

Final Report 2011

May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust

**A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT:
A COLLABORATION BETWEEN NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS
OF MANGAUNG (BLOEMFONTEIN)
AND
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
(DIVISION: SERVICE LEARNING)**

Submitted by:

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UNIVERSITY OF THE
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UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA



The May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust Project Partners



From left: Mr Willem Ellis (UFS Project Manager); Mr Malefane Mokoena (MUCPP); Mrs Marietha Johnson (Child Welfare Bloemfontein & Childline Free State); Mr Given Shingange (NTDA); Mrs Avril Snyman (Lebone Village); Prof. Mabel Erasmus (UFS CHESD, Division: Service Learning – Grant-holder); Mr Patrick Kaars (REACH Bloemfontein)

Absent: Ms Thokozile Dube (DEDI)

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1. A CONCISE PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This project entailed the implementation of a research and development initiative under the auspices of the Division: Service Learning at the University of the Free State (UFS) in collaboration with key academic departments and selected partners from the Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) sector in the Mangaung (Bloemfontein) area of the Free State, South Africa. The project unfolded against the background of a proven lack of institutional knowledge pertaining to issues of governance, sustainability, financial management, fund-raising and monitoring and evaluation among NPOs in the area identified above and the project explicitly strived to address this challenge in all of its interventions. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), among which the UFS, have a vested interest in partnering with and capacitating NPOs as the representatives of the communities that they serve. Both sectors are in need of information and results stemming from projects like this in order to optimise the performance of such NPOs, strengthen their institutional linkages with HEIs like the UFS and measure the impact of the involvement of HEIs with NPOs in a development environment.

Even though the UFS facilitated the implementation of the project, it refrained from “dominating” the NPOs and ensured that all NPOs were involved equally in contributing to the successful implementation of the project. NPOs were encouraged to share their experiences in a participative, inclusive manner – sharing their unique experiences with their peers and allowing the scrutiny of good practices in the NPO environment. The UFS facilitated and recorded this information sharing, added its expertise where applicable and ensured that skills gaps among the NPOs were identified and addressed where possible.

1.2 NPO Project Partners

Four NPOs active in the Mangaung (Bloemfontein) area were originally chosen to collaborate in the project. They were:

- **REACH (Bloemfontein):** A voluntary organisation assisting and developing youth in becoming strong and respected role models in thriving communities.
- **Child Welfare Bloemfontein & Childline Free State (CWBFN & CLFS):** A non-governmental organisation rendering comprehensive child protection services to children and families at risk – among which statutory services, a 24 hours toll-free telephone service, social work services, training and support for crèches and child care forums.
- **Lebone Village:** A faith-based organisation working as a holistic care centre for children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and poverty.
- **Mangaung–University of the Free State Community Partnership Programme (MUCPP):** An organisation supporting communities in issues pertaining to health and social care; sustainable agriculture, economic and management development; sports development as well as arts and culture development.

During the project a further two NPOs were invited to come on board. They were:

- **Diketso Eseng Dipuo Community Development Trust (DEDI):** An organisation working with families and local organisations, empowering and strengthening them to improve and render better care to young children.
- **Nhlamolo Training and Development Agency (NTDA):** An organisation striving to empower communities through information literacy training.

In terms of the original project proposal, an amount of US\$ 24 800,00 totalling ZAR 184 000,00, was awarded to the project on 17 February 2010.

2. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 NPO interactions

The original research design of the project envisaged that the objectives of the project would be reached through ongoing interactions with the selected NPOs during which these NPOs would be asked to make presentations on their operational practices and allow scrutiny of the practices by their peer organisations. The results of such peer examinations would allow the compilation of a number of “good practices” that could be shared in order to improve their management interventions. Academic departments of the UFS would also be linked to NPOs to embark on service-learning interventions with NPOs, further addressing needs at the NPOs.

In terms of the research design, the following workshop interactions with NPOs took place:

Date	Host	Topics Addressed/Presenters
04/06/2010	REACH (Bloemfontein)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Project/Partners (UFS & Partners) • Project Planning (UFS & Project Partners) • The Crucial Role of NPO Leadership (REACH)
23/07/2010	MUCPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Historical Background of the NPO Sector in the Free State and South Africa (UFS) • Partnerships and Service Learning (UFS & MUCPP) • Partnerships in Action in Early Childhood Development Interventions (MUCPP)
13/08/2010	UFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating Participatory Action Research and Project Management: A Model for Capacitating Community and University on the Co-Production of Useful Knowledge (A workshop by Dr John Boughey, University of Zululand)
27/08/2010	CWBFN & CLFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPOs and Volunteerism (CWBFN & CLFS) • Career Guidance and Study Options for NPO Volunteers (UFS) • Legal Registration of NPOs: Models and Vehicles (UFS)
11,12/11/2010	Lebone Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Training Sessions (Papillon – Jill Ritchie) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fund-raising Proposal Writing ○ Fund-raising from Government ○ Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for NPOs ○ Creative Thinking for NPOs

Date	Host	Topics Addressed/Presenters
21/02/2011	NTDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of NPOs through ICT (NTDA) • Project Reflection (Project Partners)
11/03/2011	DEDI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with Provincial Government (Provincial Department of Social Development) • Income-Generation (Lebone Village) • Financial Management (Lebone Village)
27/05/2011	UFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structuring Community Development: Practice: Method and Analysis (A workshop by Dr P Westoby, University of Queensland)
10/06/2011	UFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Monitoring and Evaluation Exercises (Project Partners) • Social Entrepreneurship – a Way Forward? (UFS) • Presentation on the Free State NGO Forum as Possible Future Network (NGO Forum Representative)
17/08/2011	REACH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Papillon Books to NPOs (UFS) • Project Partner Feedback • Project Conclusion

2.2 Challenges and Modifications

No major challenges to the implementation of the project were experienced and thus no major modifications had to be made to the implementation of the project. Some of the minor challenges experienced involved the following:

- The ongoing challenge of ensuring the interest in practical service learning and/or community engagement interventions (such as this project) at a number of academic departments at the UFS. Due to differing foci as far as teaching/learning; research and community engagement at the different faculties and departments of the UFS, it was a challenge to interest a fair number of UFS academic departments in participating in the project with CHESD. The project thus only garnered interest from a small number of academic departments. This did not, however, detract from the quality of the intervention by CHESD, as the workshop interventions were largely based on peer input from NPOs themselves. CHESD had adequate academic staff from the UFS interested to render a good service for the purposes of the project.
- The task of compiling an NPO M&E tool answering to the needs of six organisations rendering a wide variety of different services proved to be quite challenging. Instead of compiling one tool for all organisations, the NPOs were empowered through the formal training provided by Papillon to create such tools for themselves on a project basis. One organisation, REACH, will benefit from the current academic efforts of an individual post-graduate student in Computer Sciences and Informatics who will render an M&E tool applicable to REACH as an organisation.

3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A formal monitoring and evaluation workshop took place on 10/06/2011. Information was elicited from project partners utilising a structured questionnaire and a focus group discussion. In brief the results of the evaluation workshop indicated the following:

- **Applicability of the issues addressed during the training sessions:** NPOs found the topics (leadership, service learning, action research, volunteerism, NPO legalities, ICT, income-generation, financial management, community development; social entrepreneurship) all to be applicable to their operational environments and found the inputs shared during the training sessions to be helpful. The more formal training session on fundraising, proposal writing and monitoring/evaluation for NPOs was especially valuable according to the feedback received.
- **Format of the training sessions:** NPOs were complimentary regarding the inclusive, peer-driven format of the training sessions. The methodology of NPOs taking the lead in presentation during workshops worked well as NPOs could identify with the challenges of their peers. Due to the practicality of the inputs given by NPO peers, more effective learning took place. NPOs reported that they found it easier to translate the experiences of fellow organisations into learning experiences for themselves and appreciated the fact that the training was not dominated by the UFS as educational organisation.
- **Networking:** Even though most of the NPOs involved in the project had networked before, the project ensured closer working relationships among the NPOs. The project had also introduced two new partner organisations, namely DEDI and NTDA that had not formed part of stronger networks before. The UFS will also in future benefit from the strong institutional linkages that had been formed during this project.
- **Role of the UFS:** NPOs expressed their gratitude for the UFS taking the lead in facilitating the project. The UFS was seen as a knowledge hub that was well situated to empower NPOs and act as a facilitating agent as far as building and maintaining networks were concerned. Even though the NPOs realised that the UFS had mainly an academic role to play, the wish was expressed that the UFS stay involved in building, empowering and maintaining networks such as had been created through this project. The wish was also expressed that training in NPO management be formalised in order to ensure that accredited courses on the topic could be offered by the UFS, thus enhancing the career prospects of NPO members active in civil society.
- **Future needs:** NPOs indicated that they would appreciate the UFS continuing its empowerment role in the community, especially as far as the provision of updated academic information regarding the "Third Sector" was concerned. NPOs indicated that one of their major shortcomings was the fact they could not stay ahead of all developments in their sector due to the pressure on them for service-delivery and that they thus would appreciate the UFS continuing its role as information hub into the future.

It will be necessary to conduct at least one further evaluation exercise six months to a year from now in terms of which the longer term impact of training and empowerment intervention can be measured. This can again be done through the means of a focus group discussion and or questionnaires.

4. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The broad project objectives, as stated in the original funding proposal, were dealt with in the following manner:

Objective 1	Benefitting community and NPOs in an around Mangaung (Bloemfontein) area of Free State
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding made available for meritorious black student from an NPO for support from the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust project funding. • Support for the REACH Digital Doorway programme. • Support for NTDA information literacy training programme. • Creation of capacity to design own Participatory Action Research (PAR) interventions at NPOs.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support made available to Mr Joseph Motshwiga, currently employed by REACH, to take part in the Educare course offered at Motheo FET College. • Financial support for implementation of Digital Doorway project and NPO website. • Financial support to NTDA for presentation of information literacy course to members of participating NPOs. • Capacity developed at NPOs for design of own PAR interventions through workshop by Dr J Boughey. • Objective reached.
Objective 2	Rendering of relevant training and development opportunities to selected NPOs
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation of 8 training workshops (topics described above) for all participating NPOs in terms of NPO peer empowerment process. • Facilitation of one training workshop by private consultant for NPO M&E and fundraising.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful and valuable learning processes reported in terms of project M&E process. • Objective reached.
Objective 3	Enhancing of engagement and collaborative partnerships between Division Service Learning (UFS) and NPOs
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of NPOs to relevant UFS academic departments for the formation of long term partnerships. • Inclusion of selected NPOs in NRF funding proposal for inclusion in long term collaborative research project.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation between UFS academic department (Architecture) and NPOs regarding infrastructural improvement at NPO service sites (Still ongoing). • Participation by selected NPOs in successful NRF funding proposal regarding long term collaborative research project. • Objective reached

Objective 4	Compilation of a monitoring and evaluation tool for measurement of impact of collaborative processes between NPOs and communities they serve
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information gathering from NPOs regarding compilation of possible NPO M&E tool.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding made that the project would not be able to produce a generic tool capable of effectively measuring success of collaborative processes between NPOs and their communities due to the varied nature of the services rendered. NPOs capacitated to create own M&E tools on project basis through training provided by Papillon. Effort made to contribute to the completion of an academic study that could contribute to the creation of such an M&E tool for use by REACH as an individual organisation. Such a tool could be adapted later for use by other NPOs. Objective reached.

5. TOWARDS THE FUTURE

A number of positive developments have taken place in terms of which the impact of the project will be extended beyond the project implementation period of approximately 14 months. They include the following:

- National Research Foundation (NRF) Project:** Building on the experiences gained through the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust project, the Service Learning Division of CHESD has successfully initiated a new 3-year research project entitled, *“Knowledge as Enablement – NPO Focus”* (Grant-holder: Prof. Mabel Erasmus). This research project, funded by the NRF, is aimed at establishing a long-term collaborative research platform among a number of higher education institutions, selected participants from the Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) sector and relevant public sector role players for purposes of reciprocal building, sharing and utilisation of knowledge for mutual enablement and capacity-building. Specific themes and topics for investigation will be chosen collaboratively; the research designs and methodologies will be community-based, participatory, action-oriented, and situated within community engagement as a field of enquiry. Several of the NPOs that had taken part in this project, are also on board for participation in the NRF project, further strengthening the network and enhancing the strength of the NPOs through academic empowerment. Successful implementation of this NRF project will be greatly enhanced by the synergy created during the earlier NPO project.
- UFS NPO Library:** Central to empowering NPOs, has been the availability of good resource material. With project funding, the UFS has obtained a number of resources covering a number of NPO-related topics like fund-raising, NPO governance, proposal writing etc. Some of these resources have been donated to the NPOs, but a library of more specialised as well as electronic sources has been created at the UFS, to which the NPOs will have access in future. The Donor Directories that were acquired will enable the NPOs to have access to updated material on possible funding agencies on a national and international basis – contributing to their longer term financial sustainability.

- **Individual Academic Involvement:** Individuals belonging to a number of the NPOs are continuing their academic careers through the UFS and will be in contact with the team members of this project for the foreseeable future. As their academic tracks are also linked with the broad areas of service learning, community engagement and NPO advancement the opportunity for further intellectual support and advice to NPO does exist.

6. CONCLUSION

The UFS would like to express its gratitude towards the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust for the financial assistance rendered towards this project. Overall the project has proven to be successful, with further positive results expected as the partnerships and linkages formed strengthens and the NPOs get the opportunity to assert themselves through the skills and competencies gained during the project.

It has been a pleasure and privilege to have formed part of the UFS project team participating in this project.



Prof. Mabel Erasmus
Head
Division: Service Learning
CHESD



Mr Francois Marais
Director: CHESD
(Line Manager)

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

Expenditure Item	Item Cost (US\$)	Total (US\$)*
1. Project Management Support		
Project Manager	7 285	7 285
2. Equipment		
Notebook PC	665	
Panasonic Data-Projector	1 179	1 844
3. Books		
Papillon Press Books	1 410	1 410
4. Community Project Support		
Digital Doorway Project	675	
Information Literacy Training	605	
Educare Bursary Costs	1 285	
Website Development	1 340	3 905
5. Workshops, Seminars, Formal Training Sessions		
Papillon Fundraising and M&E Training	1 625	
Dr John Boughey PAR Training	520	
Dr Peter Westoby Community Development Training	331	
Venues, catering, miscellaneous cost for 10 NPO training sessions (All monies were paid over to NPOs for rendering all services in this regard)	4 050	6 526
6. Printing, Stationary, Training Materials		
Project bags	192	
Printing, binding, photocopies, promotional material, traing materials, stationery	1 080	
Miscellaneous	130	1 402
7. International Networking		
International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR) conference (Istanbul, 7-10 July 2010); Facing Crises: Challenges and Opportunities Confronting the Third Sector and Civil Society. Panel involvement and presentation (with colleagues from the USA, Ireland and Egypt working with the NPO sector) by Prof. Erasmus on topic: How Service-Learning Relates to the 3 rd Sector: Multi-National Practices and Research (South African perspective).	2 430	2 430
TOTAL	US\$ 24 802	US\$ 24 802

*All amounts were rounded off for ease of calculations. All calculations were done in terms of a US\$/ZAR exchange rate of ZAR 7,41/UD\$.