmes is relatively limited, service provision reaches large numbers of people. A major factor limiting the extension of the programmes is the cost of transport for students and staff. The research also identified the important role of core staff in the successful delivery of services. In the programmes which offer professional legal and dental services, clients had an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards the service offered and generally expressed confidence in their quality.

The benefit yielded by community service programmes in higher education depends on the following factors:

- the articulation between the programmes and the curricula with which they are associated,
- the orientation of the leadership in the higher education institution towards being more socially responsive through teaching and research;
- the extent to which the programmes provide a site for the realisation of specific teaching and research goals;
- programme design and management.

Obviously the resources available to the programmes will make a difference to their reach and the scale of delivery, but it is clear that resourcing is not the only issue which will make or break a community service initiative. On the basis of the analysis in this chapter, it may be argued that the effectiveness of community service in higher education could depend as much on management and administration issues as it does on the availability of funds.

Financing community service

Rising costs and a decrease in state subsidies have placed enormous financial strains on higher education institutions and students. A number of possibilities for generating financial resources for needy students are currently being investigated and community service has been proposed as one such possibility. Developed and developing countries have used community service in one of two ways to provide financial support to higher education students: earning through community service or repaying loans through community service. In the USA, for example, earning (with learning and service) is seen as one of the main aims and benefits of community service programmes. In South Africa the widespread implementation of either option to provide financial aid to needy

students seems unlikely. This is because of both the scarcity of financial resources and high unemployment rates.

This study has found that the two usual funders of higher education - the Department of Education and the private sector - will support community service programmes as they relate to education initiatives or human resource development, but not as a means to address financial aid for needy students.

The Department of Education states that it can consider supporting only those community service programmes which are integrated into the curriculum and which develop skills required by the country. The Department is currently reviewing its funding formulae for higher education subsidies and intends examining the real costs of programmes in the higher education sector.

The private sector sees community service programmes primarily as initiatives which add value to education. Private sector players argue that for community service to be effective, it should be supportive of the major functions of higher education. The private sector currently supports community service programmes which require higher education skills and knowledge to deliver high quality services to disadvantaged communities.

However, research for this study suggests that certain government departments might consider community service as a loan repayment option if the services were delivered in areas of unmet need and were delivered more cost-effectively than currently. The Departments of Health and Justice are at present exploring community service as an opportunity to enhance service delivery and other departments may do likewise. However, this approach demands a careful costing of community service programmes and the research found that higher education institutions are not able to provide detailed costs of their programmes.

Government's orientation towards community service

The research shows that the government departments surveyed are setting their objectives in terms of national priorities but those which stress service delivery and human resources development find it easier to factor community service into their thinking than do others. Departments which are concerned with improving the provision of social services to under-served areas are

targeting young professional graduates to swell their personnel. Those departments which are primarily concerned with human resources development see community service as one mechanism for assisting with the development of skills and civic responsibility and in the transformation of higher education.

Policy development and implementation vary considerably between departments. The objectives of service delivery, structures of delivery and target populations hold implications for the design and implementation of community service in a particular sector, as does the demarcation of departmental functions between national and provincial offices. In some cases departments are cautious in their approach to community service, wanting first to assess the practical and financial implications of implementation.

Generally, government departments do not support a single model of community service designed to meet all needs. Respondents proposed a differentiated approach to community service. This was confirmed by the perspective that community need (not community service for its own sake) should be the determining factor in the design of a community service programme.

On the issue of whether an overarching framework needs to be devised for the diversity of community service programmes, it emerges that a sector-specific framework (in the legal or the medical sphere, for example) which operates within the context of national priorities might be most effective in harnessing community service as part of a department's transformation objectives. It appears that as departments grapple with the concept of community service, a co-ordinated approach is unlikely to materialise in the short term. Nevertheless, consultation between government departments and stakeholders can make a difference to the willingness of institutions and individuals to participate in community service and may foster increased co-operation. At this stage the creation of a single governmental structure for community service seems remote.

There are examples of higher education institutions helping government departments achieve their transformational objectives whilst fulfilling the core functions of teaching and research. It also seems that co-operation between the higher education sector and a government department can leverage resources for change. However, carefully considered financial plans for the support of community service programmes are essential if these programmes are to be sustainable in the long term.

Conclusion and recommendations

Community service programmes have the potential to contribute to three important development goals in South Africa: the transformation of higher education, human resource development, and reconstruction and development. In order to maximise the impact on all three goals, recommendations are made to three key stakeholders in higher education: government, higher education institutions and the private sector.

The recommendations to government address the different interests which government departments and tiers of government have in community service. They distinguish between the role of the Department of Education which is responsible for supporting higher education as a sector, other national departments which are concerned with the delivery of social services, and provincial departments which hold major responsibility for the implementation of policy. The recommendations suggest:

- ways in which the Department of Education can encourage community service initiatives which are meaningful in academic terms and appropriate to the meeting of community need,
- how this department and others may identify human resources needs, and
- ways in which provincial departments might engage with higher education institutions based in their provinces.

There are three recommendations for higher education institutions:

- ways to build a relationship between community service programmes and the improvement of quality in mainstream teaching programmes,
- short- to medium-term planning to increase institutions' social responsiveness,
- examining the relationship between community service and criteria for the promotion of academic staff.

The recommendations to the private sector acknowledge the dual interests of donors in supporting the educational objectives of higher education institutions on the one hand and, on the other, supporting the work of non-governmental

and community-based organisations whose primary purpose is community development. It is recommended that donors:

- ✍ examine the factors cited in this report which contribute to the success of community service programmes
- ✍ identify and target strategic areas of expenditure in community service programmes so as to add their resources to those which are already being committed by the higher education institutions
- ✍ support voluntary organisations which provide important opportunities for civic learning and for service opportunities, particularly for students who are involved in disciplines which do not naturally lend themselves to learning through community service.

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INTRODUCTION

1. THE CONTEXT OF THE INITIATIVE

In 1997 the Ford Foundation provided the Joint Education Trust with a grant to establish the Community Service in Higher Education Project. The aims of the project are three-fold: to promote public debate on community service; to assist different stakeholders to develop policy positions with regard to community service; and to strengthen existing community service projects and stimulate the development of new ones.

The project was launched against the background of growing interest in the concept of community service in higher education. In the White Paper on Higher Education published in 1997, the Department of Education set out its approach to addressing major deficiencies in the higher education sector and cited community service as one such strategy. At the same time student organisations were calling for the introduction of community service programmes in higher education, not only to redress imbalances in development, but as a means of providing financial support to students engaged in higher education studies. Finally, policy initiatives in a number of line ministries were seeking new approaches to human resources development which would combine academic training with a commitment to social development and civic responsibility, particularly in professional fields.

In 1998 a number of initiatives gave the concept of community service in higher education more concrete form. They include the launch of community service for medical graduates by the Department of Health, the launch of a planning phase for community service for law graduates by the Department of Justice, and the launch of the National Youth Commission's Youth Policy 2000 which proposes the establishment of a national youth service programme targeting higher education graduates as well as out-of-school and unemployed young people, demobilised young people and young returnees. 1998 has also seen the launch of new initiatives in some higher education institutions. Some of these are structural (such as the establishment of the University of Natal's Faculty of Community and

Development Disciplines) while others seek greater recognition for time spent on community service.

2 THE NATURE OF THE PROJECT

JET's Community Service in Higher Education Project comprised two phases.

2.1 Phase One

Phase One aimed to clarify the concept of community service which has been used in many different ways in South Africa. This it did by establishing a small research team which designed a process of investigation, ultimately leading to the production of a report entitled Community Service in Higher Education: a Concept Paper written by Helene Perold and Rahmat Omar in September 1997.

The investigation involved studying examples of community service both in South Africa and in the international context, and examining these in terms of their key features and trends. The process also attempted to tease out the difference between community service, national service and the issue of voluntary and compulsory participation in the different programmes. A key issue examined in the concept paper was to what extent community service programmes could provide opportunities for higher education students to earn a small income which could help offset their fees and other financial obligations.

Phase One of the project thus examined the notion of community service very broadly and sought to track its implementation before, during and after higher education. Over 300 copies of the concept paper were distributed and individuals and organisations were invited to comment on its findings and to make further recommendations.

2.2 Phase Two

Phase Two aimed to inform debates about community service on the basis of more in-depth research and to produce a framework for the implementation of community service programmes in higher education.

A steering committee was established to provide direction to this phase of the project. The following individuals served as members of the steering committee:

Nasima Badsha	Deputy Director-General, Department of Education
Mahlengi Bengu	Chairperson, National Youth Commission
Margie Keeton	Executive Director of Tshikululu Social Investments and Trustee of JET, Anglo American Chairman's Fund, De Beers Fund and Anglo Gold Fund
Aubrey Matlole	National Education Officer, South African Democratic Teachers Union, Trustee of JET
Teboho Moja	Advisor to the Minister of Education
Naledi Pandor	Deputy Chairperson of the JET Board of Trustees and Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces
Nick Taylor	Executive Director of JET.

Phase Two examined more closely the impact of community service programmes on the process of institutional transformation in higher education, particularly in regard to curriculum reform, looked at their impact on the communities they are intended to serve, and located these initiatives within emerging government policy on community service. It also explored the perspectives of business and higher education institutions on community service.

3 ACTIVITIES IN PHASE TWO

The activities in Phase Two included an intensive research programme, two sectoral workshops, interviews with government departments and contact with other initiatives. These are briefly described below.

3.1 Research

The Research Committee recommended that the following steps be taken to deepen understanding of community service programmes in South Africa:

Six in-depth benefit studies were commissioned to provide a quantitative and qualitative overview of the impact of the programmes on student

learning, earning and community benefit. Since community service programmes involving law and medical students are matters of current public debate, it was agreed that examples of such programmes be sought. Consequently the following programmes were identified and they agreed to participate in the research process:

- The University of Venda Legal Aid Clinic
- The University of Venda Street Law Programme
- The University of Port Elizabeth Legal Aid Clinic
- The University of Port Elizabeth Street Law Programme
- The University of the Western Cape's Oral Health Promotion Programme
- The University of the Western Cape's Guguletu Dental Clinic.

The studies form the basis of the impact analysis in Chapter 3 of this report. The research design for these studies can be found in Appendix 1.

Some of the community service programmes identified in Phase One were more closely examined as case studies and new ones were identified and included in the case study process. Consequently eleven short case studies were developed, all of which are analysed in Chapter 3. The full list of case studies is in Appendix 2 while the research questions are in Appendix 3.

A workshop was held to develop ways of examining the costs and the cost-effectiveness of the community service programmes. This workshop contributed to the research design for the six benefit studies.

Questionnaires were sent to 21 universities and 16 technikons to solicit information on community service as part of their mission, their policies relating to community service, opportunities for students to become involved in community service programmes, opinions of higher education managers/faculty on the potential benefits of community service for students and higher education institutions, and challenges and constraints in introducing community service programmes. The outcome of this research is captured in Chapter 1. The questionnaire sent to the institutions can be found in Appendix 4.

Community service programmes in Nigeria and the USA were investigated. The results of these investigations are incorporated throughout the report.

The final reports on the case studies and the benefit studies are captured in a separate document called Case Studies and Benefit Analyses of Community Service Programmes in Higher Education which is available from the JET office.

3.2 Sectoral workshops

During the research process in 1997 it was not possible to engage systematically with business, labour or the higher education institutions about some of the ideas about community service raised in the concept paper. Phase Two thus focused on convening a workshop with individuals from each of these sectors. Although three workshops were organised, one with each sector, the labour workshop could not be held as planned owing to the lack of availability of the representatives designated to attend.

3.2.1 Workshop with business

Two issues were identified for discussion at the workshop: implications of community service for organisations which award bursaries and for their grantees (addressed by Monique Adams, Manager of Anglo American's Graduate Recruitment, Scholarships and Bursaries division) and implications of community service for corporate donors, particularly in higher education (addressed by Margie Keeton, CEO of the Anglo American and De Beers Chairman's Fund). Ms Adams focused on community service after higher education (ie. the implications for extending the period of service employment), while Ms Keeton looked at community service in higher education (ie. short-term opportunities for service learning).

3.2.2 Workshop with higher education institutions

Three aims were developed for this workshop: to serve as a forum in which experiences of different types of higher education community service programmes could be shared; to tap the views of higher education stakeholders about programmes such as these; and to identify key issues emerging from this discussion.

Four case studies were presented:

- Work study projects of the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, presented by Marie-Anna Marais, coordinator.

- The community internship project of the University of Natal's faculty of medicine in Durban. This was presented by Dorothy Appalasamy, coordinator of student programmes in the faculty.
- The work study programme at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), presented by Mr Mike Smith, a lecturer in the chemistry department and chairperson of the work study committee.
- A student perspective on the legal aid clinic run by the University of Venda, presented by Mr Vernon Nemaorani, a candidate attorney at the legal aid clinic.

After discussion, Professor Eleanor Preston-Whyte, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Natal in Durban, summed up some of the key institutional challenges being posed by community service in higher education. She outlined a number of constraints and options in fostering community service for all students in higher education and then looked at incentives which could assist in developing the concept and practice of community service in higher education institutions.

3.3 Interviews with government departments

Interviews were sought with the following government departments. Education, Health, Labour, Justice and Public Works. Four main issues were explored:

- the department's conceptualisation and vision of community service
- the department's plan for implementation of community service (where applicable), including skills development and a financial plan
- community service processes that might already be in place or underway in the department's ambit of operation and which the department may have helped initiate
- opportunities for community service that might already have been identified by the department.

The outcome of this research forms the basis of the analysis in Chapter 5.

3.4 Contact with other initiatives

Close contact was maintained with the National Youth Commission through regular meetings and through the sharing of information and

documents. The Chairperson of the National Youth Commission participated in the project's steering committee and one of the members of the JET community service research team is also a member of the National Youth Commission's technical team charged with developing a Green Paper on National Youth Service. These interactions facilitated a flow of information between the two initiatives and helped avoid duplication in the research process.

4 WHAT WE DO IN THIS REPORT

The concept paper identified different types of community service programmes in higher education in South Africa² and examined their key features: extra-curricular volunteer service programmes; work study programmes on campus which have little or no link with the curriculum; community outreach and extension services which draw on the specialised knowledge and skills of particular academic disciplines and which link with curricula to varying degrees; internships which are very closely linked to curricula and which also render a service; placements which do not aim to provide service.

It noted that a close relationship is developing between community service and professional fields of study in higher education³ and contrasted this with examples of programmes in a number of other countries where students may be deployed in national programmes regardless of whether their skills and fields of study are appropriate for the tasks performed.

This report develops the ideas raised in the concept paper. First it offers a more detailed conceptual framework which teases out the relationship between service and learning and looks at the conditions under which academic goals may be realised through the rendering of service and alongside the promotion of responsible citizenship.

Chapter Two examines emerging policies and practices concerning service in higher education institutions. It looks at the origins of the community service programmes currently in place, describes the range of programmes and the fields in which they are operating, explores the nature and extent of institutional support, cites the benefits which institutions see accruing from community service, and examines the constraints which institutions have identified in implementation.

Chapter Three concentrates on the impact of community service programmes. First it analyses the impact of the programmes on higher education curricula in terms of curriculum content, assessment and research, and looks at the factors which influence this impact. Secondly it examines the impact on participating students by looking at the knowledge and skills gained, the changes in student values and attitudes, opportunities for earning and employment and the factors influencing student benefit. Finally, the chapter examines the impact of the programmes on the communities: it explores who the services are reaching, community attitudes towards the services offered, the value of the services and factors influencing community impact.

Chapter Four deals with the financing of community service programmes. It examines four current and potential sources of funds for community service programmes in higher education. It then describes the need for financial aid, summarises the most recent proposals which have been made in this regard to the Department of Education and examines once again the possibility of linking community service to financial aid. Finally, the chapter looks at how community service could be assessed in terms of costs and benefits.

Chapter Five focuses on how a number of government departments view community service in relation to national priorities. It looks at the policies and implementation plans which are being developed, explores whether or not there should be an overarching framework for community service and describes how government departments see their engagement with the higher education sector.

Finally, the report concludes by examining what actions can be taken by government, higher education institutions and the private sector to advance community service as a contributory strategy for transformation in South Africa.

1 The Joint Education Trust was established in 1991 as a joint venture between the private sector, organised labour, political parties and community-based organisations for the purpose of making a contribution towards the transformation of South African education and training.

2 Perold, H and Omar, R(1997). Community Service in Higher Education. a Concept Paper, Joint Education Trust, September pp 22-47.

3 Ibid., p77

CHAPTER ONE

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

July 1998 saw the introduction of national community service into higher education when the Department of Health launched one year's compulsory community service for all medical graduates. The move marks a first effort by the South African government to direct the skills of higher education graduates towards under-served communities which have massive development needs. Aimed only at graduates, the move was a controversial one, largely because of the way in which it was introduced. While it adds to the range of community service programmes already in operation in South Africa, it differs from most in that it is driven by central government, is intended to meet skills shortages within a particular sector (ie. the provision of medical services), does not explicitly demand changes in the medical school curricula, and seeks to inculcate in medical graduates a sense of civic responsibility after they have completed their studies.

This year also saw the Department of Justice begin the process of planning a year's community service for law graduates. It has been accompanied by an extensive process of consultation with institutions and professional bodies, and is intended to effect changes in the law curriculum as well as being designed to meet skills shortages. In other words, this initiative explicitly aims to impact both on students during their undergraduate period of study and on graduates who have completed their studies.

At the same time many higher education institutions are in the process of restructuring their operations with a view to becoming more responsive to the broader society. The Department of Education is reviewing its funding formulae for higher education and this could have a bearing on the resourcing of community service programmes which link directly with higher education curricula.

A further development from the side of government is the establishment by the National Youth Commission of a technical team to draft a Green Paper on National Youth Service. This is due to be released towards the end of 1998. How is community service being understood within this context? And what are the strategies for connecting service with learning? This chapter examines some of the transformation imperatives facing higher education, defines the notion of service in higher education and looks at how service can be related to learning, teaching and research. It also explores ways in which higher education institutions might respond to their mission of service.

1 TRANSFORMATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In 1997 the Department of Education published a White Paper entitled *A Programme for Transformation in Higher Education*.¹ The Department believes that transformation is the greatest challenge facing the higher education sector in South Africa and by this it means "the redress of past inequalities and the transformation of the system to serve a new social order".

The White Paper lays the foundation for change in higher education institutions by identifying four major deficiencies which need to be addressed:

- the inequitable distribution of access to and opportunity in higher education;
- the inadequate response by higher education to the development needs of society;
- the failure of higher education to lay the foundations for a critical civil society;
- inappropriate policies and practices in teaching and research.

The White Paper spells out a transformation strategy which is intended to address these deficiencies. It has three components: achieving equitable participation in higher education, increasing responsiveness to societal needs through the diversification of curricula and improved learning and teaching practices; and creating partnerships between government and civil society to meet the challenges of modern society.

While the imperatives for transformation in higher education derive in large measure from South Africa's apartheid history, they also form part of a global quest for change: throughout the world higher education systems are being challenged to become more responsive to society's needs.

For example, in the USA there has been a growing concern since the 1980s that higher education institutions are not meeting their civic and societal responsibilities. One of the best-known examples of these early expressions of disquiet is the call in 1982 by Harvard University president, Derek Bok, for higher education institutions to "function as genuinely civic, socially and morally engaged institutions in order to fulfil their educational mission".² He went on:

"If we could teach our students to care about important social problems, and think about them rigorously, then clearly our institutions of learning must set a high example in the conduct of their own affairs. In addition to responding to its students, a university must examine its social responsibilities if it wishes to acquire an adequate understanding of its proper role and purpose in present-day society."

For many commentators, higher education institutions have lost sight of their civic responsibilities in favour of too narrowly serving the human resource development market. For example, Mattson and Shea of Rutgers University argue that "as universities strive to meet demands placed on them they increasingly see their social obligations through the eyes of the market. Professional competence and career development take precedence over attempts to prepare young people for their roles as informed, active participants in public life."³ These writers argue that while a strong sense of civic responsibility and civic education marked the 19th century American college, this changed with the industrial revolution when universities began training students in demarcated disciplines and professions. As universities increasingly trained professionals for the nation, they downscaled their local civic activities.

George Subotzky⁴ argues that in South Africa globalisation is supporting the emergence of the entrepreneurial or market university by bringing about changes in the production of knowledge and changes in higher education governance and funding. He notes that higher education institutions not only have to become more responsive to economic and

social needs, but must also become more accountable for resources allocated to them. "Governments seek demonstrable and measurable returns on investment in higher education, and their principal task is seen as contributing to economic performance and enhancing global competitiveness. ... While this represents a healthy shift from abstract academia, it tends to marginalise the imperative of basic social development."

This suggests that unless deliberate efforts are made to produce and apply the knowledge and skills necessary for social reconstruction in South Africa, globalisation could reinforce the low priority accorded to social and development issues in many higher education institutions.

The transformation imperative is thus particularly challenging in South Africa: it demands of higher education institutions that they become globally competitive and locally responsive and that they operationalise their goals of teaching, research and service within an environment which attends to the under-developed domestic social order as well as the global environment.

2 THE NOTION OF SERVICE

While the goals of higher education are traditionally regarded to be teaching, research and service, service is at the centre of much contemporary debate. The notion of service is highlighted in the White Paper on Higher Education which makes some specific references to the role of community service within the overarching task of transforming the higher education system. It calls on institutions to "demonstrate social responsibility ... and their commitment to the common good by making available expertise and infrastructure for community service programmes".⁵ The White Paper also declares that one of the national goals of the higher education sector is "to promote and develop social responsibility and awareness among students of the role of higher education in social and economic development through community service programmes".⁶ Finally, the White Paper expresses a receptiveness to "the growing interest in community service programmes for students" and gives in-principle support to "feasibility studies and pilot programmes which explore the potential of community service".⁷

But what is meant by the term 'service' and how does it relate to learning in higher education?

2.1 Defining 'service'

In the context of social transformation, 'service' in higher education could be broadly defined as social responsiveness to the development needs of South African society. This suggests that if the institutions are to serve society through their key functions of teaching and research, close engagement with national and local community needs will be required - not only in making available intellectual expertise or infrastructure through a discrete set of activities, but in changing what is taught, learnt and researched, and in changing the ways in which teaching, learning and research take place.

'Service' can also be defined more narrowly. One approach defines it as "an activity which is undertaken for reasons other than financial reparation and which contributes to the overall well-being of the community".⁸ Another defines service as "meeting an unmet need in the community".⁹ This suggests that a service activity must respond to a need identified by the community which is not addressed through an existing institution or agency.

Building on these two definitions, a 'community service programme' would be a structured set of activities designed to meet a community need. This research project shows that in South Africa such programmes tend to be initiated by institutions; they are discrete (ie. function on their own or as part of a specific academic programme) and tend to be locally focused.¹⁰ However, two types of programmes can be distinguished: those which aim to provide humanitarian assistance or relief, but which do not intend changing the conditions which gave rise to such need; and those which aim to change the social conditions of the community concerned.

'National community service' may be defined as the mobilisation of individuals, often on a large scale, with the aim of making a significant impact on social and national development. It foregrounds community service as a means of redressing social inequality by intervening directly at community level through the provision of services. To some extent the community service programme launched by the Department of Health falls

into this category, although it applies to medical graduates only. The international review of community service programmes contained in the concept paper describes other, larger, examples of such national service programmes in countries such as Nigeria, Indonesia, Nepal, Mexico and Costa Rica. Each programme has its own relationship with higher education, but most have been launched by central government and aim to meet national development needs. Most of these programmes have been funded from the national fiscus and, in the face of dwindling resources, governments have found it difficult to sustain their initial scale of operation.

The concept paper defined community service in South Africa as follows: "programmes linked to higher education which involve participants in activities designed to deliver social benefit to a particular community and which teach the participants to work jointly towards the achievement of the common goal. Participation in community service usually involves a degree of personal sacrifice in terms of time, remuneration and convenience."¹¹

The same definition of community service is used in this report with the understanding that there are potentially three beneficiaries of community service in higher education: the recipients of the service (communities and the individuals within them), the providers of service (students and members of faculty) and the institutions which have launched the programmes. Chapters Two and Three set out in more detail precisely what benefits - both anticipated and actual - emanate from community service programmes as they are currently operating, and under what circumstances the benefits are likely to be realised.

2,2 Relating service to learning

The threefold mission of higher education - teaching, research and service - has traditionally been understood as charging institutions with responsibility for developing public citizens as well as individuals with the appropriate professional skills required by a changing economy. In much of the literature this role is defined as one which strengthens moral and civic values, and which prepares individuals to take an active part in a democratic society. Mary Stanley of Syracuse University writes that "both ideas and actions have consequences. In a democratic society, those

consequences play out as the responsibility of all citizens, not just policy-makers and think tank number-crunchers. ... We live within a political structure that affirms citizens' stake in their nation and their capacity to meet the problems of the day with pragmatism, intelligence and a commitment to the well-being of their fellow citizens."¹²

Education reformers such as John Dewey wanted students to engage in service so that they would recognise that their academic abilities and collective commitments could help them respond in meaningful ways to a variety of social concerns. "The value of this approach extended far beyond the service students might provide for the elderly or the ways they might clean up the environment. It lay in the analytic and academic skills, the moral acuity and the social sensitivity they would develop as they learned to assess critically and respond collectively to authentic problems. The hope was that students' values and beliefs might be transformed by these experiences."¹³

Kahne and Westheimer distinguish, however, between two conceptions of what it means to be a citizen: Firstly, there are "those who focus primarily on charity and who believe that, to be properly educated in a democracy, students must undergo experiences that demonstrate the value of altruism and the dangers of exclusive self-interest. They stress the importance of civic duty and the need for responsive citizens." Secondly, there are "those who hope to move students towards participation in what Benjamin Barber refers to as a 'strong democracy'. They call for a curriculum that emphasises critical reflection about social policies and conditions, the acquisition of skills of political participation, and the formation of social bonds."¹⁴

In South Africa the need to redress inequalities entrenched by apartheid has been identified as one of government's key priorities. However, the need to develop civic awareness among students is less obvious. After all, for some 25 years (during the 1970s and 1980s, up until the country's first democratic elections in 1994) young people, particularly black South Africans, lived through a period which was characterised by the most intense political struggles this country has seen. Education was an arena in which the political struggle was marked by high levels of mass mobilisation against apartheid: what started with the Soweto revolt of 1976 during which students protested the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, culminated in the deep politicisation of the black education

system as a whole - in schools as well as higher education institutions. The cost was high: not only was learning disrupted, but many institutions were burnt down or damaged, and many students gave up their education to the goal of overthrowing the apartheid government.

One might have thought that the struggle against apartheid laid the foundations for civic awareness among South Africa's youth. However, the struggle against apartheid was largely political in its objective: it was a struggle for power, on the basis of which a democratic social order could be established. Only once the new order came into being, following the elections of 1994, did the struggle for power shift towards the struggle for empowerment - both of individuals and communities. It is in this context that the notion of civic awareness and responsibility comes to the fore.

Is there a culture of service in the South African education environment? In South Africa the vast majority of students have traditionally viewed schooling and higher education as a means of acquiring a qualification rather than as a means of becoming educated in the broadest sense of the term. In other words, most students judge an education qualification in utilitarian terms - by the extent to which it enables them to access jobs and thus to fulfil their other material needs (purchasing homes, cars, etc). One symptom of this orientation is the tendency of many higher education students to shy away from activities which are not a requirement for their course of study (such as occasional seminars or debates) and to treat their studies in the narrowest of terms: "Is this for marks?" "Is this for the exam?" are questions frequently posed to lecturers seeking to introduce students to a wider body of reading or knowledge.

Some voluntary service programmes in which students attempt to place their skills and knowledge at the disposal of disadvantaged communities have the development of civic awareness as an explicit aim. However, these programmes are in the minority, tend to be under-resourced and operate on the periphery of higher education. In other words, the mainstream higher education culture is not one in which education for citizenship is currently a well-developed concept, despite our proximity to the intense political struggle which so recently gave rise to democracy in South Africa.

This suggests that the introduction of community service into higher education could be an essential factor in fostering a civic consciousness

among students and graduates. The impact studies conducted during this project show that, in most cases, students who participated in well-run community service programmes changed their values and attitudes: they developed greater social awareness and became more empathetic towards the condition of the poor communities in which they had worked. However, as we show in Chapter Three, the current system of reward and promotion makes it difficult for faculty to cite time spent on community service in support of professional advancement unless such involvement is directly related to teaching and research. More thought thus needs to be given to how social relevance can be injected into academic teaching and research so as to include community service as a criterion for staff promotion.

JET's research indicates that in South Africa there may be a range of purposes for developing a culture of service in higher education institutions, none of them mutually exclusive:

- to inculcate a sense of civic-mindedness in students and make them aware of their responsibility to make a contribution to society;
- to assist in nation-building by enabling students to gain a closer understanding of the life experience of people in different communities;
- to link academic study and research to issues of development so as to influence values and attitudes, and sensitise students to societal needs and the contribution that individuals can make to society;
- to enable students and faculty to acquire skills and to experience particular types of learning within a community-based context, particularly in a context of poverty or under-development;
- to enable students to 'pay back' a debt which they have incurred to society, deriving from the government's use of public funds to cover the real costs of each student's higher education experience.

2.3 Terminology

In the USA 'service learning' is widely used to capture the relationship between action, reflection and social engagement. It is a term which is also finding a place in South Africa, as the following extract from the University of Natal shows: "Service learning is a new form of teaching/learning which is designed to make the university responsive to its context and to promote

responsible citizenship among students by producing graduates who are socially aware and feel obliged to contribute to the improvement of their communities." ¹⁵

The university describes service learning as follows:

- a method through which students learn and develop through active participation in carefully organised service experiences structured around actual community needs;
- it integrates community service into the students' academic curriculum;
- it enhances classroom learning by extending it from the classroom into the community;
- it builds community service into the academic curriculum in such a way that both the providers and recipients of service benefit from the activities;
- it is a carefully monitored learning experience in which students have intentional learning goals and reflect actively on what they are learning throughout the experience;
- it places curricular concepts in the context of real-life situations;
- it connects young people to the community by placing them in challenging situations.

The university then distinguishes service learning from related concepts and makes the distinctions on the basis of where the emphasis falls - on service or on learning:

Voluntarism	The primary focus is on service and on the beneficiary of the service.
Community service	The primary focus is on service.
Internships	The focus is primarily on student learning rather than community service. Their purpose is to give students hands-on learning experience.
Field education	The primary focus is on maximising student learning with community service being an adjunct to this, even though there are strong intentions to benefit recipients. The emphasis is placement-based; communities are placement

sites for students and relatively little attention is given to addressing long-term community problems. The service is performed in addition to a student's courses.

Experiential learning

The emphasis is on learning by doing. Service learning adds the belief that students learn best by engaging in activities that are personally meaningful and have a positive impact on others. Its mission is different from that of experiential learning.

Service learning

Occurs when there is a balance between learning goals and service outcomes, when the service enhances the learning and the learning enhances the service, when the benefits to the providers and recipients are equal. However, the credit in service learning is for the learning and not the service.

Another term to add to this list comes from Portland State University in the USA and derives from its experience of a wide range of service learning programmes:

Community-based learning This term places an emphasis on student outcomes and recognises that learning can be enhanced by community involvement and that community members can serve as co-teachers with university faculty.¹⁶

In exploring the question 'in service of what?', Joseph Kahne and Joel Westheimer return to the difference between developing responsible citizens and developing critical democrats. They argue that service activities which aim to inculcate civic values and a sense of civic-mindedness, which aim to 'pay back' to society, may in fact be developing a notion of community service as charitable work which emphasises altruism and condones token aid responses to real need, but which does not confront the deeper causes of inequality and under-development. They suggest that deepening the transformative nature of community service as

a learning experience for the individual depends on structured opportunities (whether they be within the curriculum or in volunteer programmes) to reflect on the causes of the social conditions in which students are working.

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In South Africa it may be argued that the damage wrought by apartheid is such that both altruistic and transformative service experiences are required for students. Service opportunities in which students can gain work experience, develop their self-esteem and confidence, and come to respect the communities in which they are working will be important in developing South African citizens who feel obliged to contribute to the improvement of their own communities and others.

2.4 How far can learning and service be extended in higher education?

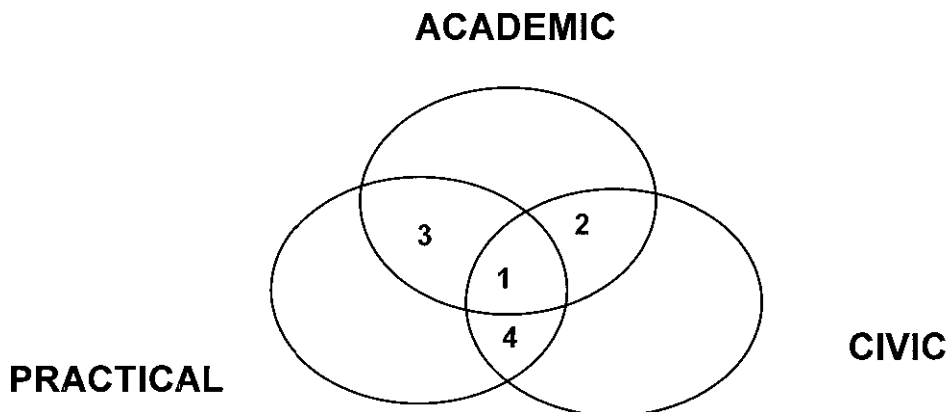
The analysis above points to three domains which shape the community service mission in higher education:

- promoting a spirit of concerned, active and democratic citizenship;
- using the resources of higher education institutions, and particularly the intellectual resources of staff and students, to improve the lives of underprivileged communities through the provision of practical services;
- infusing the academic curriculum with a greater sense of relevance by engaging with difficult political, economic, environmental and social problems.

A conceptual model which emerged during the research¹⁸ looks at the interface of these three goals as they operate in higher education: academic, practical and civic. In the graphic the intersection between each domain is numbered, designating a 'zone'. Below, each zone is described.

Zone 1: Combines academic development, civic development, practical services

This is the zone which exemplifies 'service learning' or 'community-based learning' as defined above. It seeks the balance between service which enhances learning and learning which enhances service, and strives for outcomes in which the benefits to the providers and recipients are equal.



Disciplines which fall into this zone are able to structure their teaching and research programmes so as to combine all three goals of community service in higher education: academic development, civic development and practical service delivery. JET's research suggests that some of the curricula which best lend themselves towards this treatment are those in the professions. Examples of community service programmes were found in fields such as dentistry, law, medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, optometry, psychology, physiotherapy and social work. The people-oriented focus of these disciplines and the need to combine theory with practice facilitates the integration of service into the learning and teaching programmes of these professions. How closely the service goals are related to the learning goals is a matter of orientation and programme design (see Chapter Three). The research shows that, in general, these community service programmes had an impact on students' level of social awareness and contributed to changing their values and attitudes towards their profession.

The survey also found some examples of community service programmes in professions which are not traditionally associated with all three goals: architecture, engineering, commerce and business management. Although there are very few service programmes in these fields (the ones that were surveyed being the exception rather than the rule), it would seem that with encouragement and resourcing these disciplines may be able to offer students many more curriculum-related community service opportunities than is presently the case.

Zone 2: Combines academic development with civic development

Zone 2 represents the intersection between academic development and the development of civic awareness. Disciplines which fall into this zone tend to be in the category of liberal arts and may include, for example, anthropology, archaeology, drama, economics, ethics, geography, jurisprudence, literature, political science, philosophy and sociology - fields which explore a range of aspects concerning the functioning of society. They are thus able to develop civic awareness through their exploration of issues which are relevant to the development of society and the human condition, and may be able to inject active learning into their curricula.

While many of these disciplines are unlikely to make the shift into zone 1 by integrating practical work into the curricula, some may be able to do so: for example, the use of drama in industrial theatre, the use of music in certain forms of therapeutic treatment, the use of sociological enquiry in community-based research. Careful consideration would be required, however, to determine whether the area of study would be appropriately served by a practical approach. If the practical component is considered to be applicable, then care would have to be taken in identifying appropriate sites for service. Finally, a great deal of work would need to be done on the part of faculty to forge meaningful links between the academic theory and its practical usage.

One of the questions which arises, however, is to what extent all academic learning should contain a civic and a practical component. Taylor notes that "one of the principal aims of higher education is the development of 'sacred knowledge' which consists of structures of symbolic objects that do not depend on everyday practical sense or usefulness for their significance and meaning. This is not to say that academic disciplines are totally disconnected from the world; most are usually motivated by a practical problem, evolve through a complex interplay between empirical induction and deductive reasoning, are driven by a distinct set of political values and often involve intense ideological battles. However, some pursue distinctions and elaborations for their own sake and have no obvious connection to the everyday world. It is through academic knowledge that

society is able to reach conclusions that it does not expect, that move beyond everyday usage and transcend sectarian political interests.”¹⁹ While such academic learning is valuable in the overall aim of higher education, it should not preclude some engagement on the part of its faculty and students with the condition of the society in which they are located. It might not be feasible to factor practical service into the pure mathematics curriculum, but the higher education sector may have a responsibility for developing the civic awareness of mathematics students and faculty along with everyone else. For this reason their participation in zone 4 activities (see below) may be appropriate.

Zone 3: Combines academic development with practical services

The combination of academic development with service activities is the traditional ambit of professional training. Internships, fieldwork and other forms of experiential learning characterise most professional training. What is missing from this zone, however, is the civic dimension. To what extent can and should professional training incorporate a civic component?

At face value the answer seems obvious: yes, doctors do need to confront the relationship between health and poverty, lawyers should question the ways in which the legal system structures inequality, engineers should consider the social and environmental effects of their constructions. Community service offers a way of building such considerations into the curriculum, and hence of inducting prospective professionals into a more caring and socially active approach to their work. However, the counter view is that specific service activities should be left to the conscience of the individual.

As was noted above, in South Africa the departments of Health and Justice are moving rapidly towards the introduction of compulsory community service for all newly graduated doctors and lawyers. This will take the form of one year of service immediately after graduation and will be a condition for professional registration. To a considerable extent these moves are motivated by human resource shortages and the consequent lack of services for the poor, but the programmes may fall short of the community service ideal in so far as they seek to inculcate civic awareness in providers of service. Mentoring of the young professionals may be less

than ideal because of the shortage of experienced hands in rural and township hospitals and legal aid centres, and the compulsory nature of this work may generate resistance rather than receptiveness to service learning. Nevertheless, the new graduates are likely to learn a great deal of medicine or law which they probably would not have encountered under the largely more affluent circumstances in which they, in all likelihood, would otherwise have spent the first year of their professional lives; they will gain a close view of the lives of individuals less fortunate than themselves and their work will improve the lot of many South Africans.

Zone 4: Combines practical service with civic development

Programmes in this zone have little or no connection with the academic curriculum. Many of the voluntary community service programmes described in Chapters Two and Three fall into this category. For example, the Southern African Student Volunteers' Organisation (Sasvo) has a stated aim of encouraging civic responsibility and voluntarism. One of the four main motivations behind launching the programme was to "spread the ideas of voluntarism, community responsibility, self-help and love of Africa amongst Southern African tertiary students".

As is demonstrated in Chapter Two, the participants in some zone 4 programmes use the academic knowledge or professional skills they have acquired in their studies, but in many cases the programmes do not require specialist knowledge for participation. For example, the schools partnership programmes at the University of the Wits and RAU draw students from different disciplines (such as mathematics, science and English) into tutoring teachers from black high schools in these subject areas. Sasvo, on the other hand, involves students from a range of disciplines in development projects which involve renovation or construction work at schools, clinics, hospitals and community centres.

Once again it may be helpful to recall Kahne and Westheimer's distinction between service which is charitable in intention and that which is transformative in its aims. It could be argued that the absence of a connection with the curriculum removes the opportunity to reflect critically on community service and the conditions in which such service is being rendered. This in turn may restrict the development of a civic consciousness in the programme participants. This consideration is

particularly important if the community service policy debate reaches a point where it is argued that all higher education students should have an opportunity to participate in community service, even those studying in disciplines which are not naturally suited for this purpose.

Furthermore, service activities which are not an integral part of the curriculum forgo the possibility of the service component influencing the curriculum in ways which will render it more relevant to the needs of the poor.

Finally, service activities located in zone 4 are unlikely to effect structural change in the institutions in which they occur. For example, a programme through which university students tutor underprivileged school pupils outside school hours is unlikely to have an effect on the curricula of the university's education department or on the teaching and learning practices in the school.

2.5 Correlation with the South African experience

The JET research found that few higher education faculty members in South Africa make these fine distinctions in terms of the purpose of their community service programmes. The overwhelming majority of curriculum-related community service programmes surveyed set themselves two main aims: to provide students with practical experience in a development context and to serve disadvantaged communities.

The goals of inculcating civic-mindedness and of producing an understanding of social change do manifest themselves, but do so unevenly. A number of programme co-ordinators reported that even where the promotion of civic awareness was not the primary aim, community service programmes had enabled participating students to develop better social awareness and a greater sense of civic responsibility. In some cases these purposes were quite explicit: for example, the University of the Orange Free State (UOFS) states that the primary objective of its community service work is to support 'service learning programmes which engage students in service that meets unmet community needs, while enhancing their academic study, civic skills and sense of social responsibility.' Chapter Three provides an analysis of the extent to which the different programmes succeeded in these goals.

3 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The debates on community service in higher education in South Africa are fairly new and are at different stages of development between and within institutions. On some campuses considerable thought has been given to the institution's role in society and how community service contributes to that role. Some institutions or individuals have adopted the term 'service learning' as being appropriate for their approaches while others call for a new term altogether such as 'community service learning' (UOFS) or 'socially-engaged science' (University of Port Elizabeth (UPE)).

Although the term 'community service' is understood in very different ways at higher education institutions in South Africa it remains the one most widely used to describe student activity in community settings and proved useful in this study in capturing these divergent views and practices.

The transformation agenda in South Africa, particularly the drive towards nation-building and the redress of inequality, provides a strong motivation for developing community service programmes which include a civic component and which combine this with service delivery and academic training. It would seem that the professions hold the best promise for implementing programmes which provide an integrated experience in which all three goals are met: academic training, service provision and the growth of civic responsibility. Ideally these would form an integral part of all higher education professional training, but in some cases the theoretical and practical components are easier to integrate; in others the theoretical and the civic components can be integrated, but not the practical.

Community service projects located in faculties outside the professions encounter a rather different set of problems. Where a civic component is successfully welded to the academic, the practical often becomes problematic. The application may be inappropriate to the subject under study, or may result in the discipline being applied in a contrived manner. All community service activities are prone to the civic component becoming individualised rather than part of a collective effort to improve society. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with voluntary service being driven solely by altruistic feelings on the part of individuals, such activity is unlikely to lead to thorough-going social changes.

Whatever the nature and extent of the problems pertaining to the implementation of community service programmes may be, one thing is becoming apparent. Community service activities which are well conceived and managed have the potential to change the civic consciousness of the participants towards more caring attitudes and collaborative activities. In a world characterised by high levels of fragmentation and alienation, this aspect of community service holds out the promise of helping to build a better future.

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- 6 Ibid., section 1.27(8)
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CHAPTER TWO

POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Against the background of the transformation challenges outlined in Chapter One, many higher education institutions in South Africa have embarked on extensive strategic planning and restructuring exercises aimed at responding more appropriately to society's needs. In some cases this has meant radical changes to governance and management structures and in others it involves reconsidering how resources are used and the type and nature of programmes offered.

The Department of Education believes that progress on transformation has been uneven and that some institutions are further down the road than others. In an attempt to speed up the transformation process, the department unveiled a 'planning framework' on 1 June 1998. This framework defines four national priorities for transformation: the size and shape of the transformation programme, equity, efficiency and inter-institutional co-operation. Higher education institutions were required to submit preliminary plans by mid-August showing how they intended meeting these policy priorities.

This chapter examines emerging policies and practices concerning service in higher education institutions. It looks at the origins of the community service programmes currently in place, describes the range of programmes and the fields in which they are operating, explores the nature and extent of institutional support, cites the benefits which institutions see accruing from community service, and examines the constraints which institutions have identified in implementation.

1 HOW SERVICE FEATURES IN HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

The JET Community Service in Higher Education Project surveyed all universities (21) and technikons (16) in South Africa to establish how the notion of service features in the missions of these institutions, what policies

have been developed around the concept of community service, what opportunities exist for students to become involved in community service programmes, and how higher education managers and faculty view the potential benefits of community service for students and for their institutions.

The questionnaires were addressed to the vice-chancellor or rector of each institution. Twenty-five returns were received - 16 from universities and 9 from technikons.¹ Different approaches were adopted by institutions in completing the questionnaires and this, together with the actual responses, demonstrates how the conception and location of community service varies from one institution to the next.²

The information provided in the questionnaires was supplemented by an analysis of university mission statements, annual reports of higher education institutions, vice-chancellors' reports, reports on transformation and academic papers on community service. Case studies of community service programmes based at higher education institutions were also studied for details on the nature, scope and level of institutional support offered to community service programmes.

1.1 Service within the institutional mission statements

All but one of the higher education institutions which responded to the JET questionnaire replied that community service is a feature of this mission. However, an examination of the mission statements of higher education institutions shows that the term 'service' is used in different ways:

- ✍ Five institutions use the term 'community service' in their mission statements. Of these, three regard community service as one of the three functions of their institutions. For example, the University of Pretoria's mission statement indicates that teaching and training students, research and community service are "the University's primary tasks" and the University of Venda "aspires to attain the highest level of teaching, research and community service". Two institutions describe community service as an integral part of their teaching and research: the University of Port Elizabeth seeks to "integrate community service with its core academic functions by enhancing the quality of teaching, learning and research though

development projects and programmes", while the University of the Orange Free State aims to "perform community service through its core functions of education and research by implementing programmes and projects and by comprehensively developing its students within its academic culture".

- Many of the mission statements suggest that the institutions are committed to being responsive to the needs of society. However, this responsiveness is described in very different ways. Medunsa aims to "provide and promote community-orientated tertiary education, training, research and service" while the University of the Western Cape seeks to "respond in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition". Peninsula Technikon intends to be "responsive to the needs of society" and Technikon Northern Gauteng provides "education sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged students and communities".
- Two universities see their role as developmental. The University of Cape Town (UCT) aims to play "an active developmental role in our cultural, economic, political, scientific and social environments"; the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) sees itself as "a learning community with a clear focus on development".
- Other mission statements suggest a service role for their institutions. For example Wits Technikon undertakes to "serve the communities", while Vista University aims to pursue "academic excellence through research, teaching and learning and service to society". The University of Natal "strives to serve all sections of its community through excellence in scholarship, teaching, learning, research and development".

While the mission statements provide some insight into the particular orientation of an institution towards responding to society's needs, they are only moderately useful in providing an understanding of how institutions are conceptualising service and responsiveness to society's needs. This is not surprising, given that many of the mission statements were formulated relatively recently and that institutions are currently in the throes of restructuring policies and programmes in line with their mission statements.

1.2 Institutional policy on community service

Very few of the institutions have policy on community service. Of four institutions which indicated that they do have such policy, only one, Peninsula Technikon (Pentech), can be said to have an institution-wide policy: "Where students are registered in programmes that can assist the communities in creating a better life, tasks and projects should be created that can be implemented and have an impact on the quality of lives of the stakeholders in the community."

At the University of Natal the issue of a policy on community service is under discussion as part of the larger process of transformation in the university. The Faculty of Community and Development Disciplines which has recently been launched is "devoted to issues of development and community involvement". Within it, the concept of 'service learning' rather than 'community service' is being developed as part of the faculty's mandate. According to the university this model "will be critically evaluated, and if successful, could be extended to other faculties".

In many institutions individual departments have their own policy about community service. Students in such fields as community health, radiography, psychology and social work often have to complete compulsory community work programmes as part of their degree or diploma.

2 TYPES OF COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMMES

The concept paper compared the South African experience of community service in higher education with practices elsewhere in the world. It noted that while most of the international examples of community service were initiated by government in service of national development goals, most of the South African programmes had been initiated within higher education institutions and that they function as relatively isolated local projects.

On the basis of the second phase of the research, this section of the report is able to provide more detail on how community service programmes started on South African campuses, the range of programmes, the support provided by the institutions, how institutions perceive the benefit derived

from community service, and the challenges and constraints still being faced in implementing community service. The analysis below draws on the case studies and the benefit studies undertaken for this phase of the research. Chapter Three looks in detail at the impact of the community service programmes.

2.1 Why the community service programmes were established

The research suggests that the motivation for establishing the programmes varied from one institution to the next. This affected the nature of the programmes, their shape, management and resourcing - factors which ultimately affect the impact of each programme (see Chapter Three for an analysis of impact). As with many other facets of South African life, the drive to establish community service programmes was closely tied to political developments within the country over the past 10 to 15 years.

Among the 17 programmes surveyed, one started as far back as 1978 when the Division of Community Paediatrics was launched as a component of the Department of Paediatrics at the Wits Medical School. All the other programmes in the sample were launched during the last decade in one of two key periods:

- The first period occurred in the late 1980s/early 1990s when two of the programmes surveyed were launched in medicine (UCT and UOFS), one in occupational therapy (Wits), one in dentistry (Wits), one in optometry (RAU) and four in law (Venda University and UPE).
- The second period was around 1994 when the following programmes were launched: one in medicine (University of Pretoria), two in dentistry (UWC), one in social work (UOFS), two in education (Wits and RAU) and one in architecture (Pentech). In 1994 some of the programmes established earlier received a further boost to their development, as happened in the case of the University of Venda's Legal Aid Clinic when an agreement of cooperation was signed between the University and the Legal Aid Board as part of the extension of legal aid to the former homeland areas.

2.2 Relationship of community service programmes to teaching and research

In most of the case studies the establishment of community-based programmes was directly related to the core mission of higher education - teaching and research. The key motivation for the establishment of relationships between the higher education institutions and individual communities stemmed from a perceived need to strengthen the relevance of the teaching programmes (and in some cases an interest in amplifying the base of research) by broadening these activities into black communities. Today the strength of the link between the curricula and the community-based programmes varies. In some cases the curriculum goals are primary while in others community service programmes exist in their own right. The range of programmes may be described as though they were on a spectrum.

At one end of the spectrum is the case of one university department's engagement in communities being at the very core of its work: Community Paediatrics cannot be taught or researched without reference to the context in which the discipline seeks to locate itself. In this case the interviewee did not see the issue of community engagement as community service, but rather as an intrinsic part of the curriculum in which internship is a requirement which all medical students need to undertake to qualify in their field. In other words, the registrar's professional development was the primary goal.

Next are the examples of such institutions, as the universities of Pretoria, the Free State and Venda (prior to 1994), in which some departments sought to provide students with opportunities to undertake practical work in the context of disadvantaged communities. The coordinators of the programmes say that their motivation was to provide students with a 'community orientation'. In the process services were rendered in the communities concerned, but the primary consideration was the impact on student learning.

Moving along the spectrum, some university departments recognised the severe imbalances in society in terms of the provision of services and started outreach programmes in their disciplines so as to provide services where previously there were none. Institutions started providing rehabilitation services in some rural sites, for example, and dental health

care services (both curative and preventative), social work services, legal services and optometry services in townships. In their present form the programmes are related to what is being taught in the departments, but are also seeking to make an impact on communities through service provision. In these examples the service goal is more explicit than in the programmes mentioned above. Given their limited resource base (financial and personnel) these programmes are necessarily limited in scale and confront the development challenges of how best to use scarce resources (time, personnel and money) for sustainable change.

Towards the other end of the spectrum the case studies include examples of programmes launched by institutions (such as Wits and RAU) in which the link between the programme and the curriculum is relatively tenuous or not there at all. For example, the Wits Schools Partnership Programme involves senior undergraduate and post-graduate students from the faculties of arts, engineering, science and health sciences. The students provide tuition in biology, mathematics, physical science and English to secondary school students drawn from township schools. The RAU Inset Programme draws on post-graduate students in education, general science, history and business economics to provide tuition to teachers from Orange Farm. Student participation is voluntary, except for the students taking general science whose participation is assessed (alternatively, they may choose to do an assignment). In both these cases the programmes represent initiatives through which the institutions are attempting to build relationships with communities through outreach which is not curriculum-related. In fact the Legal Aid Clinic at the University of Venda today also falls into this category since its activities have hardly any links with the teaching programme of the Law Faculty at the university.

The volunteer student programmes are at the far end of the spectrum in that there is generally no link at all between the programme and the curriculum. Although some students use the knowledge gained in their professional studies for community work, many of the programmes do not require specialist knowledge on the part of the participating students. The key goals in these programmes relate to the development of social awareness among the participants through their rendering service to under-served and poor communities.

2.3 Fields in which community service features most prominently

Community service programmes are most commonly found to be part of the professional training of students in fields such as physiotherapy, dentistry, optometry, medicine, veterinary science and law. Students tend to participate in community-based activities when they are in their senior years of study, but a number of departments are introducing community work in the junior years as well. Examples include second year medical students at UCT who are required to complete a research and health promotion course at community clinics in the Western Cape, and second year dental students from UWC who participate in an oral health promotion course in schools, creches and old age homes. One institution has introduced a community work component into each year of the four year physiotherapy course. Nursing, occupational therapy, speech therapy and social work students are generally involved in community work in all four years of study.

Engineering and commerce students were conspicuously absent from the submissions of higher education institutions on community service. Only one technikon recorded the compulsory in-service training required of engineering students as community service. However, it was not clear whether these activities are regarded as community service because they seek to cater for specific needs in disadvantaged communities or whether they merely constitute in-service training which could be carried out in professional engineering offices just as well as in a community setting.

In addition to curriculum-related community service programmes which are compulsory for registered students, there is an increasing number of electives which students can take for degree purposes and which involve community-based activity. The Department of Political Science at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, for example, has an elective module which third year students may choose to do for course credits. Science students studying for a Higher Diploma in Education at RAU can choose between tutoring on the RAU Inset Programme or writing a long essay for one of their courses.

2.4 Volunteer service programmes

The research confirmed the finding made in the concept paper that there are a wide range of voluntary programmes on higher education campuses and provided more information about their nature and form.

Three types of voluntary service programmes were identified:

- Programmes in which students use the knowledge gained in their professional studies. Law students work in legal aid clinics or on street law programmes; psychology and social work students work in trauma units; medical students work in community clinics and on programmes such as the Phelophepa Train which provides a health care service in remote areas. It seems that programmes drawing on the skills of law and medical students exist on many university campuses.
- Few voluntary programmes seem to draw in students from other faculties or disciplines. Exceptions are found at the University of Natal where engineering students do voluntary work at the Valley Trust and commerce and business administration students do voluntary work in community-based business advice offices.
- Programmes in which students engage in service not directly related to their professional field of study, but in which their academic knowledge is of some importance. One such programme is the Wits Schools Partnership Programme in which science, engineering and English students tutor pupils in mathematics, science, biology and English. At other institutions such as the North West University, University of Zululand and Technikon Northern Gauteng students from a wide range of disciplines provide tuition at winter schools or on Saturday school programmes. The schools outreach programme at Witwatersrand Technikon has adopted a particularly innovative approach to recruiting pupils to technology studies. Students from the technikon with a good track record are trained to make presentations to school pupils in rural and remote areas on technology-based careers.
- Programmes which do not require specialist knowledge for participation. The best-known of these are the University of Stellenbosch's Clinic Organisation (formerly Uskor and now known as

Matie Community Service), the Students Health and Welfare Centres Organisation (Shawco) based at the University of Cape Town and the Southern African Student Volunteers' Organisation (Sasvo) based at the University of Pretoria. Shawco and Matie Community Service both have a long tradition of volunteer service going as far back as 1943 and 1964 respectively and both organisations aim to address the development needs of communities through student activity. Although no specialist knowledge is required for these programmes, many students do work which bears some relation to their fields of study. For example many of the Shawco volunteers are medical or business science students since Shawco provides a number of health services and is widely regarded as a good management training ground.

Sasvo involves students in rural and peri-urban development in Southern Africa, mostly in renovation or construction work at schools, clinics, hospitals and community centres. These short-term volunteers also conduct human rights workshops during their three-week camps. Sasvo is the only programme in this survey of community service programmes which has an explicit focus on voluntarism. One of the four main motivations behind launching the programme was to spread the ideas of voluntarism, community responsibility, self-help and love of Africa amongst Southern African tertiary students.

Some of the voluntary programmes attract large numbers of students while others have smaller numbers participating. For example, Sasvo, Shawco and Matie Community Service each attract relatively large numbers of students: Sasvo involves 900 students per year, Shawco between 500 and 1 000, and Matie Community Service approximately 1 000. In 1996 the Phelophepa Train attracted 996 students from 28 institutions on its three-week-long service trips and in 1997 this number increased to 1 085 students³. While these numbers have remained fairly stable, it would seem that in recent years there has been a significant decrease in student volunteers participating in the legal aid clinics and street law programmes. Christoff Heyns, a founder member of Sasvo, believes that students want to make a difference and that if a service programme is well run and well organised they will become involved. He believes that once students have been mobilised around the idea of voluntary community service, it will become part of the culture of higher education. Heyns also believes that

community service has the potential to change the perspective and attitudes of participating students.

Payment for student involvement is an important issue because many people hope that community service can help needy students earn some income to offset their fees. The research found that the voluntary programmes can be divided into those in which students engage in unpaid community service and those for which students receive a stipend or hourly payment.

- In most volunteer programmes students are not paid for their services.
- In some programmes, volunteers receive a small stipend (R50 in the case of Sasvo) to cover incidental costs.
- In a few programmes students receive a grant or hourly payment. For example, the students who participate in the Witwatersrand Technikon schools outreach programme receive a grant towards their tuition or towards their student loan. In the work study programme at the University of Natal students receive a R1 500 grant for 180 hours of community service. R1 000 of this is used to offset fees. Dental students who do voluntary work on UWC's Saturday denture programme are paid by the hour for the time they work on Saturdays, providing the elderly with dentures. The Wits Schools Partnership Programme pays students R25 per hour for tutoring in black schools.

Sasvo student volunteers are provided with food and accommodation for the work camp projects. Student volunteers who have to travel off-campus, for example to run workshops for the street law programme, are generally reimbursed for the travel costs incurred.

The issue of whether community service programmes can assist students in financial need is further explored in Chapter Four.

3 INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

The research found that very few institutions are able to provide direct funding to their community service programmes. Almost all the programmes surveyed rely on external funding, mostly provided by private

sector donors. One case was identified in which a community service programme is receiving government funding.⁴

However, the research also shows that higher education institutions do provide considerable support for the programmes through the provision of facilities, infrastructural support and human resources. In many cases this is a substantial contribution and may include lecture halls, office space, administrative costs and support, financial management support and faculty time for co-ordinating and supervising students. Perhaps the greatest contribution made by higher education institutions is the time given by academics and administrative personnel to the planning, co-ordination, management and supervision of community service programmes (also see section 5 below).

One project which reported in detail on its contribution is the University of Pretoria's Hammanskraal initiative. The university bought a seminary in the Moretele district to provide a site for community orientation for students. Staff members are heavily involved in managing the project and supervising students, and the university provides the finances to run the project including transport and accommodation costs. The running costs are estimated to be R250 000 per annum.

A major difficulty in assessing the extent of institutional support arises because most institutions are not calculating the real cost of the programmes. While they may keep records on the visible costs (such as transport costs for students, the costs of materials, etc) they generally have no systems for calculating the overhead costs associated with the programme (eg. the cost of the facilities used and the cost of staff time). It is important that institutions begin to find mechanisms for estimating the hidden costs of community service programmes if we are to understand their cost effectiveness. Chapter Four explores this issue in more detail.

In addition to providing infrastructural and human resources support to community service projects, some institutions have established separate units devoted to community service. As was mentioned above, the University of Natal (Durban) has recently established the Faculty of Community and Development Disciplines "devoted to issues of development and community involvement". In 1991 RAU established a Community Development Department which is a non-academic department concerned with co-ordinating and facilitating partnerships

between the university, the private sector and communities. The department finds community sites for faculties, identifies potential donors and assists in the conceptualisation of community-based projects. Border Technikon is currently planning a Community Development Unit. The University of the Orange Free State's Student Representative Council has established Kovscom (Kovsie Community Service) to co-ordinate and channel all student community service initiatives.

4 PERCEIVED BENEFITS

The survey asked higher education managers what benefit community service programmes might yield for students and for their institutions. While the issue of impact and benefit is more fully explored in the next chapter on the basis of the case studies and the benefit studies, the following summarises the views of the institutions which responded to the questionnaire.

4.1 Benefits for students

The responses to the JET questionnaire suggest that students may benefit from community service programmes in four main ways:

- Enhancement of learning. The community service experience is thought to enhance student learning in two ways. Some respondents saw community service as an opportunity for students to apply what had been learnt in theory or in the classroom; in other words it provides an opportunity for in-service training which develops skills required for the profession. Other respondents saw community service programmes as providing other learning opportunities - problem-solving and the acquisition of general or life skills.
- Provision of work experience. Respondents suggested that community service can provide students with valuable experience of the ethos and character of the workplace and the skills that are required to operate successfully in a work environment; it may enhance employment and career prospects through providing networking opportunities and by adding to students' CVs; it gives students an opportunity to understand the challenges and practices of

the careers they have chosen and therefore helps in career development.

- Exposure to community needs and problems. Respondents said that community service programmes hold benefit for students and society because they:
 - make students more aware of community and social problems;
 - make students aware of the challenges the country faces;
 - have the potential to build a spirit of voluntarism in South Africa;
 - can make students aware of their role in building an equitable and dynamic society;
 - can make students aware of the need to participate in community development;
 - can confirm to students that they can make a difference;
 - can contribute to the increased integration of South African society;
 - can lead to some graduates deciding to work in poor communities after graduation.
- Financial assistance. One respondent thought that community service programmes could provide students with financial assistance. While this is a widespread practice in the USA, very few programmes in South Africa are able to pay students for the work they do. This issue is more fully explored in Chapter Four.

4.2 Benefits for higher education institutions

The responses indicated six main benefits which community service programmes could hold for the institutions themselves. They said that community service programmes:

- can bridge the gap between communities and higher education institutions;
- provide a mechanism whereby higher education institutions can contribute to society through the application of the knowledge and skills of faculty;
- can positively change perceptions about higher education institutions;
- can improve current curricula;

- can provide opportunities for research, focused on problems facing the community;
- can provide new sources of funding for higher education.

Most of institutions believe that community service programmes will change the relationship between higher education and communities and that this will change public perception of higher education institutions. One respondent said that higher education institutions would be seen as "relevant by ordinary people" and another that collaboration between communities and higher education institutions through community service programmes would "alter negative perceptions and improve the attitude of communities to higher education institutions". A third maintained that community service could "enhance the status of higher education institutions" in the eyes of the community. Other respondents said that community service programmes could bridge the gap between communities and higher education institutions and that higher education institutions would then be seen as part of the community or as actively serving the community.

Despite this, the institutions do not necessarily see a relationship between their engagement with communities and deeper, transformative, changes in the way they conduct their core business. For example, less than half of the institutions thought that involvement in community service programmes would improve the curricula, with two views on the matter:

- The first view (articulated by three institutions) sees the improvement of student learning coming from new, community-based, opportunities for in-service training.⁵ This view suggests that the community service programmes could add to existing curricula.
- The second view suggests that a deeper process of curriculum change becomes possible through community service programmes. For example community service could be a "catalyst for breaking the insularity of institutions" and could "force faculty to adapt curricula" to make them more appropriate and relevant to students' future careers and to the needs of the country. In the words of one of the respondents, community service will "force disciplines to reconceptualise themselves in terms of relevance, commitment and community development".

Finally, three institutions saw community service programmes as providing possibilities for accessing new sources of funding. One stated that "funding for community-based projects would naturally be obtained" while another thought community service programmes would lead to a possible increase in government funding. Both issues are explored in Chapter Four.

5 CONSTRAINTS IN IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMMES

Six constraints were identified by higher education managers in the implementation of community service programmes: limited resources, high costs, insufficient time, the need for effective policies and systems, finding placements, and the attitudes of higher education stakeholders.

- Limited resources. Most of the respondents mentioned the lack of financial resources as a major impediment to the introduction of community service programmes. As was shown above, most institutions are funding the direct costs of community service programmes from private sources, but according to the University of Pretoria this has the potential of making the function "ad hoc and donor driven, as opposed to being driven by community and higher education (teaching and research needs)".

Higher education managers and faculty claim that state funding for community service would provide some incentive for institutions to become involved in community service programmes. The subsidy formula is presently being reviewed to find ways of encouraging institutional responsiveness to society's needs, but from the point of view of the Department of Education state subsidy for community service can be provided only if the programmes form an integral part of the curriculum.

Two respondents mentioned the lack of facilities as a constraining factors and more than half the institutions indicated that lack of human resources was a major constraint. It has already been pointed out that institutions are already making an important contribution to supporting community service programmes without having fully costed out these contributions. However, with institutions facing funding cuts in a context of spiralling costs, community service programmes will have to

prove that they can add real value before they are likely to attract additional core resources from budgets which are already stretched.

- High costs. Institutions report that the direct costs of community service programmes are considerable. One pointed to the high costs of transporting students to community sites and the research shows that a number of community service programmes have been discontinued or downscaled because of transport costs. For example, UCT social work and psychology students no longer do community work at the Mamre Health Centre and the workshops run by the UPE Street Law Programme have been reduced because of transport costs.
- Insufficient staff time. A major constraint which emerged from the research is that faculty members are already stretched and lack the time required for the proper co-ordination and management of programmes and for the supervision of students. UWC provided a comprehensive set of reasons for the careful, and by implication time-consuming, planning of community service programmes:
 - the need for negotiations with communities and establishing clear networks with community structures;
 - coherent integration of the needs of the community with the programme design;
 - effective management and supervision of students to ensure that both benefit and that no harm is done to communities;
 - ensuring that students acquire skills in a planned and supervised way.

Many of these points are supported by the findings from the case studies and the benefit studies reported on in the next chapter.

Two respondents said that the time required for community service programmes not only affects staff, but also students. Some said that staff and students are already overworked while others - especially in the technikon sector - stated that the curriculum was already too full and that community service could not be added to it. Instead its introduction would require a reduction in the hours of contact or an extension of the period of study.

- The need for effective policies and systems was identified as one of the greatest challenges facing the introduction of community service programmes, particularly in regard to recognising community service as part of staff performance appraisal. According to the University of Pretoria, universities often state that community service is an important function in their mission and strategic plans, but "do not have effective systems for monitoring how and whether it gets done or what the quality/impact of their work is on communities". Even at the University of Natal (Durban) where community service is high on the management agenda "it is unusual to be promoted on the basis of community service alone". A number of universities such as the University of Cape Town have included community service amongst the criteria for faculty performance appraisal, but there seems to be scepticism about the weight given to community service.
- Finding placements is also regarded as a major challenge, particularly for institutions located outside large cosmopolitan areas. The high unemployment rate in local areas functions as a constraint to students being placed in community service programmes where they may be viewed as displacing labour.
- Attitudes and mindset of higher education stakeholders. Two institutions reported that the introduction of community service programmes was constrained by the attitudes and mindset of higher education stakeholders. One reported that one of the challenges facing the introduction of community service programmes was resistance by staff and students. This institution also saw institutional bureaucracy as an impediment to community service programmes. The second institution recorded that the "transformation of the mindset of higher education institutions" was required if community service programmes were to be introduced.

6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The survey of the policies and practices of higher education institutions in South Africa with regard to community service showed that these institutions see community service as a feature of their mission. However, in most cases the mission statement does not indicate whether community service is regarded as a separate function from teaching and research or

whether it is integral to these activities. Most institutions do not have institution-wide policies on community service, although in some faculties and departments work in communities is a curriculum requirement.

A wide variety of community service programmes operate on South African campuses - some compulsory and curriculum-related, others of a voluntary nature with no relation to the curriculum. While most community service programmes draw on professional skills, fields such as engineering and commerce do not feature prominently in service programmes.

Most community service programmes in higher education institutions rely heavily on external funding. Higher education institutions do provide infrastructural and human resources to community service programmes and in many cases the human resources provided are considerable. However, most higher education institutions are not able to cost their contribution to community service programmes which makes it difficult or impossible to determine their investment in these programmes.

Higher education faculty and managers see potential benefits for students and for their institutions in community service, but also see the lack of human, financial and administrative resources in their institutions as the main constraints to the introduction of community service in higher education.

In summary it can be said that the mission statements of higher education institutions suggest that they are responding to calls by government and the public to become more responsive to the needs of society and that community service for students is one of the ways in which they are taking up this challenge. However, the present financial cutbacks which institutions are facing and which have resulted in staffing losses are likely to inhibit the introduction or extension of community service programmes. This is all the more difficult because of the time-consuming nature of much of what makes up good community service work and the fact that, even where programmes do enjoy a close relationship with the curriculum, faculty members do not receive academic recognition for these initiatives.

1 From Rhodes University, Rand Afrikaanse University, University of the Orange Free State, University of the Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town, University of Port Elizabeth, Vista

University, Medical University of South Africa, University of the Western Cape, University of Natal, University of the North, University of North West, University of Pretoria, University of Fort Hare, University of Venda, University of Zululand, Border Technikon, Mangosuthu Technikon, Peninsula Technikon, Port Elizabeth Technikon, Technikon Natal, Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon Pretoria, Technikon SA and Technikon Witwatersrand.

- 2 In some cases the institutions sent copies of the questionnaire to faculties which each completed the questionnaire as it pertained to their programmes. Sometimes the Students' Affairs divisions of institutions completed the questionnaire and in other cases this was done by the public relations office. Finally, some institutions forwarded the questionnaire to special divisions set up within their institutions for community service activities.
- 3 This programme reports that each year it is receiving increasing interest from local and foreign students who wish to participate. Regrettably it is unable to accommodate all applicants.
- 4 The Mangaung Free State University Partnership has received funding from a number of provincial government departments: health, agriculture and trade and industry.
- 5 One respondent sees community service acting as "an OBE training technique".
- 6 Medunsa recorded that facilities for 'accommodation, meals and amenities related to university training' were inadequate in outlying areas where community service programmes should or do take place.

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMMES

The analysis in the last chapter suggests that the development of higher education community service programmes is one way in which institutions are seeking to become more responsive to society. The question which arises is: how closely are the community service programmes related to the transformation of the core functions of the institutions - teaching and research? Many of the community service programmes surveyed in this study do have a relationship with the curriculum, but are they making any impact on curriculum reform and if so, how? And how do they assist the institutions in fulfilling their mission of service?

The concept paper noted that there is a dearth of empirical research and social science literature on community service in South Africa and recommended that programme evaluations and impact assessments be conducted to document current practice. On the basis of a limited research programme in 1997, the concept paper made two findings about the impact of community service programmes:

First, it concluded that higher education students, staff and institutions are the major beneficiaries of the programmes. While some benefits do seem to accrue to the communities in which the programmes are operating, this could not be quantified.¹

Second, it noted that the impact of community service programmes on higher education curricula is greater in South Africa than in other countries. "This is being fostered by the push for the transformation of higher education and by the need to prepare students adequately for new occupations and for the world of work. The programmes surveyed show that in a number of institutions serious attempts are being made to link curricula more meaningfully with conditions in communities off campus and

that extension/outreach and curriculum-related programmes are feeding back into curriculum design. "2

One of the major aims of JET's 1998 Community Service in Higher Education Project was thus to examine the impact of community service programmes run by higher education institutions. The research project examined seventeen community service programmes, none of which had been previously surveyed. Eleven were short case studies and six were in-depth benefit studies undertaken by researchers contracted by JET. The case studies provide a body of information which enlarges our understanding of the main aims of the higher education community service programmes, how they are organised, managed and resourced, and how they function within communities - particularly with regard to their scope, their location, their duration and the question of supervision. The six benefit studies provide detailed analyses of the benefits which the programmes are yielding to their host institutions, to participating students and to the communities they seek to serve.

Appendix 1 contains the research design for the benefit studies. Appendix 2 lists the programmes surveyed, while Appendix 3 contains the research questions for the case studies.

This chapter is divided into three parts. It starts with an analysis of the impact of the programmes on higher education curricula in terms of curriculum content, assessment and research, and analyses the factors which influence this impact. The second section examines the impact on participating students by looking at the knowledge and skills gained, the changes in student values and attitudes, opportunities for earning and employment and the factors influencing student benefit. The last section examines the impact of the programmes on the communities: it explores who the services are reaching, community attitudes towards the services offered, the value of the services and factors influencing community impact.

1 IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULA

The analysis in Chapter Two (section 4.2) shows that fewer than half the institutions surveyed think that involvement in community service programmes would improve higher education curricula. This suggests that there is some scepticism about the extent to which community service programmes could play a meaningful role in transforming teaching and research.

Among those respondents who did feel that curricula could be improved, a key idea seems to be that community service programmes provide faculty with new insights into their work and thereby bring about changes to the curricula, making them more relevant and meaningful to society.

Below we look at how community service programmes have affected the teaching and research activities of which they are a part and the factors which influence their impact on curriculum transformation.

1.1 Curriculum-related programmes and participants

The research suggests that there are three main types of curriculum-related community service programmes among the cases surveyed. These are differentiated according to the way in which they draw on the knowledge and skills of students and faculty:

- Community-based internship programmes are those in which students apply their specialist skills with a view to learning how to use them in practice, or to conduct research using their specialist knowledge. These students deliver services in disadvantaged communities while they are doing practical work which is closely related to their courses of study.
- Community-based education programmes are those in which students become involved in raising awareness within disadvantaged communities around particular issues, eg. dental health care. Here too they draw on their specialist knowledge and deliver a programme or service closely related to their courses of study.
- General community-based programmes are those in which students engage in activities which are not directly related to their courses of study, eg. assisting members of disadvantaged communities with the establishment of food gardens or equipping creches with resources. Here students seem to draw far less on their specialist knowledge and skills, but there may still be some relationship between their involvement in the programme and their training.

The internship programmes and the education programmes are the ones which potentially have the closest relationship with the curricula but, as we show below, their impact on the curricula takes different forms.

Who is participating in the community service programmes? In most of the cases surveyed, the participants are senior students in their final or penultimate year of study or graduates who are doing internships. However, a number of institutions are now seeking ways of involving junior students in community-based activities as part of their training. For example, the faculty of medicine at the University of Pretoria used to involve only senior students in community-based practical assignments, but a new curriculum has started drawing students into the programme from their first year. First year medical students visit clinics in the Moretele District in the North West Province for a week at a time. On one day they undertake specific services such as observing vital signs (pulse, blood pressure, etc) while on other days they go out with village care groups who render a variety of services to villagers such as care giving for disabled children. It is envisaged that second year students will do some research in these communities, but this is still in the planning stage. First year physiotherapy, dietetics and human development students run training courses for village care groups.

At the University of the Western Cape, second year students studying for the Oral Health Diploma and second year dentistry students all participate in the oral health programme. Staff in the faculty view this component of the course as being an essential one in the professional training programme. For the diploma students the programme provides an opportunity to gain some practical experience in disadvantaged communities before entering the working world. For the dentistry students the experience provides essential preparation for the clinical work they will perform in their fourth, fifth and sixth years of study. At the same time, as will be seen below, the students provide an important service to the communities.

The trend towards involving students at lower levels in community-based work is supported by other examples: an evaluation of the University of Natal's primary health care attachment programme piloted in rural areas recommended that the programme be introduced from the third year of study and not be restricted to sixth-year students. The Coordinator of the University of Port Elizabeth's street law programme feels that the

programme could have considerable impact on the faculty's teaching methodology if it were more fully integrated into the law faculty at different levels.

To what extent, then, are the community service programmes impacting on the curricula with which they are associated?

1.2 Features of curriculum impact

The research material provided some interesting insights into the relationship between community service programmes and curriculum content, assessment processes and academic research.

1.2.1 Curriculum content

While most professional training strives to combine theory with practice, the introduction of community service as part of the higher education curriculum provides students and faculty with experiential learning of a different kind. It suggests that the departments concerned are attempting to develop a socially responsive orientation to their teaching programmes and that they are seeking to meet the challenges which derive from the application of knowledge and skills in poor communities. Below we cite some examples in which an orientation towards the conditions and needs of disadvantaged communities started influencing the curriculum in the departments concerned.

In order to support students more effectively in their work at community rehabilitation centres, the Wits Department of Occupational Therapy changed its curriculum for third and fourth year students so as to make it more community-based and problem-oriented. The practical work that students do at the community rehabilitation centres in rural areas is informed by and helps to inform the theoretical components of their training. Students learn how to deliver occupational therapy and physiotherapy to rural communities. They learn how to give disability treatment and learn how to exercise their supervisory role towards community rehabilitation workers. They teach patients how to be independent and contribute to skills that make people employable. This work is assessed and students are awarded a performance certificate without which they cannot write their examinations.

The RAU Department of Optometry adopted a community-oriented approach to its teaching programme by involving students in community clinics in Alexandra, Lenasia and on the Phelophepha Train which visits far-flung rural communities. In these environments the department sought opportunities to instil in students an understanding of the relationship between poverty and health - for example the impact of poor nutrition on vision. The strong emphasis on applied research has not been without its critics, but according to the interviewees the university is committed to achieving a better fit between theoretical and applied learning. The community-based work in the Department of Optometry has assisted in realising this goal in poor communities. In the process the department has sought to introduce a primary health care orientation to its training so as to equip its graduates to practice in both well-resourced and less well-resourced environments.

The third example comes from the Division of Community Dentistry which falls within the Wits Department of Community Health. The division's mobile unit provides a facility which offers curative dental services in under-served communities. At the same time the mobile unit provides a base from which oral health education programmes can be run within the community in which it is stationed. With the backing of the School of Oral Health Sciences, the Division of Community Dentistry will in future require that students work in the mobile unit for specific periods during term time and will give them credit for this practical component. The division has also responded to the challenge of implementing community-based programmes by integrating courses on management and community education more centrally in its curriculum (previously these were on the periphery of the teaching programme).

At the University of the Western Cape the oral health promotion programme has had a marked impact on the content of the study programmes for the Oral Health Diploma and the dentistry students. According to the dean, the programme has helped to highlight the relevance of various community health policy issues. The participation of students and staff in the community has led to a larger component of theoretical work addressing issues such as the status of the individual regarding HIV/AIDS, preventative health care, high risk groups and health education.

The case studies cited at the higher education workshop held by JET in March 1998 provided further evidence of how experience gained through community service could impact on curriculum change. For example, the University of Natal's primary health care attachment programme is bringing new information about traditional healers into the medical curriculum and is changing the nature of the training received by student doctors. Furthermore, all the medical students in this programme are learning to speak isiZulu as part of their training.

3.2.2 Curriculum assessment

The weight accorded to a community service programme and the extent to which it is integrated into the curriculum can often be gauged by the way in which the work done by students in the programme is assessed.

For example, in the University of the Orange Free State's Department of Social Work Verkeerdevlei project, the marks received by the fourth year students for this practical component and their community-based research make up 75% of their practical year mark. While this weighting may not be surprising in itself, it is significant that the department made a deliberate choice to locate the practical work in a community 85 km outside Bloemfontein and which has very few resources and very little infrastructure. Explicit goals of the project include addressing poverty and unemployment, addressing the lack of training and skills, and addressing marital and family problems through therapeutic work. Students apply their social work knowledge and skills, but also learn how to generate new knowledge about the application of their discipline within poor communities and how to do research.

Other examples include the assessment of the Wits occupational therapy students on their performance in rural centres (already noted above); without a performance certificate they are not able to write their examinations. The intention of the Wits Community Dentistry Division to accredit practical work has also been noted above.

There are, however, differences of opinion about the extent to which community-based work has impacted on the nature of the assessment process in departments. For example, the chair of the University of Port Elizabeth's Legal Education Committee reportedly feels that the legal practices course contributed to the examinations being more problem-

based and regards community service as a way of making the curriculum more practical. The staff in both the legal aid clinic and the university's street law programme believe, on the other hand, that assessment techniques used in the legal practices course should be more rigorous and criterion based - a view shared by the graduates interviewed during the benefit study. This suggests that there is room for the development of meaningful and targeted assessment mechanisms in community-based programmes.

One of the most interesting examples of the assessment of community-based work in an academic environment comes from the Peninsula Technikon. The Community Projects Office was set up by the School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering and provides in-service training to architecture students with difficulty in finding placements. The programme aims to provide students with the practical knowledge and skills required of design and construction technicians, but also aims to provide them with negotiation and community facilitation skills. The assessment format evaluates students on research, design, presentation of design (drawing and documentation) and technical skills (such as development models, site operations and liaison). In each of these areas the students are assessed in respect of their knowledge, practical application and confidence, as well as their ability to work in a team and their understanding of community work.

A unique feature of the Pentech example is that the assessment criteria seem to have been carefully developed in relation to the programme goals. This contrasts strongly with most of the programmes in which the assessment criteria for the community service component were not explicit, nor were they always clearly related to curriculum goals.

1.2.3 Community-based research

The research identified a number of examples which suggest that community engagement can generate research which has academic merit while simultaneously leading to community benefit. The following four are noteworthy.

Through its mobile unit and community service programme, the Wits Community Dentistry division has pioneered and tested an alternative and low-cost technology for fillings. Known as R-technique, the technology

involves the use of hand instruments and is now being taught in the formal curriculum.

The Community Projects Office at the School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering at Peninsula Technikon has set itself the goal of undertaking research into the development of appropriate technology in the building industry. It has produced a compressed earth brick as a low-cost, labour-intensive alternative building material. The product has been approved by the South African Bureau of Standards and was used in the building of the 80 000-brick Alliance Francaise Culture Centre in Mitchell's Plain. The programme is also trying to revive the earth technology tradition of building in the Western Cape. This it does by conducting soil tests to see if earth technology is appropriate in the area and offering earth technology workshops to members of the local communities.

The Department of Social Work at the University of the Orange Free State reports that its projects such as the one at Verkeerdevlei have assisted academic staff to gain a much more informed understanding of the conditions in which rural African communities live, and the problems they experience. This in turn has impacted on their teaching and has enabled them to contextualise some of the theoretical components of their curricula.

Similarly, the epidemiological research carried out by medical students in and around the Mamre Community Health Centre is said to feed into the teaching and policy research activities of the Department of Community Health at the University of Cape Town.

1.3 Factors influencing curriculum impact

The features outlined above suggest that community service programmes can make an impact on the knowledge base of the staff and students. There is evidence in the case studies that the community-based work done by students is feeding back into faculty thinking and that it is leading to changes in what is taught and how student learning is assessed.

However, the research also suggests that the impact of community service on the curriculum is far smaller than it could be. There seem to be four factors which constrain the influence of community service programmes on the curricula with which they are associated. These support the analysis in

Chapter Two which provided an overview of the challenges and constraints faced by higher education institutions in introducing community service programmes.

- The first factor which affects curriculum impact is the extent to which the community service programme forms part of the curriculum goals. Where opportunities are set up for students to use their specialist knowledge and skills in a service capacity within communities, and where the goals of the curriculum made this work an essential activity, the experience gained by students and staff is most likely to feed back into the academic teaching and research programme of the faculty concerned.

Two good examples are the University of the Western Cape's oral health promotion programme and the Peninsula Technikon's School of Architecture Community Projects Office. The curriculum impact in both cases has been described above. An example of poor integration comes from the University of Venda where whatever impact the legal aid clinic could have had on the law curriculum has been lost with the separation of the attorneys practice course from the legal aid clinic.

However, according to one benefit study, achieving such integration is not a simple matter. While strong links exist between the Faculty of Law at the University of Port Elizabeth and the university's legal aid clinic (the clinic director sits on the Faculty Board and student participation in the clinic is tied to the curriculum), the benefit study suggests that the introduction of the legal practices course has had little impact on the law curriculum or on the way in which students are taught or assessed at UPE. This is despite faculty recognition that legal training should have a greater practical orientation. The study suggests that some faculty members regard the introduction of the course and its close relationship with the legal aid clinic as an achievement in its own right. However, the clinic director and a lecturer who oversees the course feel that the supervision provided in the clinic is inadequate and that this limits the real benefit which students can gain from the practical experience offered.

- Secondly, the research suggests that the institution's orientation towards social responsiveness (and thus towards community service) is an important factor. Maximum curriculum impact is likely to

be achieved only when a range of efforts are made at all levels of the institution to integrate the community-based experience into curriculum design. For example, universities could make a more holistic investment in programmes such as legal aid clinics, possibly by making expertise from other faculties available to the clinic (the provision of psychologists and social workers as expert witnesses was one suggestion). It is also suggested that closer integration of initiatives such as the street law programme into a law faculty could help strengthen teaching and learning practices in the study of law. However, all these developments depend on whether the institution sees value in making community service part of its teaching and research agenda.

✍ Inadequate resourcing is a major constraint in integrating community service programmes fully into curricula. The University of Venda law clinic is no longer accessible to undergraduates taking the attorneys practice course because the clinic does not have sufficient space to accommodate undergraduate students as well as candidate attorneys and clients, and because it lacks sufficient qualified people to supervise the work of the students. It seems that inadequate supervision is also a function of insufficient resources at the UPE clinic - the director believes that the clinic should employ a second attorney who can supervise the students' work and assist in dealing with cases. Curriculum impact is likely to depend on the level of involvement of academic staff in the community service programmes. Besides the time constraints and lack of institutional reward experienced by faculty members in regard to community service, staff involvement may depend on the leadership's orientation towards community service.

For example, as was reported earlier, the University of Pretoria's faculty of medicine runs a project at Hammanskraal which involves the deployment of students in six clinics in one district in the North West Province. The case study shows that a new curriculum is being developed in the faculty and reports that it is to be called the 'problem-oriented and community-based curriculum' which requires that every block includes learning experience in the community. This is likely to affect students in a range of disciplines (medicine, physiotherapy, speech and hearing, dentistry, etc). A major factor here seems to be the energy and commitment of the professor who heads the

Hammanskraal project and his conviction that the programme is beneficial for the medical students and for the country as a whole. At the University of Venda, on the other hand, faculty members have very limited contact with the workings of the legal aid clinic and the curriculum is thus likely to remain isolated from the influence of community-based legal experience. It appears that there has been relatively little faculty participation in the street law programme at the University of Venda with the result that the programme's influence on the curriculum has been limited, despite the fact that it deals with topics and issues that are covered in many of the law courses. The University of Port Elizabeth street law programme also experiences low levels of involvement from faculty members and once again this limits the influence on teaching programmes within the faculty. According to the benefit study, the UPE street law programme coordinator and one other lecturer have attempted to make their mainstream law courses more participative and problem-based, but have not succeeded in influencing other members of the faculty in the same direction.

- The case studies indicate that curriculum impact is slow to be realised within the institutions. Sometimes this is a function of tensions which arise in a department between the original course objectives and the pointers towards modification arising from the application of skills by students in grassroots communities. In other cases staff may be aware that their course content is no longer appropriate in the 'real' world, but the impetus for change is lacking in the institution. This situation is undoubtedly exacerbated by the fact that departmental staff are not rewarded for the time they invest in community-based work since this is not recognised as a basis for promotion within the higher education environment.

A related factor is that sometimes a great deal of time is required to set up programmes, particularly when they need to be shaped by extensive processes of consultation within institutions, with professional bodies, possibly with government and with the communities concerned. The programmes may also need to be piloted or researched prior to being launched.

For example, in the case of the Wits Department of Occupational Therapy's programme for community rehabilitation workers, the planning phase lasted for five or six years before the department started training its first intake of community rehabilitation workers in 1991. The process involved consultations with three professional associations, discussions with the Department of Health and a year-long prevalence of disability study to determine the training needs of the rural areas targeted for support. Also at Wits, the Schools Partnership Programme went through a two year period of planning, piloting and school selection before it was formally launched in 1994.

2 IMPACT ON PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

The research suggests that participating students derive considerable benefit from their experience in community service programmes. Three main types of benefit emerge from the study: students acquire new knowledge and skills; their values and attitudes are influenced by their exposure to poor communities; and in some cases it may be possible for them to earn an income whilst rendering community service.

2.1 Knowledge and skills gained

The research highlighted a number of examples, particularly in the medical field, in which students' knowledge and skill was augmented by their involvement in community service programmes:

- medical students learnt research, epidemiological and communication skills and learnt about aspects of primary health care;
- the stress on health promotion enabled the students to see the importance of patients being able to sustain health practices;
- by encountering the social and environmental factors that influence disease, students came to understand the importance of a holistic approach to the treatment of disease;
- community-based practicals sharpened the skills of optometry students in the detection of pathology; they developed refraction skills and with limited technology they learnt to provide the correct reading from which to make a lens.

It would seem that following their exposure to community work, the students are more able to contextualise their training and to adapt their skills to the conditions of poverty experienced by many South Africans. Students also reported that they gained new perspectives on their academic work: they learnt that knowledge is not just contained in books; they learnt to do research and to integrate theory and practice in underdeveloped contexts.

The six benefit studies sought to establish more accurately how the experience gained in community service programmes was impacting on student learning. The studies sought information on both the knowledge gained and the skills developed.

The report on the University of Port Elizabeth legal aid clinic provides details of the knowledge gained by the students, under the following headings:

- Knowledge which strengthens academic knowledge. Students who were interviewed said that they learnt how to apply their theoretical knowledge to the clients' problems. Their work required them to recall what they had learnt during previous years of study and to integrate the knowledge of various aspects of the law when solving problems. Specifically, they improved their knowledge of criminal law.
- Knowledge about the way in which the law operates in practice. Interviewees reported that through their work at the clinic they gained improved procedural knowledge: they now understand "how things work in practice" (eg. a motion in court). In addition, the students feel that they have a better understanding of different types of legal documents (particulars of claim, summons, letter of demand, etc.) and how these should be drafted. Students also said that they now know how to deal with case files.
- Knowledge about the world. A number of students said that their work at the clinic has sensitised them to the nature of legal problems which people experience on a day to day basis. Their contact with clients has also helped them to realise the extent to which people need free legal advice.

The study then examined the skills developed by students under three headings: analytic, task-related and general skills.

- Analytic skills acquired include understanding and identifying the legal problem based on the facts presented by the client, assessing the legal facts, applying knowledge to the problem presented by the client, and deciding how to approach the problem.
- Task-related skills. These include consulting with clients and knowing what questions to ask them, making clients feel at ease, drafting letters of demand and particulars of claim, handling paper work, dealing with litigation (this includes knowledge about attorney-client privilege, professional conduct and knowing what procedures to follow when instituting litigation) and research skills.
- General skills acquired include improved second-language ability, improved communication and listening skills, remaining objective when dealing with clients, being sensitive to the clients' needs, improved confidence, empathy, patience, communicating with other attorneys, taking instruction from senior attorneys, the ability to 'think on my feet' and teamwork.

It is important to remember that in this clinic most of the students are undergraduates. The knowledge and skill acquired is thus likely to give them a head start as they move into further professional training. The University of Venda study indicates that although one of the original intentions behind the establishment of the legal aid clinic was to assist undergraduate students to gain practical legal experience, this goal has fallen away. The benefits thus accrue only to candidate attorneys who are working at the clinic.

While the knowledge and skills cited above could be acquired in traditional internship programmes, the fact that the legal aid clinics target poor and indigent people provides the students with particular experience of the law and how it operates in poor communities. This not only affects their values and attitudes (see section 2.2 below), but also contributes to their being able to function as professionals in under-served communities. The loss of opportunity to undergraduate law students at the University of Venda is all the more regrettable in the light of these findings.

The candidate attorneys indicated that they widened their legal knowledge by dealing with a wide range of cases (both criminal and civil) and learned how to handle civil cases - an area which they consider to be particularly challenging. Specific skills were gained in the drafting of legal documents, handling client interviews, cross examination and the presentation of arguments in court, and in interacting with magistrates.

The street law programmes seem to be less directly relevant to the professional development of participating students. Here the benefit to students seems to revolve more around personal and life skills development. The University of Port Elizabeth study suggests that students develop self-confidence and that, by facilitating workshops, they acquire public speaking and presentation skills. These are important skills for trial lawyers or advocates and those students who choose not to enter the legal profession would be able to use the skills in a range of other contexts (one graduate interviewee is working on a non-formal education project).

There is some disparity between the comments of students at the universities of Port Elizabeth and Venda as to whether or not the street law programme enhances their legal knowledge. The University of Port Elizabeth study suggests that although the workshop content is fairly basic, students who facilitate the workshops will have a good understanding of constitutional matters and the content of the Bill of Rights. The study of the programme at the University of Venda, on the other hand, suggests that students are not enhancing their legal knowledge to any great extent. Students claimed that they gained the opportunity to obtain information on the topics presented, but this was contradicted by the clients who said that the students were ill-prepared for the topics they handled. According to the researcher, it is doubtful that the students gained any skills or knowledge from the programme, particularly since the programme is often run in the last two months of the second semester, when students are busy preparing for final exams.

In the University of the Western Cape oral health promotion programme, the majority of students said that the course had enhanced their learning and knowledge of oral health and that they had acquired new skills by working in the communities. These include the interpersonal and communication skills (such as interviewing and listening skills) necessary to work with disadvantaged groups (e.g. disabled children). They also

learned how to deal with sensitive issues, gained more insight into health problems in communities and learnt to use the instruments for dental care practice. Some students gained the opportunity to learn about conducting research. Past students indicated that in addition to these skills, they had also learned to work with the mentally disabled. A minority of students felt they had not acquired any new skills during the course.

In the Guguletu dental clinic programme, nearly all students felt that the work they do at the clinic enhances their knowledge of dentistry. They acquired skills in restorative work, prosthetics and impression-taking. Particular experience was gained in dealing with severe oral hygiene periodontal disease. Students acquired proficiency in the use of instruments and different oral surgery techniques, and acquired skills in treating children. The maximum benefit seems to have been gained in the following areas: the speed at which students learn to work in dealing with a large volume of patients; the treatment of typical problems encountered at a primary health care clinic in a disadvantaged area, ie. pain and sepsis problems; and interpersonal skills and self-confidence.

The dentistry students in the community dentistry programmes at the University of the Western Cape learn interpersonal skills not only pertaining to their relationships with patients, but also in terms of team work with their colleagues, learn to work independently and gain in assertiveness.

The six benefit studies thus suggest that those community service programmes which enjoy a close relationship with the curriculum and which are well structured towards specific professional development goals are likely to be most effective in enhancing the knowledge and skills development of the participating students.

2.2 Values and attitudes

Much of the literature on community service and service learning cites the development of civic responsibility as a central goal. According to Thomas Ehrlich, "education should not be value-free. It should serve to deepen our sense of connectedness and responsibility to others. Incorporating volunteer service into undergraduate education, as an integral part of the curriculum, emphasises for students that serving others is part of being an educated person."³ In South Africa the need to bridge the racial divisions

engendered by apartheid, develop young people's social awareness and engage them in meeting the development challenges which face the country are some of the national priorities faced by the new democracy. Can community service programmes assist in meeting these goals?

There is no doubt that the community service programmes examined in the benefit studies made a considerable impact on many of the participating students by changing their values and attitudes towards clients, patients and workshop participants who are drawn from indigent communities and who in some cases may be disabled. The UWC study found that oral health diploma students as well as dentistry students gained insight into broader socio-economic circumstances and the health care needs of society, particularly those students who were not originally part of such communities. Nearly all the students felt that the experience of working in disadvantaged communities was rewarding and that it gave purpose to their role as health care professionals. As was mentioned above, the community service programmes were important mechanisms for introducing medical and dental students to the realities of primary health care and in bringing home to them the importance of preventive care as a component of the health care process.

Many of the students in these programmes said that they feel good about themselves because they had been able to "return something to the community" and have helped "people who need it". In the University of Port Elizabeth study one law student is quoted as saying "it gave me a new look at what it's all about, not just money". The same study shows that most respondents felt that their contact with clients had changed their view of the world. While one felt that the problems which they were exposed to were 'not unexpected', others commented that they had become more aware of the types of problems which people experience.

Respondents also indicated that their view of the law and its role had changed. They were less naive about the solutions offered by the law and were more sympathetic to those experiencing legal disputes. Several students also mentioned that the exposure to less fortunate people and people of different races and cultural backgrounds had improved their racial tolerance and entrenched an understanding that everyone is equal before the law. At the same time, some students indicated that the experience had changed their attitude to the law - they had become aware of how costly legal assistance is for many people, and that for many there

is no immediate remedy available. One person now understood that "law was not so glamorous".

Other comments were made about the impact of the programmes on student values and attitudes:

- the programme sensitises students to national problems and takes away their fear of community service;
- one programme coordinator argues that a multi-disciplinary approach brings about visible change in the students;
- another programme believes it is imparting lasting values such as patriotism and a sense that it is necessary to serve one's community;
- students are exposed to different backgrounds and get to know about the living conditions of other sectors of society, they learn to work with communities and begin to understand some of the political realities in the country;
- students in one programme say that the experience develops their social consciousness - it opens their eyes to poor sectors of society;
- for some white students, the programmes provide a first experience of working with black people.

2.3 Earning and employment benefits

In all the examples of post-graduate internship, the interns are paid for the services they perform. In the University of Venda legal aid clinic study, for example, the candidate attorneys report that they are better paid than are law graduates who are articled to private firms.

However, as was pointed out in Chapter Two, there are few opportunities for undergraduate students to earn; community service programmes which are able to pay students for their work are relatively few and far between. In the work study programme at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg students are able to earn a stipend which contributes to their fees. However, in most cases participation in the projects is not required as part of the curriculum; students choose to participate in the work study programme and are paid a stipend according to the conditions governing individual projects.

The work study programme at the University of the Western Cape also provides an opportunity for students to earn, but here the work is done on

campus and students choose whether or not they wish to participate. This work is also not related to the students' courses of study.

At technikons, undergraduate students are paid during their internships or placements, eg. the students placed in the Community Projects Office of the School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering earn approximately R550 per month for the service work they do for the community projects office. This is less than the income of students who gain placements in commercial design offices where they can earn up to R1 000 per month.

Views varied as to whether the community service experiences had an impact on the employment opportunities of participating students. Although the University of Port Elizabeth legal aid clinic respondents felt that their experience would benefit them in their future careers, graduates from the same programme felt that their work at the clinic had not been a factor in their employment. Those graduates who are now in senior positions within legal firms said that clinic experience did not necessarily influence their decision to employ candidate attorneys. Many argued that the practical legal training offered by the legal aid clinic is now standard in most LLB degrees and that the experience gained through the general legal practices course does not give the graduate a competitive edge since employers expect students to have had some practical training.

The benefit study conducted at the University of Venda points out, however, that for most of the candidate attorneys, working at the legal aid clinic appears to have been their only means of gaining articles. They thus benefited from gaining employment which fostered their professional development and from being employed at what they consider to be a high remuneration rate. However, their work at the clinic does not appear to have facilitated their preparedness for the board exams. Out of the first seven candidate attorneys at the legal aid clinic, only three have so far passed the board exams. It is not clear whether this is a function of the way the clinic operates, or whether it can be related to other factors. While the clinic's primary goal is not to meet the needs of the candidate attorneys, these difficulties could be related to insufficient supervision.

Street law programme participants at the University of Venda felt that the programme would benefit their legal careers, but no information was forthcoming during the study to confirm this expectation.

The students interviewed in the oral health promotion programme reported that the course did benefit them in their careers, primarily because their communication skills had improved. Students also reported that they are better equipped to deal with the social realities of the community and the dental needs of individuals irrespective of colour or background. One student reported that he met his current employer via his work on the oral health programme. However, UWC dentistry graduates reported that while their experience in the Guguletu dental clinic had enhanced their experience and skill, the work at the clinic did not directly enhance their employment opportunities. Only two students felt that their work at the clinic had enhanced their employment potential, primarily by enhancing their CVs.

Other than the University of Venda's employment of candidate attorneys in the legal aid clinic, none of the programmes in the benefit studies offered students the opportunity to earn while they were doing community service. The programmes were not designed to provide students with an opportunity to earn, but were designed as part of their professional training.

2.4 Factors influencing student benefit

Three factors influence whether or not students gain maximum benefit from community service programmes: the nature of the programme, programme structure and supervision.

2.4.1 Nature of the programme

The research suggests that before the programme is developed, the learning goals need to be articulated in relation to the goals of the curriculum. The nature and shape of the community service programme will in part be determined by these questions and will help to define what knowledge and skills need to be used for what purpose.

2.4.2 Programme structure

The research shows clearly that the programmes which are carefully planned and structured are the ones from which students are likely to gain most benefit. In the University of Cape Town's Department of Community Health Mamre project the students first go through a community orientation

programme, then undertake a short piece of research in the community, and only then do they get involved in the health promotion course. This means that the students first get to know more about the community before interacting with community members through health promotion. Similarly in the University of the Orange Free State's Department of Social Work Verkeerdevlei project, students start learning about the community through a situational analysis; then they are introduced to the community; next they plan specific projects on which to work, arising out of the needs identified through the situational analysis.

In this process the goals of the curriculum and its articulation with the community service programme can be made explicit. The assessment process can be planned and criteria for the assessment of student performance rigorously developed in relation to the curriculum goals.

The benefit studies suggest that a carefully designed and structured programme provides students with greatest benefit because the purpose of the learning in the community service programme has been made explicit. It is suggested that this is what makes the oral health promotion programme more beneficial to its students than, say, the street law programme where the programme design is less clearly structured and its articulation with the law teaching programme very tenuous.

2.4.3 Supervision

The issue of supervision in community service programmes has emerged as a key factor in determining how beneficial the programme is from all points of view, especially for the participating students. It appears that in many cases higher education faculty are considered to be the only people qualified to provide the supervision necessary to make the work of the students worthwhile. This in turn raises the question of how institutions can afford to deploy faculty members at community sites, especially when large numbers of students are involved, and when community service activities are not recognised within the academic environment. The research conducted suggests, however, that the situation is both more complex and more promising than meets the eye.

It needs to be established what type of supervision is required for what purpose. In some community service programmes a distinction needs to be made between managing students in the programme, supervising

students in so far as the academic nature and quality of their work is concerned, and contributing to the quality of the programme as a whole.

- Managing the students is often best done by programme coordinators or other personnel on the ground, or by community volunteers working in the programme. On paper these individuals may be far less qualified than faculty members, but they are much more familiar with the programme, with the community in which it operates and with the work that needs to be done. They are thus likely to do a better job in managing students than will faculty members.
- The supervision of the quality of student work can be done by different personnel, depending on the nature of the assignment. For example, junior medical students working in community clinics can best be supervised by nursing staff or local health workers who are likely to be more experienced in primary health care than most staff in higher education medical faculties. The supervision of senior students who may be involved in more complex professional service delivery can then be undertaken by faculty members as and when required.
- This leaves one remaining area of supervision: the supervision of the community service programme staff to ensure that the quality of the service delivery is high from a professional point of view. This too is a role which academic staff can play. In fact, there are examples in the research which show that the most effective programmes are those in which programme personnel are involved in a two-way working relationship with members of staff from the higher education institutions: programmes are jointly developed; academic staff support local personnel by helping to build their specialist knowledge (this could take place on site or through the local staff member attending sessions at the institution on a monthly basis); local personnel play a key management role on the ground and responsibility for supervision and assessment is assigned by agreement.

This differentiation suggests that a dynamic and meaningful role could be developed for faculty members in community service programmes - one which links purposefully with their core responsibilities for teaching and research. Close engagement with students and local programme personnel on site will enable academic staff to achieve three things: first, they will be able to find the gaps that become evident in their teaching

programme; second, they will be involved in the assessment of student performance; and third, they could be engaged in doing research.

3 IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITIES

A constant theme in the concept paper on community service is the absence of any information about how the community service programmes are impacting on the communities concerned. While the coordinators generally stated that the programmes are beneficial, this could not be substantiated in anything but an anecdotal way.

The research provided valuable information about the scope and duration of the programmes, while the benefit studies tapped the views of clients, patients and workshop participants in the six programmes reviewed. The benefit studies thus provide the first indicators of how the programmes are perceived by the communities in which they operate. The analysis below looks at those sectors of the population which are receiving the services offered by the community service programmes, how they view the services, and it attempts to assess the value of the services provided.

3.1 Results of in-depth benefit studies

3.1.1 Who receives the services offered`.'

The study found that the programmes target disadvantaged communities and in most cases a wide range of poor people receive the services offered:

- At the University of Venda legal aid clinic and the University of the Western Cape's dental clinic in Guguletu a substantial number of clients (possibly the majority) are women.
- The ages of the clients served by the dental programme range from children to people over sixty years old while the legal clinics also serve adults in a spread of ages.
- Clients at the University of Venda legal aid clinic have low education levels (approximately one third of those interviewed have an education level between Standards 2 and 5 while 45% have an education level between Standards 6 and 9).

- The same clinic offers the only free legal service in a huge rural area and serves people within a radius of 100 km (80% of those interviewed had travelled between 10 and 100 km to seek assistance).
- The Legal Aid Board has devised a means test which is administered at the University of Port Elizabeth's legal aid clinic to ensure that the facility serves people who cannot afford commercial legal services. However, the University of Venda's legal aid clinic does not follow this practice, resulting in some clients using the free service offered when they may in fact be able to afford other services.⁴ All the recipients of the University of the Western Cape's community programmes are people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (for example, many of the children are able to brush their teeth only at school).
- The street law programmes target disadvantaged youth and operate in schools, community-based organisations, prisons and places of safety.

The studies show that most of the programmes surveyed are relatively limited in their scope. The programme with the greatest reach (the Wits Schools Partnership Programme) involves approximately 200 students and works with 20 schools located in six different townships in Gauteng. All the other case studies operate within smaller geographic regions, work with communities of between 4 000 and 200 000 people and involve groups of up to 10 students engaging with communities at any one time.

At the dental clinic and the legal aid clinics, however, service provision reaches considerable levels: in 1996, for example, the Guguletu dental clinic saw 19 052 patients and administered 22 622 treatments. The case load handled by the University of Venda's legal aid clinic has grown from 106 cases to 326 cases per month (some 32 cases per candidate attorney per month).

With two exceptions, the programmes surveyed operate relatively close to the institutions which launched them, most being within 150 km. This enables students and staff to travel relatively easily to the sites in which they are working. The programmes which serve communities further afield are the Wits Department of Occupational Therapy community rehabilitation programme which operates in eight sites in the Northern Province and Mpumalanga, and the Phelophepha Train which travels to different communities in rural areas for three weeks at a time. One of the reasons

for the proximity of the sites to the institutions is the cost of travel: for students and staff and this is a major factor in limiting the extension of the programmes.

3.1.2 Attitudes towards services offered

The studies found that clients have an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards the professional legal and dental services. Not only do the clinics provide access to services which would otherwise be unavailable, but most clients commented positively on the supportive and approachable disposition of students and staff, expressed confidence in their ability and knowledge, and said that they would recommend the services to friends and family. At the University of Venda legal aid clinic, approximately a third of those interviewed said that the clinic had already helped them to solve their problems in that some form of tangible action had taken place (eg. payments had started, arrests had been made or interdicts served, etc.). Among these respondents were clients who were bringing their second or third cases to the clinic, indicating repeated use of the service.

What if the clients had more options regarding a choice of services? Most of the respondents in the UPE legal aid clinic study said that they would prefer to approach the clinic for assistance, even if they could afford a private lawyers. However, over 50% of the University of Venda legal aid clients interviewed said that if they had the money to seek legal assistance elsewhere they would not come to the clinic for two main reasons: they felt that commercial services would be faster and regarded outside attorneys as being more experienced.

A key issue which emerged, however, concerns the number of the legal aid clinic clients who expressed misgivings about the slow pace at which their cases were being resolved. The University of Port Elizabeth study suggests that this could be caused by three factors:

- delays caused by students having to consult with their supervisors on matters and not having sufficient time to follow-up case files, and/or
- the client having unrealistic expectations of the speed with which legal disputes can be resolved - there are statutory rules governing the number of days which may lapse before a party needs to respond to a document or

- the secretary's workload which makes it difficult to return calls or make follow-up calls to clients.

The dental clinic patients were satisfied with the quality of the service offered, but said that they had problems with some of the circumstances of its operation. For example, some wanted the clinic to open earlier and expressed their concern about the long waiting time (a function of the number of students and staff available).

Attitudes to the service offered by the street law programmes varied. The University of Venda study found that pupils and teachers at schools participating in the street law programme expressed dissatisfaction with the implementation of the programme: they said that those running the programme did not keep to agreed dates and times and were either late or did not show up at all. Another point of dissatisfaction was that those running the programme were not well prepared and were thus unable to answer pupils' questions satisfactorily. They were also dissatisfied with the short duration of the programme and its restriction to small groups at school, and to schools only. Nevertheless, as is shown below, it seems that the programme did benefit its participants. In Port Elizabeth many of the street law programme clients asked the programme to hold more than one workshop, suggesting that they were satisfied with the service and perceived it to be beneficial. The programme constantly receives new requests from community groups and schools to conduct workshops which suggests that they perceive the programme to be beneficial.

3.1.3 Value of services offered

In only one instance was a benefit study able to get external validation of the quality of service offered. This was in the case of the University of Port Elizabeth's legal aid programme which, according to its director, is held in high regard both by the Minister of Justice and the Legal Aid Board.

In most cases clients expressed confidence in the quality of the services offered. However, there are instances when they have expressed a preference for dealing directly with the full-time professional staff rather than with students. For example, in the University of Port Elizabeth's legal aid programme the director needs to participate in consultations about matters which may be too complicated for students to handle on their own.

He notes that once a client has seen him, it is difficult to convince the client to continue dealing with student advisors. This situation is aggravated by the fact that there are times in the year when students are not available to assist clients (during examinations or vacation periods late in May, in June, July, November, December and in January).

The same issue does not seem to occur in the University of Venda's legal aid clinic, but this could be a function of the fact that undergraduate students no longer participate in the clinic. Services are offered on a full-time basis by candidate attorneys.

Students and staff at the Guguletu dental clinic consider the quality of the service to be high, and the satisfaction of the clients has already been noted. However, temporary shortages of equipment and supplies cause problems, as does student absenteeism which runs at 10-20%. During the benefit study a few of the students argued that these constraints may compromise the treatment given to patients. This applies particularly to the high number of extractions which, according to these students, may not be the treatment of choice, but rather of convenience. The lack of follow-up care and lack of continuity in the dentist-patient relationship is another shortcoming identified by these students. Since the only continuity at the clinic is the presence of the full-time dentist, many patients do prefer- and sometimes demand - his services.

The benefit studies found it difficult to assess the value of the street law programmes. While the programmes do ensure that citizens are better informed about their rights, it is not clear to what extent participants are able to apply their knowledge of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to their daily lives. The UPE study suggested that this may be an area for improvement in the programme. While the University of Venda benefit study says that it is difficult to ascertain the breadth or depth of knowledge/information gained by pupils in the street law programme, there seemed to be evidence of some gains made during the programme: pupils seem to have developed a heightened respect for the law, and to have learnt that the law is there to protect individuals and that it does not discriminate. The programme also appears to have influenced pupils' attitude towards crime: they became aware of the crime situation in the country and of the need for them to participate in combating crime by informing on criminals.

3.2 Factors which influence community impact

The above analysis suggests that there are four factors which impinge on the effectiveness and quality of community service programmes: Programme design and management: Two types of programmes were surveyed in the benefit studies: those which aim to provide a regular community service (such as in law or dentistry) and those which offer educational support on a short-term and intermittent basis (such as the oral health promotion and street law programmes). The two types of programmes make different demands in terms of co-ordination, supervision and management and each programme needs to be designed so that the goals are defined both in regard to service objectives and curriculum objectives. On this basis, areas of responsibility need to be clearly designated for programme management and supervision (see 2.4.3 above for comments on supervision).

Articulation with the curriculum through assessment Where students are involved in service provision, carefully designed assessment processes and the definition of criteria for assessment (including attendance as one such criterion) could assist in reducing absenteeism - a factor which certainly weakens the quality of service provision.

Capacity and infrastructure: The University of the Western Cape benefit study makes some interesting points about the relationship between programme capacity and programme sustainability. The study points out that the oral health promotion programme was discontinued in 1998 owing to a lack of funds. If it had continued there would have been a good case for expanding the programme to reach a wider range of people within the disadvantaged communities targeted for service. However, in expanding programmes such as these, three factors would need to be taken into account: first, regular and committed participation from students is essential in providing sufficient capacity for implementation; second, administrative capacity would need to be upgraded to ensure that effective planning and management can take place; and third, the high quality facilities of the Guguletu dental clinic are an important referral point for students who identify problems among workshop participants. This last point

highlights the interface between professional service provision (such as dental services) and the education awareness programmes run by departments.

The value of core project staff In six of the short case studies, the programmes operate in the community for most or all of the year. For example, the University of Pretoria's medical support programme operates in the six clinics in the Moretele area from January to September; the University of the Free State's Department of Social Work Verkeerdevlei project runs all year - a feature which enables its students to provide therapeutic services to the community concerned; UCT's Department of Community Health programme at the Mamre community health centre operates for 40 weeks in the year; the University of Venda's legal aid clinic functions all year round; and the Wits Schools Partnership Programme runs all year in school terms, as does the RAU Inset programme. The Wits Division of Community Dentistry's mobile unit, is stationed at any one site for between four and 12 weeks at a time.

In each case this represents a substantial period and creates the conditions for continuity and impact. Whether or not such impact is realised depends in part on the availability of a core of supervisory staff in the project. For example, the Wits Division of Community Dentistry mobile unit employs a dentist and two dental therapists who are able to supervise small teams of students, and who provide a continuous service to the community for the period that the unit is stationed at any one site. The legal and dental clinics surveyed also each have one full-time director or dentist to manage the programme and provide supervision.

Whatever the duration of the projects during the year, students come and go: sometimes they render service for a few days each week, sometimes for longer periods such as three to eight weeks in a year. Supervision becomes a key factor in the value and continuity of the services rendered by students in these programmes. Some programmes (such as the community dentistry project), employ permanent staff who work closely with the departments in which the programmes are located. Other programmes depend on centre coordinators, nurses, teachers and health workers to supervise the day-to-day activities of the students who come in for short periods. In

one or two cases this has led to the forging of close working relationships between the university department concerned and the provincial departments responsible for staffing the health centre (eg. at Mature).

What this experience suggests is that from a community's point of view it is difficult to use students in training to alleviate skills shortages through the provision of continuous and regular services unless some core of permanent staff are available to provide the necessary supervision and guidance.

4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The research programme has provided a great deal of information about the impact of the community service programmes and has helped to establish the conditions under which the programmes yield benefit to higher education institutions, students and communities.

It suggests that while professional training generally combines theory with practice, the introduction of community service into higher education curricula provides opportunities for a particular type of experiential learning. It also suggests that the departments concerned are seeking to develop socially responsive teaching programmes to meet the challenges of applying their disciplines in poor communities.

The research shows that although the community service programmes could have considerable impact on the higher education curricula with which they are associated, their influence depends on the institution's orientation towards social responsiveness and the extent to which the programmes form part of curriculum goals. The case studies show that the investment made by higher education institutions in setting up community-oriented programmes remains limited with the result that the programmes tend to lack resources (both human and financial). Despite their potential to influence curriculum reform and innovation, they continue to depend on external funding and support, and in some cases it has taken years for small programmes within specific divisions or units to be recognised for the contribution they are making to the reorientation of the curriculum.

The benefit to students who participate in community service programmes lies in the opportunity to contextualise their training and to adapt their skills to the conditions of poverty experienced by many South Africans. Many students reported that they had gained new perspectives on their academic work, achieved a deeper understanding of the social conditions in poor communities and in a number of cases changed their attitudes towards their future professional role. Students also gained life skills needed for their future careers. However, community service programmes rarely provide opportunities for students to earn and it is not clear that they do enhance their chances of future employment. Three factors influence whether or not students gain maximum benefit from community service programmes: the nature of the programme, programme structure and supervision.

The community service programmes surveyed target disadvantaged communities and succeed in making services available to the most vulnerable groups within those communities: women, young children and older people. Although the scope of the programmes is relatively limited, service provision reaches large numbers of people. A major factor limiting the extension of the programmes is the cost of transport for students and staff. The research also emphasised the important role of core staff in the successful delivery of services. In the programmes which offer professional legal and dental services, clients have an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards the service offered and generally expressed confidence in the quality of the services offered.

Ultimately the benefit yielded by community service programmes in higher education depends on the following factors:

- the articulation between the community service programmes and the curricula with which they are associated,
- the orientation of the leadership in the higher education institution towards being more socially responsive through teaching and research;
- the extent to which the programmes provide a site for the realisation of specific teaching and research goals;
- programme design and management.

Obviously the resources available to the community service programmes will make a difference to their reach and the scale of delivery, but it is clear that resourcing is not the only issue which will make or break a community

service initiative. On the basis of the analysis in this chapter, it could be argued that the effectiveness of community service in higher education could depend as much on non-financial issues as it does on the availability of funds.

- 1 Perold, H and Omar, R, Op cit., p73
- 2 Ibid., p7
- 3 Ehrlich, T (1998). "Taking Service Seriously". Keynote address delivered at the American Association for Higher Education Colloquium on National and Community Service, Washington DC, January 12-13.
- 4 When asked whether they would still use the services of the clinic if they were given money for legal assistance, 20% of the interviewees said "why waste money when there is a free service?"
- 5 Some said that they were comfortable dealing with the staff at the clinic who are 'more approachable' than other legal advisors. A few said that they had approached other lawyers prior to visiting the clinic and were dissatisfied with their service.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINANCING COMMUNITY SERVICE

The concept paper raised two issues around the financing of community service programmes. First it examined the question of whether or not community service could be linked to the provision of financial aid for needy students in higher education and concluded that it might be possible for graduates in professional fields to pay off their loans if they were to be employed in vacant posts in the public service, provided these were budgeted for. Second, it recommended that cost-benefit analyses be conducted in order to quantify the value of in-kind contributions made through community service. In the survey of higher education institutions some managers and faculty members indicated that community service programmes might provide them with new sources of funding. As was mentioned in Chapter Two, one institution responded that "funding for community-based projects would naturally be obtained" while another thought community service programmes would lead to a possible increase in government funding.

This chapter takes these issues further. It examines four current and potential sources of funds for community service programmes in higher education. It then describes the need for financial aid, summarises the most recent proposals which have been made in this regard and examines once again the possibility of linking community service to financial aid. Finally, the chapter looks at how community service can be assessed in terms of costs and benefits.

1 FUNDING SOURCES

Over the last decade higher education institutions have faced increasing financial pressures as a result of rising costs and declining subsidies from government. While this is part of a worldwide trend in which concerted efforts are being made to reduce public expenditure, funding constraints

are putting South African higher education institutions under inordinate pressure.

At the outset it is necessary to summarise the position in which the higher education sector finds itself with regard to funding. Although spending on education as a proportion of total government expenditure increased from 16% in 1985 to 22% in 1994, the percentage of spending on higher education declined in this period. One indication of this decline is the state subsidy per full-time equivalent student: in universities this fell from R5 630 in 1986 to R4 179 in 1996 and in technikons from R5 833 to R3 368. In other words, over the ten year period state spending per 'unit student' decreased in universities by 26% and in technikons by 42%.¹

Within this context, community service programmes will have to compete for resources from the core budgets of their institutions (funds derived both from government and from other sources) if they are to become part of higher education activities. The programmes are presently supported by two main sources - public and private sector funding - and the research examined each of these in some detail. In so doing, some light was shed on two other sources of funds: increased contributions from the institutions themselves, and user fees. All four options are explored in more detail below.

1.1 Public sector funding

There are three ways in which government is presently contributing to community service in higher education: through the subsidy which the Department of Education provides for higher education, through partnership arrangements which channel funds from departments and donors into community service programmes, and through the employment of graduates in the public service through national community service schemes.

1.1.1 Subsidy support

The first source of funds comes from the subsidy allocated by government to higher education institutions. As was demonstrated in Chapter Two (section 3), the institutions are contributing in a substantial way to the costs of community service programmes through the participation of their staff and the use of their facilities, equipment, etc. Since these overhead costs

are covered by the subsidy paid to institutions by the Department of Education, that department can be said to be supporting community service programmes which draw on institutional support for their activities. In section 4 below we examine how these costs can be calculated more accurately.

In response to the question of whether there is any possibility of increased support for community service programmes from the Department of Education, Nasima Badsha, Deputy Director-General for Higher Education, stated that government could consider supporting only those community service programmes "which are integrated into the curriculum and where the primary concern is to improve learning".² In her view the key issue in the transformation of higher education is restructuring curricula to develop the skills that are required for the country. Government is currently reviewing its subsidy formulae and intends examining the real costs of programmes in the higher education sector. Community service programmes could be considered as part of programme costs where they form an integral part of the curriculum, but optional or voluntary community service programmes are unlikely to be considered for subsidy. Ms Badsha argues that the higher education sector does not have the resources - either financial or managerial - to insist on community service for all.

This approach may impact on the sustainability of community service programmes. It was suggested that making the costs of community service programmes part and parcel of curriculum costs could help to increase the sustainability of the programmes, particularly if public funds were matched or augmented by private contributions. However, no further information on this point emerged during the study.

1.1.2 Provincial government support

The second source of government support comes from provincial government departments. Here the example of the Mangaung-University of the Free State community partnership programme is instructive. This programme has a range of objectives in the local community including the improvement of health, education and training, sports and recreation, cultural development, economic development, agriculture, youth development and administration. The programme receives direct and indirect financial support from three departments in the Free State provincial government: health, agriculture and trade and industry.

Direct support has been solicited from the Free State Department of Trade and Industry through the Ntsika programme which supports small business development, micro-enterprise and job creation. In this case the Mangaung-University of the Free State community partnership programme was granted R80 000 to carry out an evaluation on job creation. The second source of direct support came from the Free State Department of Agriculture which had received a grant of some R3 million from the European Union. The Mangaung-University of the Free State community partnership programme put forward a proposal to the department for the first phase of a commercial vegetable development project, and received R300 000, drawn from the European Union funding for this purpose.

Indirect funding was secured from the provincial Department of Health in two ways: the department made funds available for the building of a clinic in the Mangaung community and now seconds 20 medical officers annually to this programme. These secondments could be valued at approximately R3 million per year on salaries alone and represent a substantial core for service delivery, to which university students could add through structured programme activity.

1.1.3 National community service programmes

The third source of government funding for community service lies in departments which are interested in accessing higher education students or graduates for the purposes of delivering social services in areas where needs are not being met. While details could not be confirmed, it is thought that the Department of Health has made available a monthly after-tax figure of R 4 700 to pay each of 1 200 young doctors starting their community service in January 1999. Furthermore, it appears that an incentive of R1 650 per month has been introduced for doctors opting to serve in under-served areas.

The research into the community service initiatives being taken by the Department of Justice suggests that this department may fund its community service programme from the Legal Aid Fund. At the same time it may also partner the Department of Education to direct that department's higher education subsidy towards curriculum reform in the field of law (see Chapter Four, section 4).

An important distinction thus emerges between the interest of the Education Department and that of other departments in regard to the funding of community service. The Department of Education is concerned with the transformation of higher education learning programmes and is interested in supporting community service as part of curriculum reform. Other departments, such as Health and Justice, are concerned with the delivery of services and may thus choose to support community service programmes which focus on service delivery as a primary objective. In the case of the Department of Justice the interest in reforming the law curriculum may generate a partnership with the Department of Education, but this remains to be seen.

This raises the issue of how government departments co-ordinate their interests in the transformation of higher education, and how funding for community service in higher education might be maximised. The research suggests that government departments have only recently begun to consider community service as a means of delivering services and that the prospect of a co-ordinated approach is thus still some distance away.

1.2 Private sector contributions

The private sector makes substantial inputs, both financial and intellectual, into higher education. Margie Keeton, Chief Executive Officer of the Anglo American and De Beers Chairman's Fund, points out that corporate social investment (CSI) takes many forms in South Africa, but that education attracts two-thirds to three-quarters of CSI expenditure. Within the education sector, higher education attracts the largest CSI investment and donors fund a range of activities, including bursaries, research, outreach or community service programmes.

According to Keeton, donors view community service programmes in higher education primarily as education initiatives which add educational value. "If community service is to be effective, it should be integral to and supportive of the major functions of higher education: to produce professionals of quality, to promote excellence in teaching, learning and research, and to ensure that what is taught, learnt and researched is relevant to the wider needs in society."³ In her view, community service programmes do not substitute for, replace or diminish the fundamental purposes of higher education institutions. This places limits on what they

can achieve. She argues that in responding to calls for private sector support for community service in higher education, business is constrained by the fact that the private sector cannot drive solutions. Rather, business is supportive of the initiatives of others, preferring to work as a catalyst, encouraging and pioneering. In her view the resource constraints of business need to be carefully understood.

Keeton believes that the private sector's involvement in community service is likely to be shaped by four insights gained through past support of development programmes: any initiative must create real value; programmes need to be focused, purposeful, and practical, flexible, innovative, and resourceful programmes are often champion-led; and programmes need to be structured as part of a dynamic process of change. Community service programmes thus need to be evaluated to see what difference they are making and how they can be improved.

How can the private sector contribute most strategically to the success of community service programmes? This study has found that in many cases relatively small funds can ensure the delivery of high quality services to large numbers of people. As was described in Chapter Two, community service programmes often have the infrastructure (a site from which to deliver services and the human resources required), but may not have the funds to transport students to the site or the equipment to deliver services. For example, the street law programmes are largely dependent on donor funds to transport students to the sites where the services are delivered. Oral health promotion programmes require toothbrushes and toothpaste to demonstrate their education programme and to ensure that the practices they encourage are sustained. This study has also shown that a programme coordinator (not a member of faculty) is crucial to the continuity, good management, duration and quality of programmes offered. In the Mamre community health centre, for example, a private sector donor has provided a three-year grant to support a community-based coordinator. The private sector donations have been invaluable in keeping service programmes active and effective.

At this stage it is not clear whether, and under what circumstances, private sector funding of higher education is likely to increase. Nick Segal, Public Affairs Director of AngloVaal, says that while the quality of the education system, and higher education in particular, is crucial for business's competitiveness, the business community is unlikely to commit further

resources to higher education without "clarity of purpose and a sense of forward movement".⁴ Current areas of concern shared by business people about higher education relate to lack of clarity about funding, duplication where there should be differentiation, the need to play to local opportunities and particular strengths, and shambles in governance. He proposes a meaningful forum in which business and universities can address issues of mutual concern.

Noting that the private sector sees community service as adding value to the educational objectives of higher education, a forum such as this may provide an opportunity to re-examine the private sector's involvement in community service and formulate new strategies in this regard. Should such an opportunity materialise, the following research findings from this study need to be considered:

- Small grants from the private sector can make a huge difference to programme quality and sustainability through the support of core staff and through support for operational costs such as transport.
- Some community service programmes deliver high quality services which can augment the community development efforts of nongovernmental organisations. This suggests that private sector organisations which support community development programmes could consider channelling some funds towards community service programmes in addition to the funds they already provide to NGOs.
- It is possible that high quality service provision through community service programmes may be cost-effective.⁵ The potential for public/private sector partnerships could be enhanced through more accurate costings of community service programmes (see section 4 below).

1.3 higher education institutions

This report has already provided details of the in-kind contributions made by many higher education institutions towards community service programmes. At one of the workshops convened by JET during this study, it was suggested that institutions need to undertake accurate costings of their mainstream teaching and research activities and that all hidden costs

should be included. Costings should be undertaken not only in programmes which combine learning and community service, but also in programmes such as social work where the curriculum depends on experiential learning and academic staff spend considerable time supervising students in the field. It was proposed that on this basis higher education institutions could themselves start reallocating funds towards the support of service learning objectives. Furthermore, institutions should quantify the percentage of students involved in experiential learning so that this information could start feeding into discussions with government on the review of funding formulae.

1.4 User fees

Given that community service programmes by definition are targeting poor communities who have little or no access to social services, it is unlikely that user fees could ever become a significant contribution to funding. Nevertheless, this study did find one programme in which clients pay modest fees.

Each year the Phelophepha Train offers a multi-disciplinary health care service to 45 000 people in rural and remote parts of the country. The train is staffed by medical, nursing and dental students drawn from over 20 higher education institutions. Free examinations and pre-screening services are offered, but small amounts are charged for medication (R5 per prescription), eye care (eye test R10, spectacles R30) and dental care (the treatment of one or two teeth costs R10 and three or more R15). Two months prior to the train's arrival and again two weeks before, communities are notified of its visit and the services it offers "so that prospective patients can get together enough money for their spectacles, dental needs and medicines".

University legal aid clinics are meant to administer a means test to ensure that the services are used only by those who cannot afford other remedies, but this is not always implemented.

Some participants in the research workshops recommended that user fees should be charged for community service programmes, even if at a very low rate.

2 FINANCIAL AID PROPOSALS

The decline in state subsidies for higher education has led to increased reliance on private funds and a significant rise in tuition fees. This has coincided with the expansion of access to higher education for young people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and has placed a mounting financial burden on both institutions and students. Outstanding student debts to residential technikons and universities were calculated to be R89 million in 1992 and R137 million in 1993.⁶ In 1998 this figure is estimated to be R500 million.

A number of strategies were adopted in the 1990s to address the problem of financial aid to needy students:

- Tertiary institutions provided some financial aid through appeals to local and international donors and from their own operating budgets.
- The Independent Development Trust provided R50 million for student financial aid to be granted in the form of loans to needy students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (Tefsa) was set up to administer the scheme.
- International donor organisations provided financial aid for students.
- The state provided support to needy students through funds earmarked for financial aid through the subsidy system. In addition, in 1996 the Minister of Education was able to secure R300 million of state funds for needy students and in 1997 another R200 million (a once-off contribution) was allocated to financial aid for tertiary students.

In 1996 the total amount available for student aid was thus R545 million. R101 million of this came from institutions' general operating budgets - funds contributed by government through the subsidy to institutions and earmarked by institutions for financial aid; R287 from the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (Tefsa); R30 million from provincial governments and the remainder from local and international donors. Most funds distributed by Tefsa were secured by the Minister of Education for a National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). In 1997 the once-off state contribution of R200 million was made to the NSFAS.⁷ These figures show that government provides the vast proportion of financial aid to students. The contributions are mostly made in the form of loans, although bursaries, scholarships and awards are also provided. (See Appendix 5)

A study undertaken in 1997 entitled A Report on Financing Needy Students at Tertiary Institutions in South Africa suggests that the only option for a significant expansion of financial aid to students in South Africa is an expanded loan scheme. The report does not mention community service as a possible form of repayment of loans. Nevertheless it is worth examining the main findings of the report to understand the possibilities of and constraints on community service as a form of repayment of loans.

The writers of the report claim that loan schemes have the potential to contribute both to quality and to equity in higher education. All economies face "higher levels of fiscal distress" than was the case in the thirty years after the Second World War. Levels of spending on education are unlikely to increase, even with the numbers of higher education students expanding. If current levels of spending per student are to be maintained, sources of income other than the state will be required. Secondly, in most countries there is overwhelming evidence that investing in a first degree or diploma is highly profitable for the individual. The report therefore argues that "it is both efficient and equitable to make the beneficiary pay a substantial share of the unit cost of study".⁸

Loan schemes have been introduced in an increasing number of countries over the past twenty to thirty years. In general, loans are viewed as a "means for students to draw on their future earnings in order to make a current investment in higher education".⁹ The report claims that there are a number of options available to education authorities designing a student financial aid scheme. In the view of the writers, the choice of the loan scheme depends on the country's economic and social goals and involves certain trade-offs. Since financial aid schemes have had mixed successes in both developed and developing countries, the writers argue that there is no blueprint for a successful financial aid scheme, but recommend that attention be paid to the details of successful international schemes and to local conditions.

The report emphasises the need to expand the current financial aid scheme without creating undue pressure on the fiscus. One strong recommendation is to increase the interest rates currently charged on loans so as to recover a larger amount from graduates. According to the report, this would "allow higher or more awards without additional stress on the fiscus". The report also recommends that the scheme adopted in South

Africa should be a revolving loan scheme to which graduates contribute in order to provide loans for current and future students.

3 COMMUNITY SERVICE AND FINANCIAL AID

Over the past three years a range of players have attempted to establish some relationship between community service and the provision of

financial aid. The White Paper on Higher Education noted that "A sustainable long-term scheme will include loans and bursaries, as the present scheme does, and may include scholarships to reward academic excellence and student and community self-reliance programmes such as work study and community service. The ministry is actively supporting an investigation into these alternatives." As was noted in the concept paper, Dr Pundy Pillay argued at a national conference on student financing in 1995 that community service could be a cost recovery measure which would "move governments beyond explicitly financial instruments to exact payment from graduates in areas of high social value, as a means of partially paying off the costs of higher education". This view was supported at the same conference by Bronwyn Levy who argued that "community service schemes allow graduates to provide a service to society in areas of value as a way of paying for part of the costs of higher education."¹⁰

This study found very few examples of financial aid being linked to community service in practice, although the situation differs considerably between graduates and undergraduate students.

3.1 Current practice

As was shown in Chapter Three, postgraduate interns are paid for the services they perform - whether this be in medicine, law or another professional field.

As far as undergraduate students are concerned, the study found two examples in which students earn income from community service activities related to their spheres of study. The first example is the funded internship programme at the University of Natal in which a handful of students receive tuition fees or a grant for community service activities. The second is the

example of Pentech students who are placed in the Community Projects Office of the School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering.

The only other examples of undergraduate students earning an income from service come from the work study programmes at the University of Natal and the University of the Western Cape. In neither of these examples is the service programme curriculum-related, and in the case of the UWC programme the question arises as to whether service rendered on campus does in fact constitute community service.

It would seem that in South Africa the only way in which community service could be used to offset student loans is for government departments (those for which this is appropriate) to place graduates in vacant posts in the public service (provided these are budgeted for) so as to deliver services to under-served areas. The Department of Health is already doing this for graduate doctors in their year of community service. If graduates were employed in civil service positions at a salary below market rates, the differential between what they are paid and the normal salary for the position would represent one way of enabling the incumbents to repay their loans.

3,2 International experience

The concept paper published in 1997 outlined the practices followed in nine countries which have community service programmes for higher education students: Israel, Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria, Indonesia, Mexico, Costa Rica, Nepal and the USA. In all these countries, except the USA, government was responsible for funding community service programmes. In some countries, such as Costa Rica, Indonesia, Mexico and Nepal, community service was not introduced to contribute to financial aid for needy students. It was seen as a way for students to repay society for the privilege of higher education. In these cases students were paid a small stipend or no wage at all. In fact community service was often costly for those students who had to cover their own transport and subsistence costs when carrying out community service. In all four countries government funding has been reduced over the years and in Indonesia it has now dried up altogether.

The experience of the other five countries suggests that there are two ways in which community service programmes can contribute to financial aid for students. Either students earn money from doing community service to pay for their tuition or they repay study loans through community service.

- In Israel and the USA students are able to earn a considerable portion of their fees for higher education through community service. Israeli students can earn up to half their annual tuition fees through tutoring school pupils. In the USA, AmeriCorps students receive an education award of \$4 725 after completing a year of service. Recipients can use this to pay off student loans or to finance tertiary education. In Israel the education department funds the community service programme, the AmeriCorps programme is supported by federal funds and private business and foundations.
- In Ghana,¹¹ Nigeria and Botswana students repay their university study loans through service to communities or society in general. In these countries graduates are paid below market wage levels in civil service posts. In Ghana graduates are paid slightly below civil service rates and in Nigeria graduates are paid stipends "somewhat smaller than their expected earnings". The difference between the regular salary and their earnings constitutes the repayment of subsidised higher education. An alternative to this scheme is that students are employed at market rates, but work in posts that are important for the social development of the country, eg. teachers and doctors serving in rural areas. White teachers in South Africa for many years repaid their study loans through teaching in government schools for each of the years of subsidised study. They had to repay the loans in money only if they broke service before they had completed the required number of years of service.

South Africa differs from the countries mentioned largely because the funding of community service does not take place through government funds earmarked specially for this purpose. At present South Africa does not have the reserves to launch a national scheme of this nature. Furthermore, it is only in the wealthier countries (such as the USA and Israel) that governments have been able to sustain their community service programmes through ongoing allocations from the central fiscus. In most of the poorer countries these funds have run dry.

A Report of Financing Needy Students at Tertiary Institutions in South Africa indicates that loan schemes which are income contingent are the only viable way in which to extend financial aid to needy students. The proposals rest on two assumptions: The first is that the recovery of loans, together with a significant rate of interest, is essential if the scheme is to be sustained. The second is that the scheme should be as simple as possible: the authors of the report warn against complicating the recovery of loans as this reduces the cost-effectiveness of the scheme. Both these assumptions make it difficult to factor community service into the scheme: the present economic climate may make it difficult to recover loans at an optimum rate, while the inclusion of community service in the options for repayment of student loans could add to the bureaucracy of a loan scheme.¹²

Although community service does not feature in these proposals, the report does stress that the nature of the loan scheme should be determined by the social and economic goals of the country. The research conducted during the JET study suggests that government and business could consider community service as a repayment option if the services were delivered in areas of unmet need

were delivered more cost-effectively than current forms of delivery contributed to human resource development in a cost-effective way. How would the social value of these placements be measured and costed? The concept paper recommended that cost-benefit analyses of community service programmes be conducted to establish more precisely whether the linkage between community service and financial aid could be made. The next section of this chapter covers the outcome of this exploration.

4 COSTS AND BENEFITS

The research committee set up to assist the project in its second phase proposed that the concept of cost-benefit analysis be explored as part of the benefit analyses of six community service programmes conducted on three university campuses. The studies attempted to examine the education benefits for students and higher education institutions as well as the costs of the programmes. Three possible approaches to the economic

evaluations of these programmes were considered: cost-benefit analyses, cost-effectiveness analyses, and establishing the per capita costs of programmes.

Cost-benefit analyses and cost-effectiveness analyses which "represent economic evaluations of alternative resource use"¹³ are tools which government and donors can use in their decision-making about community service programmes.

4.1 Cost-benefit analysis

Cost-benefit studies use the 'rate-of-return' approach to evaluation: that is, they compare the benefit which society derives from education with the costs of education. The studies are used to inform public investment decisions in education. Tsang warns, however, that these studies have limitations - especially with regard to the measurement of educational benefits.¹⁴

South African economists who were consulted during the research process were unanimous in considering it impracticable to undertake cost-benefit analyses of relatively small scale community service programmes within the budget and time frame given.¹⁵ According to Luis Crouch "cost-benefit analysis is, and has been done, for the big branches of education", but in practice "it is costly and time consuming, so it is not worth doing for just a few clinics and with a limited budget and limited time frame." Crouch's view is that if community service programmes were to become an activity where government was to invest "billions and billions of rand", most economists would recommend evaluating the cost-benefit over a year or two.

4.2 Cost-effectiveness analysis

Cost-effectiveness analysis aims to "ascertain which programme or combination of programmes can achieve particular objectives at the lowest cost".¹⁶ The technique was developed in the 1950s by the United States Department of Defence as a tool for making decisions on the demands of the various branches of the armed services. In the 1960s other government departments for state and local planning started using this system for analysing the efficiency of alternative programmes. However, according to Levin "its applications to educational decisions have been

much slower to develop" and even in the early 1990s "its use in considering educational resource allocation is restricted largely to the United States and has not emerged as a decision approach in other countries".

Cost-effectiveness studies in education have generally used standard evaluation procedures or studies to determine the educational effectiveness of each alternative under consideration and combined this information with cost data.¹⁷ Levin, for example, has developed the 'ingredients approach' to provide a systematic way for evaluators to estimate the costs of different educational programmes. In this approach the costs of an intervention are defined as "the value of the resources that are given up by society to effect the intervention". These are referred to as the ingredients of the intervention and it is the social value of those ingredients that constitute the overall cost of the intervention.

The method sets out systematically to identify and ascertain the value of the ingredients that are required for each education initiative that is under consideration. The identification of the ingredients and the costing of those ingredients are complex and the researcher or evaluator cannot rely only on income and expenditure statements.

4.3 Cost analyses of six community service projects

Given the complexity and impracticability of conducting cost-benefit analyses or cost-effectiveness studies, the researchers were briefed to establish the stated as well as the hidden costs of the programmes through financial statements, documents, interviews and observations.

Before the studies began, all six community service programmes reported that they had accounting systems in place and that the researchers would have access to income and expenditure statements. However, it was not possible to formulate an accurate picture of the costs of the community service programmes because

- higher education institutions do not include key costs or 'ingredients' of community service programmes (such as overhead costs) when developing expenditure or cost statements, and
- even when these missing costs are identified, it is difficult to place a value on these ingredients.

There are a number of reasons for this, but the most important is that the level of accounting and record-keeping necessary to provide accurate costs of a programme requires considerable administrative resources and systems. Many universities and technikons do not have such systems and, given cuts in funding and resources, are unlikely to put them into place.

4.3.1 Findings

The following are tentative findings from the six benefit studies carried out for the Community Service Project.¹⁸

- ✍ The 'ingredients' which are generally not included in the costing of community service programmes are the costs of faculty time spent on the programmes, the costs of facilities and equipment provided by institutions, and the costs of administrative and financial services provided. Levin argues that all these costs can, and must be, established to obtain accurate data for cost-effectiveness studies. For example, the value of facilities can be determined by estimating their lease value. Levin also comments on the exclusion of the cost of volunteers from education cost-effectiveness studies, suggesting that in community service programmes the costs of students need to be included in costing exercises. Crouch agrees and argues that it does not matter that there are no official wage scales for undergraduate students. "There is a market price for the labour of your average, non-degree student: it is whatever they can earn waiting on tables at restaurants, or whatever other employment opportunities non-degree students would have and is not hard to establish."
- ✍ Generally the studies found that only the costs of dedicated staff are included in the costs of community service programmes. The coordinators of the street law programmes and the Oral Health Programme all do community service work part-time, but are full-time members of their faculties. Their salaries and benefits are either excluded completely from the costs of the programmes or, as in the case of the UPE street law programme, are included as an arbitrary percentage of the co-ordinator's salary.

The costs of faculty involvement are very important if an accurate picture of the true costs of these programmes is to be developed. The

findings in Chapter Two showed that community service programmes are extremely time consuming and that faculty members tend to become involved in a range of activities, such as conceptualising, planning, managing and supervising the programmes. These activities are seldom considered in the costs. Currently these costs would be difficult to estimate as higher education institutions have not yet started costing their work in any detail. (This may happen as government requires more detail on the costs of higher education programmes.) Even crude estimates of staff time spent on community service are not possible at the moment as the SAPSE formulae for subsidy requires faculty to estimate time spent on teaching, research and administration and not time spent on community service.

One way to improve the costing of community service programmes would be for faculty to keep time sheets to record the time spent on planning, implementation, management, supervision and assessment of the programmes and to relate these to the goals of the curricula.

- The costing of community service programmes is complicated by the fact that government contributes to community service through subsidies which support the costs of infrastructure and staffing at higher education institutions.
- The research found that community service programmes which function as part of a curriculum but have no specific site, such as a clinic, for undertaking the service, tend not to keep records of costs for the practical/experiential/community service aspect of the curriculum. Exceptions are those community service programmes which receive funding from donors or other external sources. These programmes generally do keep financial records, but the expenditure statements are limited to the items for which the grant is given. They do not reflect the full costs of running the programmes.

The researchers found that financial records are generally kept for community service programmes which operate from particular sites such as health clinics and legal aid clinics. Once again, however, these records do not systematically capture all the costs of the programmes.

- A necessary factor in cost-effectiveness studies is that programmes of similar type are compared. When the benefit studies were undertaken, the researchers thought that it would be possible to compare street law programmes and legal aid clinics on different campuses. However, the studies revealed that in both cases the programmes have moved in different directions. These differences make comparative studies of the programmes very difficult.

For all these reasons there is insufficient evidence to determine the cost-effectiveness of these interventions or even to cost them.

4.3.2 Recommendations on feature costings

If, in the long term and with a reasonable budget, one wanted to evaluate the cost-effectiveness or the cost-benefit of these programmes, Crouch suggests the following minimum requirements:

- Much stricter accounting - not of costs, but of ingredient use. Such accounting would have to be imposed on all programmes that were to be evaluated, and one would have to provide training to enable programmes to track the ingredients, and audit the process.
- Tracer studies of the students who participated in the programmes over a period of approximately five years. These could be undertaken by an independent agency and, where possible, compared with equivalent students who did not participate in the programmes.
- Customer satisfaction surveys if one wanted to evaluate the value of the service and not just the educational value. These surveys would have to be of the contingency-value type: if the client received the rand value that it costs the state to provide the service, would the client spend the money on this clinic or would s/he pay a 'real' lawyer for the services even if the client had to top up the money provided?
- Ideally a sample of each type of programme is necessary in order to generalise with regard to its replicability as a type. If there is only one case, there is not much that can be said in terms of cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit.

5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

Rising costs and a decrease in state subsidies to higher education have placed enormous financial strains on higher education institutions and students. A number of possibilities for generating financial resources for needy students are currently being investigated and community service has been proposed as one such possibility. Developed and developing countries have used community service in one of two ways to provide financial support to higher education students: earning through community service or repaying loans through community service. In the USA for example, earning (with learning and service) is seen as one of the main aims and benefits of community service programmes. In South Africa the widespread implementation of either option to provide financial aid to needy students seems unlikely. This is because of the scarcity of financial resources and high unemployment rates.

This study has found that the two traditional funders of higher education - the Department of Education and the private sector - will support community service programmes as they relate to education initiatives or human resource development, but not as a means to address financial aid for needy students.

- ✍ The Department of Education claims that it can consider supporting only those community service programmes which are integrated into the curriculum and which develop skills that are required for the country. The department is currently reviewing its funding formulae for higher education subsidies and intends examining the real costs of programmes in the higher education sector.
- ✍ The private sector sees community service programmes primarily as initiatives which add value to education. Private sector players argue that for community service to be effective, it should be supportive of the major functions of higher education. The private sector currently supports community service programmes which require higher education skills and knowledge to deliver high quality services to disadvantaged communities.

However, research for this study suggests that certain government departments might consider community service as a loan repayment option if the services were delivered in areas of unmet need and were delivered more cost-effectively than current forms of delivery. The

departments of Health and Justice are currently exploring community service as an opportunity to enhance service delivery and other departments may do likewise. However, this approach demands a careful costing of community service programmes and the research found that higher education institutions are presently not able to provide detailed costs of their programmes.

- 1 Archer, S, Coetzee, J, Dorrington, R, Fitschen, A, Saunders, S, Segall, R, Wakefield, J (1997). Financing Needy Students at Tertiary Institutions in South Africa, Mimeo.
- 2 Contribution made at a seminar on community service in higher education held at the Joint Education Trust on 22 June 1998.
- 3 Keeton, M (1998). "The Implications of Community Service for Corporate Donors, Particularly in Higher Education". Presentation to JET workshop on 13 March 1998.
- 4 Segal, N (1998). Address delivered to Centre for Development and Enterprise Round Table Number 2, August.
- 5 The costings of the legal aid services examined in the benefit studies were not reliable, as is shown later in this chapter. However, they do indicate that services may be cost-effective.
- 6 Ministry of Education (1995). Higher Education Financing. Prepared by Tertiary Education Program Support (TEPS), Project of USAID. 27 January-29 January 1995, p 3.
- 7 Archer et al, Op cit., p3
- 8 Ibid., p39
- 9 Ibid. p6
- 10 Quoted in Perold and Omar, Op cit., pp 91-92.
- 11 The community service scheme in Ghana has stopped because of a lack of government funds.
- 12 One suggestion made during the research workshops was that a pocket of funds be earmarked by the NSFAS and that community service programmes draw on this to pay

students for their participation. It was suggested that the funding guidelines support the main thrust of government's interest in restructuring curricula.

- 13 Levin, HM (1995). "Cost Effectiveness Analysis" in M Carnoy (ed) International Encyclopaedia of Economics of Education, Pergamon, Oxford.
- 14 Tsang, MC (1995). "CostAnalysis." Ibid.
- 15 Communication with Luis Crouch (economist and consultant to the Department of Education), Sean Archer (Associate Professor, Department of Economics, University of Cape Town) and Charles Simpkins (Helen Suzman Professor of Political Economy and head of the Department of Economics at the University of the Witwatersrand).
- 16 Levin, op cit.
- 17 Levin emphasises that the evaluation of effectiveness is separable from the evaluation of costs. Most standard evaluation designs for assessing the effectiveness of an intervention are also suitable for incorporation into cost effectiveness studies.
- 18 Data from the eleven case studies was used to supplement these findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

GOVERNMENT'S ORIENTATION TO COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Community Service in Higher Education Project consulted with five government departments to find out how they view community service. The Department of Education was interviewed because of its policy-making functions in the higher education sector. The department of Health and Justice had both announced their intention to implement community service among medical and law graduates on a national scale. The Department of Labour was chosen because of the human resources development thrust of its skills development strategy. The Department of Public Works runs a Community-Based Programme and was interviewed to assess what relationship, if any, this might have with community service.

Interviews were held with officials at the level of chief director and director in the departments of Education, Labour and Public Works between April and June 1998. Officials in the Department of Justice were not available for interviews, but referred the researcher to departmental reports and to a newspaper article on the community service scheme proposed for law students. An interview on the processes underway in the department had been conducted in February with an academic who is involved in the transformation process in that department. Attempts to secure an interview with the Department of Health were unsuccessful and the information about the community service initiative within that department was derived from newspaper reports.

The research process was thus relatively limited and this report cannot establish definitive trends. However, the Findings do provide some pointers to current thinking and throw light on a number of significant issues. This chapter examines how the departments which were surveyed view community service in relation to national priorities and looks at the policies and implementation plans which are being developed. It explores whether or not there should be an overarching framework for community service and describes how the government departments see their engagement with higher education.

1 COMMUNITY SERVICE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES

The survey sought to establish how the government departments link community service to the national priorities of reconstruction, development and economic growth. Two positions were identified: one foregrounds community service as a means of redressing social inequality by intervening directly at community level through the provision of services; the second views community service primarily as a means of improving the quality of the education and training of higher education students.

By associating community service with the concept of redress, the first position assumes that community service forms part of the national agenda which prioritises reconstruction and development. It asserts that there cannot be any political or economic settlement without effective service delivery by government and that community service should be one of the mechanisms used by government to provide services, thereby bridging inequalities. For this reason it was stressed that community service should be targeted at areas of community need. For example, initiating community service for law students was seen as an effort by government to address problems of access to legal services by deprived communities.

However, this view of community service in no way diminishes government's responsibility for service delivery. It was suggested that government must take primary responsibility for the provision of social services and that community service is only one of the vehicles used by government to achieve this goal. The Department of Health was cited as an example which had assessed essential needs for health care services and was taking seriously its responsibility for service provision in that sphere, using community service as one of a number of strategies.

The second position sees community service as a strategy which contributes to the development of individual skills as well as to the human resource base of the country as a whole. Here community service is seen as an indirect means of addressing community needs: students may be the primary beneficiaries of community service in that their skills are enhanced through these opportunities; nevertheless the research has demonstrated that communities do benefit from many of the services provided by students in training.

The emphasis on human resources development might suggest that this view foregrounds development through economic growth. However, the concept paper noted that a number of government policies acknowledge that the development of poor communities requires a much wider diversity of skills than are presently being produced by the country's higher education institutions. "There is growing interest in relating people development, teaching and learning to the world of work, to social and community development, and to achieving national and provincial needs. These trends provide new impetus for developing a service ethos in human resource development. The objectives for community service which flow from this position were articulated as follows:

- Community service needs to make students aware of how knowledge is developed and applied and how it contributes to finding solutions for problems.
- It must make students aware that they have a responsibility to make a contribution to society.
- It must serve to link broad academic studies to issues of development so as to influence values and attitudes and sensitise students to societal needs and the contribution that individuals can make to society.
- Community service needs to be structured to engage critically with problems and help students understand the context within which they operate.²

The orientations sketched out above suggest that from government's point of view there are two different purposes envisaged for community service in South Africa: the first relates to improving the delivery of social services; the second is more closely related to the transformation of higher education and the skills, attitudes and values which are imparted to students in the course of their studies. However, it would be incorrect to see the two purposes as being totally divorced from one another. To some extent the use of community service in the delivery of social services also aims to inculcate in young professionals a better understanding of the context in which their skills can be used and a sense of civic responsibility. Nevertheless its primary purpose seems to be to enhance service provision. Essentially, then, it might be argued that the two positions on the purpose of community service have different starting points and different emphases, but that there is considerable overlap between them.

2 POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The research process provided some insight into how the different departments are practically engaging with community service. It suggests that policy development and implementation vary considerably from one department to another, and that there are different approaches to the introduction of community service.

2.1 Uneven policy development

Three of the five government departments had not taken any formal position on community service at the time of the study. Although the Department of Labour expressed an interest in community service, the officials interviewed stated that no policy had been adopted in this regard. The Department of Education has also not developed policy on community service and is not directly involved in any community service initiative. The officials in the Department of Public Works distanced themselves from responsibility for initiating community service programmes. The national office of the Community-Based Programme in that department does not see itself as an implementing agent, district and regional councils were identified as the implementing agents and where community service would be located.

By contrast, the departments of Justice and Health had already initiated tangible policy-making processes for community service for higher education students. In March 1998 the Department of Justice appointed a legal aid transformation team to investigate the transformation of the justice system so as to improve access for people who cannot afford legal services. The transformation of the system will include the introduction of community service for law graduates³ along with changes to the higher education curriculum. In May 1998 the Department of Health announced new regulations which make it compulsory for newly graduated doctors to spend a year of service in a public sector hospital in order to be given a licence to practise. Twenty three doctors started community service in July 1998.

It needs to be noted, however, that the manner in which the two departments set about introducing the notion of community service was quite different: it would seem that relatively few opportunities were

available for consultation between the Department of Health and the stakeholders which might be affected by community service. Furthermore, the stress seemed to fall on the issue of graduates rendering service in under-served communities and little attention was paid to curricular issues. By contrast, the Department of Justice appointed a task team which involved the organised legal profession in its deliberations. Bodies such as the Association of Law Societies, the judiciary, law schools and law student councils all became involved in discussing curriculum changes. It would appear that the inclusion of these professional bodies set the scene for consensus on issues such as the development of models of community service by law schools. How effective this process of consultation was can only be measured by its outcomes, and these are still to become evident. While it is difficult to generalise findings from five departments to the whole of government, these observations suggest that some departments are well on their way to implementing community service, albeit in different forms, while others have not yet considered the matter.

2.2 Factors affecting implementation

What, then, are the factors which create the conditions for practical engagement with community service in some departments, but not in others? The research suggests that the departments' orientation to community service may be determined by their policy objectives, their delivery strategies and whether they are able to access the products of higher education directly.

The departments of Health and Justice seem to view community service as a viable component of the machinery required for the delivery of services. To a significant degree their ability to deliver services is dependent on a large pool of person power that is readily identifiable as university educated and professionally qualified. Their objectives - the delivery of justice and health care - are also clearly identifiable. It may be, therefore, that the synergy between means and ends (the means being trained professional graduates and the ends being the provision of services in health and justice in under-served areas of the country) facilitates the conceptualisation of national community service programmes for university students. Their leverage derives in large measure from making community service a condition for professional registration.

By contrast, the relationship between community service and the objectives of the Department of Labour is much more tenuous. One official points out that service delivery for the Department of Labour is geared towards the development of skills in unemployed individuals. The learnership component of the department's skills development strategy provides for learners to be placed in a work environment, which could conceivably be a community-based placement. However, there has been no discussion in the department on integrating community service into learnership programmes. Furthermore, the department is presently more engaged with the further education and training sector than it is with higher education.

However, there were two ideas on how learnership programmes could articulate with community service. One respondent saw the possibility of integrating community service into the learnership programme in medicine and engineering, for example: undergraduate medical students could spend a year doing community service as part of their medical degree, and undergraduate engineering students could assist in public sector projects for a year prior to qualifying. The second suggestion was that community service opportunities could be identified by Sector Education and Training Authorities, as part of the process of identifying employment opportunities in the different economic sectors.

The research suggests that the Department of Education adopts a cautious approach which has three characteristics: it encourages feasibility studies and pilot projects; it prefers to support external initiatives on community service rather than launching them from within the department; and it is keen to assess the practical and financial implications of community service.

The Department of Education's orientation towards community service stems from the fact that while effective human resource development depends on the nature and quality of higher education offered, in this case the department does not have direct control over the structures of delivery: the higher education institutions are legally autonomous and essentially run themselves. The department's subsidy to institutions provides it with the leverage necessary to encourage transformation in teaching and research within the policy framework set by the White Paper on Higher Education. However, the department does not have the resources to introduce community service for all, or even for most, students.

The public works official located in the Community-Based Programme at national level saw his division as a funding agent and not an implementing agent. He therefore referred the researcher to another division which was said to have an implementation function. This suggests that where programme implementation is not defined as part of the primary responsibility of the national office, the department is less likely to be concerned with issues such as community service.

One final consideration concerns the issue of the scale on which community service is introduced. The Department of Justice has defined a broad scope for its legal aid programme: it seeks to render legal aid as required by the Constitution and aims to reach a greater number of individuals than is presently the case.⁴ The Department of Health seems to have done the same: its community service scheme is on a national scale. In both cases it would seem that the actual scale of service provision through community service will ultimately be determined by financial considerations - whether the departments concerned have sufficient funds to employ the graduates against vacant posts. Current fiscal constraints may in fact limit the scale of community service in both cases. The Department of Labour faces other constraints: learnerships will be implemented if and when there are workplace opportunities for learners. According to one official, "what one does not want is to have a huge number of graduates without jobs. The problem of introducing learnerships for all is that students will have the theoretical part of learnership experience, but no good work experience. ... Learnerships should not be compulsory programmes as they can only happen when there are workplace opportunities for learners."

These observations suggest that while there is the inclination in some departments to introduce community service on a compulsory basis and on a national scale, this intention may be constrained by fiscal constraints as well as by other strategic factors.

2.3 Should there be one model of community service?

The researchers explored whether there should be a single model of community service in higher education. The varied orientations towards community service in the five departments suggest that one model would

not necessarily meet their objectives and operational considerations. This was supported by a perspective which argues that community need should be the determining factor in the design of a community service programme. Accordingly, specific programmes will have to be shaped in appropriate ways if the stated needs are to be met in a meaningful manner.

One official put it this way: "To state that all university students should be involved in community service is too generalised and does not take into account the context of development. For example, to say that an information technology student should go and offer IT services in villages would not serve much purpose, as village communities do not have the necessary infrastructure." He suggested that in order to ensure that community service meets community need, it would be better to tie the concept of community service to professional training.

The orientation towards service provision in the departments of Justice and Health may thus make it quite feasible for these two departments to adopt similar approaches to the implementation of a national community service programme in which young graduates serve a period of time in civil service posts as a condition of registration, in order to meet community need for legal and health services. However, other needs may require a different response, suggesting that a "one-size-fits-all" approach is likely to miss the mark.

Does operationalising diverse types of community service necessitate some kind of framework to guide the different initiatives? Is it possible to develop such a framework in view of the different visions for community service and the varied structures for delivery? The concept paper suggested that a diversity of community service programmes would need to operate within a framework of national priorities if their responsiveness to national needs was to be augmented.⁵ The research threw further light on this issue.

The Department of Education's respondent said that whilst his department would support the variety of community service initiatives that are already under way, the department's concern would be that these initiatives should take place within a policy framework. There was, however, no elaboration on what form this framework could take and what it would address.

An analysis of the interview material on community service initiatives in the Department of Justice was more interesting in this respect and suggests three considerations:

- ✍ It may be appropriate to look at the question not from the viewpoint of a single framework that lays down one set of guidelines for all community service programmes, regardless of the sector in which they occur, but rather to work from the viewpoint of particular spheres - such as the legal. This approach has the advantage that the policy framework helps develop guidelines that focus on the needs and peculiarities of that particular sphere.
- ✍ It may be appropriate to have frameworks or parameters driven by transformational imperatives, rather than by the idea of community service for its own sake. This would aid decision-making about how best community service could assist with departmental processes of delivery, what form it should take and what objectives it should achieve. For example, community service is part and parcel of the transformational process which the Justice Department has initiated in the field of legal education and training and in its structures of delivery. It will in all likelihood
 - take the form of a one-year internship, following an LLB degree shortened from five to four years;
 - deploy legal graduates to provide services either in the Public Defender's offices, legal aid clinics or government offices;
 - aim to provide legal services to poor South Africans who are unable to afford lawyers.

In so doing, it will also provide young graduates, who may otherwise experience difficulty in finding articles of clerkship with attorneys, access to legal practice and provide them with practical community-based experience.

- ✍ For reasons of consensus-building, a framework should ideally
 - be negotiated rather than imposed;
 - have some flexibility; for example, in the legal field, each law school has the flexibility to develop its own curriculum, but within agreed parameters. Each law school is also able to develop its own model of community service, which is to be approved by a task team set up by the Department of Justice.

2.4 Factors which may impinge on the success of community service

If it is agreed that community service should not take a single form, the question arises of what the relationship between different forms of service could be, and what co-operative arrangements are required to ensure that optimal benefit is derived from community service.

As was pointed out earlier in this report, some respondents felt that government departments are still grappling with how to implement community service and that the issue of a co-ordinated approach is still some distance away. Nevertheless, it was suggested that the nature and extent of consultative processes make a difference to the willingness of institutions and individuals to participate in community service and may foster increased co-operation between departments and other stakeholders. For example, an official in the Department of Labour suggested that it might be important to think about how community service can be factored into the decision-making structures of the department and was of the opinion that the proposed National Skills Authority may usefully set up a subcommittee to consider service issues.

Three other factors were identified as being significant:

- Incentives. It seems that incentives are an important factor in drawing participants into community service. One view from a government respondent was that community service will not be acceptable to people if it does not provide some form of remuneration to its participants. Another suggested that those who do not want to do compulsory community service should be required to repay the proportion of fees that government pays as a subsidy towards higher education. Those willing to undertake community service can then be said to be paying off this subsidy through the service rendered.
- Should community service be for disadvantaged youth? The question of whether community service should be undertaken by disadvantaged youth was raised in relation to the lack of a clearly defined purpose for national youth service. One official responded in this way: "Maybe unemployed youth can clean streets, but what about youth who have been lucky in finding jobs? Maybe community service should focus on disadvantaged youth."

- Labour relations issues. It was suggested that there may be labour relations issues which need to be taken into consideration in policy development and planning for community service. One official raised the risk that any wage subsidy for community service may create work displacement. Another suggested that employers and the unions are not committed to community service.

3 INTERFACE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The research provided some insight into how government can interface with higher education on community service. While the case of the Department of Justice provided the clearest example there appears to be potential in other departments for cooperation with higher education.

Two points emerged: first, that higher education can help government departments achieve their transformation objectives whilst fulfilling its core functions of teaching and research. Second, that co-operation between the higher education sector and a government department can leverage maximal resources for change. Each of these points is explored more fully below.

As part of its transformation process, the Department of Justice encouraged law schools to initiate changes in the law curriculum and to introduce content that will achieve better alignment between the department's objectives and those of legal training. For example, the period of study for an LLB degree will be shortened from five to four years and will be followed by one year of internship.

Positioning national community service in relation both to governmental processes of transformation and to teaching and learning finds approval with some government officials. It was suggested that combining the objectives of service provision with the fulfilment of learning objectives is likely to make community service a meaningful experience for the participants. Unless community service in higher education keeps both objectives in sight all the time, "national community service will evolve as a programme that exists at a distance from the very structure that is supposed to shape it and give it its impetus".

The example of the Department of Justice provides the clearest example of how resources for change can be leveraged. The research material shows that introducing community service in the legal field is meant to achieve three objectives. Firstly, it is to address the lack of access to legal services by deprived communities. Secondly, it is designed to inject community content into legal education. Thirdly, it is to afford young lawyers access to legal practice through internships.⁶

The achievement of these three objectives requires a community service programme that draws partly on the resources of higher education and partly on those of the department. The department will provide opportunities for the practical legal training of students, such as in legal aid clinics. Other than the pool of students, the universities will presumably provide staff for supervision and facilities for training. With regard to funding, the plan is that funds are drawn partly from Legal Aid and partly from the Department of Education.

As was mentioned earlier, a task team was established by the Department of Justice to work with universities to devise ways of providing legal assistance to communities and injecting community-related content into legal education. The task team will approve implementation plans drawn up by the universities. However, it is still not clear what structures of co-ordination will be put in place once the task team has completed its work.

4 FINANCING

None of the departments interviewed has a financial plan for community service. In most cases this is possibly because they do not have policy on this matter. However, in those instances where government departments have already committed themselves to community service, the absence of a financial plan is cause for concern. It suggests that the community service ventures have not been carefully planned and may thus not be sustainable.

Nevertheless some tentative indications emerged about possible sources and forms of funding. The Department of Justice expressed the possibility of funding its community service initiative partly from funds provided by the Legal Aid Board and partly from funds provided by the Department of Education. The Department of Education is presently reviewing its subsidy

formula for higher education and the indications are that funds for community service are most likely to be accessed where such service programmes form an integral part of higher education curricula. At present the department has little sense of the financial implications of supporting community service projects and is keen to draw on pilot efforts for some initial assessment.

The Department of Health is reported to be funding community service placements against vacant posts, but a recent newspaper report (which could not be confirmed) suggests that such vacancies may become available through the non-renewal of service contracts of more experienced medical personnel.? Should this be the case, the question that emerges is whether the department is not in fact undermining the quality of the health service in order to cut costs through the deployment of new graduates in place of more experienced personnel.

5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The research shows that while all the government departments surveyed are setting their objectives in terms of national priorities, those which stress service delivery and human resources development find it easier to factor community service into their thinking than do others. Departments which are concerned with improving the provision of social services to underserved areas are targeting young professional graduates. Those departments which are primarily concerned with human resources development see community service as one mechanism for assisting with the development of skills and civic responsibility within individuals and with the transformation of higher education.

Policy development and implementation vary considerably from one department to the next. The objectives of service delivery, structures of delivery and target populations hold implications for planning, design and implementation of community service in a particular sector, as does the differentiation of departmental functions between national and provincial offices. In some cases departments are cautious in their approach to community service, wanting first to assess the practical and financial implications of implementation.

Generally, government opinion and practice does not support a single model of community service designed to meet all needs. In a variety of ways respondents proposed a differentiated approach to community service. This was supported by the perspective that community need (not community service for its own sake) should be the determining factor in the design of a community service programme.

On the issue of whether an overarching framework needs to be devised for the diversity of community service programmes, it emerges that a sector-specific framework which operates within the context of national priorities might be most effective in harnessing community service as part of that department's transformation objectives. It appears that as departments grapple with the concept of community service, a co-ordinated approach is unlikely to materialise in the short term. Nevertheless, consultation between government departments and stakeholders can make a difference to the willingness of institutions and individuals to participate in community service and may foster increased co-operation. At this stage the creation of a single governmental structure for community service seems remote.

There are examples of the higher education sector helping government departments achieve their transformation objectives whilst fulfilling its core functions of teaching and research. Second, it seems that co-operation between the higher education sector and a government department can leverage resources for change. However, carefully considered financial plans are essential if community service programmes are to be sustainable in the long term.

1 Perold and Omar, op cit., p14.

2 Interview with official in the Department of Education in June 1998.

3 Business Day, 14 July 1998

4 Department of Justice, Initial Report by the Legal Aid Transformation Team, 1998

5 Perold and Omar, op cit., p102

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Community service has been a subject of considerable debate in higher education and government. There are different conceptions of such service, various views on its purpose in social and economic change in South Africa, and several opinion on how it relates to the core functions of higher education.

This report has attempted to inform the debate by

- providing a conceptual framework;
- describing emerging higher education policies on community service and analysing current practice in the field;
- examining the benefits of community service, identifying the main beneficiaries, and the conditions under which the programmes operate most effectively,
- exploring the resourcing of community service programmes and the costs involved;
- examining the orientation of government departments to community service in higher education.

The report suggests that community service programmes have the potential to contribute to three important development goals in South Africa: the transformation of higher education, human resource development, and reconstruction and development.

The challenges facing the higher education sector in South Africa are clear: to become more socially responsive, to develop high levels of excellence and to respond simultaneously to global and domestic imperatives - all within a context of rising costs and shrinking financial support from the public sector.

The report describes South Africa's relatively limited experience of community service programmes and shows that most of these function on the margins of mainstream teaching and research activities within the institutions.

Nevertheless there is evidence that in some cases community service programmes are impacting on curriculum reform and are producing the knowledge and skills needed for social reconstruction in South Africa. The experience of other countries shows what responsibility higher education carries for the development of civic awareness among students and for inculcating an understanding of responsible citizenship within a democracy. This study shows that community service programmes can do a great deal to contribute towards the growth of civic values in students and faculty, but draws a distinction between those programmes which promote altruism and those which lead to a deeper understanding of fundamental social change.

The transformation of higher education is closely related to South Africa's efforts to improve the skills of individuals as well as the human resource base of the country. Here the objective is not only to develop the skills required for global competitiveness, but also to produce the diversity of skills required for social and community development within the country. Community service programmes offer institutions an opportunity to get in touch with the demands and challenges likely to be faced by their graduates and to enable them to restructure their curricula and assessment systems accordingly.

There is some evidence from other parts of the world (the USA and Nigeria in particular) that community service programmes may help to stem the flow of skilled people from under-resourced areas. This is an important consideration in South Africa where recent studies have demonstrated that one of the reasons for the ongoing underdevelopment of provinces such as the Northern Province and the Eastern Cape is the inability of these areas to retain highly skilled people. It seems that community service can improve the likelihood of graduates working in rural areas after their training - especially if they have participated in community service in the areas in which they grew up.

As far as a contribution to reconstruction and development is concerned, the study has shown that through the involvement of faculty and students who are developing professional skills, programmes such as legal aid clinics and dental clinics have enormous potential to enhance the delivery of social services to large numbers of poor people. Furthermore, programmes in which students draw on their professional knowledge and skill to run education programmes (eg. on health or legal issues) can make a substantial contribution to the empowerment of communities through information and knowledge.

In order to maximise the potential of community service to impact on all three national development goals, the following recommendations are made to three key stakeholders in higher education: government, higher education institutions and the private sector.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

The study has examined how government departments and tiers of government differ in their interest in community service. The recommendations below address this differentiation by distinguishing between the Department of Education which is the department responsible for supporting higher education as a sector, other national departments which are concerned with the delivery of social services, and provincial departments which hold major responsibility for the implementation of policy.

1.1 The Department of Education

The Department of Education sees curriculum reform as the key to producing the skills which South Africa requires for its own development and to make its mark in the community of nations. Clearly the subsidy which the department makes available to higher education is the means through which institutions could be encouraged to infuse teaching programmes with greater relevance and responsiveness to social needs.

The following recommendations flow from the research:

1.1.1 In reviewing its funding formulae, the department should seek input from the institutions on the following issues:

- how institutions intend factoring community service into their planning frameworks for transformation;
- how the goals of academic excellence, service and the promotion of democratic citizenship can be met in different disciplines;
- how disciplines which do not lend themselves to community service view their role in fostering civic values among students and staff;
- a framework for costing learning programmes in all disciplines so as to establish their real cost to the institutions, including the

costs of the service components (such as those in community service programmes).

On the basis of these inputs, the department needs to consider how it intends supporting different aspects of the transformation plans submitted by institutions, including curriculum-related service activities. The main thrust of this approach is not to implement a "one-size-fits-all" approach to community service, nor to insist that it is obligatory for all institutions, faculty and students, but rather to encourage initiatives which are meaningful in academic terms and appropriate to the meeting of community need. If the department is to use the subsidy as an incentive, however, its rationale for encouraging the integration of service into the curriculum needs to be made explicit.

- 1.1.2 The Department of Education could add impetus to the growth of community service as a feature of learning programmes by making available grants which encourage institutions to restructure their curricula to respond to social needs.

The grants would need to be drawn from funds separate from the overall subsidy and earmarked for this purpose. Ideally grants should be made for a two- to three-year period so that institutions have sufficient time in which to undertake the preparation required for successful partnership agreements (between institutions and the communities concerned).

Outcomes could be reviewed according to criteria which are clearly articulated and which support the department's objectives of curriculum reform. For example, outcomes could include the development of models for the effective assessment of learning through service, and models for measuring the impact (in both qualitative and quantitative terms) of community-based teaching and learning on students, faculty, the community and the institution.

- 1.1.3 It is recommended that the Department of Education initiate a process whereby it invites other government departments to join with it in supporting initiatives such as those cited above. The intention here is twofold first, to ensure that the human resources outputs which departments other than the Education Department are seeking from the higher education sector are articulated and form part of the

planning which the Education Department undertakes with institutions; second, to encourage the departments to explore the potential for jointly leveraging funding for the development of specific human resources.

1.2 Other government departments

There are those government departments which are not responsible for higher education (eg. the departments of Health, Welfare and Justice), but are centrally concerned with the delivery of services and depend on the higher education sector to produce the skills needed to realise these objectives. There are also those departments which are concerned with human resources development and utilisation, such as the Department of Labour. The study suggests the following:

1.2.1 Departments such as these should

- articulate their human resources development needs and priorities in relation to their stated policy objectives, identifying areas in which there are skills shortages;
- devise strategies through which these human resources development needs could be met, indicating whether and under what circumstances co-operation with other departments (such as the Department of Education) may be feasible;
- cost these strategy options, and
- devise funding strategies - from their own line budgets, in co-operation with other line functions, and in partnership with the private sector.

1.2.2 Where the goals of these departments would be well served by the employment of higher education graduates, individual departments should consider earmarking posts which could be filled by new graduates. Salaries for these positions should be structured so as to enable graduates to pay back their study loans through service.

1.2.3 The establishment of a number of positions for undergraduate student interns in relevant disciplines could assist students in gaining work experience, earning some income towards their fees and introducing them to the use of their skills in the public service.

1.2.4 Departments should identify disciplines in which there are skills shortages and for which they have vacancies, and then offer student bursaries for these courses tied to employment obligations. This would have the effect of encouraging students to enter these disciplines (there is confirmed evidence that the number of students entering disciplines like engineering is directly related to the number of sponsorships available), allow the departments to select quality candidates and be confident that they can afford the employment of these employees.

1.3 Provincial departments

It is recommended that provincial government departments establish working relationships with higher education institutions in their provinces. These may take various forms.

1.3.1 Higher education institutions should approach provincial government departments for funds required to support curriculum-related community service activities which are synergistic with the objectives which those departments have set themselves.

1.3.2 Consideration should be given to the feasibility of provincial departments drawing higher education students and faculty into forms of service provision at local level. These partnership arrangements may be curriculum-related, but need not necessarily be. They would seek to draw higher education expertise and skills into the activities of departments such as Water Affairs, Welfare, Safety and Security, etc. Provincial partnerships could be initiated on the basis of proposals or plans which are jointly developed by the institutions and the province and which could access government support (including financial support) at both provincial and local level.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

This study has found that a large number of higher education faculty see the benefit of community service programmes in terms of the kudos it brings to the institutions. However, the central thrust of this report argues for a great deal more, namely that the integration of community service into

higher education learning programmes should become part of the quest for academic excellence and social responsiveness. The report also points to the role of higher education institutions in developing civic awareness among students.

The study has identified a number of factors which are likely to impact on the realisation of these goals. They include:

- the higher education institution's vision of social responsiveness;
- the extent to which community service programmes form part of curriculum goals,
- the manner in which the relationship between service and learning is assessed;
- the involvement of academic and institutional leadership;
- whether and how efforts are made to establish and support links between similar efforts in different parts of the institution;
- the institution's willingness to act on lessons learnt about the relationship between service and learning in community-based environments;
- whether and how recognition is given to faculty and students involved in community-based programmes which integrate service and learning;
- how the costs of community service programmes are related to the costs of core functions such as teaching and research.

These factors suggest a number of recommendations which may assist institutions in integrating community service into their core functions of teaching and research.

2.1 The first recommendation concerns the move by some institutions to establish units or departments which are intended to co-ordinate and facilitate partnerships between the institution, communities and donors (see section 3 in Chapter Two). These initiatives are commendable in their efforts to raise the profile of community service in the institutions concerned, and to co-ordinate the institution's engagement with communities. However, most of the initiatives run the risk of being divorced from the academic mainstream of the institution. As such, they are likely to be viewed as 'add-ons' which lack academic credibility and thus lose the opportunity to influence curricula and teaching methods.

An example from the USA is instructive. In an effort to render the institution more socially responsive and to improve the quality of its academic work, Portland State University put in place a single comprehensive centre for academic excellence designed to "link the three - teaching and learning excellence, community-university partnerships, and assessment - and by drawing them together, to improve student learning outcomes, support faculty scholarship, and contribute to the Portland metropolitan community."¹

What is significant in this example is the close relationship which this structure seeks to build between community service and excellence in teaching and assessment. The JET study found examples of South African institutions attempting to integrate mainstream academic work with community service by means of new structural relationships within the institution. For example, the University of Natal (Durban) which has established a faculty of community and development disciplines, suggests that this initiative sees a relationship between becoming more socially responsive and the need to raise the quality of teaching and research activities in the departments involved.

- 2.2 The introduction of community service in higher education in South Africa faces a number of obstacles. Amid competing pressures within a cash-strapped environment, it is not necessarily seen as the next natural step in developing the higher education system. For this reason community service needs to be introduced in ways which are regarded as legitimate by all sectors of higher education.

As part of this approach, higher education institutions are encouraged to extend and deepen the partnerships which are being developed with non-governmental and community-based organisations in different fields. These and other working relationships could assist in reducing the time required of academic staff by sharing experience, roles and responsibilities along the lines suggested in Chapter Three (section 2.4.3).

- 2.3 If community service is to be integrated into teaching and research, it is recommended that institutions review criteria for confirmation and promotion of academic staff. The study found no cases in South Africa in which community service is regarded as a criterion for tenure. Even where it is sometimes advanced as a criterion for

promotion, most academic communities remain sceptical. It would seem, however, that with interest growing in community service, some efforts are being made in South African institutions to start addressing this thorny issue more systematically. It is recommended that these discussions be conducted in conjunction with the larger question of how community service is to form part of the core business of higher education institutions and that experience in other parts of the world be examined in this regard.²

3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector's support of higher education continues to be a lifeline for institutions which are trying to innovate within the context of reduced public funding. The inputs made into this study by individuals active in the private sector were helpful in establishing a clearer understanding of the perspective of private sector donors on community service. Essentially they see community service programmes as adding value to the educational goals of higher education and distinguish their support for these activities from the support which they provide to community development through non-governmental agencies.

This study has shown that community service programmes, if properly designed and managed, can contribute to both goals: that of adding educational value to higher education curricula and adding value to reconstruction and development efforts on the ground. On the basis of the results of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- 3.1 In their grant making donors should consider the nature and types of programmes that add most value in terms of their own objectives, and the conditions under which this best occurs. This report provides guidelines for assessing programmes and the factors that contribute to the success of community service programmes.
- 3.2 Small grants from the private sector can make a huge difference to programme quality and sustainability through the support of core staff and through support for operational costs such as transport. The study has found that some of the community service programmes require relatively small amounts of funds to deliver high quality services to hundreds of people. Community service programmes

often have the infrastructure (a site from which to deliver services and the human resources necessary to do so), but lack the funds to transport students to the site or to purchase the equipment to deliver services (see section 3.2 in Chapter Three). It is recommended that donors identify and target these strategic areas of expenditure in order to add their resources to those which are already being committed to community service programmes by the higher education institutions themselves.

- 3.3 Funders are encouraged to continue their support of voluntary community service programmes in higher education. Voluntary programmes presently provide important opportunities for civic learning and for service opportunities, particularly for students who are involved in disciplines which do not naturally lend themselves to learning through community service. However, it is recommended that donors require from these organisations reports and evaluations which can help to measure their outcomes and improve the quality of their operations.
- 3.4 Community-based research is essential to understand which interventions add value and contribute most effectively to human resources development and community development. By supporting this type of research, donors can assist institutions to increase their knowledge of development issues and enlarge their own understanding in the process.
- 3.5 Some community service programmes deliver high quality services which can augment the community development efforts of nongovernmental organisations. This suggests that private sector organisations which support community development programmes could consider channelling some funds towards community service programmes.
- 3.6 It is possible that high quality service provision through community service programmes may be cost-effective. The potential for public/private sector partnerships could be enhanced through more accurate costings of community service programmes.

1 Driscoll, A. Op cit., p163.

2 It is instructive that at Portland State University, the centre for academic excellence is charged with assisting in the development of new guidelines for promotion and tenure within the university. "The concept of professional service ... has affirmed the need to rethink criteria for reviewing faculty achievements related to the community. To begin meeting this need, the centre for academic excellence staff have developed cases of faculty professional service accomplishments ... and used them for faculty and administrative group discussion about how to evaluate such scholarship." Ibid., p162.