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CONTENTS

Introduction

Realigning Higher Education Policy and Practices with Metrics of Well-Being Through Public Good Professional Education Melanie Walker	<i>1</i>
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Case Studies

Social Work, Silvertree University Arona Dison, Melanie Walker, Monica McLean and Rosie Vaughan	<i>17</i>
Engineering, Acacia University Rosie Vaughan, Melanie Walker, Arona Dison and Monica McLean	<i>53</i>
Theology, Acacia University Arona Dison, Monica McLean and Melanie Walker	<i>96</i>
Law, Fynbos University Rosie Vaughan and Melanie Walker	<i>129</i>
Public Health, Fynbos University Arona Dison, Melanie Walker and Monica McLean	<i>167</i>

INTRODUCTION

Realigning Higher Education Policy and Practices with Metrics of Well-Being Through Public Good Professional Education

MELANIE WALKER

The project 'Developing Discourses: Higher Education and Poverty Reduction in South Africa' explored how university-located professional education might contribute to transforming South African universities to make contributions to poverty reduction. The research project ran from July 2008 to December 2009. These detailed case studies serve to present the richness of our data and to show in detail how we arrived at the four levels of our 'human development public good professional education' index (see Appendix to this introduction). They complement the short summary narratives and various working papers and articles produced by the research team.

Public reasoning

We hope the case studies will form the basis of public reasoning in universities, policy fora and among service providers. We are strongly influenced by Amartya Sen's (2009) theorisation of the idea of justice and see such processes of public discussion and scrutiny as 'central to an understanding of justice' (Sen 2009: xix) and the removal of injustices in an imperfect world. As Sen (2009: xix) reminds us, in a world 'which contains much "unreason"', such public reasoning 'may be particularly important'; we ought then to use reason 'to the extent we can' in pursuing a theory and practices of public good professionalism: 'The requirements of a theory of justice include bringing reason into play in the diagnosis of justice and injustice' (Sen, 2009: 5).

Our specific focus was on the role of universities in educating public good professionals who will make the responsible choice and have the knowledge and practical skills to function in the interests of people living in conditions of poverty – to make their lives go better, for example through having more dignity, more respect and more agency. Such professional 'capabilities' (Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1999) are formed through teaching and learning, albeit mediated by individual biographies and social arrangements. Professional capabilities formation is a response to the future by producing professionals who can lead and change people's lives and their flourishing.

Capabilities

The capability approach in our research is a means to theorize questions of justice, professional education and professional agency. Capabilities are the real and actual freedoms (opportunities) people have to do and be what they value being and doing and to choose between different kinds of lives (Sen, 1999, 2009). The capability approach asks us to evaluate well being in terms of what people value being and doing, and to work to increase their freedom to be in those ways or to do those things. For our purposes it then follows that the responsibility of a university committed to social transformation is to enable students to develop relevant capabilities while at university; that is, to impart the knowledge, skills and competence which constitute the capability to practice as professionals working for social transformation. Professional 'beings and doings' that are valuable to the professionals who emerge from higher education would be functionings; such functionings would be proxies for what we call 'professional capabilities' (see Appendix). With capability also comes responsibility for what we do, and the obligations we owe to others (Sen, 2009).

We recognize how contested notions of transformation are in globalized times for higher education (see Walker and Dison 2008 and Walker forthcoming). Boughey (2007: 5) points to the 'mutual contradictions' and 'slippage' in the South African state's policy position, 'from a progressive equity agenda to a more conservative agenda', as higher education is linked to macro-economic restructuring and a value-added, high skills knowledge based labour market. Using the field of Educational Development as a case study, but framing an argument which might be more widely applied in the field of higher education policy, Boughey suggest that educational development is being framed 'as a tool for capitalist expansion' (13); in the face of market forces an economic agenda is displacing the equity agenda. We might then expect to find residual discourses of transformation-as-equity and emergent discourses (perhaps becoming dominant) of transformation-as-human capital in the policy arena, and an unevenness of take up or rejection at the level of actual universities and professional programmes¹.

We chose professional education as the site of the investigation because it is at the nexus of universities and the societies they serve; it points inwards to institutional transformation, and outwards to social transformation. It is where academic knowledge, values and professionalism meet the world of practice and interact with the people who are the users and recipients of professional services. It is the 'space' in this project for evaluating, by proxy of professional work, human well-being. The project involved three different South African universities – each having different histories and transformation trajectories, and five different professional education departments across the three universities. We have tried to situate the research within a broader understanding of transformation than access and race, even while recognising the critical salience of race in South African transformations².

The universities and the interviewees have all been anonymized even though we

¹ In higher education in developed countries, including the USA, UK and Australia, 'transformation' is commonly understood by policy makers (and indeed many vice-chancellors) as involving a shift from educational values to market and business values. See for example Tuchman (2009).

² How critical race continues to be is made clear by the recent Soudien Commission on race (see DOE, 2009) in South African universities, which found widespread and continuing race-based discrimination, together with the continuing need in the case studies to define people using uncomfortable but arguably necessary racial descriptors like white, black, coloured, and so on to track trends in admissions, success and staffing in universities.

acknowledge that the universities may be identifiable in the South African context. It has therefore been important to discuss each draft case study with the participating department and to adjust the final text to capture the views and perceptions of our interviewees, while still producing a trustworthy and rigorous account.

The project sought to develop a *prospective* analysis to ask: which policy should be implemented (Alkire, 2008). Alkire (2008: 32) explains that a prospective application of the capability approach (rather than an evaluation of whether capabilities have been expanded) will ask what changes to existing [educational] arrangements would expand certain [professional] capabilities and how 'durable, equitable and sustainable such expansions would be'. *Which policies and actions would yield greater capabilities?* Moreover, a prospective analysis, she says, needs to recognize that contexts of social norms, groups and social institutions are essential in developing policies which will advance capability formation.

Thus in the project we have employed a prospective application of the capability approach rather than an evaluation of what is - whether capabilities have been expanded. We have been building up accounts to identify which changes to existing education and social arrangements would expand professional capabilities, drawing on the ideas of people, structural factors and practices within the research sites, both constraining and enabling. We have been looking at which professional capabilities are valued by diverse individuals and groups across five professions, as well as looking at policies, practices and institutional cultures which would promote capability expansion, such as curricula and pedagogies within the programmes. We have done this recognising that developing policies, curricula, pedagogy, reshaping institutional cultures, and so on, take place in particular contexts influenced by professional fields (which comprise both individuals in professional role and professional fields as structures), existing departmental/faculty/university cultures, and broader societal change processes which are themselves contested and in flux in South Africa³.

The case study narratives therefore are not evaluations, nor have we been looking for an exact fit against transformation, given our prospective application of the capability approach.

In the project we have been concerned to index public good professional education as a measure of transformation, accepting the ambiguities and contradictions, captured by the head of social work at Silvertree University,

If you take a notion like transformation and you say that transformation is going to be a key indicator and using certain proxies to reflect what are the elements of transformation in each department or in each university, whether it's curriculum design that's a response to social needs or whether it's a participatory process – or whatever the elements are that you are looking at within this notion of transformation. Transformation is both a process as well as an outcome. So you're not going to get an automatic fit because the process that is ongoing is itself subject to a whole lot of factors that are not only determined by the agency of staff and students; and so theoretically one has to situate some of those notions within that broader understanding of what's happening. (7 October, 2009)

The concept of prospective analysis is also helpful in research on transformation where what is being researched is caught up in change processes or societal needs for change. It seeks not to judge what has been done, or is being done but draws on history and context to suggest what could or ought to be done in the future and why this is important. We think that individuals and collectives being able to imagine or 'aspire' to

³ For a broader framing of higher education, human development and quality more broadly see Boni and Gaspar (2009) and for global higher education, social responsibility and graduate capability formation see Walker (forthcoming).

(Appadurai, 2004) alternative futures is a key dimension in bringing about educational and social change.

In relation to the case studies, we are clearly looking for a thread running through from valued capabilities to educational arrangements, informed by the confirming or differing perspectives of lecturers, students and alumni. We have looking for pointers to whether students/emerging professionals are developing these capabilities which they will be able to translate into functionings within the often constraining environments of professional practice. However, we do not have sufficient evidence to make strong evaluative claims about programmes.

For the same reason we have conceptualised the index we have produced as a normative framework for prospective or developmental interrogation rather than an evaluative capturing of what is. It ought to enable situational analysis but also participatory development and change if taken up by professional departments, by higher education policy makers, and by service users. At some stage it might then also constitute an evaluative framework for transformation and quality in professional education, adjusted as appropriate by situated professions and professional education sites.

Justice, comparative assessments and 'comprehensive' outcomes

Because we have chosen to undertake a prospective analysis (what ought to be), the index we have produced might also serve as the basis of what Sen (2009) describes as 'comparative assessments' of justice in a second best world, where hard but also realizable choices have to be made, on the basis of public reasoning and the 'values and priorities of the people involved' (2009: 17). What matters in arriving at these assessments, for Sen, is 'the lives that people can actually live' (2009: 18). Any realization of professional capability formation (and subsequent professional practice to expand the capabilities of those living in conditions of poverty) would further need attention to what Sen describes as 'comprehensive outcomes' (2009: 22), that is the processes involved in professional and capability formation, as much as the outcomes. By comprehensive he means 'a process-inclusive broad account' (2009: 24). By this reckoning our index and our case studies must be understood as frameworks for discussion and reasoning, rather than as a blueprint for educational action. If we think poor service delivery by professionals constitutes a manifest injustice, then we might look to the index as the basis for public discussion about what is happening in organizations and in professional education as sites where we might work to remove severe injustices.

Data collection and stages of analysis

We have drawn on these data sources in generating our metrics and index⁴:

1. existing data (on diversity in universities, secondary literatures on South African higher education, newspapers and WebPages);
2. our theorizing from human development (Haq, 2003; Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1999) and the capability approach (Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1999), from professionalism, and from key concepts like 'transformation';
3. an existing list of valuable capabilities⁵ (see Walker et al, 2009);

⁴ A full archive of anonymized interview data, summary narratives, 'chunked/coded' data, detailed case studies, three key iterations of the Index (March, July, September 2009), and various working papers, presentations, posters and institutional narratives has been assembled.

⁵ We used a list drawn from Nussbaum (2000) (No.s 1-10) and Wolff and De Shalit (2007) (No.s 11-13): 1. Life; 2. Bodily Health; 3. Bodily Integrity; 4. Senses, imagination and thought; 5.

4. an ongoing deliberative process with universities and departments;
5. indexed dimensions based on empirical interview data, especially interviews with students, lecturers, university leadership, alumni, professional bodies and NGOs.

The case studies focus especially on the qualitative data but draw also as required on research literatures about the relevant professional fields. The paper by McLean et al (2008) advanced our theorising specifically of professionalism and public good professionalism and is a backdrop to this paper, as well as those papers in which we explore human development and capabilities (e.g. Walker, 2009; Walker et al, 2009).

Bearing a comprehensive capabilities list in mind, and taking into account engagements with colleagues working in the three case study universities and interview data, we drafted a number of dimensions which would be particularly relevant to professionals working for social transformation. Through rich empirical case studies and theoretical and research studies, four interlocking tables of dimensions have been produced as our framework for transformation-as-human development (see Walker, 2009; Walker et al, 2009).

The overarching theme was conceptualized as '*human development*⁶ *public good professionalism*' (slightly clumsy but necessary to capture all the key elements). In South Africa we suggest this means 'pro-poor' professionalism given that the majority – over 60% – of people still live in conditions of poverty (see Taylor, 2000). We wanted to know from our data how public good professionals were being educated in universities, notwithstanding tensions, contradictions and constraints of change and transformation. We looked for a consistent educational philosophy, for example, the importance of human dignity but did not expect to find a homogenized vision so much as a plurality of strategies, locations and underpinning themes. Nonetheless we thought there ought to be an iterative 'thread' which could be pulled through all the interviews for each professional site in order to tell a reasonably coherent story about educating professionals. Thus if we found public good professionalism in alumni and students we assumed it is happening in some way in professional education and that we should then be able to find evidence. We further believe that the empirical qualitative data is significant because it enables us to listen carefully to the voices of a range of people involved in professional education and in professional work.

The data gap lies arguably in the fact that we did not speak directly to service users. But we have used documentary and other evidence to inform our assumptions about what service users might value for their own lives and their interactions with professionals.

We analyzed the data bearing in mind three themes: i) the integration of macro/meso and micro levels; ii) what kind of professional is envisioned; and iii) what is actually going on in professional education at each site:

- Stage 1: Interviews with students, lecturers, university leaders, alumni, professional bodies, NGOs (August – October 2008; over 90 interviews).

Emotions; 6. Affiliation; 7. Practical reason; 8. Other species; 9. Play; 10. Control over one's environment; 11. Doing good to others; 12. Living in a law abiding fashion; 13. Understanding the law. We have not asked poor people directly which capabilities they most value, but have extrapolated from research. Wolf and De Shalit further suggest from their research that six core capabilities emerge as central to 'fertile functionings'. These are: life, bodily health, bodily integrity, affiliation, control over the environment, and sense, imagination and thought (2007: 119). They suggest that any person or group doing badly on all dimensions can be assumed to be the least advantaged.

⁶ Human development, according to Haq (2003), involves key values of well-being, participation and agency, but also economic productivity, and seeks 'to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives'. It sees human flourishing as the ends of development, rather than say, economic growth.

Discussion with a research working group (RWG) at each university. Initial draft of professional capabilities index (see Walker et al, 2009).

- Stage 2: Coding of Social Work data by research team to agree 9 themes (drawing on theory and data) (December 2008).
- Stage 3 Coding and 'chunking' of student, lecturer, alumni data using agreed categories of professional capabilities, educational arrangements, and social constraints; followed by professional bodies and NGOs, and University leaders (by mid March 2009).
- Stage 4 Five summary narratives produced for each case study (about 1500 words each) (March 2009).
- Stage 5 Further responses from research working groups (March 2009).
- Stage 6 Revision of professional capabilities tables across all 5 case studies, and indexing of educational arrangements, institutional conditions and social constraints, drawing on summary narratives and RWG inputs (March 2009).
- Stage 7 Further iterative adjustment of these 4 tables after feedback from RWGs (July-September 2009).
- Stage 8 Drafting of expanded case study for each professional site, including discussion and feedback from each participating department; discussion and feedback on revisions from Walker and McLean (by December 2009).

In addition to these stages, discussion and dissemination began in October 2008 and continued through to December 2009; various presentations and working papers have been placed on the project website to disseminate evolving thinking about key aspects of the project. Iterations of the Index have also been developed at three key points: October 2008, March 2009 and September 2009.

Working with our nine analytical codes⁷, we first generated four central capabilities working with the data set from Social Work as an exemplar of a profession working directly at the interface of vulnerable lives. We described these as Vision, Professional Agency, Affiliation and Resilience. For example, data from one social work alumnus for each of these dimensions included:

- Vision: 'not to be deluded about the situation and not to romanticize it, but to know that humans can change, countries can change, but you've got to be there for the long haul' and, 'You've got to have a commitment, first of all to this country and the change that the country needs, the human change it needs'.
- Resilience: 'you've got to be prepared to be committed and to persevere. It's so easy to give up and there are reasons to give up. There is burnout, case loads are incredibly high, turnover is really high, and there are too few social workers and too many problems. But if you stick long enough and you're committed enough ...I think that's what a social worker needs'.
- Affiliation: 'our ethos is relationships before projects'.
- Professional agency: 'I can do stuff. I can make a difference'.

Coding the case study data initially using our nine themes yielded evidence-based tables organized around three key categories of (i) human development professional capabilities, (ii) educational arrangements (including institutional conditions), and (iii) social constraints for each case study, across the interviews with lecturers, students and alumni, followed by the NGOs and professional bodies.

⁷ The themes were: transformation; poverty; contribution to poverty reduction (positive); contribution to poverty reduction (negative); capabilities of the poor; professional capabilities; lecturer capabilities; educational contribution (positive); educational contribution (negative). Each was colour coded and the transcripts coded manually.

Human development meta-professional functionings and capabilities

Thus iterative discussion with each RWG and analysis of all five professional sites expanded the initial framing to eight central professional capabilities and four non-hierarchical key meta-functionings.

We propose that public good professionals are multidimensional human development practitioners who are able to act in these ways, i.e. they have developed these four core *meta-functionings*. We argue that through their professional education at university, graduates ought to be able to do and to choose to do, in all these multi-dimensional ways, as public good professionals:

- Recognise the full dignity of every human being
- Act for social transformation and to reduce injustice
- Make sound, knowledgeable, thoughtful, imaginative professional judgements
- Work/act with others to expand the comprehensive capabilities ('fully human lives') of people living in poverty.

Capabilities underpin these functionings. Through their professional education students in professional education ought to have the opportunity to do and to be and to choose to do and be public good professionalism by forming these eight core, incommensurable, non-hierarchical, multi-dimensional professional capabilities:

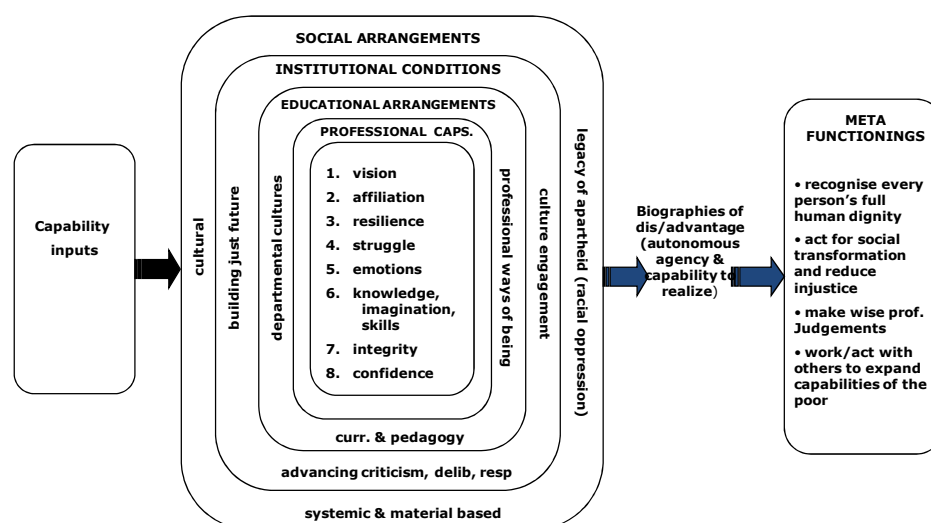
Core human development professional capabilities⁸

Informed Vision	Affiliation (solidarity)	Resilience	Social and collective Struggles [could be practical reasoning?]	Emotion	Integrity	Assurance & confidence	Knowledge, imagination, practical skills
E.g. Understand how the profession is shaped by historical, socio-economic, political context national and globally. Being able to imagine alternative futures and improved social arrangements	E.g. Accepting obligations to others Care and respect for diverse people Communicating professional knowledge in an accessible way/ Courtesy, patience	E.g. Perseverance in difficult circumstances Recognising the need for professional boundaries (having a balanced life)	E.g. Community empowerment approach/ promoting human rights/humility Participating in public reasoning/listening to all voices in the 'conversation'	E.g. Empathy as having narrative imagination Integrating rationality and emotions	E.g. Acting ethically Being responsible & accountable to communities and colleagues	E.g. Expressing and asserting own professional priorities Having confidence to act for change	E.g. Having a firm, critical grounding in disciplinary, academic knowledge Being enquiring, critical, evaluative, imaginative, creative and flexible Open mindedness

These professional capabilities in turn, interlock with dimensions of educational arrangements, university conditions, social arrangements, and individual biographies:

⁸ See Appendix for detailed Index, comprising four interlocking tables.

(DRAFT) Human Development Public Good Professional Capabilities Index



The educational arrangements dimensions are: curriculum, pedagogy, encouraging professional ways of being, and departmental cultures.

We have identified four university conditions dimensions: institutional culture, advancing criticism, deliberation and responsibility (see Waghid, 2005), social engagement, and appropriate contributions to building just futures.

Finally we identify social constraints on developing public good professionals – the legacy of apartheid on the systemic and material base and cultural dimensions

Our tables of dimensions in turn, can inform situational analysis (what is going on here), participatory action, and the evaluation of e/quality in university educational and social arrangements. We do not yet know if the professional capabilities we have identified would be those chosen by people living in conditions of poverty as important in what they want from professionals and public service delivery, but we do think that the knowledge and the index generated by this research have the potential to be effective in reducing poverty, and that such poverty reduction constitutes a public good in that it contributes to reducing injustice and increasing well-being.

Thus professional capabilities constitutes the 'space' for thinking about i) the public good; ii) public good professional education; and (iii) university transformation. Professional capabilities allow people to lead professional lives they value, and for our purposes, to choose the public good if this is what they value. We think professional capabilities can capture institutional and social complexities – we can capture in our framework the relationality of individuals and the social sphere - while also being clear enough to have practical usefulness as an evaluative and developmental framework.

What is not well captured by our data is the 'conversion factors' (Sen, 1999) that shape individual's opportunities to develop and then to convert their capabilities to professional functionings; this is likely to differ for students from different class, gender and race backgrounds and requires researching.

What kind of professional education?

For graduate professionals to work to expand the capabilities of those living in poverty, they need themselves to develop as transformative agents, having professional capabilities which enable them to choose to act in this way. To do this, in turn they need exposure to professional programmes in departments in which curriculum, pedagogy and assessment fosters the appropriate knowledge, understanding and professional ways of being. We understand from the social constraints identified by our interviewees the difficulties presented by government departments, organizations and severe social problems in being the kind of professional one might value being and that social structures shape the possibility of transformative professional work for graduates. Nonetheless we still want to ask the question how professional education might mediate structures and agency in the direction of transformation and social accountability, leaving space for public reasoning 'around the tensions, conflicts and struggles through which creative transformation in professional practice might result' (Gleeson and Knights, 2006: 278).

We think that the form of education and training that will foster public good professional values is a form of praxis pedagogy which is transformative, critical, and attentive both to knowledge and to responsible action in society (McLean et al, 2008). Praxis is understood here to involve both the integration of academic knowledge (acquired at university) and practical knowledge about how one lives as a citizen and a human being.

Why this matters

Notwithstanding the constraints on educating public good professionals and the obstacles to realizing one's professional capabilities in professional work places, this project has been underpinned by the view that professional education, like other forms of education, is a space of possibility and involves 'inviting people on a journey to become more thoughtful and more capable, more powerful and more courageous, more exquisitely human in their projects and their pursuits' (Ayers et al, 2009: 725), and that this is 'central to achieving a democratic and open society' (*ibid*). Such professional education is never finally resolved - there is no one right way to go about educating professionals - it needs attention, dynamic practice and discussion because 'there is always more to know' (*ibid*).

We have been concerned in this project with the education of professionals who are 'finely aware and richly responsible' (Henry James, quoted in Nussbaum 1990: 148), ethical professional agents who act to remove injustice (Sen, 2009). Such professionals are able 'to see more humanely' (Nussbaum, 1990: 210). This seems particularly important for three reasons. Firstly, people in conditions of poverty are highly dependent on public action and public services as they have no private resources to invest (for example, in private health care) and suffer most from poor service provision and delivery (Keefer and Khemani, 2005). Secondly, research suggests that socially conscious elites can play a significant role in affecting social policy and change in society when they see themselves as having interdependent lives with those living in poverty, obligations towards the poor, and believe that public action to reduce poverty is possible (De Swaan et al, 2000). Thirdly, professionals equipped with knowledge, practical skills and public service values can make a positive difference in the everyday lives of the people with whom they come into contact (caring rather than indifferent lawyers, for example). As Cohen (2000: 142) reminds us 'Personal choices [to do professional good]....are fateful for social justice'.

By doing particular kinds of educational things universities educate particular kinds of professionals. We argue that the 'particular kinds of things' ought to be to educate public good professionals, with the capabilities to act responsibly towards others. Of course graduates can contribute in plural ways to social development. We are more interested in how or whether a public good contribution is related to genuine public service. In the arena of professional education this ought to translate into discourses of transformation

and human development in which students learn not only knowledge and skills but the difference between simply having a professional skill on one hand, and on the other having the commitment to use that skill to the benefit of others and to continue questioning and extending expert knowledge and its applications. Not just the education then of professionals, but the formation of critical and socially committed professionals. This is then to conceptualize transformation as deeply embedded in a view of universities as social institutions (properly governed by conceptions of service: to disciplinary areas, to students, and to society).

Impact on lives and poverty reduction

If certain kinds of professionals are being educated by universities, with knowledge and skills but also other-regarding transformation values, this is a significant contribution to poverty reduction in South Africa, given that all professionals - engineers, lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers, economists, business leaders, social workers, and so on - are now educated in universities. We see this as way to advance justice, providing capability-expanding services to people living in conditions of poverty, or leading vulnerable lives. Within the ambit of professional services there are 'redressable injustices' (Sen, 2009: vii), we suggest from our evidence, which are doable without waiting for perfect social structures or perfectly just institutions to be put in place.

We did not have a research focus on the impact factor of graduate professionals in different communities and on service users; while this has not been the focus of this project, it might be in a future project. We can however extrapolate from other people's research as to which capabilities poor people value, for example the study of 60,000 people by Narayan and Petesch (2002: 462-470) and Wolff and De Shalit's study (2007). Narayan and Petesch's identification of 10 valuable 'assets and capabilities' largely overlaps with Nussbaum's (2000) ten central universal capabilities (see footnote no 2). Their list includes: bodily integrity; emotional integrity; respect and dignity; social belonging; and imagination, information, education. When we showed our combined list of 13 capabilities to interviewees in NGOs and professional bodies there was broad agreement about the value of these capabilities for people living in conditions of poverty.

The idea is then to 'backward map' from these 'comprehensive' capabilities, as we have called them to distinguish them from the subset of professional capabilities, to processes and outcomes of professional education. Thus we suggest that impact in making lives go better might be assumed or extrapolated from our research, and increased in practice if universities were to draw on the idea of comparative assessments, the ethics of human development and human capabilities, and our index based on these ideas, as a resource and practical tool to evaluate professional education and training, graduates' subsequent professional contributions, and as educational action to reduce injustice. This takes us in the direction of an egalitarian theorizing of university education and social arrangements, in which there is recognition of the obligations to the least advantaged in society, and action to bring about poverty reduction.

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APPENDIX: INDEX AS 'FRAMEWORK FOR INTERROGATION'⁹

TABLE 1: Capability dimensions* (freedoms to be and to do and to chose) and examples of achievable functionings (beings and doings)

*Infor-med Vision	*Affiliation (solidarity)	*Resilience	*Social and collective struggle	*Emotions	*Inte-grity	*Assu-rance and confidence	*Know-ledge, imagi-nation and practical skills
<p>Understanding how the profession is shaped by historical and current socio-economic -political context national and globally.</p> <p>Understanding how structures shape individual lives</p> <p>Being able to imagine alternative futures and improved social arrangements</p> <p>Commitment to economic development of country & creation of equitable economic opportunities</p> <p>Environmental awareness</p>	<p>Accepting obligations to others</p> <p>Care and respect for diverse people</p> <p>Understanding lives of poor and vulnerable</p> <p>Developing relationships and rapport across social groups and status hierarchies</p> <p>Critical respect for different cultures</p> <p>Communicating professional knowledge in an accessible way/Courtesy and patience</p>	<p>Perseverance in difficult circumstances</p> <p>Recognising the need for professional boundaries (having a balanced life)</p> <p>Hopeful/fostering hope</p> <p>Having a sense of career security/development</p>	<p>Community empowerment approach/promoting human rights/humility</p> <p>Contributing to policy formulation and implementation</p> <p>Identifying spaces for change/Leading and managing social change to reduce injustice</p> <p>Working in professional and inter-professional teams</p> <p>Training and educating others</p> <p>Participating in public reasoning/listening to all voices in the 'conversation'</p> <p>Building and sustaining strategic relationships and networks with organisations and govt.</p>	<p>Empathy/narrative imagination</p> <p>Compassion</p> <p>Personal growth</p> <p>Self care</p> <p>Integrating rationality and emotions</p> <p>Being emotionally reflexive</p> <p>Compassion</p>	<p>Acting ethically</p> <p>Being responsible & accountable to communities and colleagues</p> <p>Being honest</p> <p>Striving to provide high-quality service</p>	<p>Expressing and asserting own professional priorities</p> <p>Contributing to policy formulation and implementation</p> <p>Having confidence in the worthwhileness of one's professional work</p> <p>Having confidence to act for change</p>	<p>Having a firm, critical grounding in disciplinary, academic knowledge</p> <p>Valuing indigenous and community knowledges</p> <p>Having a multidisciplinary / multi-perspectival, non-dualistic stance</p> <p>Being enquiring, critical, evaluative, imaginative, creative and flexible</p> <p>Integrating theory and practice</p> <p>Being problem-solvers</p> <p>Open mindedness</p>

⁹ The notion of a framework for interrogation comes from the RWG at Silvertree University. Sen (2009) might describe this as process of public reasoning, or using reason in the pursuit of justice.

TABLE 2: Educational arrangements for educating human development public good professionals

Curriculum	Pedagogy	Encouraging professional ways of being	Supportive departmental culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interdisciplinary - Socially responsive - Research-led - Incorporating key questions of social and political significance, including opportunities to learn how poor people can be empowered and capacitated - Increase and deepen knowledge base of professional field - Coherent, flexible and challenging - Service learning / experience in poor communities [<i>e.g. numbers and time spent in poor communities</i>] - Electives with clear social focus - Opportunities for practice-based experience and contacts with practicing professionals - Includes content about contexts of professional practice, locally and globally; historical, political, socio-economic - Opportunities to learn different languages and discourses - Includes leadership and management - Includes professional ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultivates critical, open, independent minds and stances [<i>e.g. opportunities to do research</i>] -Exposes students to a range of competing ideas and perspectives - Engenders respectful interactions & valuing diversity - Fosters imagination: (i) narrative imagination; (ii) opportunities to image 'what might be' in social arrangements <p>Encourages students to see social problems and issues thickly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Takes account of and supports variation in academic preparedness - Creates safe spaces for students; builds students' confidence - Integrates theory and practice - Organises peer learning, teamwork and collaboration across diverse groups - Ensures equitable uses of languages of instruction - Prioritises discussion and dialogue - Employs case studies and experiential learning - Lecturers act as role models - Provides opportunities to learn clear and confident written and oral communication in a range of ways and which enables supervision - Supports students to deal with interiorised guilt and anger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insistence on reliability, punctuality, attendance etc. - Engenders an awareness of the difference professional work can make to communities - Supports developing professional judgement, ethical behaviour, and evaluation of personal strengths and weaknesses - Produces confident communicators and advocates for social justice - Instils the importance of accountability to service users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment [<i>e.g. throughput</i>] - An ethos of service to others - Staff sympathetic to mission and teaching goals - Welcoming to students and engendering a sense of belonging in the programme - Academic staff provide diverse role models - Involving parents of prospective students - Lecturers involved in professional standard-setting - Encouraging research agendas and projects responsive to poverty - Culture of respect for all - Communicating high expectations

TABLE 3: University conditions to support human development public good professional education in South Africa

Dimensions	Institutional culture and environment	Advancing criticism, deliberation and responsibility	Social Engagement	Building just futures
Descriptions <i>[with examples of indicators]</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multi-language policy - Courageous participatory conversations about transformation - Respectful of all and each other - Open to change <i>[e.g. active student councils]</i> - Prioritises public reasoning - Pride in physical infrastructure <i>[e.g. litter-free campus and attractive buildings]</i> - Acknowledges any institutional history of injustice in formulating strategies of transformation - Fosters aspirations in students - Democratic governance - Fosters human development (well being and agency) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evident high achievement and expectations <i>[e.g. high profile successes aligned to social transformation]</i> - Rewards and incentives for public good academic contributions in <i>all</i> areas <i>[e.g. contributing to foundation year teaching]</i> - Prioritises knowledge / intellectual project - Transformative teaching and learning, curriculum policies <i>[e.g. curriculum debates]</i> - Aligning research, teaching, social good and ethical functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transformative, publicly available access policy <i>[e.g. collecting data and monitoring progress and throughput]</i> - Student diversity profile in line with social demographics and worked towards for staff <i>[e.g. active recruitment]</i> - Commitment to / involvement in improving schooling - Global conversations and internal networks open to students and staff - Community dialogue and partnerships, service learning - Rural engagement - Public accountability in terms of mission and goals to all who contribute to HE - Engagement with MDGs - Engagement with the African continent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visionary leadership - integrated institutional planning and operation <i>[e.g. aligned to producing students as transformative agents]</i> - Financial solvency

TABLE 4: Constraints on educating human development public good professionals in universities (Legacy of apartheid)

Dimensions	Systemic and material base	Cultural
Descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immovable, fragmented, conservative poorly managed public services - Disjuncture of policy and implementation - Staff shortages - Staff lack of capacity and skills to be competent professionals - Under-resourced public services - Material deprivation of service users - Family and community breakdown - Culture of entitlement and learned helplessness - Crime and violence - Lack of access to public services - Brain drain - Lack of black professionals - Poor schooling, university access and entry to professions - Burnout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attitudes to black African professionals - Material values in society - Conservative religious beliefs - Low status and salaries of some professions - Inability to communicate well with poor and vulnerable - Displacement of responsibility of professional body - University turning away from/not addressing or discussing social realities and divisions

1. Context of social development and welfare in South Africa

The apartheid system in South Africa pervaded every aspect of political, social and economic life and left in its wake a country rife with poverty and inequality. Despite the transition to democracy, poverty has increased, and inequalities have deepened. Most of the focus of the Social Work profession has been on the multiple social problems rooted in this history, compounded with additional challenges such as the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. These problems include large-scale unemployment, malnutrition, low levels of literacy and education, high levels of crime and violence and the breakdown of the social fabric of families and communities of the poor (Earle 2008a: 18). The majority of Social Work professionals in South Africa engage closely with this dire poverty and related social problems. They are working 'at the coalface of delivery to the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of society' (DSD, 2005a: 4, in Earle, 2008a). The high level of illness and deaths resulting from HIV/AIDS has contributed to the further breakdown of families and communities, and the consequent extra burden on the welfare system¹⁰.

The social work profession under apartheid was used as one of the tools for implementing policies of separate racial development. Differential forms of social welfare services were provided for different race groups. The focus of welfare was predominantly on the minority white population. While the state took care of the welfare of whites who needed support, it expected the needs of black people to be taken care of by families and communities (Mamphiswa and Noyoo, 2000: 23, in Earle, 2008a).

With the transition to democracy in 1994 key changes were introduced in the social welfare system. The social welfare sector changed from being nationally fragmented, and predominantly focused on the welfare needs of the minority white population, to being nationally united, inclusive and focused predominantly on the needs of the majority poor and marginalised black population. Social welfare took on a more redistributive function with social security and grant allocation emerging as a major welfare focus (White Paper, 1997; Earle, 2008a: 23).

The Department of Welfare (subsequently renamed Social Development) introduced a policy framework aiming to replace the 'residual welfare' paradigm which informed social welfare under apartheid with a 'developmental welfare' approach (White Paper 1997; Earle, 2008b). A 'residual approach' sees welfare as necessary for individuals who cannot fend for themselves, where primary sources of support such as family or community have failed. This approach was criticised for creating dependency and was too resource intensive for a South African context (Earle, 2008b: 449). Furthermore, it was not addressing the roots of social problems. According to a developmental approach the social welfare system should contribute to developing national human, social and economic capital and aim to create self-reliance of individuals, groups and communities (DSD, 2005, in Earle, 2008a: 23).

¹⁰ One of the indicators of the impact of HIV/AIDS on family and community structures is the increase in the number of child-headed households by 25% between 2002 and 2007 (*Cape Times*, 14 July 2009).

Lombard (2008: 158) argues that the shift in policy from a residual to developmental approach generated confusion about the implementation of the new policy which continued to affect the system for the decade of implementation following the issuing of the 1997 White Paper. She argues that the concepts of 'developmental social welfare' and 'social development' have been conflated and used interchangeably. Lombard supports Midgely's concept of social development as one strand within a developmental social welfare approach. Midgely defines social development as 'a process of planned social change designed to promote people's welfare in conjunction with a comprehensive process of economic development' (Midgely, 1995: 25, in Lombard, 2008: 159). However as a strand of developmental social welfare, it does not 'negate the other approaches, or minimise their efforts to enhance people's well-being...but within the *context* [Lombard's emphasis] of economic development seeks to link the social services to economic development in a dynamic way' (*ibid*). For many in the Social Work/Social Development field, the shift in policy has been interpreted as requiring a complete change in the role of social welfare to a 'social development' approach, which has implications for the types of programmes and social work methods supported by the government.

In spite of transformative policy intentions, there have been certain negative effects of policy implementation on the social welfare system. Aspects of the system have been put under strain through changes in funding allocation. Although the overall social welfare budget increased, the rapid expansion of spending on social security services such as pension and child support grants significantly reduced the funding allocated to welfare services. This is not to negate the necessity of social security services such as grants in conditions of dire poverty. The provision of grants has made a contribution to alleviating the effects of poverty (Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 2000; Triegaardt, 2006). One of the aspects of budget reallocation was a substantial reduction of funding of the NGO sector. Historically the provision of social welfare services was shared between government and NGOs with government providing financial support to organisations through subsidisation of social worker posts (DSD, 2004, in Earle, 2008a: 25). The reduction of government funding to NGOs has coincided with a diminishing of donor funding to NGOs in South Africa since 1994. At the same time the demands on the NGO sector have increased dramatically (Earle, 2008a).

According to Lombard (2008: 158), the shift in policy from a residual to a developmental approach generated misunderstanding about the role of traditional social work methods within a developmental welfare approach. The residual welfare approach was associated with the casework method, which involved working with individual clients. Casework was considered both inefficient and disempowering by the new Department of Social Development (DSD), associated with theories of psychology which focused on the individual in a decontextualised way. Earle (2008b: 27) argues that the developmental approach mistakenly came to be associated almost exclusively with the methods of group and community work. As a means of affecting transformation within the sector, the ANC government changed the subsidisation model from supporting social worker posts directly to supporting selected programmes with outcomes in line with the new social development policy. These programmes utilised group and community work methods. Subsidisation of equally necessary remedial and statutory casework virtually disappeared. This took place in spite of arguments that a particular approach to social work did not necessarily mean a particular method, but that the developmental welfare approach should be incorporated into all social work methods (Earle, 2008a: 28). At the same time the need for statutory casework has grown, for example with the statutory requirements associated with HIV/AIDS and the requirements of the Children's Act (2005). Thus there has been

an expanded need for statutory casework, without additional funding being made available (Earle, 2008a; Lombard, 2008).

These factors have resulted in social workers, particularly those in the NGO sector, becoming overburdened and demoralised. This has been compounded by a number of factors. Social workers experience the stress of working with desperately poor individuals and communities. In addition the numbers of social workers are inadequate to meet the social welfare needs. Most of them work in under-resourced and difficult conditions. Furthermore they earn low salaries compared to other professionals with an equivalent level of education, while the profession is undervalued in society. There is a great demand for social workers in developed countries and many of them leave South Africa to work abroad, which feeds into a vicious cycle of a shortage of social workers and lack of capacity in the system. This is elaborated on in the empirical section.

Unintended consequences of the implementation of what is essentially a progressive and transformative policy as well as the increasing demands on the welfare system have resulted in major setbacks in the desired process of transformation of the welfare sector. Furthermore, a lack of adequate leadership and human resource capacity within the various components of the national Department of Social Development (DSD) has constrained the implementation of policy. In addition social workers on the ground have struggled with the required shift in roles and with developing the capabilities to contribute to transformation and have experienced conflicting demands and pressures (Earle, 2008a, 2008b; Lombard, 2008).

2. Professional education and training of social workers at Silvertree University

The Department of Social Development at Silvertree University is located in the Humanities Faculty. This case study focuses on its professional programme which provides education and training to social workers. In order to practice as a professional social worker, students are required to undertake a four-year programme of study which complies with the requirements of the South African Council for Social Service Professionals (SACSSP). In addition they need to register with the Council. The Bachelor of Social Work degree consists of a combination of Social Work semester courses together with courses in Psychology and Sociology.

In response to changes in South Africa and in the welfare system, the Department of Social Development at Silvertree has been undergoing a process of transformation. According to Miriam Grey, the head of department, they 'introduced a lot of changes to not only be more relevant but to ensure that when [their] students graduate they have the ability to cope with the realities... of working in an environment that has a lot of structural inequities'. Furthermore they need 'to understand those structural inequities and what is happening to address them, and also ... to be able to situate themselves as professionals trying to respond to that'. To signal a change in the department's approach, the name of the Department of Social Work was changed to Social Development in 1999 in line with the shift in national policy discussed above.

The central change that has taken place in the department in relation to teaching and learning has been a rigorous process of curriculum revision and development. While curriculum revision was necessitated by requirements of the state and the professional council, it had not 'just been an exercise in conforming' to these requirements. The curriculum revision process had provided an opportunity to

transform the curriculum, and to develop new courses from first year level which aimed to educate a social worker 'who is able to think and operate more systemically and able to make an impact on the development challenges in the country, moving beyond a main focus on micro level, individual, couple, family, but getting far more knowledgeable and able as far as policy work is concerned and intervention at community and societal level' (Amanda, lecturer).

At the time of data collection in 2008 the four-year programme required to practice as a social worker was divided into a 3-year undergraduate programme and an Honours programme¹¹. The Honours degree was made up of four specialised streams: Clinical Practice in Social Work: Social Development, Social Policy and Management and Probation and Correctional Practice (Silvertree student handbook)¹². The Clinical Practice specialism was geared towards advancing the knowledge and skills of social workers in clinical, therapeutic practice. The Social Development specialism aimed to enable students to 'engage with social and economic empowerment and look at what needs to be done at community level and how they can enter communities and engage in change' (Miriam). Its focus overlapped with the Social Policy and Management specialism which aimed to expand the capabilities of students to be able to manage 'social welfare, community and other social service organisations in both the public and private sector' (Silvertree student handbook). In this specialism, students interrogated policy, drawing on theory to inform discussion about 'who's notion of the good society ... what kind of ideological principle is actually fuelling that kind of policy development' (Dorothy Williams, lecturer). The specialism of Probation and Correctional Practice aimed to equip students to function effectively in the transformed probation system and emphasised youth care and rehabilitation (Miriam). The introduction of these specialised streams were part of the department's project of making the curriculum more relevant and responsive to the needs of South African society, with its deeply rooted structural inequities, and to enhance the capabilities of students to contribute to processes of transformation in their fields of practice and in the welfare system.

In spite of the transformation process of Silvertree which started before the change of government in 1994, the racial profile of students is still far from representative of the South African population as a whole. This also applies to the Social Development department as can be seen in the table below. It should be noted that a high proportion of the international Social Work students are from African countries other than South Africa, rather than from other parts of the world. One needs to be aware of this context when discussing departmental processes of transformation and educational arrangements such as classroom activities.

Table 1: 2007 breakdown of Social Work students (undergrad and post-grad) by race¹³.

¹¹ The programme was changed to a four year Bachelor of Social Work degree in 2007 to comply with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework and the national professional council. The students who were interviewed in our study were doing Honours under the previous system.

¹² Information on recent developments in the department, the curriculum, and other contextual information were gathered from departmental and faculty reports, which are referred to in this study. Please note that while these documents do exist, we cannot reference them fully without revealing the identity of the institution, so they are not listed in the bibliography.

¹³ We use the racial categories which were constructed by the apartheid system, because it is necessary as an indicator of processes of demographic change. Furthermore we recognise the impact of apartheid on people's identities and life trajectories. International students from Africa are mostly black.

	Black	White	Coloured	Indian	International	Total
Number	32	75	38	4	64	213
%	15	35	18	2	30	100

This project focuses largely on the contribution of professionals to poverty reduction in *South Africa*. However we did not exclude informants from other Southern African countries who volunteered to join the focus groups¹⁴. These students were studying in South Africa with the aim of returning to their home countries and practising as public good professionals in those contexts.

3. Professional capabilities (valued beings and doings)

In order to identify and analyse valued professional capabilities of public good professionals in the field of social development, we interviewed informants in a number of different categories. These were lecturers, students, alumni of the Silvertree social work programme, members of Social Work NGOs and a member of a professional body, as represented in the set of tables below.

Table 2: Interviewees¹⁵

Name	Male	Female	African	Indian	Coloured	White
a) students						
<i>Focus group 1</i>						
Joy (specialising in Social Development; from another Southern African country)		x	x			
Sharon (Clinical)		x		x		
Karen (Clinical)		x				x
Sheila (Social Development)		x				x
<i>Focus group 2</i>						
Mary (Social Development; from other Southern African country)		x	x			
Carla (Social Development)		x				x
Lyn (Social Development)		x				x
Yusuf (Social Development)	x				x	
b) Alumni						
Charmaine Jacobs, School social worker, graduated 2006		x			x	
Anne Hardy, faith-based organisation, graduated 1984		x				x
Thandi Matshisa, NGO, graduated 2007		x	x			
Lisa Smith, NGO,		x				x

¹⁴ In the two student focus groups one out of four students in each group was from another Southern African country.

¹⁵ All respondents have been given pseudonyms, as has the University. It should also be noted that some respondents not were interviewed in their first language, Afrikaans; quotes from interviews have been edited slightly to facilitate reading.

graduated 2005			
c) Lecturers			
Miriam Grey, Head of Department	x	x	
Elizabeth Goodwin	x		x
Dorothy Williams	x	x	
Amanda Hoffman	x		x
d) Others			
Rehaana Desai, NGO	x	x	
Joanne Rose, NGO	x	x	
Liesel Vermaak, professional body	x		x

Our analysis of professional capabilities valued by informants draws mainly on the interviews with lecturers, students and alumni¹⁶. Our focus is on capabilities that are needed by a public good social work professional, and we also discuss some generic capabilities needed by social workers. In the undergraduate degree, the lecturers aim to educate a generalist practitioner with a 'balanced understanding of people in their context' (Amanda Hoffmann, lecturer). This represents a shift from the highly clinical focus on decontextualised therapeutic intervention of the department in the past.

All of the lecturers interviewed subscribed to an ideal of educating social workers who would contribute to reducing poverty and inequality (a pro-poor commitment within a human development/public good framework), and who would work with an orientation to social justice. However, as is to be expected, there was not a homogenous view on what this meant. Lecturers in the department emphasised different roles of the social work profession in contributing to poverty reduction. There were differences in opinion about whether social workers could contribute directly to social transformation at a macro level, and what form social workers' contribution should take. All the lecturers rejected the type of social work practice that was equivalent to 'putting on band aid strips'. Miriam Grey, the Head of Department, emphasised the education of social work professionals who could contribute to transformation of the profession at a macro level. One of the graduates whom she put forward as an example was currently in a leadership position in the Social Development department in the provincial government. The lecturers, Dorothy Williams and Amanda Hoffmann emphasised the capability for professionals to work in diverse contexts within the welfare system with an understanding of the macro socio-political context, both South African and global. Elizabeth Goodwin, who taught on the practical component of the programme emphasised 'the value of individual transformation'. This took place through 'assisting people to be empowered ... to have doors opened that they would never have had before ... that's no less social transformation' (Elizabeth).

Arguing for realism about social workers' contribution to transformation, she emphasised an advocacy role. For example, they should be educating other professionals such as town planners or engineers about the social aspects of development. There was implied criticism of government policy or at least interpretations of policy which located the profession in a role of *driving* a process of social change and economic development. She said 'this whole idea of social development, that we can change the country is ridiculous, we can't. What we can do is impact on others to [bring about change]' (Elizabeth).

¹⁶ We should note that the Head of Department of Social Development at Silvertree draws on the capability approach as a theoretical approach. This is not the case in the other four research sites.

In a subsequent discussion to review this draft case study, the Head of Department framed these differences in emphasis, less as fundamental disagreements and rather in relation to the debate that had been prevalent in the social work field for many years. As discussed above, there had been a tension between views that a social worker's primary role is to 'work with individuals using very specific therapeutic methodologies', and a view which located the role of the profession in terms of its engagement with macro social conditions. She concluded that 'that sort of binary is false' and the department encouraged the development of emerging professionals who wanted to address the social conditions at a micro level, using tools that they felt more comfortable with, and others who wanted to operate at a different, more macro level; 'both are equally important' (7 October 2009).

3.1 Capability to play a transformative role oriented to social justice

This section elaborates on the overarching capability of playing a transformative role as a social development professional, based on discussion of valued capabilities with lecturers and students. In it we draw on the views of lecturers who emphasised a 'macro transformation' perspective.

Miriam, the head of department, aimed to educate social development professionals¹⁷ who would 'work within a human rights framework and have an understanding of what the Constitution and the Bill of Rights is about' (Miriam). Furthermore students needed to appreciate 'how the constitutional rights of every person living in South Africa has value and the realisation of those rights is part of their work' (Miriam). She wanted graduates of the programme to understand issues regarding civil, political, social and economic rights and to see the rights of people 'living in informal settlements, in squatter communities' as being 'as important as the rights of people who live in Constantia¹⁸ or in Stellenbosch and places like that' (Miriam). Students needed to develop an understanding of structural factors which caused and perpetuated poverty and inequality in order to be able to work in a developmental way.

Amanda developed this point further, saying that Social Development graduates needed to understand root causes of problems. She said,

... if they don't understand root causes they're going to be working on symptoms and perpetuating the inequalities and inequities of the past, the imbalances, the critical development challenges, they're going to be part of the problem and not part of the solution. They're going to be putting on band aid strips as opposed to understanding where the leverage needs to come in order to make shifts in power and in access to resources and access to opportunities, etc. So they will never be able to help people increase their capabilities and capacities if they are unable to see what the blocks are to that actually happening.

Amanda argued that in order for students to play a transformative role in their professional life, they needed to have values and principles based on social justice. Social work lecturers could not teach recipes for working towards social justice. Rather they aimed to develop in students an understanding of social justice, embodied in the Constitution, which should underpin their professional

¹⁷ The majority of students in the programme were training to be social workers, but some of them would pursue related professions in the field. Hence the use of the more inclusive term 'social development professional' here.

¹⁸ People living in informal settlements are invariably black and poor. Constantia is a wealthy, predominantly white area.

work. They should acquire knowledge and understanding of historical inequities as well as policies and programmes which aimed to transform society so that people's rights would be realised. As she put it, students should understand social needs for 'equity, fairness, access to opportunities and resources'. Furthermore they needed to work at 'redressing the imbalances of the past in terms of availability of services ... participation in decision making ... If they can come out with that firmly in their minds, that can guide them' (Amanda).

Amanda wanted social work graduates to be able to work in whatever context they were in, bearing 'the bigger picture in mind' In addition to developing knowledge and understanding of the roots of poverty and inequality within the context of South African political, social and economic history, she emphasised that students needed to understand global trends which affected South African society. She explained,

It's critically important to understand the forces that are at play from the level of global trends, globalisation of the economy, the impact of trans-national companies, the impact of everything that's happening in the economic sector on the country and right down to the level of individual people who are poor and unemployed and why they are poor and unemployed and in the situation that they are in.

Thus she wanted students to be able to understand the links between micro, meso and macro contexts and between the local and global.

According to Amanda Hoffmann and Dorothy Williams, the department was not aiming to mould students into a particular type of professional, but rather to give them opportunities to develop a set of capabilities that would enable them to work in diverse contexts of practice. If students developed these capabilities, they would be able to translate these into functionings in different types of practice and workplaces. Amanda said,

[Graduates should be] able to work in any sector, whether it's a clinical setting [such as] a psychiatric hospital or whether it's in a neighbourhood working at a development organisation or whether it is in the policy division of the department of Social Development or whether it's working in the profit-making sector like for Volkswagen, whether it's in private practice that the practitioner is able to understand the scenario, the kinds of issues that he or she is dealing with in a context that spins off from the local and that person sitting in front of you if you're working with individuals, right to an international global level.

Dorothy thought that the majority of staff in the department wanted to educate professionals who would be effective change agents 'no matter where they are, whether they set up in the corporate sector or whether they're in a very humble NGO ... and the whole of the teaching is geared towards that, to bring about transformation at whatever level they find themselves'.

When asked about capabilities of social workers and social work students, there was a tendency for lecturers to provide a normative account of the capabilities that they valued. While they all acknowledged the extremely difficult and challenging contexts which most social workers were located in, they were very enthusiastic about what the department was doing to develop social workers who could contribute to social development and transformation.

Students and alumni tended to approach the issue of valued capabilities through considering their experiences, what they knew about social work practice and the types of challenges that social workers encountered. Many of them felt positive about their current or future roles as social workers. However, their accounts

tended to focus to a greater extent on the challenges and constraints faced by social workers compared to the accounts of the lecturers. Many of the students did show evidence of viewing social work practice within broader social, economic and political contexts.

In a number of discussions that took place in the focus group interviews, students were grappling with what kind of approaches were needed when working in impoverished communities. Karen, an Honours student in the clinical stream thought that it was inappropriate to 'work with poor communities at a very psychological level'. She said 'there is no way in which you can try and enlighten them by trying to explain the psychological effects and the emotional effects of their alcohol abuse on their children because at the end of the day why are they abusing alcohol? ... if your basic human needs are not being met then everything else on top - it's just going to be a domino effect and you can't try and correct something further down the line if your basic needs aren't met' (Karen). She spoke about working with children from disadvantaged communities and the need to understand the conditions of the children in relation to their family situations, the conditions at their schools and the socio-economic factors perpetuating poverty. Thus she reinforced the views of the lecturers that social workers' practice needed to be informed by an understanding of the root causes of poverty.

Lyn, a student in the Social Development stream, emphasised the need to devise an appropriate strategy for each context of practice. She argued that a social worker should not have a general strategy to use in poor communities. The only 'common thing that's always got to be there is respect, but what else you provide is going to be so community specific and so individual specific' (Lyn).

In the focus group discussions students identified the need to have insight into political dynamics affecting one's work context, in order to make choices about how to act in that context. Students showed awareness of the multiple, interwoven factors compounding poverty and lack of well-being. This led to an emphasis on the constraints on the agency of social workers to contribute to transformation. This sense of discouragement was expressed by Carla, who said, ... a lot of the time what is happening is social workers are being sent into what are seen as impoverished communities. They're being sent in there almost to like calm the storm for a while, you know, it's like 'OK go in there, settle them down' but a lot of the time social workers don't have that power to make decisions. They can't say to somebody OK, you will have running water within a month, they can't say that because the amount of red tape they need to go through, it's going to take them more than a month to get that done. ... when you're going into these communities ... so many promises are being made, but nothing is being delivered. So what does it help one more person going in there unless they have the resources themselves to actually pour it into that community, as opposed to national or provincial resources?.

While social workers may have an understanding of the social context in which they work, she implies that the ability to *act* to address the roots of the problem is constrained by the inadequacy and inefficiency of service delivery and lack of resources for intervention programmes. She also shows an awareness of the disjuncture in government funding for social development at local, provincial and national levels, which is referred to by Earle (2008a).

One of the elements of political awareness which students discussed was the need to be able to manage different political perspectives and agendas which impact on their professional practice. They argued that social workers are not free agents,

but are accountable to the institutions that they work for, even if they do not always agree with their policies or programmes. Carla said 'if you're working for government and they send you to go and work in a particular community and you then start lobbying for that community against Government, you know, (*others laughing*) there's always going to be that conflict and those barriers that you need to stay within' (Carla). In this part of the focus group discussion, students were grappling with the need for social workers to locate themselves in relation to different agendas and interests within the transformation process and to find a way of working in which they maintained their own integrity.

Anne Hardy, an alumnus who had worked in a faith-based organisation for many years, also referred to the need for political sense in the work context. Her emphasis was on the need to respect community leadership, while 'knowing it can also be very corrupt. So with community leadership, keep it close but be very, very watchful of it as well, and the community will lead you in that. And there's a lot of corruption of formal leaders, who have got power bases and ulterior motives' (Anne).

The department of Social Development at Silvertree University aimed to develop capabilities of students relating to national social welfare policy. From lecturers' interviews and the curriculum it was apparent that they wanted all students to understand the policy context in the social welfare field. In terms of our understanding, all social workers in government and NGOs would be in positions of implementing policy at various levels, and all graduates should be able to have a critical awareness of policy and implementation of policy. In addition the Department aimed to enhance the capability for higher level policy formulation and critique of those students who had a particular interest in this. The lecturers also emphasised the need to develop capabilities for managing departments and institutions, and managing social change. These claims are reinforced by the inclusion of a Social Policy and Management stream at Honours level. However, there was not much data on the capabilities related to management and policy, perhaps because in the latter case none of the alumni who were interviewed were involved in policy formulation or critique. The capability of doing applied research was strongly valued and this is dealt with in Section 4.

3.2 An empowering approach to working with individuals and communities

The concept of 'self determination' of the client is seen as a cornerstone of social work principles (South African Council for the Social Service profession –SACSSP - code of conduct¹⁹). Dorothy Williams described this principle as helping clients to determine their own lives and make their own life choices, rather than doing things for them (Dorothy 183). This forms part of an approach to social work practice that empowers individuals or communities, rather than creating dependency. All of the informants, without exception, subscribed to an empowering approach to working with individuals and communities.

Miriam Grey explained the name change of the Department from Social Work to Social Development in relation to the expansion of capabilities. She said that the change arose from the need for the department to broaden their approach to addressing social conditions, so that they were not just aiming to deal with social problems, but to take on 'preventative and developmental approaches to what was happening in South Africa'. It was in this context that there was a shift of emphasis from helping people to cope with their situations to 'helping them to change their communities, to change their environment and ... to build people's

¹⁹ See <http://www.sacssp.co.za>

capabilities so that they can turn their own lives around and the lives of people around them' (Miriam).

According to various informants, working with communities in an empowering way was characterised by abilities such as motivating, encouraging, facilitating, mediating. It was associated with listening, empathising, understanding ... which we discuss below in relation to the capability of affiliation. Students described the type of social workers needed in South and Southern Africa in the following ways,

[Professionals need to be able to] really motivate the community because you can have that aspect of people coming up with programmes and implementing programmes, but you've also got to have a community that are motivated to comply with that and to want to make the change. So it's not just going out there and being focused and getting this project to work, it's ... to really empathise with them and get to understand where they're coming from first before you implement the project (Sharon).

[A social worker needs to get] the community more actively involved in their own development. Whilst you don't really tell them what to do, you facilitate and you encourage them. At the end of the day they have to make their decisions of what works for them in their own situations. I think participatory action development is what would be needed when working with poor people (Joy).

[When] going into ... impoverished communities or under-resourced or unserved communities, you can't go in thinking that you're the expert. You need to, OK, it sounds a bit like I'm just rehashing theory, but I really do believe that you can't. Yes, people are going to be looking to you for answers because they feel hopeless, but at the same time if you go in there as a mediator between people and draw out those ideas and the needs from them, that immediately takes away that feeling of hopelessness and revives the community (Carla).

Thandi, one of the alumni explained her view of an empowering approach in contrast to a dependency creating approach,

I believe in letting people change themselves. I believe in facilitating the change but not leading the change. So I can only show you where the resources are and help you get to the resources, but I will not go and get the resources for you. I will not make an appointment for you. I'll call to say that you need to see someone to get this kind of assistance, but I'll never go with you to that person because I think that people have a kind of resilience that has kept the client going before they came to me. So the fact that they came means to me they're willing and they're feeling empowered enough to access the resources. So my role is to facilitate the change in them; it's not my role to change them.

Thandi argued that the role of social workers should be to strengthen resources and social structures within communities rather than imposing solutions. This involved expanding the capabilities of members of communities who were already playing a supportive or counselling role within those communities,

So instead of us training new lay counsellors, what I came with here to the [NGO] was using the older women in the communities who are already working as counsellors, but giving them skills, such as confidentiality, so that if somebody comes to you and tells you that they're HIV positive, you don't tell your neighbour. Because that's what they're already doing; they're already working as counsellors ... So if we got to training a 23 year old to become a counsellor, who's going to come to them? So already we're creating another

social dynamic; it's like we're breaking the rules of the community. But if we're using that 72 year old woman that everyone comes to, giving her the skills to support her so that she doesn't feel overwhelmed with the stories and she knows that there's support if there's a need for a referral or a need for professional intervention.

Thus as well as expanding the capabilities of people in the community and strengthening existing informal structures, Thandi thought that the role of social workers should be to act as a resource, to provide back-up and support.

Anne Hardy spoke about the need to link up with people in the communities whom she referred to as 'peace change agents'. While Thandi was concerned with expanding capabilities and supporting people who were playing support roles in communities, Anne saw her relationship with the peace change agents as a reciprocal relationship. She said when she started working with a community she looked for 'that woman or ... man who will connect with you, find a way for you into that community and then cover you' (Anne). She said that she'd been very fortunate in finding peace change agents in the communities in which she worked. As a result she could 'walk into any community where I am involved and it's because of that peace man or that peace woman that I have the right to be there ...'.

Anne developed a friendship with a woman in a community who was 'one of [her] peace women'. She said 'I just loved her smile and I was drawn to her, and she gave me entry into the community, because she'd been a sangoma²⁰, people used to come to her ... and so in that way she became a community leader, a very, very strong personality'. Anne emphasized how she had learned from the peace woman. She said,

I used to go and sit at her feet and learn everything I could from her about community, about culture, about how communities perceive social workers and why ... they've got the perceptions that they have. About stokvels²¹, burials, savings, how you deal with grieving.

Her story indicates that she did not see herself, the social worker, giving and providing resources in a one-way relationship. The peace men and women were giving to her in opening up access to the communities. She emphasized how much she had learned from poor people and valued the professional capability of being 'teachable'.

Anne also approached the issue of empowerment of communities in terms of the inner resources that exist in communities. She said that NGOs should be careful about the timing and the way that financial resources are channelled into communities for development work as it could be damaging to those dynamics already existing. She said,

There's far more resource in a community than you think there is. There's such a strength perspective to every community, that's how we're discovering it, I'm almost loathe to bring money in or donors in, because internal resources are so amazing and they can be ruined and spoilt if you bring in too much outside resource. ... there's a community at the moment where we're walking that very narrow line and we can see the fruits, they've got an amazing support group of HIV positive women running community projects in the community and we bring in minimal of resource, and they find their own way and they're totally independent and they've got their own support group running for young girls at the moment, and I think if we flooded them with resources, getting their own community-based organisations up and running

²⁰ Traditional healer.

²¹ A form of saving in which a group of people put an amount of money into a common pool every month, and each person is allocated the pooled money on a rotational basis.

and all the rest, which we could have done, the time might come for that but right now it's not the right time ... The poor are incredibly resilient and they're very articulate of what they need and how they need it and why they need it..

Here Anne introduces another important capability of professionals which is professional judgement. She describes decision-making about resource allocation and timing as 'walking that very narrow line'. The capability of professional judgement is discussed further below.

Sheila, an older student who had been working for an NGO approached the issue of resources from another perspective. She questioned the practice of an empowerment approach in a context of intense material deprivation. She argued that an empowering approach could only facilitate change if it was accompanied by resources and the meeting of basic material needs. She said,

It's OK to go in there with an empowering approach like a Freirian approach, "don't just domesticate the people, but actually liberate them". But then ... there's not much you can do! Then you have to say "OK, this is your situation", but how can you help them to improve their situation? Because it takes more than just you, it takes Government, it takes housing, it takes policies. I know it's quite negative, (laughing) the way I'm speaking at the moment! But I mean it's very realistic. Those types of programmes are wonderful if you can have the resources, the backing to actually do something. They can actually get to some sort of conscientisation and realisation that "these are the reasons why I'm in this situation so now how can I get from here to there?" And that's the difficulty, it's OK getting them to that realisation but then it's having the resources and the skills and the professionals to be able to get them from a to b, and that's the frustrating part.

Sheila's comment reflects her scepticism about what she perceives as an unrealistic 'empowering' model intervention. Moreover in the context of the interview, she feels overwhelmed and helpless because of the extent of the breakdown of the community, and the lack of material and human resources to address this.

3.3 Knowledge capabilities

From the combined case study data we identified a capability dimension of 'knowledge'. This incorporates capabilities and functionings relating to professional and disciplinary knowledge and practical skills. Furthermore it includes the ability to integrate theory and practice and capabilities of being inquiring, critical, creative and flexible.

Social Work lecturers, students and alumni strongly valued the capabilities of being innovative, flexible and adaptable. This has been captured above in the stated goals of lecturers to educate professionals who could work in a range of contexts. Carla, one of the students, said 'for too long social workers or social work professionals have been ... boxed in'. She criticised the categorising of social work practitioners into separate roles of clinical social worker, development or community worker. Her view of social work was that it should be a diverse profession where social workers integrated different roles. She argued that in Africa there was a need for social workers could 'go out at grassroots level and actually do the work there as well as being able to communicate with top level management'.

Dorothy Williams emphasised the need for social work students to develop an integrated framework of knowledge which would inform their practice, a 'holistic integrated mind map in terms of the way they approach the problem'. She

believed that an outcome of the change in the programme was that it was bringing out 'a different calibre of student at the end of the four years, more able to actually go out there with this feeling of I can actually practice at all these different levels comfortably and not see them in different silos, not that's the only way of doing things, but that they actually overlap'.

Social workers needed to be able to make sound professional judgements appropriate to the issues that they were dealing with in the localised context. They should have sufficient knowledge and understanding of theories and methodologies in their field and be able to apply this knowledge to devise appropriate strategies for each context of practice. According to one of the lecturers, Elizabeth Goodwin,

[social workers should be able to] get a proper grasp of what the issues are that are facing either the individual group or community and they are able to engage with that community or individual in a way which is appropriate for that person, that makes the other person feel comfortable and also that they are then creative enough to select the appropriate intervention method, decide on which level to intervene or what particular theory to use, practice theory to use to intervene.

The lecturers, students and alumni emphasised the need to be a reflective practitioner and to engage in life-long learning and ongoing professional development,

[Social Development graduates should be able to] reflect on their capabilities, their strengths, their weaknesses and to try and constantly build on their strengths and work through whatever weaknesses they have. So we don't expect our graduates to think that after a four year generic degree they have arrived, there has to be this constant reflection in practice, you know working in practice, reflecting and moving on and learning from one's experience. And if there's anything that we would want to emphasise in our training and education is that this has to be a lifelong cycle for our graduates that in the professional work setting they need to reflect not just what they're doing but their ability to do it and learn from what has happened and bring those learnings into different practice (Miriam).

3.4 Confidence and pride in the profession

Arguably in South Africa social workers tend to be undervalued, with a low status, disproportionate to their education, level of skills and important role in society. Both the lecturers and students affirmed the value of the social work profession, and some made the point that social workers themselves needed to have a pride in their profession and take an active role in asserting their ability to contribute to change. According to Amanda 'the social work profession is a fantastic profession. I think that social workers have a huge opportunity to be transformatory, to make a significant contribution to transformation in any society where they're working, particularly in South Africa.

Elizabeth argued that a social worker needs 'to be the kind of person who holds their head up high, who is in fact a leader ... who has the knowledge, who has the ability, who has the presence to be noticed and to be taken seriously'. She emphasised that in order to make a difference in society, confidence needed to be backed up by a high level of professional knowledge and skills. She said 'if we want to make a difference in policy, if we want to be able to make people listen to us, we have to be people who can hold their head high and be listened to and that means a series of skills, it's no good unless you've got the skills'.

Some of the students expressed a strong pride in their profession. Yusuf, a returning Honours student who had been working for a number of years, said 'where I work, I do the training ... first thing I say [is] I'm a social worker. They give me fancy titles at work but the first thing that I say is I'm a social worker. Why? Because that's enough!'. Another student, Lyn, criticised the fact that social work is 'not seen as a top profession that really is making a difference'. She argued that 'social workers needed to raise the profile of what a social worker is actually able to do and can do'.

The emphasis on pride in the profession is particularly salient for public good social workers in a South African context. Within the framework of a developmental and transformative role they need to be valued and the profession needs to be accorded a higher status so that they have expanded agency and power to contribute to change.

3.5 Ethical values and integrity

Ethical values, honesty and integrity were strongly valued by all categories of informants. Amanda Hoffman described integrity as 'a make or break thing', [A social worker needs to be] an honest reliable person who doesn't generate false hope, who's honest in terms of what they bring, what their own shortcomings are, honest in terms of what contribution they can make to whatever processes they're involved in, who is never deceptive and never dishonest with money or anything else and who can be counted on.

A number of students were concerned that social workers should not make empty promises. 'They can't say to somebody "OK, you will have running water within a month" ... when you're going into these communities ... so many promises are being made, but nothing is being delivered' (Carla).

The capability of 'going against the grain' or 'swimming upstream' was used a number of times by lecturers and students. Lyn, one of the students said that social workers needed to be 'willing to go against the grain and get a bit of flack. And because of their value system be willing to kind of fight for that'. This capability can be associated with integrity in that it refers to an individual being clear about her or his own views and values and prepared to assert that view, even in a context where they are in conflict with a more dominant view.

3.6 Affiliation

A number of capabilities were discussed by informants that could be grouped as part of the capability of *affiliation* as described by Nussbaum. These included empathy and caring, respect, respect in relation to diversity and having a caring, people-centred approach. This was contrasted to a competitive, individualistic and materialistic approach prevalent in society and also, as some informants suggested, in many elements of Silvertree University.

Some of the students believed that the secular and religious values of caring and compassion were inculcated in family and community, prior to university education. Carla said, 'for somebody to choose a helping profession, I think you are already guided by your own values to helping ... people. I think you've got those intrinsic values already within you to go and do those type of things' (Carla). One of the students said that she thought social work was a great profession because it was not only work focused 'but also relational'. She believed that her studies in social work were equipping her 'with skills to relate to people, so it's not just going out there and being focused and getting this project to work,

it's one on one as well, to really empathise with them and get to understand where they're coming from first before you implement the project' (Sharon).

All of the lecturers saw respect for people as a fundamental capability of social workers. According to Amanda,

... the professional values that we need to have inculcated by the end of the fourth year and for me one of the huge things around that is basics like respect and also consensus, showing respect for the people that you're working with, from colleagues to those who are in jail for child abuse, to people with no education at all, to people who are still racist, all of that, that's got to be fundamental. You're not respecting their ideas necessarily or what they do and how they do it, but just their basic worth as people.

Similarly, many of the students spoke about the importance of respect. The 'common thing that's always got to be there is respect' (Lyn).

One of the alumni, Anne, who worked for a faith based organisation associated the ability to be a change agent with emotional affiliation and the building of relationships,

You've really got to have a commitment, first of all to this country and the change that this country needs, the human change it needs. And you've got to have a heart for that. And secondly, with that commitment must come a relationship, integrity and honesty about the situation ... you've got to be prepared to be committed and to persevere.

She said that the ethos of her organisation was 'relationship before projects and so that I feel very, very strongly about. You earn the right to be among folk by relating to them first, they can either want you or they don't want you'. As a social worker one needed to 'be open and teachable, learn from [people in the community], take time to form relationships, even if it takes a year before you actually effectively are in there, even though their needs are tremendous, it takes time to build a relationship and trust, when you've got *that* then everything is open and you're embraced by the community'.

One of the aspects of respect that was highlighted was the capability for respect in relation to diversity. The ethics of social work required the ability to respect 'the need for people to be different ... recognising that you know people are different. They may have different values, different languages, different religion, and ... they have the right to their own sexual orientation and so on' (Miriam).

Miriam pointed out that caring, people-centred values conflicted with the values of the dominant competitive, individualistic society which in her view were also so prevalent in the university. She said the Social Development department was giving students a message that,

... there is another way of doing things that is not rooted in this individualistic society and that is not as competitive and that's really hard for graduates to take on board. Because everywhere else they engage with competition and individualism as a driving force. And so we're saying that there's more to it than that and the more to it is about creating spaces for people to be different, to value different things.

3.7 Social and collective struggle: Working within structures of a social welfare system, relationships and partnerships

There are certain capabilities which are crucial for contributing to a process of transformation which surprisingly were not emphasised by the Social Development informants in their interviews. These are capabilities associated with relationships with other social service practitioners and partnerships with other

components of the social welfare system. One of the capabilities mentioned by Amanda, a lecturer, was confidence 'working in team contexts because that's what's required, particularly in South Africa, working in partnerships with the different sectors and with other professionals and with communities' (Amanda). However, this capability was not emphasised by most of the informants. Sheila, one of the students, did make the point that social workers cannot work with children in communities in an isolated way. She said 'you can't only have the social workers working at that, you need the teachers and the families and all the other professionals in the communities helping with that too'.

We have mentioned the argument that Dorothy, one of the lecturers, put forward about interaction between professionals in different sectors. She emphasised the contribution that social workers could make to social transformation through influencing professionals, such as those who were involved in town planning and infrastructure development. (From our case study on engineering education, we were alerted to the tendency of professionals such as engineers to focus narrowly on technical issues, without consideration of the social aspects of development).

In a later discussion with two lecturers in the Social Development department, the lecturers accepted our observation that there was little direct or explicit reference to these intersectoral, collaborative capabilities and functionings in the interview data. However they asserted that this capability was prioritised implicitly in their conceptions of a social development change agent and because intersectoral alliances and struggles were not mentioned it cannot be assumed that this was not valued as a professional capability. We will develop this further in Section 4, on educational arrangements.

As part of transformative policy of the social welfare system, a new category of social service professionals were introduced including auxiliary social workers, youth workers and community workers (Earle, 2008a). The only informant who mentioned the need for social work professionals to be able to work effectively with auxiliary levels of social service practitioners was Liezel Vermaak, a representative of a professional body. She said, 'when you address issues like poverty, [social workers] should also work closely together with your auxiliary levels of practice'. She suggested that there was insufficient clarity of roles between social workers and auxiliary social workers. Earle argues that auxiliary social workers could do a lot more of the administrative component of statutory work, freeing the professional social workers to do the work that needs more expertise (2008a). The issue of roles of different categories of social service professional needs to be clarified at a policy level. In addition social workers need to be able to work with different levels of practitioners in a constructive and transformative way.

Liezel thought that social workers should 'play a much more important role in initiating policy development around issues like poverty [and should] play an active role in advocacy with regards to poverty to approach it in a professional way'. Building on the commonly held view that the profession needed to 'break from [the approach of] the distant past where we handed out food parcels', she said,

... this is really something that must be planned strategically, and there must be a collective approach in how we deal with poverty. That is across all the government departments and your professionals in this field. There's so much of a team effort required in addressing this matter, with not just your social work professionals but also with the community development practitioners, and so forth. Where other professions in other departments are involved, that for me is very important - that there's a coordinated effort to address this.

Like Liezel, students and alumni thought that social workers should play an advocacy role. Lyn expressed this as 'being a voice for the community'. She said that community resources are so depleted that a social worker could play a facilitating role, finding out from communities what they need and what they want. She said 'we generally are much better off and we have access to more social resources, more people in higher positions and so perhaps being a voice for those who, they're not voiceless, they've got their voice, but they're just maybe not in a place where their voice is heard loud enough'.

Mary, a student from another Southern African country, said 'we live in a society whereby other people haven't had an opportunity to go to school. So we have knowledge, we have skills, we are able to help others around you who might be in situations where they cannot have people around to help them out' (Mary). Both of these views of the responsibility of social workers to their clients in poor communities can be related to Sen's argument that that 'capability is a kind of power' and a 'central concept in human obligation' is to use that power for social betterment (Sen, 2008).

There is an interesting contrast between the views of the student about a social worker being a voice for the 'voiceless', and the emphasis of Anne, the alumnus, who expresses her role as seeing 'the poor having more of a voice and help to facilitate them speaking up and out, not necessarily doing it myself'. She added that her role was to 'encourage advocacy and systems and structures' and social movements 'to see that the poor do have a voice over and above politics'.

3.8 Resilience

The alumni and some of the students referred to the need for resilience to cope with the wearing-down and draining nature of much of social work practice, particularly when dealing with the struggles of poor individuals and communities and the overwhelming structural social problems. Anne talked about the need to 'stay for the long haul' in order to make an impact and see change happening. Social workers needed resilience and staying power in order to stay and work under difficult conditions and not leave the profession or the country to practice elsewhere. The need for perseverance and tenacity were also mentioned,

... it's really got to be a calling or it's really got to be something in your heart
... there's so many people suffering and there's just this continuous cycle and
... the only thing we can do is continue to, as social workers, to have a positive attitude and focus on that passion that we have just to get through all these barriers and especially the bureaucracy and payment and all that.
(Sharon, student)

... you've got to be prepared to be committed and to persevere. It's so easy to give up, and there are reasons to give up. Burnout is high, caseloads are incredibly high, turnover is really high, there are too few social workers, too many problems. But if you stick long enough and you're committed enough there's a real sense of integrity and transparency and openness to the realness of the situation. I think that's what a social worker needs. And not to be deluded about the situation and not to romanticise it, but to know that humans can change, countries can change, but you've got to be there for the long haul (Anne, alumnus).

While social workers needed the capabilities of being able to care for and empathise with their clients, it was important to be able to maintain professional boundaries in order to avoid burn-out. Thandi, one of the alumni said that as a social worker you are advised not to get 'over-involved. You're not supposed to take whatever is happening there and take it home with you'. However, it can be

difficult to do this and 'so you end up wanting to help everyone. And it doesn't work like that, it's not possible, you're just a small drop in a big ocean. So there's always a struggle to maintain the boundaries... you're constantly taking your clients' stories home with you. You can't help it sometimes; those stories that are able to get under your skin no matter how disciplined you are, you find yourself talking about them after work ... you get headaches'.

3.9 Summary table of human development professional capabilities

By way of a summary, below we tabulate the human development professional capabilities as they emerged in particular from alumni, students and lecturers. These are presented non-hierarchically and must be understood as components of a multi-dimensional list, although some might be seen as more important than others, while the capability to be transformative professional change agent might be considered architectonic, informing and underpinning all other capabilities:

Table 3: Human development professional capabilities

Alumni	Students	Lecturers
Facilitating capability expansions of clients – 'self-determination'	Expanding capability of poor people to bring about change in their lives and communities	Capability to be a transformative professional, informed by knowledge and understanding of South African and global context
Recognising resilience of poor people, recognizing resources of communities	Critical understanding of 'empowering' approach, not romanticise.	Expanding capability of poor people to bring about change in their lives and communities
Holistic approach to practice	Understanding individuals, families and communities in a holistic, 'inter-systemic way'	Generalist, flexible, balanced professional, able to respond appropriately to different contexts, drawing on different methods
Vision of a just society	Calling, passion (vision)	Work to reduce poverty, inequality, informed by a social justice perspective
Reliability and accountability	Accountability and obligation, consistency, sustainability, not making 'empty promises'	Ethical, honest, with integrity, not making false promises
Decision-making about appropriate strategies, prioritizing and allocation of funding etc.	Capability to be flexible, innovative, use appropriate strategies	Responsibility, accountability in terms of efficiency
Political sense	Negotiating different interests and agendas, political sense and voicing one's own position	Contributing to policy formation, implementation and critique
Confidence/desire to grow into leadership position	Confidence	Going against the grain.
Doing research in order to increase knowledge and understanding		Build links with other public good professionals and organisations
Ongoing growth and professional development	pride in profession	Reflective practitioner, engaged in ongoing

		professional development
Perseverance		Pride in profession
Establishing professional boundaries/protective boundaries		
Resilience through self awareness and self-care		
Capability for emotional affiliation, building relationships		Empathy
Learning from the poor		Caring, people-centred in opposition to competitive, individualistic, materialistic, society
Appreciation of diversity and building bridges		Respect in relation to diversity
Ethical values and practice	Respect	Respect

4. Educational arrangements

In a discussion with two of the Social Development staff which took place after they had read a draft of the case study, the Head of the Department cautioned against looking for too close a fit between goals and outcomes of a teaching programme within the context of transformation. She said,

If you take a notion like transformation [and you use] certain proxies to reflect what the elements of transformation in each department or in each university are, whether its curriculum design that's a response to social needs or whether it's a participatory process – or whatever the elements are that you are looking at within this notion of transformation. Transformation is both a process as well as an outcome. So you're not going to get an automatic fit because the process that is ongoing is itself subject to a whole lot of factors that are not only determined by the agency of staff and students ... (7 October 2009)

This comment resonates with the analytical approach of this study which is a prospective application of the capability approach rather than an evaluative application (Alkire, 2008). From the data in the case studies, we are building up a picture of what changes to existing education and social arrangements would expand professional capabilities, taking into account both enabling and constraining factors.

4.1 Curriculum and knowledge

As discussed above the Social Development department has engaged in rigorous curriculum change to facilitate the students developing an understanding of the complexity of the South African context and entrenched inequities within this, as well as policies and processes which have aimed to address these inequities. The 'knowledge project' – knowledge from constituent disciplines and professional knowledge - is thus significant in bringing about change. For example, the role of critical theory in expanding capabilities to be a change agent was highlighted by Dorothy. She felt that engagement with critical theory and analysis of power was

needed to inform a critical, reflective professional approach. She said 'the consciousness of what we're doing [is] very much informed by a whole range of people like Gramsci and Habermas, particularly Paulo Freire's education for critical consciousness and Max-Neef'. She emphasised that teaching theory was not just about conveying content and that attention needed to be paid to this pedagogical approach. There was a need for 'modelling in the classroom ... So it's not just about the didactic learning, it's about the experiential stuff and it's about translating and not reproducing that same pattern of discrimination and inequality in the way we design the curriculum and the way we carry out the work' (Dorothy).

From interviews with informants, supplemented by the 2008 Student handbooks we have loosely identified four 'strands'²². The *first strand* concerned the need for contextualised understanding of professional practice of social work and the capability for application of this understanding. Both lecturers and students articulated the need for students to understand problems manifesting in individuals and families in relation to communities and broader socio-economic contexts.

Lecturers referred to courses in the programme which provided content about the political, economic and social contexts which affected social work practice in South Africa. Students are introduced to these contexts of professional practice in one of the first year semester modules entitled 'Community Connections'. The course aims to 'develop students' understanding of the interactions between different social systems in the context of selected contemporary social issues' (Student handbook). Furthermore, it looks at 'the impact of these interactions on individual households and communities' (ibid). In another first year module, on 'Basic professional interaction', there is a section on Conflict Resolution which also deals with micro-macro issues. As one of the lecturers put it, in first year 'they get their first lick and a promise' of the broader socio-economic context and in further years 'there's a scaffolding and a sequencing of how this is really expanded for them' (7 October 2009).

In second and third years the students do modules on the political economy of the social services. Here the department aims to deepen and broaden students' understandings of macro contexts of professional practice. At second year the political economy module 'introduces students to the evolution of social service professions in South Africa' and contextualises this in global, regional and national contexts (Student handbook). It traces the changes in the Social Welfare system from the pre- to post-democratic periods (Student handbook). The political economy module offered at third year builds on the second year module. It focuses on government and NGO responses to social challenges at a regional and local level and 'critically engages the students with regional social policy issues, structures and practices' (Student handbook). In the Social Development programme there were also modules on 'contemporary social problems, HIV and AIDS, sexuality and the importance of the Constitution and understanding professional ethics in a changed environment' (Miriam).

Lecturers conveyed that they were working towards curriculum and pedagogical approaches which integrated different elements of social work knowledge and the expansion of practical skills. A large proportion of the degree programme (the *second strand*) was devoted to equipping students to engage in the practical aspects of social work, both through teaching methods in the classroom and

²² The word 'stream' is used by the Department to refer to the specialisms that students choose to study at *Honours* level. We are using the term 'strand' to refer to the aspects of the *undergraduate* curriculum which we have identified from the data.

through the Practicum components of the programme. The students were encouraged to gain knowledge and understanding of the different social work methodologies so that they could make informed decisions about appropriate programmes and strategies. Classroom based teaching in this strand of the curriculum is introduced in first and second year. The practicum component is run throughout the year both in second and third year. We will discuss the practicum component further below.

A *third strand* in the undergraduate curriculum noted by lecturers related to expanding capabilities of the emerging professionals in order for them to become change agents. Clearly this strand is closely interwoven with the first strand of contextualised understanding of practice. We have discussed the courses on political economy and the social service professions which are offered at second and third year level above. The Developmental Social Work module offered in third year provides content aimed at expanding students' understanding of individual, family and community problems in relation to both macro and local causes of poverty and ill-being. Moreover it includes an experiential learning component, where students assess problems and resources in partnership with members of a poor community (Student handbook).

In the policy specialism, students interrogated policy, drawing on theory to inform discussion about 'who's notion of the good society ... what kind of ideological principle is actually fuelling that kind of policy development' (Dorothy). The department has worked on curriculum change with the aim of making it more relevant from first year, preparing students for the realities of social work practice, and encouraging them to locate themselves as professionals who will act as change agents in the various contexts in which they work. In the last year of the Social Work qualification (the Honours year in our 2008 data) there had been introduction of specialised programmes which aimed to prepare students to work in different fields of practice in the Social Development sector. These have been outlined above.

One of the challenges which need to be addressed by lecturers in the Department is the lack of exposure of middle-class, 'sheltered' students to the realities of poverty in South Africa. The legacy of apartheid urban and rural geographies means that many white and even now a new black middle class need have relatively little contact with people living in conditions of severe deprivation and poverty. Silvertree University has a majority of middle-class students and a high number of international students who tend to be from a privileged background. This is reflected in the profile of students in the Social Development programme as mentioned above. Two of the lecturers discussed the challenge of working with students from relatively sheltered and privileged backgrounds to facilitate a growth in awareness and understanding of the realities of poverty in South Africa, ... at an undergraduate level it's not so easy to get our students to grapple with those realities. Because as you know, Silvertree because of its historic place in South African society has been able to attract students from different parts of Africa and ... more recently from the world, but people who can afford to be here ... often have not been exposed to the hardships that many young people growing up in the townships and informal settlements and rural areas of South Africa have been exposed to (Miriam).

Older postgraduate students were aware of the apartheid history of South Africa, as they had lived 'through a whole lot of the major events of the transformation of the country' (Amanda). Those who were in their fourth year in 2008 when the research was conducted were about nine years old in 1994 when there was a change of government. Many middle-class children were already attending racially mixed schools in the years prior to 1994 as middle-class (white, coloured and

Indian) schools began to become more open. Most students growing up post-1994 would not have been aware of legislated discrimination. Amanda said 'Now you're dealing with kids who [say] 'The what uprising?' (laughs) 'The who?' and that is a whole challenge because our graduates have to go out with a very good understanding of why things are the way that they are, where our country's come from and what is impacting on the current that's come from the past. You can't understand the present if you don't understand the past'.

As mentioned above the lecturers indicated that they were working towards a programme that integrated different elements of Social work theoretical and practical knowledge. In contrast to this, Carla, one of the Honours students, had experienced a lack of integration in her undergraduate degree, confirming the need for the changes that were being put in place. She said,

[The lecturers] try and ensure that you're an all rounded professional, but at the same time there's more emphasis given to your normal clinical type work, which is what social workers are generally associated with. But at the same time they try and get you to be innovative in the things that you're doing, but there are a lot of boundaries. I've found that only in my postgrad or Honours study have I been given that space to actually move around and come up with my ideas on things. Whereas in the actual undergraduate part of the degree I felt that there were quite a lot of boundaries in which you had to move.

A *fourth strand* of the curriculum is research. Students do a semester course on Social Work research in third year, including a small research project. They study research methodology and conduct a research project in the fourth or Honours year. This is discussed further in the section on pedagogical approaches (Section 4.3).

A last general point about curriculum is in relation to the raising of students' awareness about the need to work with other social development professionals, government sectors and other sectors of society in order to contribute to poverty reduction. (This is a capability which was not emphasised by informants in the 2008 data set). In the meeting with Social Development lecturers which followed their reading of the case study draft, the lecturers asserted that the formation of this capability was built into the curriculum. As the Head of Department said,

Throughout the undergraduate curriculum there's an emphasis on relationships with civil society organisations, with government organisations at different levels as well as with the private sector, so social workers and social development practitioners – their work is actually determined by the level of interaction that takes place between government and civil society and they become the bridge between government action or inaction and community-based structures (7 October 2009).

A lecturer in this meeting elaborated on this, relating it to the scaffolding in the curriculum described above. She said that in their third year students had to facilitate development projects within their placements, with the objective of sustainability of the project after they had left. She said the key component of facilitating sustainability was 'connecting [the project] with other key organisations and task groups which is vitally important, so that's a theory plus practice component which gets integrated at that point'.

This capability is discussed further in relation to research projects below.

4.2 Pedagogy

4.2.1 Practicum programme

There is a strong practical component built into the curriculum, with students situated in placements from second year. The department has strong links with organisations, agencies and communities within the field and recognises the importance of sustaining these relationships and maintaining their credibility with these groupings. In many cases students are placed in NGOs and they are supervised by staff within the placement agencies. The lecturers emphasised the support and guidance provided by supervisors in placement, but there was also acknowledgement (by one of the lecturers) that the value of the placement relied on the calibre of the supervision, which could be inconsistent. Although students and alumni had had varied experiences of the practical component of the course, there were strong views expressed by some about the value of the practical component, the gaining of confidence, the integration of theory and practice, particularly where there was an excellent departmental supervisor who mediated the learning experience.

When they were situated in a placement for the practical component of the programme in second year, supervision thus played a crucial role in building their resilience. Lecturers stressed the role of placement supervisors who were expected to help students to cope with their exposure to harsh realities and give them support to work through their experiences 'theoretically, intellectually, but also emotionally' and to assist them to 'centre themselves again' (Dorothy).

During their Honours year, students spent most of their time working in placement organisations, produced a research project and interacted with their project supervisor. They met a number of times a year as a group with other students and their supervisor (and other members of staff?). A number of students in the Clinical stream felt that they were not getting enough support from the department at this stage. As Sharon said, 'I went away with feeling a whole lot of different feelings that were evoked and not knowing what to do with this' (Sharon). They did imply that they had received more support to cope with their emotional responses to their practical experiences in the undergraduate programme. In addition, much of the support needed to come from the placement supervisor, which varied according to the supervisor, as noted above.

Some of the students expressed concern about starting processes with groups in their placement organisations, which could not then be sustained because of the temporary nature of their placement. Karen, a Clinical stream student, expressed this concern in the following way,

You so do want to go in there and you see that there's so much deprivation and you can do something but at the end you've also got to think about sustainability, because as much as you'd love to, it's got to be a consistent thing otherwise you're just adding to the damage...I'm doing a project in a local township now and it's a photography for change project with little kids in a primary school and my role is to just make the teachers aware, to debrief them in order to make the teachers aware of any social issues that could come up or the impact of this project. And one of the things was that trauma or dramatic events or emotions that they've been through in the past could be evoked through the pictures that these children take.

A teacher asked her what she should do in the event of the photographs bringing painful or traumatic emotions to the surface. Karen said she would have liked to reply, 'well I'd be there, help them and I'll take them aside and counsel them', but I said to her 'I'd rather you refer to a permanent social worker because I can't promise that I'll be based here'. On the one hand, her expression of concern shows her awareness of the limitations of the impact students can make during temporary work in placements. It is likely that lecturers have raised students'

awareness in this regard as part of their mediation of practical experience.

Sharon, a Clinical stream student, reflected on the process of experiential learning and the interaction between theory and practice in the practical aspect of the programme,

I feel not completely prepared as a professional but....I've been equipped - and especially with the fieldwork and applying my theory to the fieldwork. Last term we had a great supervisor who really showed a lot of insight from her practice as a social worker and that really equipped me. She really did motivate us because you've got all this theory and what do you do with it? And when you're actually forced to get out there and use it, you learn so much more, sometimes you don't even have anything, you don't have the theory, you don't even know, but you learn your own way of doing things and that's what instils the confidence to go out there and say, 'OK I've done it in that situation, I can do it again'.

4.2.2 University teaching methods

One of the aspects of educational arrangements that we were interested in were the pedagogical approaches used in the department. Pedagogy refers to the framing of teaching and learning in the curriculum or the ways in which teaching and learning activities are constructed and facilitated. It would include the pedagogy of the practicum but here we consider the teaching and learning in the university classroom.

Some of the lecturers explained their attention to processes in the classroom, such as dealing with diversity in the classroom as a pedagogical resource and working with it to overcome prejudice. For example, one of the students had experienced racism in his practical work and this was processed and discussed in the classroom. There was also reference to entering into a contract with students to practise respect in the classroom as a way of bringing values and the professional code of conduct into their classroom interactions.

The lecturers valued the building of students' confidence, and this took place through practical experience, learning of theory, classroom discussion, engaging with different viewpoints and through skills development. There was evidence both from the lecturer data and the student data of building students' ability and confidence, for example,

it develops you into a public person, to speak for other people, to speak in front of people. I usually before, I'm still not really up there, before I used to be very timid, speaking in front of people, maybe it goes back with culture whereby you know from childhood, you are put in a situation whereby because you are a woman you have to be quiet, don't challenge, you have to listen, like that (Mary).

Students learnt to speak in public, to formulate and voice their own views on issues, and the ability to communicate with a diverse range of people. This was attributed to the programme as a whole and, in particular, student presentations at fourth year level, which was significant. Here students were required to present the findings of their research projects to the whole department and to members of some of the placement agencies. Carla, one of the students said,

... before coming to university I've always had this thing, OK no wait, they're more educated than me. I can't really challenge what they're saying because they know what they're talking about. Whereas since being in the department I've challenged a lot of things within the department and I haven't felt disempoweredfor challenging those things. And now I feel that's one of the things where I could probably go talk to the State President

and not have a problem with it, but then I could also go and talk to somebody who has never gone to school and be able to be at their level as well. So.... in that way I've really developed as a person through my studies.

Two lecturers spoke about a number of elements in the programme that could build the students' personal resilience. One of the elements in the Bachelor of Social Work curriculum as a whole was the study of Psychology in the undergraduate programme. Lecturers argued that studying psychological theory and engaging with this theory in an active way in the Social Development programme helped to equip students to understand the psychological dimensions of clients' issues and problems and engage with these clients in an effective way. Furthermore it enabled them to develop more self-insight, emotional reflexivity and resilience. Dorothy, one of the lecturers said,

Our students come in here as very green eighteen year olds and most of them are drawn to social work and there's been sufficient research done about the need to repair things, repair the lives of individuals and very often it comes from their own backgrounds, they come in as wounded healers as it were, you know, wanting to do something about it and they come on a journey of - the first year is actually more of a self-discovery of who I am and a lot of understanding the psychology of self in terms of defence mechanisms and group dynamics and family therapy and all that kind of exposure and a theoretical background and during the courses that they are exposed to, they have access to the staff members in terms of what's happening to them and very often they come out of a human sexuality class and then actually say "I've been abused". We encourage them to go for counselling, we will do the supportive work but we won't do the counselling because obviously you have to separate the academic stuff from the therapeutic stuff.

Elizabeth spoke about the need for exposure to harsh realities, while providing a supportive space to assist students to cope with their own emotional responses to these realities. She said that the department strove to help students to 'build the resilience to survive the course as a student because I believe that we really can't protect the students from reality, that it would be better for them to hit some of these awful things while they have a total system supporting them than once they get out in practice where often they [may not] even get decent supervision'.

4.2.3 Inquiry learning

Part of the curriculum change that took place in the department was a revitalising of the students' research projects in the curriculum. Students are required to do research projects in third and fourth year. At a third year level they do small scale research projects which are contained and manageable. Dorothy said that research projects made them feel that research is 'actually doable'. She said that doing the research project gave the students energy and self confidence to do further research. It provided 'a little window into what research could actually [do]' and its potential to 'make a difference' (Dorothy).

The fourth year research project had been reframed from a situation where students had been doing fragmented topics to doing a joint project. One year the students did a project in collaboration with the provincial Department of Education, looking at aspirations of Grade 12 learners at high schools in a working-class coloured area. Amanda felt that this development was transformative for the students. She said,

... the big thing is that we're reaching out and linking with the Department of Education and saying to them we would like to contribute through research to your knowledge base, to information that you can use for policy making that can be shared with the schools. And so here we are as a department that

wants to, through our research, while we're busy educating and training our students around realities out there, we're also making a useful contribution to the Department of Education and that's quite ... significant. So from those fragmented bits and pieces that just collected dust to all seventy students ... doing the same topic supervised by different people and then the end product being of some value at a higher level than just the schools where we've done the research.

From the experience of this project, students were learning how to do applied research and to understand the value of research. The research projects provided a rich opportunity for students to heighten their awareness of relationships, partnerships and coordination between different government departments in facilitating transformation.

4.3 Diversity of students

This section overlaps with that of pedagogy but is separated out here because of the critical impact of diversity on student learning and lecturers' teaching, especially across axes of race, gender and socio-economic background. A diverse range of students were admitted to the Social Development programme. The department admitted students with lower school-leaving results than the rest of the university, although most of the students were still from a privileged education system. However, there were also students from poor working-class or rural schools. Most of the lecturers talked about diversity as a positive challenge. Dorothy said that there had been a large increase of black students from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds in 1994 and 1995 which had 'impacted on the whole pedagogical approach to the students' and led to development of 'alternative ways ... of bridging that gap between high school and the university and what was exciting for us was a new learning curve in that we brought in educational specialists to help us with scaffolding the actual assignments and looking at alternative ways of addressing this issue' (Dorothy). Addressing these challenges demanded commitment and investment of time from staff and according to Elizabeth, the department was known in the faculty as having one of the best throughput rates.²³

In response to our question regarding the continuing salience of race Dorothy responded that,

Race, I think, comes up in the class - in race, class and gender - so we openly sort of bring it out into the open....there are problems because at the beginning when I taught, my black students would sit in pockets and cliques and the white students would sit separately. Over the years I've seen that change and it's changed because they've also seen how we as staff behave with each other and I think a lot of modelling happens at that point when they actually meet the staff, see them in staff meetings 'cos we have students and staff meeting together and the way we engage with them in the classroom. There are problems, I wouldn't say there aren't because I think it goes along with prejudice and prejudice reduction stuff happens over time. We deal with it specifically in some of the courses where we raise that issue or when they come into supervision and you realise this is a racist thing. One of the students came and said to me, he was working at a [religious] organisation and he had to go to this elderly white lady and she thought he was the milkman and he was actually coming there to counsel her and he

²³ In the current context there is not a direct correlation between race and socio-economic background. However, one can assume that white students and international students come from a relatively privileged social and educational background. See Figure 1 for breakdown of 2007 social work students by race.

spoke about how he felt about that experience, bringing that all out and containing it and working with that.

Staff also have had to find ways to work together across their own differences, she added: 'As staff, we also have to at times say things in staff meetings to each other which wasn't always comfortable, but there's a sense of being able to be open about it'.

Nonetheless, while the lecturers emphasised the diversity of students, figures from 2007 show that South African black students were in a minority compared to South African white and international students, and this factor needs to be taken into account.

4.4 Plurality of perspectives

In the department the lecturers have diverse interests and areas of research specialism. A number of them have been involved in national and international processes or organisations in the Social Development field. This diversity and expertise adds richness to the programme offered by the department. Carla referred to the range of lecturers in the department and said that as a student one gravitated towards the lecturers whose approach was of most interest to you, and that students find their own mentors within the department,

... even just within the department there are also differing schools of thought. I mean you'll have some lecturers that push the academic route, that [believe that] we need more academics out there actually teaching the subject, but then you've got others that [believe that] it's all about practice, 'you need to get out there, you need to be innovative, you need to work at the grass roots'. And then you get others that [believe that] you need to go do this first and this is how the process works and only once you've got experience can you do that. So yeah I suppose it's also just a matter of who you - I mean for myself I've adopted certain people within the department as my mentor through my studies and I think you gravitate towards the school of thought that most interests you.

The lecturer who read the draft of the case study, responded to this quotation, saying that it reflected two pressures on the role of the department in educating social development professionals. On the one hand, there was a push to get professionals practicing in the welfare system. On the other hand in a university environment, the role of the department was not only to produce practitioners, but also to facilitate knowledge production about the social development field in South Africa, and to produce social work educators. She also saw the department engaging in dialogue with practitioners in NGOs etc, both to hear what needs their were in the field and to inform practitioners about new theories and models coming out of academic research. In her view, one of the valuable aspects of students' interaction with agencies was their contribution of new theories and models (7 October, 2009).

4.5 Professional ways of being

The department sought also to inculcate professional values and ways of working, as Mary explained,

I appreciate university education in that it moulds one into a position of responsibility and that encompasses a lot. You have to be focused at what you are doing and you have to get it right, meaning that that attitude has to go even at a work situation, make sure things are supposed to be done right and the issue of deadlines whereby at times one will be, maybe you explain, but once people hand in the essay, oh it's not finished, so I get a zero, meaning that the goals, the objectives that are set must be accomplished.

Not only that, you are, we are being taught in a situation whereby though there's knowledge, but don't just accept it, see where you can add, where you can criticise, unlike before. And it develops you into a public person, to speak for other people, to speak in front of people..... So I appreciate university education in that it puts you in a frame whereby when you go out in society, you'll be able to represent people, correct issues and work along with others.

4.6 Location within Silvertree University

Institutional conditions affected the work of the department. Thus some of the lecturers spoke about the difficulties of the department's location at a university like Silvertree because there were differences between the nature of the Social Development department with other university departments in terms of purpose, goals and values. Miriam Grey, the head of department thought that often the goals and focus of the department had 'been at odds with where the university was focusing its own resources and its energy because social work and social development deals with a very unattractive part of society'. The work of the department doesn't have easily measurable results such as 'the pure sciences or the health sciences lends itself to say 'we've come up with this model of this treatment or this formula'.

Social Development at Silvertree University is located within the Humanities Faculty. There are only two sites of professional education and training in the faculty – Education and Social Development. Thus 'professional education is a very small part of the faculty' (Dean of Humanities). Elizabeth Goodwin described the relationship of a social work department in a university as 'uncomfortable'. She said that social work in a university context 'is often a bit of stitch-on and we do have to keep on pushing and knocking because we are different ... I don't think everything in this world should be necessarily comfortable, it doesn't bother me, but it does mean it's very hard work most of the time. We're always fighting for staff, fighting for this, fighting for that ...' (Elizabeth). At the same time, she was aware that other faculty members had respect for the Social Development department, and confidence in the lecturers. She was aware that members of the faculty valued the high throughput rate of students in the department.

4.7 Summary table of educational arrangements

Below we summarize the key elements emerging from our data in relation to educational arrangements.

Table 4: Educational arrangements

Alumni	Students	Lecturers
Practical experience built into curriculum	Cultivation of innovative, self-reflective, professional, involved in ongoing professional development	Curriculum that aims to imbue students with 'systemic', contextualised understanding of Social Development practice
Disjuncture between theory of social work practice and practical experience in 'real world'. Limitations on extent to which university can prepare students	Accountability responsibility - Writing reports, meeting deadlines	Communicating particular vision of Social Development practice
		Engaging with critical theory
Quality of agency	Learning from practical	Integrating experiential

supervision	components	learning and theory
Lecturers engaged in current research	*Confidence building, communicative capability through presentations, feedback	Teaching variety of methods and building contextualized judgement about interventions.
Research projects	Integrating practice and theory	4 th year specialism for particular spheres of practice
Evidence of student learning, drawing conclusions and formulating an argument through experience of research project	Discussion of impact of their practical involvement on the communities, and sustainability	Building confidence through presentations to dept and stakeholders
Building awareness of and training for knowledge production in a South African context	Positive and neg experiences of departmental supervision i.r.t. practical work	Personal growth aspect building resilience
Cultivating professional excellence	Pos and neg experiences of agency supervision	Supervision within placement, mentoring & guidance
Contextualising social work practice in SA history	Diversity of lecturers and approaches	Safe space for processing exposure to difficult realities
Application of theory to practice – whole systems model	Balance or lack of balance between theory and practical components of curriculum	Emphasis on Developing equal and reciprocal relationships
Resilience building through self knowledge and reflection on self	Difficulty of less support during Honours year	Communicative ability for listening and developing empathic relationship Engaging with diversity and prejudice within classroom
		Carefully designed research projects. Develop students' sense of being able to make a difference
		Networking between department, government departments and NGOs etc
		Knowledge and understanding of social welfare system
		Academic development
		Diversity and expertise of staff in department

5. Social arrangements and constraints on the formation of public good professionals

We have provided an outline in Section 2 of the context of social work professional practice in South Africa, which affects the formation of public good professionals. In this section, we give space to informants' views of the factors constraining public good professional practice.

One of the factors that has not been mentioned are the social and personal problems which some of the students face which affect their studies. Elizabeth referred to 'a huge amount of domestic violence, there's sexual violence, there's

financial difficulties, there's a lot of personal stuff which I think very often in the rest of the university nobody knows about it and the student drops out' (Elizabeth). This is not surprising given the violence in South African society. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are much more vulnerable to these kinds of problems. This requires awareness and interventions within the university as a whole as well as sensitivity within the department. These issues need to be taken into account in the building of resilience of students.

Contrast between ideals and realities of practice

This point has been discussed in the section on Capabilities. Another dimension of the problem which students brought up was the stifling of students' creativity once they become part of institutions in the welfare system. Yusuf, an Honours student who had had a number of years of work experience observed that the education of social workers developed their capabilities to be creative and innovative professionals. However,

... somewhere along the line either the Government which employs most of them or the NGO sector does not provide the environment for them to work on those levels and use those creativity and innovations and the Government is very bureaucratic. So they're static and the NGO sector often - their ideas and innovations are stifled by lack of funding and a lack of risk taking as well. And poor management generally (Yusuf).

Students talked about serious organisational constraints on their professional ways of being, both in the government and the NGO sector, as one student explained:

if you're working for Government and they send you to go and work in a particular community and you then start lobbying for that community against Government, you know, there's always going to be that conflict and those barriers that you need to stay within....I just came out of a situation where I was working for an NGO and I just, the more and more I sat there and looked how they did things, the more and more I was like, the founder of this organisation is so, like has such narcissistic behaviour that I actually cannot work there ... and you know you have to, you also need to know when to say no to certain things, like do you carry on with this when you know you can't get it right or do you follow your own values and that type of thing, and leave the organisation? (Carla)

So while the capabilities of students to be creative and innovative had been expanded through their education, they were often unable to *convert* these capabilities into functionings (Sen, 1999) or *realize* their professional aspirations because of social characteristics such as the bureaucratic structures of institutions and environmental characteristics such as resources. Nonetheless, in order for students to act as change agents in very difficult circumstances, they need to learn to apply creative and innovative approaches within such hard and challenging circumstance.

Shortage of social workers and lack of resources to address tremendous social problems

We discussed in Section 1 the change in social welfare policy which had had the effect of a reduction of funding to the NGO sector, while the demands on the sector had simultaneously increased. Elizabeth spoke about the shortage of social workers in relation to this context,

There're just not enough social workers, absolutely no way near enough, we need, I can't remember the stats, thirty thousand or forty, but agencies, NGOs

are not being given the financial backing they need, the State is not supporting them enough and they cannot get adequate funding, I mean they are all desperately fundraising but there's a limit to how much you can fundraise.

Sheila, an older student who was also working for an NGO described her experiences of how the lack of capacity of the social welfare system affected communities. She spoke of the huge caseload of individual social workers, estimating that one social worker could have a case load of two hundred. The NGO that she worked for was the social work body who had authority to work with a particular community. She said the social workers in the NGO, ... just don't have time, they just do not have time, because they work with such a huge geographical area and farmland etc, and they just do not have the time for individual cases. The other week, a little girl died, and she's been [on the caseload of the NGO] for the last three years and she died of unnatural causes, we know that, but nothing's done. It's very frustrating, the social workers there have a very difficult job because they have such a big caseload, I mean two hundred, I'm not sure, two hundred cases or more, how can you do justice to any of those cases?.

Yusuf highlighted the rhetoric of policy and the failure to deliver on good public service provision,

I think social workers are actually being set up for failure and to a large extent because you've got to work within what's in the community, but I think there's reach a level where communities have become depleted of resources and the resources are so few that it actually becomes a point of conflict you know because they are battling for it. So on the one hand sending a social worker in to deal with poverty and not giving that social worker the necessary back-up is actually setting the social worker up to failure. But if you come in there and you're going to say you're going to network people, you're going to build social capital, for me that's a lot of words coming out of my experience with Government. They've got all these brilliant strategies and it's a lot of words, it's not always about money they say, it's about building resources, capacity and networks....[but] at the end of the day you need to put some power behind, some muscle needs to go behind it.

Working conditions and lower salaries relative to most other professions

The difficulty of the conditions under which most social workers work is evident from descriptions such as the one above. Social workers talk about the everyday contact with desperately poor people, the stress of being understaffed and in many cases a sense of helplessness about their ability to meet the needs of their clients, under the circumstances. They refer to the high possibility of burnout. Most of the informants made reference to what they see as the extremely low salaries²⁴ and the impact that that had on the motivation of social workers. One of the students said that incentives and salaries of social workers needed to be improved 'so that they can also be motivated because I'm surely not going to go and motivate someone who is poor when I cannot take care of myself or my family you know' (Joy). Charmaine, a school social worker, understood the low salaries of social workers as an effect of the limited resources available in the country for social welfare. However, she said that she had to constantly reconcile the lack of financial reward with the fact that the work was meaningful for her. She felt passionate about clinical work and working with children but needed to

²⁴ Presumably relative say to doctors and lawyers, but not dissimilar to nurses and teachers.

think about money. One needs to take into account the gender dimension of the low salaries of social workers (Earle, 2008a:30). In South Africa and internationally social workers have traditionally been women, although this has been changing. The caring professions and work which has mainly been done by women have historically had low status and remuneration. She said, 'I'm a single woman, I need to support myself and so that's the kind of a thing that I'm grappling with at the moment' (Charmaine).

The international professional labour market

In the context of globalisation and international mobility, social workers, who have high-level capabilities are in great demand in the international labour market. The movement of professionals is usually from developing to developed countries. Social workers have highly transferable skills/capabilities since despite local application, they base their practice on international bodies of theory and knowledge (Lombard, 2003, in Earle, 2008a: 43). We have mentioned factors such as poor working conditions, high workloads, emotional stress of working with severely poor communities and the high incidence of HIV/AIDS and low salaries which push social workers to leave the country. There are more general national issues such as personal vulnerability to violence and crime²⁵ (Earle, 2008a, 43). Elizabeth, one of the lecturers, thought that the high level of emigration of social workers was not generally based on dissatisfaction with a career in social work. 'I think it's the usual brain drain, security and especially with women, many of them are concerned about the violence side of affairs'.

In addition to the movement of social workers out of the country, movement out of the social work profession is common in South Africa. As Lombard (2003) observes, 'the generic and transferable, social, theoretical and analytical skills ... make them suitable for a range of employment opportunities other than social work' (cited from Earle, 2008a: 57). Anne Hardy, one of the alumni, said that she had 'seen people come and go ... and seen social workers leave the profession and go into human resources or into [the business sector]....[of my] graduation class of 1984, there's only about three or four of us still practicing'. The Honours students who were interviewed were acutely conscious of issues such as the low salaries, difficult working conditions of social workers and the high level of social workers leaving the country. Four out of eight students interviewed were going to go abroad after qualifying, although many of them temporarily.

In 2003 the government started to recognise social work as a 'scarce skill' and developed a strategy for retention of social workers (DSD, 2005). There have been indications that relations between the NGO sector and some provincial government departments are starting to improve (Earle, 2008a). Earle reports that the extent of emigration of social workers peaked in about 2002/3 and that there has been a drop in numbers of emigrations since then. While these factors are encouraging, there is clearly much development and capability expansion that needs to take place for the Social Development sector to maximise its contribution to transformation and poverty reduction in South Africa.

5.1 Summary table of social constraints

Below we summarise the social and educational constraints on educating public good professionals in Social Work.

²⁵ Data on the emigration of social workers from South Africa is patchy but Earle (2008a) estimates that between 10% to 30% of each graduating class leave to work overseas.

Table 5: Social constraints

Alumni	Students	Lecturers
Inadequacy of institutional resources, finances and staffing	Structural, economic realities that constrain social workers from making a difference. Complete breakdown of social structures.	Majority of students middle-class, sheltered and young (haven't lived through or were very young during apartheid)
Poor salaries of social workers	Poor working conditions, low salaries	Reliance on supervision by agency staff, which depends on individual supervisors
Limited capabilities of professionals	powerlessness to make an impact in the face of multi-layered, compounded poverty	Challenges for recognition and valuing of Social Development's work within university
Resistance from people in communities to social workers and social work interventions	Resistance of poor people to interventions from social workers,	Poor quality of school education of working-class and rural black students
Dependency, sense of entitlement and 'learned helplessness' of poor people	either wanting handouts or complete disillusionment and despair –	Poor quality of many practising social workers
Low status of social workers,	Low status of social workers	Desperate shortage of social workers in system, both government and NGOs, but lack of funding
lack of clear and strong professional identity	*Institutional constraints on agency of social workers,	Many social workers leave the country
Many social workers leave profession	Vision, 'calling', passion, heart for being a social worker crushed by barriers and own powerlessness	
	Too few social workers both in government and NGO contexts to meet desperate social problems. Lack of resources both staff and financial	
	Contradiction of shortage of social workers, and difficulty for new graduates to get jobs.	
	Desire to go overseas. Question whether will come back.	

6. Concluding comments

In this case study we have outlined the valued professional capabilities that emerge from our data, sketched the key features of the professional education provided by the department at Silvertree University, and considered the social

arrangements that constrain social workers from practising as public good professionals. While social arrangements shape and may constrain labour market conditions, nonetheless the education that students acquire at Silvertree University is equipping them with the knowledge, practical skills and for the most part the confidence to be the kind of social workers required for transformative change in the lives of individuals, groups and communities in South Africa. In our view the department works hard to puncture the 'membrane' which insulates many of its students from the realities of life for people living in conditions of poverty. Thus it creates conditions for the development of compassionate other-regarding agency and professional responsibility. What one should care about for meaningful life pervades the professional education provided.

Social workers are being educated with a durable sense of how their access to higher education generates obligations to others, summed up here by Mary: 'As you know that we live in a society whereby other people haven't had an opportunity to go to school. So if we have knowledge somehow, we are able to help others around you who might be in situations where they do not have people around to help them'. The programme appears also to be equipping students for the 'creative transformation in professional practice' that Gleeson and Knights (2006: 278) highlight, albeit that this is unevenly realized.

We find evidence of praxis in the integration of academic knowledge (acquired at university) and practical knowledge about what it means to practise as a social workers aware of and sensitive to what it means and what is needed to live as a fully human being. Exposure to critical theories and critical reasoning about society, combined with practice and experiential learning offers at least the possibility for being able to imagine alternative social arrangements. If such professionals are being educated in Silvertree University in this one department, this constitutes a contribution by higher education to poverty reduction.

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1. Introduction: Engineering and poverty in South Africa

This case study explores the significance of engineers' professional training for poverty reduction through interviews with students, alumni, lecturers, senior Faculty members, NGO workers and a professional body. The study employs the capability approach as a framework for conceptualising both poverty in South Africa overall, and also more specifically how professional education can enhance the agency of engineers who want to contribute to poverty reduction (Walker et al, 2009).

We start from the position that engineering has a central role in social and economic development. Development economists have long drawn close connections between infrastructural development and economic growth²⁶. Further, the profession is able to address the lack of infrastructure and basic services that exacerbates global poverty, and engineering is widely regarded as integral to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (Singleton, 2003). For instance, a recent report compiled by UNICEF and the WHO revealed that 40% of the earth's population does not have the most basic sanitation available to them (WHO, 2004). A lack of affordable housing and basic urban infrastructure, teamed with increasing population growth, has resulted in large numbers of people living in slums, and by 2025 60% of the world's population will be urbanised (UNFPA, 1999).

These problems are very much present in South Africa today. At the time of the transition to democracy in 1994, the country faced a high population growth rate, extensive urban and rural poverty, and rapid urbanisation. There were high expectations that political change would bring widespread improvements in economic circumstances and quality of life, and many of these expectations focused on engineering services (Wall and Motsei, 1996). Yet over a decade later most of these problems remain. Many of South Africa's engineers are keen to play a role in reducing them, as the responses in this study show²⁷.

In their working lives, engineers can (and arguably *should, according to the way we have conceptualised public good professionalism*) be part of the struggle to reduce poverty in many ways. Improvements in public services and the building of infrastructure for both commercial and social ends (such as new houses, clean water production plants, and improving power supplies, transportation, sanitation, agriculture, and information technology) cannot take place without skilled engineers. Such work can also involve taking on government contracts with specific requirements to help develop the infrastructures in disadvantaged communities (Watermeyer, 2006)²⁸. Engineers can also have an important role through the innovation and creation of smaller-scale

²⁶ See Dollery, Brian (1988) 'Modish thought, dirigisme, and engineering urges in South Africa', Development Southern Africa, Vol 5.

²⁷ There are three types of engineering professionals in South Africa: engineers, engineering technologists, engineering technicians (HSRC, 2009: 2). This study focuses on engineers, who require a four-year Bachelors of Science in Engineering degree.

²⁸ In the case of government contracts the level of community awareness is not only dependent on the perspective of the engineer, but is also required to be built into the procurement contract. Since 1995 the South African government has instituted a programme of procurement reform to address good governance concerns and to use procurement as an instrument of social policy. Stipulations for the contractor may include requirements about who gets employed, housing standards and responsibilities to the local community. For further discussion see Watermeyer (2006).

products to alleviate poverty-related problems, perhaps more cheaply or efficiently than before (for example, by developing new technologies, or products that can be produced domestically instead of being imported, thus making them cheaper; for examples see Singleton, 2003)²⁹. Further, building projects require manual labour; one of the legacies of apartheid has been a dire lack of skilled labour but such engineering projects can employ and train people from poor communities in engineering and construction skills (again, this is something which may be addressed in government procurement contracts; see Watermeyer, 2006:28-29). There are, therefore, a number of opportunities for corporate social responsibility.

Yet there are also many career paths for engineers which might avoid these professional pathways particularly by working for large corporations. As demonstrated through the interview data in this study, for example, students often spoke of career paths which were attractive because of higher pay and better employment packages; this is often the case when working for larger firms which by their very nature normally prioritise profit maximisation over social justice issues. This does not mean that working for a large firm means completely abandoning involvement in some pro-poor projects; but a professional training course might encourage to a greater or lesser degree such an orientation among its students. This is what this study aims to examine.

Engineering is clearly pivotal to South Africa's development. Yet different understandings of 'development' and 'transformation' entail different roles for engineers in poverty reduction. In this case study, as with the other four cases, a distinction needs to be made between two different understandings of 'transformation': first, in the sense of getting more people from disadvantaged backgrounds to study engineering, thereby helping individuals towards a better career and quality of life (which many of the respondents refer to in this case in particular); and second, in the sense of a professional contribution to poverty reduction through engineering *practice*, which is the particular concern of this study. At a broader level, poverty itself is traditionally defined in terms of income and resource levels; but in this study we employ a definition of poverty as the deprivation of capabilities. In the first definition, engineers might contribute chiefly through helping to raise income levels and economic growth through infrastructure development; the second definition, which we use, calls for a more subtle and multidimensional understanding of the ways in which engineers can affect the lives of the disadvantaged.

Post-transition, South Africa underwent an expansion of infrastructure. Levels of investment increased to some degree: in power plants, roads, airports and harbours, and improvements to other municipal services, although overall public service needs have not been met. Preparations for the 2010 FIFA World Cup have prompted a more recent burst of activity, including the construction of new stadia and the upgrading of existing ones, transport improvements, and accommodation expansion. The construction industry has also expanded at an unprecedented level.

This infrastructural growth has required an increasing number of engineers. Between 1996 and 2005 there has been a 7% average annual growth in the numbers being employed in engineering positions, and a corresponding increase in numbers studying engineering (HSRC, 2009: 38). Yet South Africa is still suffering from an acute shortage of qualified engineers, described as one of the worst capacity and scarce-skills crises in years, with local municipalities hardest hit (Lawless, 2005, cited in HSRC, 2009: 3, see

²⁹ One prominent example of an innovative and highly successful South African engineering design which improves lives in disadvantaged communities has been the 'playpump' system, which uses a children's roundabout to pump water from the ground. Starting as a small-scale project outside Johannesburg in the early 1990s, Playpumps International is now an international NGO with projects in disadvantaged communities in several sub-Saharan African countries, including South Africa. For further information see www.playpumps.org.

also 31-36). The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) notes that South Africa currently has 473 trained engineers per million citizens, whereas Japan, which co-hosted the 2002 World Cup with Korea, had 3,306 per million citizens (HSRC, 2009: 1)³⁰. Some of this is due to outward migration of qualified engineers, either due to high levels of crime and violence in the country, or due to more favourable employment and salary prospects overseas (HSRC, 2009: 30). As South African Engineering degrees are recognised internationally, South African engineers are highly mobile globally, making outward migration relatively straightforward, and attractive to those in search of higher salaries and keen to escape high crime rates³¹.

Interestingly, only half of those trained to be engineers end up employed in engineering, with the rest moving to other industries for managerial or consultancy positions, often attracted by the higher salaries on offer, and frustrated by the lack of on-the-job training and opportunities to learn from others with more experience (HSRC, 2009: 15-16, 19). Those who remain in the field of engineering may work in the public or private sector; in 2005, 32.4% of engineers and technologists worked for the public sector, and 67.6% worked for the private sector (HSRC, 2009: 14).

The demographic profile of the profession is also changing. Engineering and technologist positions continue to be dominated by White workers, although the period 1996-2005 has seen an increase in the proportion of African, Coloured and Indian workers within each of these employment groups (HSRC, 2009: 21-22). During this period, the proportion of engineers and technologists who are white decreased from 84.53% to 69.53%; within the black proportion, African engineers and technologists decreased from 81.07% to 66.53% whereas the Indian proportion increased from 7.91% to 22.72%. Similarly with technologists, the white proportion decreased from 71.42% to 58.61%; the African proportion of black technologists increasing from 59.98% to 72.60%. The proportion of women to men in both groups decreased over the same time period (engineers and technologists, from 11.36% to 8.48%; technologists, from 11.94% to 8.76%). What is clear is that significant diversity challenges remain, so that transformation understood as access and equity is a key issue which sits beneath and inside this case study and professional transformations.

Thus while these issues of access and equity require urgent attention, it is also the case that the current professional training of engineers may have a significant role in the extent to which engineers go on to work towards human development and transformation goals in their own working lives. These concerns are not limited to South Africa, as recent studies in the UK and US have explored³². A recent report on engineering education in the United States by the Carnegie Foundation urges new thinking on the ethical role of engineers in society. It concluded that ethics have 'a new urgency in today's world' but are often left out of an already-crowded engineering curriculum,

not only are programs packed solid with the technical courses, but also there are limited conceptual openings for issues of professionalism. Students have few

³⁰ Similarly, the HSRC notes that South Africa's level of engineers is low compared to other upper-middle income countries, like Chile (1,460 engineers per million citizens) and Malaysia (1,843 engineers per million citizens).

³¹ The Engineering Council of South Africa is a signatory to the Washington Accord, which recognises the equivalence of engineering qualifications between Australia, Canada, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore, the UK and the USA. Engineering faculties such as the one at Acacia have constantly striven to maintain membership of this agreement in recognition of the international standards of their programmes.

³² For an example of an attempt in the UK to impart values in an engineering course, see Fenner et al (2005); for an example from the USA to introduce community engagement and professional responsibility into engineering education, see Sullivan and Rosin (2008). Other examples from South Africa can be found through the University of Cape Town's Centre for Research in Education Engineering.

opportunities to explore the implications of being a professional in society. Moreover, the responsibility of providing such opportunities is often left to other academic units (Sheppard et al, 2008: 6).

The Engineering Faculty at Acacia University has seen one of the more recent attempts to directly address this through aiming to instil specific professional values into their students. The following section sets out the institutional context of this Faculty.

2. Engineering at Acacia: Society in Perspective

The Engineering Faculty at Acacia University was established in 1944, and was the first of its kind in an Afrikaans-language University³³. Today it consists of five departments: Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering, and Process Engineering (incorporating Chemical and Mineral Processing). The Faculty currently has about 2,500 students, about a quarter of whom are postgraduates³⁴. The Faculty has a good reputation and is generally held in high regard in higher education circles; for example, for the past three years an Acacia Engineering alumnus has won the Eskom prize for the best final year undergraduate student in engineering. In line with Acacia's distinctive history and identity as a university, the Dean of the Engineering Faculty elaborated on their vision of a 'brand' of engineers that Acacia produces, with particular qualities, detailed further on in Section 4. Being ECSA-accredited, the four-year BEng is internationally recognised, meaning that BEng graduates are highly mobile internationally and many leave South Africa to work overseas.

While engineering is by definition concerned with construction and national development, for this study we wanted to examine to what degree the Faculty is concerned specifically with poverty reduction and social transformation. The Faculty is openly committed to the University's overall *Community Interaction Programme*, launched in 2004 in the University's *Community Interaction Policy*, which encourages the restructuring of academic courses to include interaction with and services to local communities, encouraging departments and faculties to 'play a bigger role in addressing the development needs of the society' (2004: 1)³⁵. One of the main aims of the programme is, 'encouraging civil responsibility in students by subjecting them to the realities of society as preparation for their participation in a democratic society' (2004: 2). The Faculty identifies community interaction as one of its three main activities alongside teaching and research, on the front page of its website.

In terms of research, the Faculty website states,

The main research objective of the personnel of the Faculty is to provide a better life for South Africa's people. Thus the Faculty strives to do research in areas such as roads, dams, water purification, effluent treatment, renewable energy, etc³⁶.

However, according to the head of one of the departments, the research at Acacia's Engineering Faculty relates to poverty reduction in a less direct way,

I think the type of research that we do all relates to creating technology for the country, which could reduce poverty but there's no specific focus on poverty reduction *per se* in our Department.

³³ The construction of the present Faculty building commenced in the 1960's but was not completed until 1979.

³⁴ These figures are for 2009, from the acting Dean of the Faculty.

³⁵ Information on recent developments in the Faculty, the curriculum, and other contextual information were gathered from Faculty reports from 2004, 2008a, 2008b, and 2009, which are referred to in this study. Please note that while these documents do exist, we cannot reference them fully without revealing the identity of the institution, so they are not listed in the bibliography.

³⁶ This quotation is from the Community Interaction pages on the Faculty website.

While overall research activities may not be particularly oriented towards poverty reduction, there has in recent years been a shift in this direction within teaching. In 2008 the Faculty piloted a module called 'Society in Perspective' within its BEng programme, which aims to give students a greater awareness of the society in which they will be practicing as engineers. The module was conceived of in order to cover one of the 7 key knowledge requirements stipulated by the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA)³⁷. This module also forms part of the University's overall *Community Interaction Programme* (2004).

The 'Society in Perspective' module was taken by 31 chemical engineering students in the final year of their studies in 2008. In 2009 the module has been extended to many more students across a wider range of courses³⁸. The module consists of theoretical and practical components. The theoretical component involves academic lectures in Philosophy and Political Science, through which the students are able to gain an understanding of wider political context and causes of poverty. The practical component involved the students tutoring secondary school students in Maths and Physical Science at two secondary schools in disadvantaged communities close to Acacia³⁹.

Although starting with a small proportion of the students, this module has achieved a relatively high profile. It featured prominently in the Faculty's one-page contribution to the 2008 University Annual Report, thus presenting poverty reduction as central to the ethos of the Faculty. According to the Dean, the module represents their desire 'not only to be bridge builders in the literal sense of the word, but also in the figurative sense' (Acacia University, 2008b: 50). Thus the Faculty,

produces more rounded graduates who are aware of the realities in and needs of communities. They are sent out into the professional world with the satisfying knowledge that they could make a positive contribution to communities and hopefully they are encouraged to continue doing so.

In addition to the 'Society in Perspective' Module, engineering students can engage in other forms of community work, as part of the University's *Community Interaction Programme*. This almost entirely consists of outreach schemes to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds and groups to study maths and science, and ultimately apply to study Engineering for an undergraduate degree⁴⁰; although there are also ad-hoc opportunities to become involved in small-scale infrastructure projects in the nearby township.

Respondents in this study

³⁷ Engineering programmes in South Africa are accredited by the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) if certain exit level programme outcomes are met and certain knowledge areas are covered. Two 'exit level outcomes' are particularly relevant for the issue of poverty reduction: outcome 7, the impact of engineering activity; and outcome 10, engineering professionalism. For further details see (ECSA, 2004), available online at <http://www.ecsa.co.za/documents/PE-61-r2.pdf>. ECSA's overall Code of Conduct also requires ethical and responsible behaviour from its members, http://www.ecsa.co.za/documents/ECSACodeofConduct_17March2006.pdf.

³⁸ In total, 7 undergraduate programmes in Engineering are offered by the Faculty at Acacia University: Chemical Engineering; Civil Engineering; Electrical and Electronic Engineering; Electrical and Electronic Engineering with Computer Science; Industrial Engineering; Mechanical Engineering; and Mechatronics Engineering.

³⁹ In 2009 students taught at 4 schools.

⁴⁰ Events include an annual Open Day and Winter Week for school learners in Grades 7-12, an annual 'Women in Engineering' afternoon, and an afternoon for teachers. Ongoing programmes to encourage learners include the TRAC programme which enables learners to work in a computerised laboratory, and the SunStep programme, where learners can build their own electronic circuits.

The University respondents in this case study (Table 1) are not necessarily a representative sample of the Engineering Faculty. The student respondents had all participated in the 'Society in Perspective' module and therefore may have been disproportionately aware of the transformation potential of engineering (or at least felt they should be seen to be displaying such concerns). It is also difficult to tell the extent to which their ideas about transformation were a direct result of their participation in the community interaction module, as they might have been poverty-aware before, which motivated their participation in the module, or other experiences may have influenced their perspectives.

Table 1: Interviewees⁴¹

Name	Male	Female	African	Indian	Coloured	White
a) Students						
<i>Focus group 1</i>						
Mandla	x		x			
Pieter	x					x
<i>Focus group 2</i>						
Dawie	x					x
Fabian	x				x	
Jaya	x			x		
b) Alumni						
Theuns le Roux	x					
Jeanne Marais		x				
Willem Steenkamp	x					x
Chantal Brown		x	x			
c) Lecturers						
Marian Lamprecht		x				x
Christo van Heerden	x					x
Jonathan Landsman	x		x			
d) Other university						
Marius de Beer, Head of Department of Process Engineering	x					x
Thomas Ryer, Dean	x					x
Hendrik Pretorius, Acting Dean (interviewed in 2009)	x					x
e) Others						
Fiona Perkins, NGO representative		x				x
Kobus van Rensburg, professional body	x					x

While most of the alumni and lecturers interviewed have not been involved in the 'Society in Perspective' module, they were also chosen particularly because they had expressed an interest in, or were active in, processes of transformation and poverty reduction in relation to engineering practice⁴². One of the lecturers, Marian, taught on the 'Society in Perspective' course; the other two had an interest in community interaction and 'public good' work. The head of the department which piloted the 'Society in Perspective' module, Process Engineering, was also interviewed.

Respondents spoke enthusiastically about the potential of Engineering to make a positive contribution to South Africa's future, in terms of poverty reduction or otherwise. This is possibly because, by its own nature, engineering is a 'problem-solving' profession, with

⁴¹ All respondents have been given pseudonyms, as has the University, and the township where the students teach maths and science. It should also be noted that many respondents were not interviewed in their first language, Afrikaans; quotes from the interviews have been edited slightly to facilitate reading. We use the categories constructed by the apartheid government for race/ethnic groups. This is necessary in order to understand and trace current developments within a historical context. These categories are African, coloured, Indian/Asian and white. The term 'black' is commonly used inclusively to refer to African, coloured and Indian people.

⁴² Some of the lecturers who were interviewed, for example, had to have the programme explained to them, as at the time it was not widely known. In the following year it has come to have a higher profile, being featured in the University's Annual Report and being extended to a significantly larger number of students.

the discipline itself built on the belief that existing problems *can* be solved through innovation and action, providing practical solutions to improve on the current state of development. Most students, alumni and lecturers saw their profession as absolutely key to South Africa's development (even if not directly in a poverty-reduction sense), with a tangible optimism about South Africa's potential conveyed through their responses. This optimism may seem surprising, given the socio-economic problems that South Africa faces, outlined in the introduction; however this may also be due to the fact that the Faculty has only turned to a concern with poverty reduction comparatively recently, so there is little experience so far of failure or disillusionment.

The first analytical task was to identify the qualities which engineers felt were central to them being 'good' engineers; and in particular, what qualities they felt a 'public good' professional engineer needed. The two are not necessarily the same in theory, however. For example, a high level of skill, logical ability and honesty might be required to be a 'good' engineer; one that works for the public good, however, may require additional personal resources. In the following section to this report (Section 3), therefore, the interview transcripts are analysed for what the respondents perceive to be the qualities of a 'good' engineer', and also their ideas about what constitutes a 'public good' engineer, particularly in terms of poverty reduction.

It is very likely, particularly in a time of political, social and educational transition, that there are tensions about the specific purposes of engineering education and of higher education. Even if poverty reduction is taken as a goal, as outlined at the start of this report, there are different definitions of poverty: our understanding of poverty reduction is in terms of capability expansion, but other definitions exist, such as resource-based understandings. In analysis, therefore, we focus on the common points in what respondents feel are qualities valuable for being a 'public good' engineer.

We are employing the capability approach as a framework for human development, with development defined in terms of the ability of individuals to choose and to do what is valuable to them. Therefore an engineer with a broad capability range is one who is able to act and practice according to their values, which may or may not be public good values⁴³. In the third section, responses are analysed in relation to the public good professional capabilities identified in the earlier phase of analysis in the project.

In the fourth section we then consider the extent to which the training at Acacia enables students to realise these values and valuable skills (relating to poverty reduction / public good) and have the capability to act according to them. The final section addresses the factors *outside* of education that respondents felt were constraining their ability to act as pro-poor, public good professionals.

3. Professional capabilities: 'taking South Africa forward'

3.1 Vision

In this section we consider the ideas about the society that engineers felt they are ultimately working towards creating; the vision that their work was in some way contributing to positive change and social transformation in South Africa.

Some of the typical concerns of being a 'good' professional centre on financial and business skills. For example, one alumnus, Chantal, described how a good engineer would be able to turn a profit on a project, minimising costs and using resources optimally. However, all students, alumni and lecturers also felt that a 'good' engineer

⁴³ See footnote 51 on theorising about education and the development of values within the capability approach.

should be able to contribute to the community and South African development and transformation. For Fabian, a student, this meant not just trying to make a profit on a project but seeing how this affected the community around it,
we as engineers sometimes do just think of how can we optimise profit and that type of thing, without concerning even sometimes the environment or even the people living around [it].

Jeanne, an alumnus, wanted,
to be able to make a difference in the country by developing it and uplifting it to a more developed country, and contributing to infrastructure and making things better.

This desire to contribute professionally to South African development was valuable to all respondents. But there are subtle differences in what sort of 'giving' would make a difference in the long run; engineers can choose paths which contribute directly (e.g. working on pro-poor, community projects) or indirectly (e.g. improving infrastructure for economic growth, acting with integrity, and encouraging skills development and aspirations in people from disadvantaged backgrounds)⁴⁴.

For some, most notably the students, their vision often involved engaging quite directly with disadvantaged communities through projects. In some cases this would be through building community infrastructure (for example, facilities in townships such as such as bridges, roads, football pitches, sewage systems or proper housing); at other points, respondents spoke about their role in encouraging personal development through tutoring or employment so that individuals could work towards a better quality of life: for example, helping to attract more disadvantaged children into schooling, possibly on to engineering education, and then on to a professional career.

There is a palpable sense among students that they could be agents of change. One student, Dawie, was struck by the difference in levels of technology in mines and industrial plants in comparison to the facilities in the communities around them,
a lot of these rural communities which live around the mines and all these big chemical operations don't have running water or water of a high enough standard and all of the infrastructure which engineers actually specialise in...we just need to know there is a problem and we can actually do something about that.

For others, more notably the alumni, the role of the engineer lay more in contributing to South Africa's economic growth through larger-scale infrastructural development, stimulating the economy, and thus indirectly helping to alleviate poverty through the 'trickle-down' effect. One alumnus, Theuns, stated,

The best thing of it all is at the end there's a nine-storey building that stands and you can actually say 'Well, I've designed it; there it stands, some people can use it and it is infrastructure for the country and it is actually just helping the whole economy and everybody"...you're taking South Africa forward.

Another, Jeanne, explicitly identified her role as indirect, 'I don't think we really push that transformation as such, but indirectly I think, yes we do play quite a big role because, you know, it's up to us to put that infrastructure in place at the end of the day'. Other alumni spoke about the potential to take advantage of the requirements in government procurements to contribute to the country's development (for example using the infrastructural developments relating to the 2010 World Cup to develop the surrounding communities better, by using government requirements for new structures) and of the trend towards corporate social responsibility.

⁴⁴ To some extent this also depended on the branch of engineering and the scale and nature of project the respondent was likely to work on e.g. processing plant (Fabian, for example, was concerned with the impact of large projects on the environment and the effects on people living around the project).

Lecturers also felt that engineers can make the biggest difference in a more indirect way. For Christo, the difference that engineers could make was through, building infrastructures, the big catalyst for economic growth, social upliftment. Even though students of civil engineering don't do something for one poor guy...building a road that is linking something with the poor community to an industrial area really is doing upliftment.

Respondents felt that crucial for seeing engineering's role in transforming South Africa is having an awareness of social realities. Moreover, it is also important to have some understanding of the political context in which they would be working. Students were aware of this; Pieter articulated that, 'if you are an engineer you still have to understand politics and you still have to understand other parts of the world'. Mandla echoed this, I don't see it now because I haven't been in the workplace. All I can say is that I'll probably need it one day. There are problems that need to be solved, maybe political problems that I might be involved maybe at the workplace; and I'll probably have to think about what did I learn in politics, what I learnt in ethics, what did I learn in philosophy, and how can I apply this knowledge to the problem that I'm currently in now.

Alumni also felt it important to be aware of and able to understand the national context in which they are practicing. Jeanne felt that, 'one of the biggest things is just to see the bigger picture and to be able to look at what exactly is needed to improve the greater South Africa'.

The head of department also saw this as an important quality for an engineer to have, Our feeling is that once [an engineer] goes into industry [they] would realise that business is driven not only by business but by the political system within which that system operates...So for them to actually understand political systems and the philosophy behind the systems, I think it's just a benefit for us.

One lecturer, Marian, described this in the terms that a good engineer should have an understanding of how humans interact in specific systems – rather than just seeing their work as going in and fixing a particular problem and then leaving again, I would imagine that it's pretty important that they at least have some understanding of the human beings functioning and how that body interacts in specific systems and what they can do to alleviate problems that the students might experience and the learners might experience...we actually tried very hard to get them into the systems theory to try and understand how these layers work, and it's not a matter of just going in and fixing something and switching on the buttons, 'whoop', you go out again.

In some cases, respondents appeared to have a rather detached and passive impression of disadvantaged communities and people – such communities needed external help, to be 'developed'. Development and poverty reduction was sometimes described as something that was 'done to' or given to other people and communities (as opposed to 'working with'), with such communities themselves almost identified as a distinct, 'other' kind of people. As one student, Mandla, articulated, 'I would love to be involved with the community and make sure that I contribute to developing other people'. Jonathan, a lecturer, said,

You [can] use those engineering skills to foster and create a better living environment for people... And you get those people to build their own houses. Once you've actually have sweated hard enough for something which you've done yourself, you appreciate it more, not the freebies and the handouts, that should stop.

On the other hand, rather than being a paternalistic approach to poorer communities, this could also be a reflection of the 'problem-solving' approach common in engineering.

Also, other respondents did place emphasis on consulting and working with communities on an equitable basis. Moreover, given the traditionally conservative nature of engineering practice and its typical focus on projects to benefit the white community, these shifts may reflect a significant shift in attitudes.

Overall, therefore, having a vision of the role of engineers in transforming South Africa was important to all respondents, who expressed commitment to developing their country. Having awareness of the realities of poverty spoken of as central to being an engineer who could make such a difference. However there was considerable variety in ideas about what this role could be, which was probably underpinned by differing understandings of the social and economic context.

3.2 Resilience

Students and lecturers identified perseverance and the ability to be hard-working as an important quality. However, while resilience is important in the caring professions because of the emotionally demanding nature of the work (cf. public health and social development case studies), in engineering this capability is important because of the competitive nature of the profession, for individual professionals to achieve success. One student, Jaya, felt that, 'You have to be goal driven...Just to strive the whole time...and the only way you're going to get to where you want to go is by just going on with it'. This perspective is not surprising given the high number of hours both students and professional engineers are expected to put in (cf. Sections 4 and 5). Several respondents elaborated that they chose less high-flying career paths because they wanted to spend a decent amount of time with their families.

If an engineer wants to focus their work in some way on transformation and poverty reduction, yet more perseverance and effort is required. One lecturer, Christo, worked on some community projects in addition to his teaching duties. He highlighted the need to be resilient because of the number of administrative and political obstacles to pro-poor work,

You've got to have a lot of hair on your teeth⁴⁵...There's a lot of issues, there are a lot of problems getting jobs, finding tenders, BEE⁴⁶, all these issues, so you've got to have a really strong will and a lot of hair on your teeth to actually do some upliftment.

Christo was the only person to speak explicitly about this sort of difficulties; overall, as taking a directly pro-poor career path tended to be referred to by the students, few of the respondents with working experience raised the issue of resilience in relation to pro-poor work.

3.3 Knowledge

Another capability central to being a 'good' engineer was having sound knowledge and logical ability. According to one alumnus, Theuns, if you have this capability in the first place then engineering is a suitable profession to choose; '[an] engineer is quite a logical, reasoning behind everything, so if you're logical in your ways I think engineering is a good profession'.

But in the context of South Africa's high levels of poverty, knowledge and logical ability is especially important for finding cost-effective and workable solutions which might raise the quality of life in disadvantaged communities. Students spoke of 'good engineers' in

⁴⁵ A colloquial phrase, meaning tenacity, to be tough and independent.

⁴⁶ BEE stands for 'Black Economic Empowerment', a programme of the South African government to give economic opportunities to previously disadvantaged groups (Blacks, Coloured, Indians and Chinese, all declared as 'Black' in 2008). The scheme includes measures such as employment equity, skills development, and preferential procurement.

terms of their ability to problem-solve, think laterally, and come up with practical solutions - potentially with implications for poverty and development. Pieter articulated that the sort of engineers that South Africa needs are,

Smart ones... We need engineers that find new ways to do stuff easier and better, and cheaper and more reliable...you really need guys who think a lot. We need people who can understand the problems and speak to them and try and fix them...[in South Africa] You haven't always got what you need everywhere and you have to make do with other stuff sometimes; and you have to kind of rise above that and get your work done and get it done in such a way that it's quality work and stuff...there are challenges in terms of it being expensive to import some substances and needing to make local solutions. But luckily we've got mining and stuff, so the raw materials and stuff is in South Africa...you have to be innovating.

The Dean also reiterated this point that the real potential of engineering in poverty reduction lay in competent design and problem-solving,

I think engineering's role as a catalyst in poverty relief is actually much larger than most people realise - because where do you start if somebody hasn't made the appropriate design?...I think we should focus on making sure that we have the initiators and the integrators, and the innovators. That's what we should focus on primarily.

If engineers want to contribute directly to social transformation through infrastructural projects in disadvantaged communities (e.g. Singleton, 2003), then it is crucial to have both a sound knowledge of engineering principles, teamed with lateral thinking, to find effective solutions to practical community issues.

3.4 Assurance and confidence

As noted before, one very noticeable aspect of responses was a tangible confidence and optimism in their potential agency in contributing to poverty reduction. Students described specific poverty-related problems they felt they would be able to address through their work as engineers, for example water purification (Fabian), chemical engineering such as making soap (Mandla), or discovering mineral resources and building mines (Mandla). This links to the point that students' appear to have a more 'direct' vision of their role in transformation, as described in Section 3.1. This sense of optimism might be related to the 'problem-solving' nature of engineering as a profession overall.

While there was confidence in the potential of engineering to provide practical solutions to problems that communities faced, however, there was less optimism about changing policy or negotiating implementation; seen, for example, in Christo's descriptions of political obstacles to his attempts to build infrastructure in the local township.

3.5 Affiliation

For this project, 'affiliation' is defined as the ability to understand and feel empathy for those living in poverty. In some of the case studies of other professions, affiliation is identified as important because caring for others can be crucial to remain motivated in pro-poor work. In engineering, empathy and understanding are considered important, but for different reasons; largely in terms of effective communication with workers, rather than self-motivation for pro-poor work.

One reason engineers need to be able to feel affiliation is to be sensitive to the needs of the community in engineering projects; this involves engaging and listening to such needs in the design stage, and considering the impact of projects on communities. One

alumnus, Jeanne, drew attention to the importance of respect for people from different backgrounds, and respect for their needs, when planning projects,

you've got to look at everybody as if you were in their shoes....for instance when we do a lot of these pedestrian bridges or access to places, you've got to take into consideration people in wheelchairs and you've got to put a ramp onto your bridges which is often a big problem because a client will come to you and he wants a bridge to go over and that's it and he doesn't understand why he needs to put in this extra ramp because it's a lot of extra money and you can imagine what the ramp and stairs, the ramp is by far the more expensive part... You've got to provide for those people because they're just as much of the community and they've got just as much of a right as anybody else.

The respect and consideration of poor communities is therefore key in acting as a pro-poor engineer. This is particularly the case as part of redressing the recent history of apartheid; according to the head of department, 'what came with the certain political system is the disrespect of people – so that's something we have to take away'.

However, pro-poor engineers also need affiliation for *individual* interactions and relationships with workers. First, understanding and caring about the circumstances of workers enables an engineer to expand the capabilities of others through professional and skills development. This is expanding others' capabilities in terms of 'opening up' engineering to more disadvantaged people – both for manual workers working on engineering projects, and also in terms of getting more students from disadvantaged backgrounds to study engineering at university. A professional engineer potentially has some agency in both of these areas, and the three groups alluded to this possible side of their professional lives.

One alumnus referred to the importance of valuing employees and expressing that their role was important, so that they feel happier in their work. Several spoke about the importance of actively encouraging employees – particularly out of the 'negativity' which can accompany poverty – but to work up the career ladder, so they can work towards a better quality of life, and gain confidence. One alumnus, Chantal, describes this, as an important part of her own professional identity,

often you get lots of people that are de-motivated...especially as an engineer, you walk around, you work with blue collar workers...I can encourage people, I'm a motivator, I can motivate people to do their best and just speak hope in people's lives because you get people that can become very despondent. Poverty has got a lot of negative things...and I've heard so many stories of people committing suicide or wanting to commit suicide, you know, just get very heavy. So I think in my profession, I'm very good at encouraging people out of negativity ...I'm very positive about the future of our country.

Theuns also saw such potential in his role,

On the construction sites itself, there are many people with not very good skills and with a background that's quite hard living...in a way you can encourage them, say, well, "you can also be an engineer". Or, "let me explain to you why we are doing this"; "It is difficult but I think there is actually a way we can do it".

If, as Appadurai (2004) argues, poverty can be understood as having both material and aspirational components, then there is immense importance in engendering hope in this way.

However, efficiency and productivity considerations are never entirely absent, and expanding workers' skills and education is also seen as important to South Africa's economic growth. This is particularly pertinent as the industry is suffering from an acute shortage of skilled workers. As Theuns describes,

when they've done something right, well, compliment them and say "Well, excellent, that's the way we want it and you are very good in what you're doing". Next time they're going to do it definitely again because of the compliments. If you just get on site and everything is wrong and you shout and you go mad, and

took off and you're back in the office and say "Well, I'm going to come back when everything is right", then you've lost the battle...if you can just raise the level of education of the builders, I think that will make a massive difference in the industry. And that will just help everybody.

In many ways, such respondents held a 'human capital' understanding of South African development, ultimately focused on skills improvement for economic growth.

In addition to expanding worker capabilities, alumni also spoke about the importance of respect, compassion, understanding and patience, because it is important to be sensitive to the social problems that people from disadvantaged backgrounds might be facing.

Chantal said,

you've got all these workers with different problems and different situations...you can never basically assume that any situation is the same for another person 'cos it differs all the time, so you need to have that level of compassion...you do get people that are not honest and you need to discern appropriately when...somebody's really in the wrong or when somebody is in the right, so you mustn't be presumptuous, you must have that level of being compassionate towards people as well and having a good value system.

Lecturers also recognised this need, both in practice, and for teaching. Marian emphasised how it was important to be able to relate to others properly,

my understanding of engineering, it's very much...a formula, $A + B = C$, and the moment you start dealing with people with different backgrounds, then you have to have a human understanding of their way of thinking.

Similarly, Jonathan realised the importance of understanding others,

Not just environmentally, but also culturally, racially sensitive because at first, I remember when I got to Butterworth [town in an African rural area], whenever I spoke to the students, they always used to look down, they'd never look at me, no eye contact. I felt this was a problem until one day I'd had enough and I became quite aggressive and kind of challenged a student and it was only afterwards that I found out that you don't make eye contact with an elder...within African culture and then it was, "I need to learn more about the culture we are in".

Students also felt that communication skills were an important part of their professional skills set. Jaya outlined the importance of understanding others' view-points,

Having the communication, inter-personal skills with people around you. I think that's also very important... I mean, not everybody's like me, or like yourself...so you must be able to communicate effectively with that person, understand where that person's coming from so that when you're in a decision-making position you'll be able to take more than one side into account.

As with expanding capabilities, however, relating to and respecting people from different backgrounds is also something that facilitates good management of workers, particularly the case for engineers working on infrastructure projects, managing teams of construction workers. A good engineer needs to be able to communicate effectively with people from a wide range of different backgrounds; in their roles, on projects in different parts of the country and employing a range of different people, they were likely to have to manage people from different races and cultures – engineers should be able to be culturally sensitive and 'know how to conduct themselves in different environments'. This was often spoken of in terms of productivity: on the project management side of things you would be likely to have higher productivity if you understood people's behaviour better and could communicate well with them. Language barriers were mentioned here – for example, the importance of knowing basic Xhosa to communicate with workers on a project.

Alumni, as people now practicing professionally, felt very much that this was an important capability, both in terms of language, and more subtle communication and management skills. Chantal spoke about the relationship between communication and productivity,

As an industrial engineer, you can't get away from the people aspect because...your work depends on how you treat your people. We do a lot of engineering management courses and interaction with people because at the end of the day, a lot of your productivity depends on your people management and people's behaviour can determine how your productivity will go. So...if your interactions with the people aren't right, it does affect them.

Willem, now practising as an engineer, had found learning Xhosa improved project efficiency,

To be able to use high profile, high tech equipment and techniques...you have to explain [to workers] in their language in a low level of education, what we are actually doing and what we need to be able to do it...Now the most important thing in that skill, communication skill, to be able to know your level for understanding, be able to be efficient in the project while using labour that does not have sufficient quality of communication. It can go further on where there's a language barrier, of course, especially in the Eastern Cape where English is quite limited. So I had to learn basic Xhosa very quickly to be able to transmit the plans and the management and supervision in an efficient way...I would say the most important thing is to have that communication skill and that level of management from top to bottom...You have to be able to vary it or control it depending on your workforce.

As Theuns, an alumnus, outlined,

You need a lot of patience actually because there's a lot of unskilled people, and you are quite skilled at what you do but then you must go and explain that to unskilled people or an unskilled person...if you don't have patience, well, then it's not going to work.

A representative of an Engineering professional body also highlighted how it looked for communication skills in the courses it recognised. Particularly in the Western Cape, language is an important issue, as also examined in educational arrangements in Section 4,

We're also looking for, also at communication, for example, they must be able to communicate well, read and write etc. in at least one or two of the languages, the official languages of the Western Cape in our case, which is also difficult because, you know, the student who is normally good at mathematics and science is not necessarily good at communication and language, like English, Xhosa or Afrikaans.

Overall, therefore, respondents spoke at length about the importance of the capability for affiliation, although this was usually expressed in terms of efficiency considerations rather than an intrinsic need for solidarity with the poor.

3.6 Integrity

All groups identified that a good engineer had certain values and *integrity* – that they followed these values consistently through their professional conduct. Alumni, who had been practising for a few years, highlighted the need for integrity and a strong value system overall. It is especially important to be honest (e.g. not being fraudulent, and being truthful with workers and clients). Honesty and openness is important for efficient working, according to Theuns,

I think that's a thing in engineering, just to be open to everybody, because there's lots of people involved. And if you don't give all the information to everybody then it's getting very difficult to actually work together.

Integrity also entails being responsible and accountable for your work, such as making sure that products or buildings are properly constructed and following safety procedures. Theuns said,

One of the qualities is to be precise in the way you do things. You need to have integrity, definitely, otherwise some building may fall down. And another thing is you must know your limits in terms of your knowledge. A good engineer doesn't always know everything, but he knows where his limits are. And if he has reached his limits he'll go and find the right people.

Thus responsibility is not just to clients but communities, according to Jeanne, at the end of the day, you know, as a professional, you do have a responsibility and that responsibility is towards one person, your client, and at the same time towards the greater community...And to be able to balance those responsibilities and keep that in mind is important.

Students were also particularly concerned about responsibility, Responsibility is probably one of the key ones [values]...as an engineer I think you can do a lot of harm to a lot of people if you don't do your job correctly, especially if you do like sanitary work or something like that, public sphere (Pieter).

With engineers it's important just to be honest in what you're doing in even dealing with the people, that's basically integrity, and be considerate. I think you are going to face lots of challenges...at the end of the day you have to sit back and think, what if I were the person that has to receive – let's say, bad water that has dropped into a community...What if you were the farmer that is living on that farm and someone would destroy something of yours – you know, just look at things as if something could have happened to you (Fabian).

I think it all boils down to having the right ethics (Jaya).

Indeed, certain ethics and values are necessary to be a member of the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), which the body is keen to engender within practicing professionals. One of the respondents stated,

That is the function really to a large extent of ECSA in promoting ethics. A person who is registered must be honest and must be ethical in all his activities...a member of the public can, if they're not happy with the services of a registered person, take the necessary steps via ECSA and ECSA will then take disciplinary steps against such a person if they're registered. Of course not everybody's registered with ECSA because it's not compulsory, it's only compulsory if you do private work, if you tender for jobs, etc., but quite often then it's only the top professionals at a large company, let's say it's a construction company or a contractor or a consulting business, then it's quite often just the top management that are registered with ECSA and they don't require the other members of the team to be registered.

That the value of integrity was so emphasised by all respondents might suggest that it is perceived to be partly lacking in the industry. For example Christo, a lecturer, stated that it was important for engineers to be,

Honest and hard working, be accountable, have responsibility. Responsibility is also a big problem, we find a lot of engineers, they don't like responsibility, they just do something, but they take a step back.

When interviewed in 2009, the acting Dean elaborated that engineers tend to be keen on responsibility for technical rather than management aspects of their work; and also that problems with responsibility may lie with non-engineers who are in management positions. Chantal's comments reflected the need to be concerned with management as well as technical responsibility, in order to maintain standards and efficiency,

You need to have a very good value system, because you work with a lot of people and people come from different backgrounds with different values...you're always in a management position as an engineer, people look up to you. So if you're going to break rules, like you don't come on site, you're not punctual for meetings, you're very slack in your nature, then that's basically going to come across to the people that you interact with, your workers and eventually you're going to get, it's going to effect them, you're going to get people pitching up late for work, you're going to get people, you know, stealing at work, because it comes from the management level. So your value system needs to be intact, you need to know what you stand for and it needs to come across. You need to appreciate the company and also obey the company values and stuff.

It is therefore important for an engineer to have integrity for both intrinsic reasons, and because productivity may be affected.

3.7 Social and collective struggle

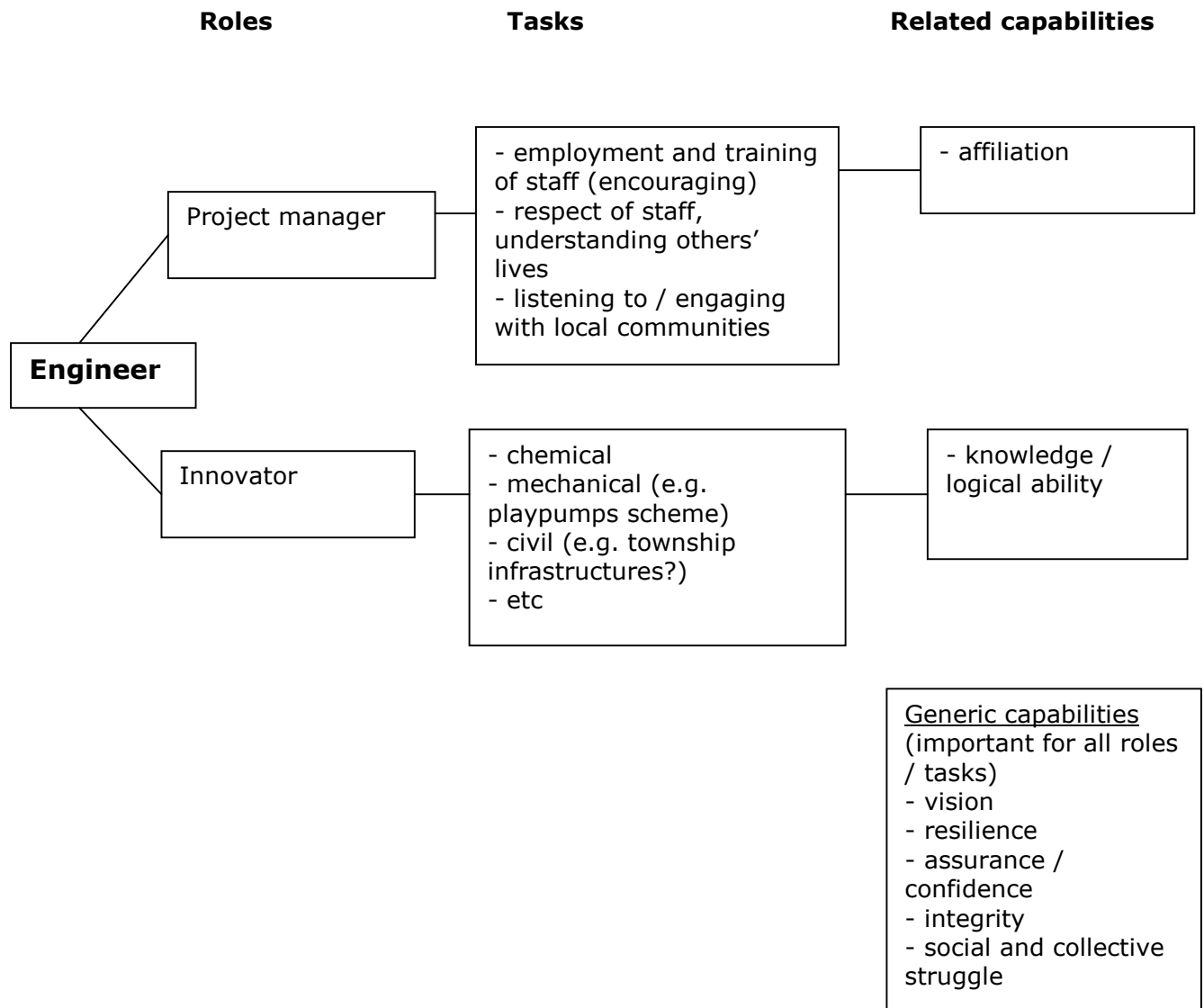
The notion of social and collective struggle to alleviate poverty has been referred to by respondents in other case studies. It can be described as being pro-active towards making some positive change to the current poverty situation in South Africa, and seeing this pro-poor work as part of a broader, coordinated movement with other professionals in your field (e.g. something which might motivate an engineer to work on specific pro-poor projects, rather than acting in an honest, responsible and sensitive way just at an individual level).

Overall, respondents in the field of engineering said little that indicated they view their work as involving this kind of social and collective struggle. While some engineers referred to expanding the capabilities of workers and communities through wider training, this training, support and encouragement of workers was generally not consciously regarded as part of a collective movement.

The interviews did expose a sincere desire among respondents to make a difference to South Africa and be part of the process of bringing about change, although within this are a range of paths; but this was generally conceptualised as through small, micro-level ethical behaviour (with the frequency of comments about integrity suggesting that respondents felt that the profession as a whole needs 'to clean up its act') or through working on single, explicitly pro-poor projects.

Conclusion

The following diagram summarises the main ways in which respondents conceptualised the possibilities for public good work, and the capabilities which relate more closely to certain roles:



Overall, the responses suggest a relatively limited and indirect understanding of what being a public good professional engineer entails. Respondents very much wanted to contribute to poverty reduction; but their understandings sometimes rested on unproblematised understandings of economic development, such as a 'trickle down' understanding of the benefits of aggregate economic growth, or a focus on how engineers can improve the human capital skills of individuals living in poverty, rather than a broader, multidimensional understanding of poverty which takes into account the rights and capabilities of wider groups of people. There also tended to be a focus on *individual* agency in bringing about transformation: both in terms of empowering individuals living in poverty, rather than encouraging collective action; and in the sense of them acting individually as public good engineers rather than a sense of collective struggle within the profession. And while awareness of the realities of poverty in South Africa was repeatedly highlighted as an important capability, there was sometimes a tendency for this to be expressed in a slightly paternalistic sense.

Nonetheless, the responses enabled us to identify the key capabilities for being a public good engineer. The following section explores the extent to which these are fostered by the professional training course in the Engineering Faculty at Acacia.

4. Educational contribution

The previous section examined the valuable capabilities identified by engineers needed to be a pro-poor professional. This section goes on to explore whether and how the professional education received might enable engineers to develop these capabilities; and what might constrain this type of professional training. Analysis draws both on comments which directly relate to the 'Society in Perspective' module, and more general comments about what the BEng courses do, and should, provide.

In the practical component of the 'Society in Perspective' module, students work as tutors in maths and science in secondary schools in nearby disadvantaged communities⁴⁷. The module also contains two terms of courses on applied ethics, culture and technology, political science, and philosophy (Table 2). The module was designed to fulfil two of the Engineering Council of South Africa's ten 'Exit Level Outcomes' for university courses: (7) Impact of Engineering Activity: students should demonstrate critical awareness of the impact of engineering activity on the social, industrial and physical environment; and (10) Engineering Professionalism: students should demonstrate critical awareness of the need to act professionally and ethically and to exercise judgement and take responsibility within their own limits of competence. Both of these were assessed through essays and tests. As part of the assessment of the module, students had to write a report of their experiences⁴⁸.

The Head of Department felt that while the new module was a positive step, it would be a slow cycle of change; how they manage the training now would have an impact in ten or fifteen years' time,

I think we're working for the next generation, that's really what's happening – so what we do now will determine the next generation and how they operate.

⁴⁷ The schooling project takes place in the nearby Umziwethu township, population estimated around 22,000.

⁴⁸ Some of the reports were analysed for this case study. The students were asked to cover the following points: positive and negative characteristics of the school context which influenced the intervention; experiences as engineering student of such a community intervention; importance of such an intervention for future engineers; constructive suggestions to improve on future engineering community interventions; and did the transfer from Umziwethu, influence your experience, if so give your reasons (only applicable to students who halfway through the projects were moved from Umziwethu).

Table 2: Taught components of the 'Society in Perspective' module

Course	Goals	Outcome
Applied Ethics	<p>Equip student with knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - moral principles - important ethical concepts - basic ethical theories <p>Analytic skills and insights, which would allow them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - traverse the culturally diverse terrain of South African society in an independent way - identify and analyse moral problems attached to professional service delivery in the Engineering profession - find and implement ethically justified solutions to those problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have a reliable understanding of the ethical dimensions of individual and social behaviour - have a basic understanding of selected ethical theories and their relevance to the ethical issues pertaining to the engineering profession - be able to relate case studies to ethical knowledge and theory - be able to use strategic moral decision-making in, amongst other things, the context of case studies
Culture and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - look at the world in which engineers live and work - discuss various strategies of thinking with reference to modernism and postmodernism - emphasis placed on the inevitability of ethical dimensions in everything we do - consideration given to the nature of risk in contemporary society, and related to postmodern theory - look at the question of intellectual property and software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - insight into various thinking strategies - sensitivity for the nature of complex problems - insight into the interwoven nature of science, technology and culture - awareness of the unavoidability and importance of ethical considerations
Political Science I	<p>The student should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - describe, analyse and interpret key concepts in politics; - identify and assess the role of ideas (in the form of ideologies) in politics; and - examine and interpret the dynamic interaction between national and international politics. 	<p>The student should be able to contribute meaningfully to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the debate on the role of the state in economic development - the debate on the relationship between democracy, capitalism and development within the context of the current global political economy.
Political Science II	<p>The module aims to enable students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understand the South African political system, as well as the South African political economy - to analyse policy issues 	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analyse South African political issues and shifts - analyse issues like poverty, HIV/AIDS and equality

Source: Acacia University (2008).

4. Faculty culture

The Faculty culture is an important factor in determining the content and style of teaching; and the Dean of the Faculty is central to setting the tone of this. At Acacia's Engineering Faculty, the Dean, Thomas Ryer, has a well-formed idea of what he felt Acacia's 'brand' of engineering graduates should be like. On leaving, students should have,

...a realistic perspective on South African society. And it's not so easy if one comes from the higher income groups to have a realistic perspective – so that's the first thing that I want our students to have.

He also felt that students should leave their Faculty with sensitivity to gender and culture; and that they should be able to work in at least two languages,

What I feel very strongly about the [Acacia] engineer as a brand is that engineer should be able to serve a client in at least two languages, and if it was possible to do it in three it would be great, but at least two.

The 'Society in Perspective' module was specifically designed to cater to the first of these two. The Dean felt that his vision is shared by the rest of the Faculty; and that the adoption of the new module was only possible because others shared this vision, because ultimately it involved allocating time and resources away from other subjects.

For the Dean, it was important that encouraging receptiveness to the community, and respect for others, was a central part of their training, and indeed what it means to be an engineer,

The whole philosophy of engineering is part of that course ['Society in Perspective'] to show engineering is not only building things and giving it to people, it's the other way round – we start with the real need in the community, that's the way it starts. And then through a process of discussions you turn that need into the specification of a product that you make. And when you make the product you're going to find the community again and improve on it until you have something that the community really wants, not what you as an engineering scientist thinks should be delivered. So that whole philosophy needs to become part of the way we train engineers and now that way of thinking. And people still have an old perception of an engineer that that's the person that makes this fancy thing, nobody understands it, nobody understands them, and they don't actually want it – to turning it the other way round.

However, the Dean emphasised that the main concern of the teaching in their Faculty was technical, rather than an understanding of South African society,

This is not our primary focus. We want our students to come out with an excellent social awareness but they're not social scientists, and they should not try and be social scientists; there are specialists for that as well. But it's an awareness, a sensitivity and that's what's important to us.

The reason behind this is that the Dean sees the main contribution to South African development in terms of providing more engineers for the expanding economy, and in this way contributing to building up the economic infrastructure. This suggests a predominantly 'trickle-down' understanding of poverty reduction,

What is the real contribution that we should make as an Engineering Faculty towards poverty relief – it's still putting out enough engineers into the South African society. That is the priority by far. And there're a number of reasons for that. I think the main reason is that all infrastructure development which is a basis for economic upliftment is provided by engineers. If you don't have enough engineers, you may have enough tax billions to build the infrastructure but there's nobody in-between to design it in the appropriate manner. And this is actually one of the major bottle-necks in South Africa...and other countries with economies with the same GDP as ours more or less, like Korea and so on, they have two and a half, five times more with the same sort of population numbers

and GDP. So you wonder why we have all the tax money but the infrastructure is still not looking all that great. Because there are not enough engineers, that's the one reason. And, as I say, your infrastructure is the basis for the rest of economic activity.

But elsewhere in the Faculty there are also other understandings of how engineers can contribute, seen chiefly in the list of community outreach activities on the website, separate from the 'Society in Perspective' module.

The Faculty has undergone several changes in recent years. Since Thomas Ryer became Dean of the Faculty in 2002, there has been a more than 50% increase in student numbers, and also a significantly higher intake of female and black students (the student composition traditionally has been predominantly white and male)⁴⁹. There has also been a change in language policy to a parallel medium of instruction, so that lectures are now offered in both Afrikaans and English.

The educational activities of the Faculty are discussed in the following sections. We begin by looking at course content and curriculum, first for the module on 'Society in Perspective' taken by a sub-section of the students, and then for other parts of the BEng course. Second, pedagogical arrangements are considered; and finally, constraints to the provision of a public good education are reviewed.

4.1 Curriculum and knowledge

a) Society in Perspective

Vision: awareness and understanding

The potentially secluded and theoretical nature of University learning means that there could be limits to how well it can prepare students for the realities of professional life. One lecturer on the 'Society in Perspective' module, Marian, felt that,

to a large extent [University is] not for real, students live in a kind of a bubble and it's really theoretically based, everything works, they can go to the labs and they can have their projects and their machinery and everything would be intact, but the moment you start working with people from a different environment and a different background than yours, and you don't have that knowledge, I think it can be, it can be a problem.

It was this potentially secluded aspect of professional training at University which drove the Dean and other members of the Faculty to institute the 'Society in Perspective' module. The head of department of process engineering, which piloted the scheme, was also very much driven by a concern to expose students to social realities, preferring to institute the community schools project rather than using the curriculum time for extra training in language or law; 'our feeling is we put them in the centre of real issues related to South Africa'. Thus the new module specifically aimed to work against this seclusion, to provide students with an awareness of the levels of poverty in their country, both through lectures and studies to learn about politics and wider society, and through working in schools in disadvantaged communities.

According to the Dean,

once they practice as engineers, that's the society they'll work with, and that's the society for whom they will provide engineering solutions. So it's good now...to

⁴⁹ Currently, 20% of the students are female and 11% are black (encompassing Africans, Indians and Coloured people). The gender balance is therefore more equitable than current proportions in the profession, but the white:black ratio is greater than in the practicing profession (see statistics in the introductory section).

sort of broaden their perspective and understanding and see that they have something to offer but you have to offer it in context.

The module aimed to give an *understanding* of political theory and context, and how engineers can engage with existing inequalities and power structures. Students, many of who would not have studied politics or humanities in great depth because of their specialisation, reported that they now had a better understanding of the political context in which they would be working,

In politics they tell us what engineers need to understand in terms of the politics governing engineering work in South Africa (Mandla).

I think for something like engineering, I mean, any degree you have or work you'll do one day, you have to understand the circumstances in which you work – so if you are an engineer you still have to understand politics and you still have to understand other parts of the world, so I think something like 'Society in Perspective', especially with our politics part of the course, really helped a lot of people to think a bit outside of engineering...the political science we had was on South African law and the South African constitution – so you can see how our laws should work, she explained to us the judicial system and stuff like that (Pieter).

It introduced you more into politics, you know, we as engineers don't usually think about politics firstly, but we must realise that it actually is or does have a big impact in our career and even on our lives (Fabian).

This module, it gave all of us a broader perspective of how South Africa politics works, because if you're working in industry and you know 'this is the law that governs our emissions' and 'Parliament wants to put a new Bill out', it changes that – you'd need to know how that works and how could you change it because it will affect your company (Dawie).

Students who had taken the 'Society in Perspective' module also reported such an increased awareness of the realities of life in disadvantaged communities. For many of the white students such as Pieter, entering a disadvantaged settlement was a completely new experience,

We never really saw shacks⁵⁰ [before, even though] I came to Cape Town a lot, and there you drive along the freeway and you see all the shacks. I've never been inside – and then we went in. You see the poverty and it is really bad how the people live...I think really something should be done (Pieter).

Many of their existing ideas and perceptions of disadvantaged societies were challenged, giving them a greater understanding of the factors underlying different ways of life, I remember one thing we did, it was something about rural women and transport – and I remember thinking when I got the assignment, "what is this nonsense?", because they asked what the challenge was that faced women in rural areas pertaining to transport. And then I actually read and read about it and started looking – and there are problems; I could not believe it...it goes back to the real world and it teaches you some things you never hear about (Pieter).

In the end, I know we were there [in the community school] for work and science and stuff, but I [also] had a few interesting discussions with the students about philosophy and life and everything, and it was interesting for me as well to see their views on what they think, how they see society and how they see life and death and everything (Pieter).

⁵⁰ Informal dwelling or small house that is in disrepair, in the township in which the students were working.

One student reported that it was important to impress this on students,
It is a known fact that [Acacia] students “live in a bubble”, thus it is a good thing to force students out of their comfort zones and get them involved with the community around them [report A].

Black and coloured students, who themselves had often seen such disadvantage before (although perhaps not so closely), recognised that this was a greater level of exposure for white students. In some ways perhaps this engendered greater trust and understanding between the white and black engineering students,

for me it was nice to see that most of the white students...that they actually also see because...sometimes it was a bit of a joke [for the white students] to see how these people are actually living, because they never came to these areas firstly, and they don't even, you can't even relate in so many with them because they had no really idea what those people are actually going through. For me it was nice that some of them could also go there and see what is really happening, because I'm sure in their lifetime most of the whites wouldn't go (Fabian).

people don't realise that there are schools out there that still have the education that was, let's say, in the past or something like that, that aren't getting the same standards...So I think it is for me what I like to see, is that people actually saw it was a eye-opener of what's out there compared to what they have got (Jaya).

Gaining awareness of disadvantage, however, was not limited to white students. Some black, coloured and Indian students had already had some previous exposure to more disadvantaged lifestyles in South Africa, but not to the particularly cramped and insanitary conditions of informal settlements,

I grew up in a village, and the homes are situated far from one another, and there's space, they're built on bricks. So seeing people living in shacks like that...I mean, if a fire breaks out in one shack, they all catch fire; there could be death. And I think that place wasn't very clean. And there's a lack of sanitation...the shacks part and the other part where we usually drove through...it wasn't good looking...that is not nice (Mandla).

Even we [coloured students] don't always understand what the whole thing is about, the gap between the rich and the poor. But when you actually go from Acacia, let's say the nice areas where the streets are so clean. And then you go to an area like that where the houses are built with tin, old motor parts and stuff – you know, how can we be in, not even the same country, just be in the same town and you can have those extremes? (Fabian).

These students clearly felt discomfort, frustration and non-acceptance that such levels of inequality continue to exist in South Africa today; and at least part of this discomfort seems to have been engendered through their experiences on the course.

Pieter, while also wanting to bring about improvements, spoke of his fear of being there at night, thus revealing that he felt a greater distance from the people in the community.

As Mandla said, he could see sewage somewhere, and in the school even it smelled of stale urine in some places, I mean, in the *school*. I can't understand that, I think something should really be done about that. I don't know what but something...it's better in some ways than I expected but I would not want to be there at night; I think then because it's really scary and dangerous – but, ja, it was to some extent eye-opening.

While his awareness had been raised, he also found it hard to understand why some conditions continued to be so bad, or to suggest a solution. Indeed, some student responses showed that while they have been exposed to a new side of society, this has not really changed their world-view. For some white students, the trips to the settlements seemed more of an exciting curiosity and foray into an 'other' world, than a

reframing of their understanding through realising social reality and a catalyst for change,

I also enjoyed it in some or other way because we drove in there and there's Saartjie's barber shop, and this one's selling cell phones and that one has a shop and like stolen pieces of furniture outside. I mean, it's just, they're actually, the people still go on. And we drove past more than one person smiling a lot and waving and laughing. So it's bad...but still people were going on, people were dealing with this, people were sort of accustomed to...I mean, it's bad, it's really...

Pieter appeared undecided as to whether the conditions were really that bad and whether the local people would really like their conditions to be changed. In this way there may be limits to what straightforward community interaction offers – or indeed to how great the changes university education overall can ever bring.

Mandla, the only African student interviewed, was keener to offer a solution, and to see better housing prioritised,

I think something needs to be done about that [the living conditions]; people can't live like that...I don't think people need to live that way. Those things must be given priority when it comes to house building, the [state subsidised] houses. I know those houses are not very good looking but at least it's something. You'd rather have people living in those houses than live in shacks. So I do believe that those shacks must be removed and just decent houses built there.

As the lecturer on the module suggested, perhaps university courses can at least aim for the 'bottom line' achievement of raising awareness which individual students can deal with according to their own values, rather than specifically spurring on pro-poor action in professional life. Perhaps such a course in such a context and student demographic can only have a limited aim. Marian pointed out that,

Most students reported on a decidedly bigger understanding of the realities of the South African community at large...So I think one could say that if all else failed then at least students became aware and they gained some understanding of what these students go through.

The Dean agreed,

The students report that they never realised the realities of the South African – so in a sense it's a wake-up call.

Affiliation

A sense of affiliation was certainly engendered to some extent through visiting poorer communities in the outreach section of the module. According to the lecturer on the course, Marian, this was one of her specific aims,

that was part of my undertaking at the beginning, to share with them that a lot of these kids might not be attentive because they hadn't been eating for the whole day, as a lack of food, or they hadn't slept properly and they've got to take that into account and we worked on health issues and hygienic issues that they must be aware of and also I dealt with the whole notion of personal space, attitudes, perceptions about poorer communities and poor children.

The students' work in the community was a unique chance to increase their understanding of the lives of the disadvantaged, and an opportunity to discover a sense of common humanity. As Pieter discovered,

I mean, they're just people, they're the same as us just in different circumstances which they have to be in, with which they have to [cope], so I think they just do [cope]. Ja. Ja. It was interesting.

It also made them more aware of how their own backgrounds made it easier for them to reach university and achieve well, as Fabian realised,

It is actually sad or bad in many ways because at the end of the day these kids from these different areas who come to the same university, let's say Acacia, you

won't get that guy to perform better or even have a better value system than someone who lived in let's say in a clean town or a richer town, or than someone who came from an informal settlement or that type of thing. And those kids also have big aspirations, they also have big dreams, they also want to be your next, not your president, but I mean one who can go onto space, they also have their big dreams, the same as the kid that comes from the cleaner town or better circumstances.

This sense of affiliation also probably encouraged feelings of satisfaction and reward that their intervention was useful. As one of the students recalled in their report,

The experience that I gained from this community intervention was a very positive one. It is a great feeling to be able to help someone with basic knowledge that you have.

The ability to feel affiliation to others would be crucial to engendering a desire to increase their workers' capabilities on projects. Yet developing students' ability to feel affiliation with others was also seen in the light of developing good communication skills and being able to relate to other sections of society. Students realised that community interaction programmes could be a crucial part of this. According to Jaya,

some people don't really have that kind of communication skills to mix with people that's very, I wouldn't like to use the word, but a different class in a sense; it's very much different to what they are. And [during the teaching in schools] they interact with these people...I think that's very important because you're not going to be with people like yourself every day. You're going to be working with people that are totally different from what you are; and it's good for people to actually see and know at least how to communicate with people coming from those backgrounds...because when you work in the workplace and you want to interact with the people there, this is the stuff they talk about and it's good to actually know about some of the stuff so that you can actually put your say in it as well.

Integrity and Values

The module promoted values and ethics as central to a professional engineer's working practice, as opposed to being guided mainly by financial goals; balancing financial considerations with responsibilities to others' lives. The course on 'Applied Ethics' in the taught component of the module explicitly aimed to imbue students with an understanding of ethical issues relating to the engineering profession, and the ability to use 'strategic moral decision-making' (for further details see Table 2).

Students who had been on the 'Society in Perspective' module were aware that this had been one of the aims of the course. As Pieter recollected,

With subjects like Society in Perspective and Philosophy, they are trying to teach us some ethics and showing you that everything is not just about numbers on a page and you have to take into account people's lives and circumstances other than just money or outcomes.

For example, this could mean only taking on contracts where you have the specialist knowledge to execute it properly, rather than taking any job for financial gain. This had made quite an impression on Mandla,

We learned a lot about qualities and values, how we should act as professionals...because sometimes it's easy for anyone to come to me and say "Well, I want you to do this for me", for financial gain. And I can probably say "Well, because there's money there I can just easily do it". We learned in this course, we had ethics as part of it where they teach us as engineers, as professionals you must know that you're doing you have qualifications for and that you are the right person to do it. So we need people who would know that, "that part of work, it's not for me".

However, while encouraged to consider the needs of communities in their work, to act honestly, responsibly and respect others, students do not appear to have explicitly been encouraged to have the value of directly working for poverty reduction.

Responsibility, particularly because of the relatively privileged position of the students, was also something that the course encouraged. One of the students said in their report on the community intervention,

One day we will be the leaders of this country, and it is a good reminder to have of how privileged we are to be in the position that we are...the student engineers of today will be the engineers of tomorrow...it is thus important for us to have an understanding about the less fortunate communities around us, and that we take them into consideration when we do the work that is expected of us [report A].

There was some debate amongst the students over whether values could – or indeed should – be *taught*, especially at university level, when people have already developed personally to some extent⁵¹. Some felt that their values were already instilled and could not be influenced by higher education, which might make us question the effectiveness of this aspect of a professional course. Jaya, for example, felt that a number of personal experiences in his life previously were far more influential in building the foundations of his value system than his professional training,

I don't think it's something you can really teach someone; it's something you really have to be exposed to and will see. So, I mean, I did do courses like environmental engineering and when I sat through it, it's stuff that I already know because I've actually been and seen stuff like that... You know what, let's say they teach us in class about pollution and you sit there in a class and you're listening, "okay, yes, yes". But the only way that – well, probably one incident that I actually learned the most about how pollution has affected the environment, I remember from when I was small going to this one beach and it used to be fantastic playing on the rocks. And I went there ten years later and there's bottles and whatever. So, I mean, it's more about your previous experiences, what you've been exposed to, what you've actually seen or perceived from what's going on out there.

Jaya felt, as other quotes from him show, that the teaching of ethics, politics and philosophy might have some effect but will largely be understood in terms of the values students already have.

Fabian was similarly unsure of the impact that the module could really have on your value system; his prioritising of 'values from the community' perhaps reflecting his experience of the divisions of South African society,

Sometimes your core values come basically from home where we grow up and then the community that you come from. And it's difficult to really change your mindset...if you are raised in that type of way, your values sometimes do stick with you even if you become more educated. But I suppose you would add more onto that, so I wouldn't say your professional [education] will develop your core values but at the end of the day would add to some of the values that you already had, or maybe even consider some of the values that you do have to get

⁵¹ The relationship between education, the development of capabilities, and the development of values is unclear and requires further analysis. For the purposes of this project, we view university-level education as having the potential to enable students to explore and discover what is valuable to them, rather than being a more blunt process of imparting specific values (in professional education generally the business of ethics is often explicit, though this can be seen as separate from values/morals). However, it should also be remembered that educational processes *can* be used to impose particular values on students, as South African history shows us. Arguably such imposition is not the way to go in a democratic society seeking to form critical and creative citizens through university education, and to educate students to choose lives of responsibility to others. This is an ongoing debate in professional education across the globe (e.g. see Sullivan and Rosin, 2008).

rid of the bad values or bad ideas that you have. So at the end of the day I would say the education does have a big impact in the end of what you want to do or what you're going to do.

Dawie saw the course not as instilling values but as exposing students to new ideas, so they could make up their own minds,

I would say that the University's idea when they included these modules like ethics and society in perspective and those things, they didn't want to teach us new values; they rather wanted to expose us to new things. So if you didn't know about these things previously but now you know about these things and you formulate your own ideas about these according to your values you've been taught.

Yet the importance of personal experience in ethics formation (as opposed to formally teaching ethics) might actually emphasise the importance of the community interaction part of the course, in that it might prompt students to reflect upon their position in society and their potential agency and responsibility in contributing to poverty reduction.

Social and collective struggle

As seen in the above sections, the 'Society in Perspective' module certainly exposes students to the realities of life in disadvantaged communities, and aims to teach about general ethical professional activity. Moreover, the taught components of the module are designed to give students an understanding of the South African political system, and issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS and equality. However, respondents said little which suggested that the module had given them a sense of the possibility of engineers working collectively to alleviate poverty, particularly in a more radical, transformative sense.

Resilience, Knowledge, and Assurance and Confidence were not commented on specifically by the students, although from comments relating to the course in general (see next section) it is clear that they are engendered through the BEng but not in a specifically pro-poor sense.

b) Other courses on the BEng

Aside from the 'Society in Perspective' module, other parts of the BEng course relate to pro-poor concerns. This section examines how public good professional capabilities might be being fostered through the majority of the Faculty's teaching on other courses and modules. Student responses are used less, as they related largely to the 'Society in Perspective' module, but alumni comments are drawn on.

Vision

Community work features as part of the Faculty's contribution to the university's overarching Community Interaction programme. There was support for this within the Faculty (although not clear what proportion). The other two lecturers interviewed for the study were highly motivated to expose students to the realities of poverty.

One lecturer, Jonathan, had himself come from a disadvantaged community in the Cape Flats (and had become a lecturer at Acacia through the non-traditional route of a diploma from a technikon [polytechnic]). As part of his work for the Engineering Council of South Africa he visits schools from his home area to encourage children from disadvantaged backgrounds to study engineering at university, and aspires to set up a scheme for Acacia students to tutor such children. For him, the dual purpose of

community interaction – helping disadvantaged pupils and raising awareness – was something which had heavily influenced his own professional life,

So that's something which was one of the reasons that I actually moved back home, to try and set up something like that where we can go into these areas, try and improve the lives of those kids and if we do that, if their marks are good enough, they can come and study here, it is a win-win situation for all parties.

Another lecturer, Christo, felt even more strongly about this. He felt that it was important to expose students to these realities at University, because they may never see them in the course of their working, adult lives, as it is still possible to remain sheltered from them in South African elite society. In this context, the content of professional education becomes ever more important,

A lot of people think community work is just a one way, but community interaction is interaction between both parties...And you actually get a lot out of it as well. It's not just you giving, I mean we get a lot out of it, life skills...So if you can get the people's eyes just to be open to that, I think, yes, there's a big need for a subject like that...'Cos it has to be that kind of mind shifting, it has to be forced on to people, I believe. All right, force is a very strong word, but they have to be exposed to it...They won't expose themselves.

Thus he felt that their University course might be their only opportunity for learning about the realities of South Africa. Christo, who lectures on structural engineering, strove to include community development considerations in his teaching, and is an example of how one lecturer attempts to engender community awareness and pro-poor considerations, in parts of the course other than the society in perspective module. At the time of interview, in fact, this lecturer was unaware of the presence and content of the society in perspective module. Although other colleagues were also trying to do the same, he felt unguided; and also felt this is something which cannot be assessed.

Yet while some Faculty teaching staff are very much motivated to create awareness of disadvantage among their students, this is not the norm. In 2008, the majority of the students in the Faculty did not have exposure either to community interaction, or to the theoretical training on politics and ethics as in the 'Society in Perspective' module. The significance of the 'Society in Perspective' module can be seen from the deficiencies perceived by alumni who had taken the undergraduate degree without this module. Reflecting on what would have been useful to them in their professional education, alumni felt that some knowledge of politics would have helped them develop pro-poor working practice on leaving university. Chantal recalled,

We haven't done any political studies...I definitely think that we would benefit, because sometimes you sit in class and you're sort of in this utopia, like "this is how it is, this is how it should be"...but you're not so involved, so it's not so in your face, it's still somewhere out there and it seems so far from you...if you had more access to that type of knowledge and information, then you would actually realise the real-life scenario out there and how things are really going. So it won't be like something so far from you, but it would be more at home...it would be more real life, instead of having to just read facts and stuff.

Willem had similar feelings,

The university can only allow you to study for four years or five years, but it does not have certain aspirations on doing the most social part of it...maybe at some other university it does that, but at the one that I attended, no, not as such, because these type of projects are limited in South Africa...to balance that, they [students] need to know, they have to go and do industrial resource assignments. There's some scope for that, do we need our students to be able to do that, or do we need them more to be able to know technicalities and then add an in-post training, to be able to pick up these type of skills...For poverty relief projects or situations where you actually are.

As the 'Society in Perspective' module has been extended significantly in 2009, however, and as the general community interaction programme of the University also expands, this lack of social awareness may lessen in years to come⁵².

Resilience

To some degree the rigours of the course offer a certain amount of training for resilience in professional life, through learning how to manage deadlines and pressure. For students, learning to handle stress and deadlines was an important part of becoming an engineer. Pieter's impression of the course overall was,

I think they basically try to teach you the skills you need to sort of become the engineer you have to become when you work. They're giving you the tools; they're teaching you how to perform under stress and then one day when you have to do ten things at once, then you at least have some sort of knowledge of how to handle that, not necessarily the specific problem you've got as an engineer at that stage, but at least you've got the skills. So I think they're basically just trying to teach us how to survive on land.

However, the course does not specifically teach students how to deal with the trials and hardship of pro-poor professional work.

Affiliation

Some lecturers on other courses also felt that it is important for students to be able to understand and empathise with people from different backgrounds. Jonathan tried to build this into his teaching,

I think that is also what we try to teach our students, that they should be culturally sensitive too, so that they know how to conduct themselves in different environments...But I think we try to produce a student that is not just academically good but also has the soft options that I spoke about earlier, to have those in place as well, to complement their education so you send out a holistic person.

As with the 'Society in Perspective' module, a large part of the reason this was perceived as important was to improve the communication skills of the students; another course module is also offered on 'professional communication'.

Integrity

Values and integrity are addressed in modules such as project management and environmental engineering. The Head of the Department of Process Engineering explained that in the course on project management, for example, speakers from companies are brought in to talk about ethical issues, respecting your company and your client, and also environmental awareness. This was also related to the Project Management Institute of South Africa, which has its own code of ethics

Lecturers who taught on modules other than 'Society in Perspective' felt strongly that the course could and should impart particular values or responsibility and respect, despite there being few guidelines or teaching materials. Christo took it upon himself to include this in the modules he taught,

I must say my colleagues in this division, I'm just talking about this division, most of them take it upon themselves to try and develop those things. We keep reminding ourselves, saying we're an educational institute, we must educate people more than just the formal curriculum. Now to include that in a course, to say you have a course learning about values... we've got philosophy and ethics,

⁵² According to the acting Dean, in 2009 the majority of programmes are now offering the 'Society in Perspective' module.

we've got these things, but we're actually trying to develop those skills, the few guys I'm talking to...In structural engineering, I mean I've got this community development thing. I talk about it in the class a lot and there's a lot of interest and I try and get people interested in giving back to the community and the way we treat people, the way we teach. We don't just check that they get the right marks, I mean we see that they get the outcomes, that they actually develop, we try and encourage these things.

In particular, Jonathan is keen to encourage students to act responsibly according to their skills, and to always consider community needs,

What I realise, the courses that I teach...it becomes "What do you do if somebody asks you to come and design a bridge, what do you do? Do you just go ahead and take them at face value that you've got to do this? Do you find out what the implications are first or what the community needs?"...What we try and do is, we don't want to teach abstract engineering principles, it is "If I do this, these are the consequences of my actions of forgetfulness or my irresponsibility"....Basically in the system, they probably have about fifteen per cent of the coursework is not engineering related courses, trying to build a much better individual.

He also outlined that,

When [engineers are] designing a building, the chances are that...you'll have to do something crucial on the Friday afternoon and you may get a phone call telling you can watch rugby, "All your buddies are waiting for you" and you leave. On Monday morning you come back again but you're snowed under with other stuff and you just send the work off, completely forgetting to check the critical aspect. So you come back on the Monday morning and find that you don't have time, you send it off and the building gets built and my family walks through and they get killed. What do you think I should do to you? It's those interactions that I have with the students and hopefully that makes them think in those lines to become more responsible.

Through this, for example, a lecturer would be able to encourage students to consider the needs of the whole community in a project, not just the client.

Students referred to other courses urging ethical behaviour amongst professionals; for example, Mandla referred to the Project Management module as doing this, in project management they teach us about what society requires from me as an engineer. So we learned that as an engineer you should show integrity in your work and things like that. And many of the subjects we did, we didn't learn a lot about qualities that we need to have as professionals... So that is more dependent on an individual; you must develop those qualities yourself.

As with the 'Society in Perspective' module, while ethical values of responsibility, respect and community needs were encouraged, an explicitly pro-poor orientation is not.

Knowledge

The course also helped students to develop analytical thinking. Lecturers spoke of the importance of intelligent and critical thinking. For example, Jonathan said,

[we're] trying to teach students the ability to think analytically. Yes, we have computers and we have computer packages and I think to a large degree, our students have become complacent that, "Ach, you just punch a button and you get an answer". What we're trying to say is, try to teach them just beyond that.

While a high level of subject knowledge and lateral, analytical thinking is encouraged, this is not specifically relating to pro-poor work.

Conclusion

For the rest of the Engineering courses, the extent to which students are exposed to issues relating to poverty depends a lot on individual lecturers. The comments of alumni suggest that many feel that more exposure to the realities of South African society would be helpful, although this was often in the sense of facilitating better communications and workforce management. Few of the alumni respondents demonstrated a desire for better professional skills which were specifically pro-poor.

4.2 Pedagogy

Section 4.1 looked at the content of the Engineering course and the 'Society in Perspective' module. This section turns to examine the significance of the methods of teaching used, and whether this has any significance for pro-poor work.

A first notable pedagogical aspect is the practical components of the courses which give first-hand experience of disadvantaged communities, and therefore may be likely to have a more lasting impact than if these issues were only taught in the abstract. The teaching outreach section of the 'Society in Perspective', and other community interaction projects, means that students are able to interact first-hand. This practical experience may have a deeper and more lasting impact, especially possibly in the sphere of pro-poor value-formation. As detailed in the previous section, for many of the students this is the first time that they will have come into contact with disadvantaged communities. Students are required to complete a piece of writing in which they reflect on the significance of the experience for their understanding of their work as an engineer.

A second pedagogical aspect is the ethos and culture within the learning environment, as introduced in Section 4. The Head of Department, Marius, outlined how a crucial part of instilling values, and respect and affiliation for others, in the students was how they were treated by the lecturers themselves,

it's really just who you employ and what you do with them and the culture that you drive in a department...the way we handle students here is on a respect basis; they are human beings irrespective of who and what they are.

In this way, he suggests that the production of a community-focused, ethical engineer is also dependent on the activities of lecturers as role models, throwing focus onto the importance of employing lecturers with certain values.

Learning to respect and value others may also be fostered through the teaching methods in the classroom. The Dean outlined the Faculty's strategy for small group work and study groups, in which it specifically mixed students from different backgrounds in the same working group, was part of the important process of learning about different sections of South African society. As Acacia, a historically white university, becomes increasingly mixed in terms of race and gender, the students' experiences in the classroom may also foster greater understanding and empathy of people from other backgrounds. According to the Dean, half of the content of the degree is delivered through traditional lectures, the other half through practical work in tutorial groups, in which the students have the chance for discussion. With the intention of helping students to engage with others from different backgrounds, some lecturers purposefully mix up the groups. In modules such as project management, course leaders make sure students from different engineering disciplines are mixed with each other, but also make sure that there is a mix by gender and race. A similar approach is taken when assigning students to out-of-hours study groups, so that, according to the Dean, 'they mix and match according to where they live or the group of friends'.

The Dean also drew attention to the significance of the culture of the department overall. He outlined the need to make all students feel welcome, highlighting in particular that white / Afrikaans students from relatively privileged backgrounds still need to feel valued, particularly in the face of affirmative action; and emphasising that they are a crucial part of efforts to reduce poverty in South Africa overall – that they have an important role to play in the new South Africa. Interestingly Jonathan, the only African Faculty member, speaks of the negative effects of affirmative action, which he sees as (unnecessary) fast-tracking to meet equity targets.

While students usually socialise in racial groups at university, and black students remain a minority at Acacia, one study suggests that black students are nonetheless able to rework their identities while at University (Soudien, 2008).

In these ways, the pedagogical arrangements at the Engineering Faculty attempt to create an environment in which racial difference and diversity are accepted and understood; a quality which should be important to engineers in their working lives.

Finally, the 'society in perspective' module has been placed specifically in the fourth year to enable the maximum amount of critical reflection and self-questioning. The Head of Department outlined how they had carefully chosen the point at which the students take the 'society in perspective' module; 'it's a more mature student who has the ability to question himself more than the first year student'. Students are given communication skills and engineering modules in the first few years, so they can absorb the 'society in perspective' module better with such background knowledge.

4.3 Educational constraints

Interviewees suggested a number of constraints to the extent to which engineering education could produce 'pro-poor' engineers.

University and society

Alumni (perhaps because they were unaware of the new course) felt that the university setting was too detached from the realities of society to be able to broach this effectively, with one respondent expressing that they thought it would be too difficult to measure whether the students were coming away with an adequate level of pro-poor consciousness and practice. One alumnus, Willem, expressed considerable doubts about the feasibility of such training, particularly in terms of teaching about political context,

Personally I don't think it would be beneficial...I would rather take the political situation out of it and look at the social situation...The social situation is the more important part in this whole equation...And if we can encounter or create certain barriers so that the social situation in your local areas, your smaller communities in the rural areas...Are uplifted, they're actually moving in the right direction. Political is...I don't want to elaborate on it.

One of the lecturers, Jonathan, felt that students' other values – in particular, the desire to 'make a good living' – would get in the way of the transformation messages that the curriculum might strive to communicate,

I think probably 99.9% will tell you, "we've gone ahead, we've studied for four years and we want to see some form of reward for it"...I don't know of anybody that has studied engineering or even specifically civil engineering, that is not working in order to make a good living for themselves. So a lot of them, they work for contractors, consultants and government organisations.

The desire to earn a good living might well counter any messages in the course about pro-poor work; as the final section to this report illustrates, even where the course could make students aware that pro-poor values are needed as part of their practice, it seems that other priorities and values may take precedence in the choice of which career paths they take (such as aiming for higher salaries, perhaps to enable their own families to live well). In the cases of students who have come from disadvantaged backgrounds themselves, the desire to build a better life for their own family may understandably be very strong.

Curriculum and change

Of the constraints to changing the curriculum that the lecturers spoke of, one was that the existing curriculum was already too full; according to the acting Dean, students are already expected to spend between 55-60 hours each week on their studies⁵³. Moreover, lecturers who would otherwise want to develop new parts of the curriculum on poverty reduction are held back by the time required to do so. Christo, a lecturer already working with some students on a number of different projects in the local township, wanted to get more students involved. But the time-intensive nature of organising it was a disincentive.

a big constraint is time...I mean you've got to actually sit for two hours and think what is it you actually want to learn or teach them and...you've got to think of how to implement it, how to include it, it takes a lot of extra time...the technical work you do [in community interaction] is a small percentage of the time you spend [in total organising it].

Jonathan felt that his other duties already took up too much time, coupled with disinterest in the Faculty,

Somehow, we are too caught up in this, this is what I do from eight to five, I'm too busy to do everything else and when I leave here I've got to go to my family and I've got to look after them. Things are becoming too rushed and we don't seem to have sufficient brainstorming sessions where you can go and say this is what can be done and look at the feasibility of it...the thing is you need people to drive it and once you go ahead and you come up with these ideas and nobody really wants to listen to you, you say to yourself "Well, I'm kind of fighting a losing battle".

The Head of Department also reiterated this point.

Moreover, if community interaction components have been arranged, logistical problems can require more time. In the 'Society in Perspective' module, students and lecturers described a number of logistical constraints that they had faced: that there was not enough classroom space or textbooks, maintaining attendance from the students, communication problems between the engineering students and the schools / pupils (particularly making arrangements for the taught sessions), and language barriers (cf. student reports).

Another constraint to curricular change can be opposition from older academic staff. Christo perceived there to be quite a difference between the mindsets of younger and older staff,

This thing I'm doing with the community interaction is actually seen as a groundbreaking thing for our department...we're not involved in that at all traditionally...So this is something new which you can almost say the younger generation people are trying to bring...We are going to change the views of students...Well I am, at least...The older generation guys maybe not as much as the younger generation guys.

The Dean and Head of Department also described how bringing curricula change was a slow process because it involved convincing other members of the Faculty.

The fact that teaching about pro-poor work was less 'tangible' and easily assessed was a set-back for Christo, who was not working within the remit of the 'Society in Perspective' course,

it's not very easy because there's no textbook to follow and we try and include it and try and actually teach people more than just studying, but there's nothing I can show for that, there's nothing, I can't show marks, I can't show curriculum.

The Dean saw cause for optimism, perceiving that attitudes were shifting within the field more generally,

It's been a process to shift that thinking to where we are today. But we are there; I'm quite convinced. Nobody nowadays will think that we do not need that. And

⁵³ The acting Dean also pointed out that if courses follow the ECSA professional training guidelines, they only have the space to address ethical issues in one module.

then I know from my meetings with deans at the other engineering faculties nationally that we simply understand that it's engineering in context, it's not engineering for the sake of just technical issues.

Christo also felt that the messages of ethical engineering is hindered by a lack of suitable role models and mentors; the high-profile leading engineers often having less progressive mindsets,

we actually have a problem in our profession at the moment that we haven't got a lot of mentors for the young guys...So we've only got these old school guys and the old school guys are very old school, what I've heard, I mean, "It's not really a place for women to be in engineering", those kind of mindsets.

Language of instruction

Students identified the language of teaching as something which could hinder their learning in general. Mandla, an African student, encountered difficulties with this,

The language is a little bit of a problem to me because I had Afrikaans at school, I did Afrikaans at school but that was second language, and we didn't really get much practice speaking it. So it was more about just learning it to pass your exams and tests and that was all. We read novels, we read poems in Afrikaans; but I don't think that the language will come out unless one starts to practice speaking it. So it was a problem for me in the first year; I had to just depend much on the textbook. That was the way I actually learned.

But this is something that the Faculty is aiming to change. As mentioned in Section 4, the Dean identified that as part of the Acacia 'brand' of engineers, they should be able to communicate in several different languages with their clients. There had recently been a change in language policy; three years ago they introduced a policy of parallel medium of instruction in the first year of the Engineering degree. This involves attending lectures either in English or Afrikaans. From next year (2010) this will be introduced into second year as well; this has made and will continue to make a significant difference in accessibility.

5. Social constraints

While professional education might be able to facilitate the development of engineers' capabilities to work towards poverty reduction (as they perceived it), respondents also referred to a number of constraints that 'pro-poor' engineers might face in practice.

A number of constraints related to the choice to practice as a 'pro-poor' engineer on leaving university. First, both students and lecturers felt that engineers' desire to earn money was a constraint to their likelihood of going into work which specifically focused on transformation and poverty reduction. Jonathan, a lecturer, was aware that almost all students were prioritising salaries,

I don't know of anybody that has studied engineering or even specifically civil engineering, that is not working in order to make a good living for themselves. So a lot of them, they work for contractors, consultants and government organisations.

This was echoed by Christo, another lecturer, who felt that self-interest was driving many of those completing their training, particularly driving some to leave the country in favour of higher salaries rather than stay and work together for the development of their country.

Something I'm seeing lacking for engineers at the moment is a will to make a change...It's very selfish "What can I get out of it?"...I see a civil engineer as somebody that should serve the country, should see all the work they're doing as uplifting the economy, uplifting the country and building infrastructure. There are

a lot of guys going overseas to get more money. They use a lot of excuses, crime and stuff, but when it comes down to it, it's getting money...something that's important is a will, I don't know the right term, the will to make a change, to actually make a difference.

Students' responses revealed that their future level of earning was a high priority⁵⁴. Jaya felt that the choice to work for social transformation was not attractive, money and other issues also go to account because you did study engineering for four years as well, and it's not that easy just to say, listen here, I'm going to go work now for the social workers, help them out, or something like that – because sometimes you're not really going to have the time as well...that is actually in our mind when we're selecting a company, who's going to offer us the best package, the best benefits.

Fabian felt more divided about the issue, acknowledging that a salary was important, but that personal development was also an important part of his decision to be in engineering,

Basically because of the money; you earn a lot of money becoming an engineer firstly...I did mention earlier that I do want to make money but I think it's not really an issue for me also, because you can just get motivated with money till a point then money doesn't motivate you anymore. So to self-actualisations, to know you're making that goal, you're developing yourself – that is more my terms of why I am in engineering, not really about the money. It must just also be there.

Both of these students, who were black, had taken the 'Society in Perspective' course, which had raised their awareness of poverty; but it also remained important to both to have a certain standard of living themselves.

Perhaps because the profession is largely identified by engineers as a practical, problem-solving line of work, their potential contribution to poverty reduction tended to be perceived in terms of how *well* they could provide this technical, infrastructural service, and identified constraints to this. Jeanne, an alumnus, felt that their role as engineers was simply to provide a good and effective service of building infrastructure and not to be directly concerned with transformation,

I don't think we really push that transformation as such, but indirectly I think, yes we do play quite a big role because, you know, it's up to us to put that infrastructure in place at the end of the day...So we aren't the ones necessarily pushing for it or, you know, doing that sort of work, but at the end of the day we are the ones doing the work and actually making sure that services do get put in place at a desired cost and making sure that the housing, all those kind of things, are in place.

Thus for Jeanne, the decision to be 'pro-poor' was less pertinent, as in her view all engineering work ultimately contributes to infrastructural development, bypassing the more contentious political issue of transformation.

Some lecturers spoke of the technical problems on projects which could hinder the progress of pro-poor development; Theuns, an alumnus, saw the (low) quality of (unskilled) labour as another hindrance to the impact that engineering could have on poverty reduction,

⁵⁴ Two other pieces of research exploring South African students' motivation for studying engineering also reveal that financial incentives was a priority across race and gender (Jawitz and Case, 1998 and Reed and Case, 2003, cited in HSRC 2009: 43). Traditionally engineers have been high status and high income earners in South Africa and in an increasingly consumerist society students may be even more motivated by income rewards. White male students made strong mention of practical engineering activities and problem-solving; white female students seemed to be strongly motivated by school experiences and supportive family environments. Black male and female students appeared to be motivated by opportunities to serve their communities and to prove themselves in careers historically dominated by white men.

the whole problem at the moment is there's so many non-skilled people coming into the industry that the construction sites are actually quite a nightmare at the moment...[when] buildings fall down...mostly it is the case that the builders actually were not skilled enough to go and build that building.

Many respondents also pinpointed technical and logistical constraints to project work. Language differences are an obstacle to acting as a pro-poor engineer, and Willem, an alumnus, outlined the effects of lacking communication and management skills,

The main constraint of course is proper communication...That you deal with on a day to day basis.

This is a problem largely specific to South Africa, with the recent history of apartheid meaning that whites in particular have not had the opportunity to learn others' languages (and in some cases did not desire to). Engineers are also hindered by the fact that they may not necessarily have the proximity or opportunity to engage with the local community. Jeanne felt that,

whoever runs the project is usually more in contact with the community and what their needs are and finding that out. We basically get [instructions] from whoever the client is, be it government or somebody actually writing a social upliftment or, you know, improvement project. We basically are handed the criteria as in, you need to provide so many houses and this is the budget...And then we will take it from there. So we don't really have that much involvement as such with the community.

Students also perceived there is a lack of opportunity for direct action. Jaya voiced a certain frustration at the options for doing so,

I mean, look at the jobs that's actually available today – where do the engineers themselves actually have a say – “okay, here, we actually want to do this so we can help out society”?

Engineers feel that they are often at too much of a distance to make a substantial difference.

The alumni Theuns and Jeanne felt constrained by the general lack of funds for pro-poor projects. Theuns outlined how they were very much dependent on the financial decisions of others,

I think we are basically very limited to the kind of projects that come to us. I mean, we can do many water systems...and maybe we want to put in a water system for a township if they don't have anything – but if the municipality doesn't have the financial support for that then we can't do that. Or for instance the financial problem now, if there's no money for investors we don't have a profession...We rely on the economy and other investors to actually give projects to us so that we can design and engineer it.

Jeanne similarly felt a lack of agency in community projects, due to the search for funds between different bodies,

[if] there's no bridge at all, it's difficult ground to be on and that's where you've got to be the mediator and sort of say “well, the client doesn't have that much money, so let's see, can government or can the municipality push a little bit so that the project can actually happen”? Because at the end of the day a bridge is still better than no bridge, but you don't want to have a bridge and not have catered for the people in wheelchairs...So it's a bit of a tied situation that we do sometimes see ourselves in...And then sometimes you're successful and you end up with everything and other times unfortunately there's just not the money to go ahead and do it.

Christo, a lecturer, spoke of the difficulties of liaising with other groups on pro-poor projects, largely due to local politics. In his recent experience of trying to build a bridge in the local township, he felt that the project became ‘hijacked as a political thing’, with the local municipality wanting to claim credit and gain political leverage. He felt that the engineering team were demoted to fundraising, with the municipality wanting to build the bridge itself.

Relating to the 'indirect' role of engineers – i.e. themselves not being the drivers of initiatives, but enabling them to function well, was some discussion of the recent shift towards government laws and regulations that aim to bring a more pro-poor / community awareness to engineering practice. Jeanne, an alumnus, while seeing such regulations as important to poverty reduction, saw a constraint in that it takes a long time for these sorts of things to change.

I think often it's, you know, just basically regulations which obviously are in place for a reason...But they do and that's also with the whole process of transformation, those regulations also are probably always transforming...And they're not the easiest things to transform, you know, because it's a long process and something that has to be looked at from many different aspects.

Christo, a lecturer, also felt that these regulations would bring change, but slowly, it's not an easy road, it's a rocky road 'cos you've got on the one side, the regulations coming from some department of the government just coming down without really maybe good communications and it's stuck onto the engineering profession and they've got to incorporate it to try and get the contracts from the government. If they don't incorporate and do the stipulations, I mean they can't get contracts, so I think it's a rough road, but there are a lot of changes. So yes, I think there are changes, but slow, but it's mostly because it's enforced.

The NGO representative felt that a lack of coordination on the part of government agencies was hindering progress. They have been approached by regional education departments who did not get enough government support; and felt that the government needed to have a long-term plan,

there's a myriad of different institutions, corporations, committees, councils, each doing their own little bit of intervention programmes. I mean, all doing little bits, there's a common goal, but there's no synergy and synchronisation between all of that.

Beyond contributing to poverty reduction indirectly through properly-constructed infrastructure, and contributing to the growing economy, however, respondents (particularly alumni and lecturers) showed little sense of agency for pro-active work such as raising funds for pro-poor projects. This is perhaps one area to which professional training could contribute, perhaps learning through case studies of successful projects, or more generally encouraging lateral thinking and creativity in project management.

Prejudices in society can also hold back engineers who want to engage in pro-poor work, particularly if they are from a marginalised or disadvantaged group. Chantal, a black female alumnus, felt that others' attitudes could affect her efficacy as a pro-poor engineer, as she had to prove herself first before she is trusted and given respect on a project.

Certain trends in the engineering profession are making it less likely that engineers would have the time and energy to engage specifically in pro-poor work. The high pressures of being a practicing engineer made it less attractive for students to either enter the profession after graduation, or have the inclination to take on the yet harder task of pro-poor projects. Jonathan, a lecturer, for example, referred to the long hours which professional engineers now worked, which encouraged him to stay in academia despite the lower rates of pay, so that he could spend more time with his children (and therefore not become a pro-poor *practicing* professional),

with the lack of engineering professionals out there, working twelve hours a day is common practice now because there is just so much work and if I'm going to do that, if I'm going to go out into industry, I'm not going to see my family.

Christo spoke of the fact that the difficulties of getting jobs currently and of having to be aware of many concerns such as BEE, discouraged engineers from going further in pro-poor work,

I think that's probably the reason why a lot of people actually are just pulling back, looking after themselves 'cos nobody else is looking after them, so why look after other people?

These pressurised working conditions mean that perseverance and resilience are particularly important in enabling an engineer to forge a pro-poor path.

6. Conclusion

By examining interviewee responses in relation to our theoretical work on capabilities, professional education and poverty reduction, this report has attempted to analyse the extent to which the Engineering Faculty at Acacia University works towards poverty reduction. The Faculty has embraced the University's community interaction programme; and the 'Society in Perspective' course is a particularly progressive move. It gives students valuable experience of the realities of disadvantage in South Africa, along with social and political theories to put this in context for their working lives. This module, although starting off limited in numbers and reach, is potentially a very big step both for the majority of students who will have kept at a distance from townships until doing the module. It demonstrates some bold vision on the part of the Faculty, and clearly has great potential for producing engineers more inclined to work on poverty reduction. Indeed, the Faculty certainly overall seems amenable to ideas about how their work can be part of South Africa's transformation. Discussion with the Dean in a feedback meeting to discuss an earlier draft of this report showed that this study itself has had some impact, with a seminar held in August, titled, 'Is Acacia University Educating Public Good Professionals?'.

It is notable that many of the comments relating to a 'vision' of transformation in South Africa actually pertain to the need to be *aware* of the realities of South Africa; it was harder to identify common ground on what engineers should be working towards. The predominant 'vision' that alumni and lecturers had of the role of engineers in transforming South Africa was largely through an indirect contribution to poverty reduction, using high quality, ethical practice to improve infrastructure, which was understood to be beneficial both for communities and for overall economic growth. But the responses from students taking the 'Society in Perspective' module suggested a new generation of learners (especially in the sense that they are more mixed) with a more direct understanding of how they could contribute. Yet responses in this group were nonetheless varied, and there was also little sense of collective action or struggle for transformation. All groups of respondents demonstrated some sense of affiliation with those living in disadvantaged communities, but the as respondents themselves were selected on the basis of their interest in poverty reduction this result may well be non-representative. Moreover, the importance of affiliation was usually coupled with concern for efficiency and productivity considerations.

The 'Society in Perspective' module fosters these capabilities to varying degrees; and seems to be particularly effective at engendering vision (largely in terms of awareness), integrity, and affiliation (although efficiency considerations run high here). Table 3 summarises the findings of this study in relation to the overarching framework of 'Public Good Professional Capabilities' identified by this project.

Table 3: Ethical engineering practice: different professional capabilities in 'Society in Perspective' module

Public good professional capability	Related components of Engineering course at Acacia
Vision	- Visiting disadvantaged communities to raise awareness of levels of poverty - Taught modules facilitate an understanding of social and

	political context
Affiliation	- Working with students in disadvantaged communities can encourage affiliation and empathy.
Resilience	Generally dealt with in overall course but not specifically relating to pro-poor work.
Social and collective struggle	Not specifically addressed; will depend on particular lecturers.
Integrity	Values such as honesty and responsibility are specifically addressed in the taught components of the module. Poverty reduction through ethical and responsible development of infrastructure and economic growth, but not 'pushing' for change.
Assurance and confidence	The course generally seems to give students confidence in the ability of engineering to solve practical problems in disadvantaged communities; but less so specifically relating to pro-poor work.
Knowledge	Efficient and effective practice through quality teaching and curriculum; ideally also encouraging critical and lateral thinking.

Through analysing interviewee responses and course components, this study has examined how professional education might contribute to developing all of these capabilities. While currently these are being addressed largely through one specific module, potentially such considerations could be addressed through the entire curriculum, although the educational constraints detailed in Section 4 are certainly sizeable. The role of the teaching staff is crucial and will determine the extent to which the curriculum changes in future; in feedback for this project, for example, there was debate on whether evaluation of 'public good' capabilities should be seen as fitting into only two of ECSA's professional competencies, or whether they could be woven through all ten⁵⁵.

However, there are different conceptual models of poverty and poverty reduction that people can have. In this study, economic development was regarded in an unproblematised way: there seemed to be an underlying, unspoken confidence in the beneficial effects of economic growth through infrastructural development – a belief that efficient production and economic growth provide the foundational basis for poverty reduction. But beyond this there was little evidence of students or alumni unpacking what 'development' means; even while there was a desire to improve the lives of the poor, there was also a lack of broader political theorising to guide action. This may however, develop as the 'Society in Perspective' module and similar course expand.

This final table attempts to summarise the different possible 'levels' of ethical behaviour for engineers.

Ethical value	Professional public good capability	Contribution to / model of poverty reduction
Efficient working	Knowledge, assurance and confidence	Poverty reduction through economic growth, role of engineers in this. Neoliberal / trickle-down?
Honesty, responsibility	Integrity	Poverty reduction through ethical and responsible development of infrastructure and economic growth, but not 'pushing' for change.
Awareness of and	Vision, affiliation and	Poverty reduction through targeting community

⁵⁵ Feedback from Acacia University Research Working Group meeting, August 2009.

actively targeting poverty	resilience.	and individual needs, providing solutions to lacks / gaps. 'Pushing' for some sort of change, usually at micro-level. Working in community projects / factoring poorer communities in / dealing with staff sensitively and encouragingly
Redistribution-transformation	Social and collective struggle	Poverty reduction through redistribution of power; 'pushing' for change in underlying power structures. Actively empowering local communities. Not really picked up in this study?

Finally, it may also be that the project's early conceptual shift from an emphasis on pro-poor professionalism to something we have called 'human development public good professionalism' might enlarge the scope for the kinds of identities and commitments engineering students might form at university. The more expansive concept of public good might allow for valuing both direct and indirect contributions to poverty reduction and human development in South Africa and enlarge the reach and responsiveness of the capability approach, and its reception and discussion by lecturers involved in designing professional curricula and pedagogies. At the same time we would want poverty reduction and the theoretical language of human development, capabilities and justice to anchor public good professionalism so that it did not 'float free' to mean whatever an individual or group chose it to mean or become narrowly focused on the good of some publics rather than adopted inclusively.

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Theology, Acacia University

ARONA DISON, MONICA MCLEAN AND MELANIE WALKER

1. Contextual background to the education and training of theologians at Acacia University

The Theology Faculty at Acacia University was originally a seminary for training of ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), which was an institution of white Afrikaners. In 2000 the Faculty opened its training facility to ministers of the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa (URCSA), a related black church movement, in addition to the DRC. Furthermore it began to provide education and training of ministers from different church denominations, although it remained most closely linked to the Dutch Reformed and Uniting Reformed Church movements. The Dutch Reformed Church was established in South Africa after the country was colonised by the Dutch in the seventeenth century. In the early twentieth century the DRC was geared towards promoting the social and economic interests of Afrikaners after their defeat and subjugation by the British in the Boer war (Pakenham, 1979). There was a strong connection with the DRC amongst Afrikaners arising out of their 'aversion towards English domination and a fear of eventual black domination' (Durand, 1985: 41). According to DRC theologians' interpretation of the Bible, it provided evidence for racial inequality and white superiority over blacks. Their theology was fundamentalist, based on a belief that the Bible contained unchanging truths, and there was no consideration that biblical text could be subject to different interpretations. In the late 1930s the theology of the DRC was used to promote the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism and the promotion of racial segregation, based on a concept of white superiority. When the Afrikaner Nationalist government came to power in 1948, most white Afrikaans theologians and intellectuals subscribed to apartheid ideology (Durand, 1985).

In order to understand the changes that have taken place in the Theology Faculty at Acacia, one needs to know some contextual history of the Dutch Reformed Church and URCSA in South Africa. Thus we sketch an outline of this history very briefly. In colonial times, there was extensive missionary work carried out by Christian institutions to convert 'non-believers', in many parts of the world. The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa had a long history of missionary activity and began establishing separate missionary churches ('daughter churches') for coloured and for black African members in the late nineteenth century. The churches within the Dutch Reformed 'family' were involved in provision of assistance to black and coloured Christian groupings through education, medical and other services aimed at social and economic 'upliftment'⁵⁶ of these specific communities (van der Watt, 2003).

From 1960 tensions in the Dutch Reformed Church began to emerge with a minority of theologians within the Church questioning the DRC's complicity in apartheid structures and particularly its theological position on racial inequality and segregation. In 1982, Alan Boesak, a South African coloured minister in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church was elected President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. As president of this alliance, he declared that apartheid was a heresy, and that the apartheid system depended on the theological justification of the Dutch Reformed Church. Subsequently, this was formalised as the official position of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC), signalled by the adoption of the 'Belhar Confession' in 1986. In this declaration the DRMC rejected any doctrine of forced separation on a racial basis which perpetuated

⁵⁶ 'Upliftment' is a term that has historically been used for the improvement of the conditions of poor people. It has connotations of a patronising and unsustainable approach to interventions aimed at poverty reduction

'hatred and enmity' (DRMC, 1986). It promoted unity and reconciliation of all people within the church. It declared that the Church must position itself against injustice and 'must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others' (DRMC, 1986). In 1994, just prior to the change of government, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (the 'coloured Church') merged with the Dutch Reformed Church of Africa (the 'black Church' to become the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa (URCSA). URCSA was grounded in the values of the Belhar Declaration, but still composed of black members (Naude, 2003). Since that time there have been ongoing attempts to formally unify URCSA and the DRC, which have not yet been successful.

Christianity has a large following in South Africa, with 76% of the population identifying themselves as Christians in 1996 (Statistics South Africa, 1999)⁵⁷. We chose the education and training programme of the Theology Faculty at Acacia University as a research site for the following reasons: its concern with social engagement and issues of poverty; and the changes which have taken place in the Faculty from its conservative origins and close alignment with apartheid ideology at Acacia University.

2. The Faculty of Theology at Acacia University

The Faculty of Theology is a small faculty at Acacia University, but has a symbolic significance as it is the oldest educational institution at the University (Mouton, 2007).⁵⁸ As mentioned above, the Faculty used to provide training exclusively for ministers in the Dutch Reformed Church. The student and staff were exclusively white and male. From the 1990s onwards, there have been a number of changes in the Faculty. It has changed from being predominantly Dutch Reformed to ecumenical (accommodating different church denominations). There has been a change in race and gender distribution amongst the students and staff of the Faculty. By 2007, 44.65% of the undergraduate students were black (inclusive), while 55.53% of the students were white. About 25% of the undergraduate students were female. One third of the staff were black (including coloured and African staff). This is far from representative of the demography of the South African population as a whole but still significant. In 2008 a new Dean of the Faculty was appointed who was female, white and committed to transformation of the Faculty. The most dramatic shift that has taken place in the Faculty has consisted of changes in philosophical, ideological and theological perspectives. There has been a shift towards a transformative, developmental approach to Theology, and a strong focus on poverty, poverty reduction, and issues to do with human dignity. The vision of the Faculty is to promote academic 'excellence' in professional and other training according to the nature and purpose of the Christian faith; to understand and enrich the identity and ethos of churches in various (mainly African) contexts; to welcome and nurture a diversity of people, traditions, opinions; and to serve communities via community-oriented centres, strengthening leadership, networks and developing public discourse (Mouton, 2007).

The Head of the Practical Theology Department, Jakob Steyn, described the Faculty as being closely engaged with South African society and playing a role in the upliftment of people, socially, economically, and politically. Daniel le Roux, a white lecturer in the Faculty, said that a concern with community development was a central unifying focus in the Faculty. He stated that 'everything we do is geared towards making a difference in society, but doing that from a Christian theological perspective'.

⁵⁷ There is a proliferation of church denominations in South Africa, and a minority of ministers are educated at university.

⁵⁸ It was initially established as a Theology Seminary in 1859 and was incorporated into Acacia University in 1963 (Faculty of Theology 150 year commemorative album, 2009).

There is a strong research culture in the university, with a high proportion of research focused on poverty, development and the broader political concerns in South Africa from a Christian perspective. Three of the research centres located in the Faculty, are concerned with issues such as the Church's responsibility in relation to social, ethical and economic problems; Christian perspectives on public affairs and research into religion and development. The centre for Religion and Development Research conducts empirical research with a development focus, much of it in the area surrounding Acacia. This provides a resource for the Faculty and postgraduate students. Staff and postgraduate students do studies on Christian practices such as liturgy within a South African development contexts or preaching in the context of poverty. Staff and postgraduate students are also engaged in research conceptualising problems from a theological perspective and trying to find solutions. Research enriches the teaching in the Faculty as well as informing the Faculty staff. The Faculty has links with faith-based NGOs which are doing development work in the area. (Interviews with Daniel le Roux, Jakob Steyn, Acacia University website).

A significant development that contributed to transformation of the Faculty, was the merging of the Acacia training facility for Dutch Reformed ministers, with the Fynbos University training facility for ministers in the Uniting Reformed Church (URCSA). We will discuss this in more detail under Educational Arrangements.

The structure of the professional education and training programme for ministers offered at Acacia University takes the following form. The Baccalaureus in Theology (BTh) is a four year degree which is offered to students who intend to be ministers, as well as others who have an interest in Theology or community work from a Christian perspective. In order to qualify as a minister, students need to do a Masters in Divinity (MDiv), which is a one year advanced ministerial training programme, and a one-year Licentiate in Theology, which consists mainly of practical 'on site' training under supervision in local congregations, in association with reading and writing components (Theology Faculty webpage, 2009). Our initial focus was on the Practical Theology course within the Bachelor of Theology degree, which consists of subjects addressing the practice of being a minister and has a component on Community Development. Our focus group interviews were with fourth-year students on the BTh programme. However, our research on the Practical Theology course is located within the professional education and training of ministers as a whole in the Faculty.

University context

Acacia University is one of South Africa's oldest universities. During apartheid, the university was white and Afrikaans. It played a significant political role in the apartheid regime, educating the political elite and civil servants. It was instrumental in providing philosophical and political underpinnings for segregation. As mentioned above, the Theology Faculty was closely bound with the Dutch Reformed Church, which formulated theoretically grounded justification for segregation and racial inequality.

Acacia University has always prided itself on its academic excellence, but since 1994 has had to reposition itself in response to political changes in South Africa. It has stated its intention to become more relevant to the needs of the broad South African society, and amongst other statements of intent it has committed itself to apply its substantial capacities, expertise and resources to the benefit of 'the broad South African community'. It has recognised the need to work towards equity in terms of developing a student and staff profile which is more representative of South African society (Acacia University Strategic Plan 2000). In some respects the transformation process of the university has been slow, for example changing the diversity profile. There have been a number of contradictions and tensions in this transformation process the university and contestation about issues such as the language policy and its continued privileging of

Afrikaans. In 2006 a new coloured Vice Chancellor was appointed who had a dynamic vision for furthering the transformation process. He came from the Acacia Theology Faculty. He promoted the concept of a 'pedagogy of hope', based on Paulo Freire's work⁵⁹, as a unifying theme for the university. Under his leadership, there was a strategic management decision to align the core activities of teaching and learning, research and community involvement with the themes of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Acacia University Annual Report 2007)⁶⁰. Each faculty was required to select one or two of these themes and integrate them into the goals of the faculty.

All of the Theology lecturers who were interviewed identified strongly with the concept of a 'pedagogy of hope'. This was seen to be 'strongly linked to transforming our South African society' through an engaged university which 'should make a real difference in society' (Daniel le Roux, a lecturer). According to Jan Hofmeyr, another lecturer, the Theology Faculty had decided to focus on the goals of poverty eradication and promoting the restoration of human dignity. Human dignity was seen as highly relevant in the light of Faculty's historical association with the Dutch Reformed Church's complicity in the gross indignities imposed by apartheid.

At Acacia University there has been a culture of community outreach, which has been formalised and reoriented in the form of 'Community Interaction' or 'Community Engagement', which has been mainstreamed as a department contributing to the 'three pillars of teaching, learning and community engagement. The community engagement department has been vigorously promoting the integration of service learning components into curricula within the university.

Location of Acacia University – the town and surrounding areas

The town of Acacia is situated in a scenic valley surrounded by wine farms. The university is integrated with the picturesque town with its historic buildings and tree-lined streets. The Theology Faculty is located in the original Theological Seminary building which was built in 1859 (Acacia website). In contrast to the wealthy environment of the town and the surrounding wine farms, there is enormous poverty in the township and informal settlements and rural areas surrounding Acacia. Processes of globalisation and changes in agricultural production have resulted in redundancy of many farm workers and eviction from farms. André van Wyk, a minister in a small settlement outside of Acacia described the settlement in the following way,

Socio-economically things are difficult for the majority of the community... There are the poorest of the poor and then there are the many senior citizens who are dependent on the government for pensions. And then [there are people] who stayed on farms and worked in surrounding areas and then simply got removed from them and were dumped in [this settlement]. And the area that they were dumped in is now an area fraught with socio-economic community problems - alcohol abuse, drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, young children who have their own children and now don't go to school.

Some of the lecturers and alumni expressed an acute awareness of the contrast between the wealth of university, the prosperity of the historically white sectors of the town, and

⁵⁹ Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian educationalist known for his work on educational practice and liberation. His concept of 'pedagogy of hope' puts forward a critical pedagogy which aims to inculcate hope, which must be rooted in practice and struggle, regardless of the obstacles to transformation (Freire, 1992).

⁶⁰ The themes which were extracted from the MDGs as goals for Acacia University were the eradication of pandemic poverty in Southern Africa and Africa; promoting peace, security (including food security) and stability on the African continent; promoting the development of democracy; promoting and developing sustainable resources and securing a sustainable environment; and lastly, promoting physical and psychological wellness and promoting the restoration of the dignity of people.

the extreme poverty amongst those black and coloured people who are marginalised from the economy, living in the townships and in the surrounding rural areas.

Racial transformation – perceptions of white students in the Faculty

As we have mentioned, Acacia used to be a white, Afrikaans university. This history has a profound influence on the current transformation process of the university. Students from white, Afrikaans communities are situated between the transforming university and the white, Afrikaans communities which they come from. Thus we found that the perceptions of white students about transformation provide contribute to understanding the transformation of the Faculty and the university. The voices of coloured students are dispersed throughout the narrative, and the voices of the coloured alumni are represented strongly in the sections on professional capabilities and educational arrangements.

Some white students commented on the unevenness of change and the contrast that they experienced between their lives at university and their lives outside the university. Many of the students came from geographical areas and communities where there were still strong racial divisions and discrimination. Aletta, argued that in many places racism was not over. She said 'in my town I think there're two houses where coloured people live, the rest of the town is white'. Jacques reflected on the lack of transformation experienced by farmworkers in a conservative area. He referred to the lack of social and economic change in their lives, lack of education and their attitudes which he perceived as unchanging,

[The rural area where his family lived] was like Acacia thirty years ago. Nothing's changed, the people working on the farms have never left the farms. They can't read and they're treating me like a hero just because I'm white, so we're not past it [apartheid] at all.

Marieke, described her experience at Acacia University as living 'in a bubble because that [racial] division isn't really there'. She said,

If you stay at a residence, it's white, black, coloured mixed together and all of a sudden it's not that big an issue. You share a room and you're friends and you go to church together, it's really not something weird, but then you go home and you're in a totally white church and four coloured people walk in and it's like 'What just happened?'.
Moreover, she thought that the 'racism in our heart, in people's hearts' was not the biggest problem. Rather the historical and current economic system was 'one of the biggest factors dividing people' and in the sheltered context of the university, 'that division [was not] really there'. (One of the factors contributing to the perception of lack of difference may be that the majority of students at Acacia University come from privileged middle-class backgrounds.) Peter argued that students were not concerned with race in relation to their classmates and students in the residences, but still saw people outside that locus of similarity as 'other'. He said,

people still make a big fuss about race, but you can be black, but if you fit into my framework of, you study along with me, so we've got the same mindset, studying at the same university, so we're rather up there in the same social circle thing and that's still fine, then you're still in my category.

These students' comments reflected their conscious views about race and class issues, but there are also unconscious forms of othering and silencing which take place. This was evident in one of the focus group meetings where Peter discussed the difficulties of understanding poverty when students had not experienced it themselves. This is a valid point. However, the interviewer was struck by the way that Peter used the pronoun 'we' to refer to the students in an all-inclusive way. In that moment he showed no awareness of the presence of Lukas, who was sitting next to him. Lukas came from a poor rural background, where he had worked as a minister for many years. Thus he had

experienced poverty first hand. Lukas remained silent during this part of the conversation.

It is ironic that in the same focus group, Inez, a white student, spoke about a focus of students on problems in the world outside the classroom, while they lack awareness of these same problems manifesting themselves in the micro contexts which they inhabit. She said that the problems 'and the separations and all those things that we experience in the macro world, we see here [in the classroom], but we're not aware of them'. One can infer from this that while Theology lecturers have a strong focus on the effects of apartheid in society, they could do more to facilitate students' reflection on the way that apartheid has influenced their own assumptions and ways of interacting. This is picked up later in the section on educational arrangements.

Table 1 gives the demographic details of those interviewed for the study.

Table 1: Interviewees⁶¹

Name	Male	Female	African	Indian	Coloured	White
a) Students – 4th year Bachelor of Theology						
<i>Focus group 1</i>						
Karl	x					x
Aidan	x				x	
David	x				x	
Nico	x					x
<i>Focus group 2</i>						
Lukas	x				x	
Peter	x					x
Inez		x				x
<i>Focus group 3</i>						
Jacques	x					x
Adele		x				x
Aletta		x				x
Marieke		x				x
Sara		x				x
<i>Focus group 4</i>						
Ignatius	x					x
Marie		x				x
b) Alumni						
Linda du Toit, Contract minister, DRC, graduated 2003		x			x	
Niels Landsman, Rural minister, URCSA, graduated 2002	x				x	
André van Wyk, Rural minister, URCSA, graduated 2003	x				x	
Saul Fouché, Permanent minister, DRC, graduated	x					x

⁶¹ All respondents have been given pseudonyms, as has the University. It should also be noted that some respondents were not interviewed in their first language, Afrikaans; quotes from interviews have been edited slightly to facilitate reading. We use the categories constructed by the apartheid government for race/ethnic groups. This is necessary in order to understand and trace current developments within a historical context. These categories are African, coloured, Indian/Asian and white. The term 'black' is commonly used inclusively to refer to African, coloured and Indian people.

1996			
c) Lecturers			
Daniel le Roux	x		x
Jan Hofmeyr	x		x
d) Other university			
Shaun Muller, Deputy Vice Chancellor	x	x	
Jeanne Olivier, Dean of Faculty		x	x
Marlene Brink, Faculty manager		x	x
Jakob Steyn, Head of Department and Lecturer	x	x	
e) Other			
Nataniel Brand, faith-based NGO	x		x

3. Professional Capabilities

3.1 Vision

Within a context of theological practice, all of the professional capabilities need to be infused with a vision of a theological approach and forms of practice associated with this. We found that the members of the Faculty had a strong and coherent vision about the role of theology in South Africa and the types of ministers they wished to educate. They expressed their vision in terms of a theology which is engaged with macro transformation processes leading to poverty reduction and the restoration of human dignity, as well as individual process of transformation. As Daniel le Roux, a white lecturer, said, 'We want to connect society in all its forms to theology because we believe that theology can indeed make a difference'. The views of the alumni were consistent with the Faculty vision, although they described their roles in relation to the particular contexts in which they worked. The BTh fourth year students who were interviewed were quite diverse in their levels of awareness and understanding of issues related to inequality and poverty. Some of the students were very engaged and articulate about these issues, while others seemed to have a more superficial understanding.

Lecturers in the Faculty understood transformation as a process that needed to take place at different but interrelated levels. At a macro level it required change in the political and economic spheres. Jan Hofmeyr, a white lecturer, was relatively optimistic about the political direction in which South Africa was going, which he described as 'moving slowly but surely more towards democracy'. At an economic level the lecturers were very aware of the massive inequality in the society and the conditions of poverty that the majority of the population lived under. Daniel argued for transformation in all spheres of life, specifically mentioning 'the economy, health, education, religion, health and ... emotional health and wellbeing. In addition conditions needed to change in relation to housing and safety of poor people'. He said that these changes were crucial so that 'people [could] live to their full potential' with dignity.

A strong theme amongst the Theology staff was the desire for their students to be aware of poverty and social issues, as Jakob, the HOD of Practical Theology expressed it, 'they should be conscious Christians, with all the ramifications of society being their responsibility in all its aspects, whether it's political, social, economic'. Many of the informants expressed their vision in terms of making a difference. As Nico, one of the students said, 'We need people that actually want to make a difference and want to go in

a new direction and want to make a change in the country'. Students were encouraged to contribute to transformation in the various contexts in which they would work.

Across the range of informants, we identified two broad directions which a minister could (with variations within this). At the one end of the continuum, ministers worked in very poor communities (predominantly black or coloured), and at the other end, ministers were located in wealthy churches which used to be mainly white in the past. (Dutch Reformed Churches were exclusively white during apartheid). The guiding vision for working in poor communities was to contribute directly to poverty reduction, in various forms, using a participatory approach with members of the community. The central vision expressed for working in traditionally wealthy or middle-class communities involved facilitating integration, encouraging appreciation of diversity, conscientising members about poverty and the need to make contributions to poverty alleviation in a way that respected human dignity. Jan, a white lecturer, emphasised the need for integration of people from different social backgrounds in terms of race, socio-economic class and culture. He argued that within a Christian context social interaction within faith communities had the potential to play an important role in social integration. Many of the informants expressed the need for openness. Peter, a white student said,

We need people who aren't narrow-minded anymore 'cos narrow mindedness was the reason South Africa was in trouble. It was 'cos people were ... concerned only with themselves and while there's still a lot of that going on, people aren't willing to accept new things, people aren't willing to be introduced to new realities and that is a problem and if we don't sort out that problem, we're never going to be able to move along or get up front in this whole struggle'.

Another theme which was apparent across a range of informants was the relationship between social transformation and individual transformation and. Jan, a lecturer, used the term 'identity transformation'⁶², which he described as identity formation in relation to faith, getting in touch with one's deepest values and living one's life according to those values. He believed that identity formation was enriched through opening oneself to other cultures and working with other faith traditions. A number of informants expressed the view that change happened on an individual basis and that individual agency contributed to change within a community or broader society. As Niels Landsman, a coloured minister in a poor rural area said, 'the word of God can change people, and that changed person can be used in the community to [contribute to change]'.

One of the themes that emerged from the voices of a number of informants was related to seeing transformation as a long-term process taking place over generations. Lecturers in the Faculty invested a lot of hope in their students facilitating transformation of the church in the future. Jan quoted the Vice-Chancellor of the university saying that 'we have to trust the next generation to take some things further'. Sara, an exceptionally thoughtful and articulate white, Afrikaans student, spoke of the 'bitter knowledge' that is passed down between generations and the need to actively fight those unconscious beliefs and assumptions within oneself. Two of the coloured alumni who were ministers in poor, rural areas spoke of the need to focus on empowerment of children and youth in their practice as ministers. André van Wyk, a coloured minister in a poor, rural area, said that youth needed to be equipped with basic life skills and knowledge about how to deal with social problems affecting them. Ultimately in order to facilitate transformation of the church, one needed to work with youth and children.

Across the range of informants, a view was expressed that a minister needed to work with faith communities in a holistic way, with a concern for individuals and communities as a whole. Two of the alumni contrasted this view with the narrow role that is often

⁶² He uses this concept, drawing on Talcott Parsons' work on transformation (Parsons, 1951, 1978).

played by the church. Linda, a coloured minister in a Dutch Reformed church said that the church tended to isolate itself. In contrast to this, she viewed herself 'as someone who is there to help people, not live life there that one hour that they're coming to church, but the 24 hours when they're outside of church'. A similar view was expressed by André, another alumni, who said that 'the church ... just misses what people are struggling with every day, the basic life issues ... and ... we [the Church] stand apart from this, keep a distance'. The alumni all expressed views that ministers should see their role in terms of involvement in the issues and struggles that people in their faith communities experience. These comments support the views of Faculty members about the need for ministers to be involved in social issues.

All of the informants spoke about experiencing a calling from God, which we interpret as a spiritual vision about their identity and role in life, which is framed by a fundamental faith in God. Many of the informants interviewed for the study articulated a vision about enriching, healing and transforming society in a holistic way through practising as a minister. One of the students aspired to be a spiritual leader who was supportive, open-minded with a prophetic vision. A number of students used the term 'prophesy' and 'prophetic' in relation to having a vision and being able to 'stand up and ... and proclaim what is right in the midst of the problems' (Ignatius). Marie, a student, understood prophesy within a vision of social justice. Spiritual leaders needed to 'articulate the will of God for the present ... speaking against social injustice now' and working 'with a vision for the future ... for a better society'.

3.2 Emotional reflexivity

All the categories of Theology informants emphasised the need for capabilities linked to the self, such as self-knowledge, personal growth, self esteem, and centredness, linked to spiritual and religious identity. The outer work of social transformation is intimately related to the inner task of personal transformation (Karecki, 2003). This relates to Jan's comments above about identity transformation. The examples below illustrate some of the dimensions of emotional capability which were valued by various informants. We have mentioned the comment of Sara, one of the students, relating to the concept of 'bitter knowledge'. She argued that there was a need for deep self-reflection to facilitate individual transformation. She spoke about this in the context of the involvement of an individual's family, community and self in South Africa's apartheid history. A visiting black professor, Jonathan Jansen⁶³, had spoken of 'bitter knowledge', a concept that resonated strongly for her. Jansen's work on personal transformation focuses particularly on white Afrikaans students' responses to political change in the country and in their universities. However, the processes that he discusses are relevant for all South Africans, particularly youth, who are making a transition from the apartheid past into the future. Sara said,

[Even though] we are a different generation and we view this stuff a lot different than our parents have ..." she said, "we have to realise that ... we all have that bitter knowledge, whether we were part of apartheid or not. It's something that's passed on and along and I think we have a responsibility to fight actively ... against the bitter knowledge that's in us.

Aidan, a coloured student, thought that ministers or community workers within a Christian framework needed 'to know themselves or have grown to know themselves [so that there would be] a level of authenticity' when they were engaged with other people. He said 'a lot of the people that I engage with were people with extremely low self esteem. Now if I cannot accept myself, then there's a sort of barrier that comes across ... and in accepting myself I give almost permission to other people if you can use that

⁶³ Jonathan Jansen has written a book entitled, 'Knowledge in the Blood. Confronting race and the apartheid past' (Jansen, 2009). He has subsequently become Vice Chancellor of the University of the Free State, a historically white Afrikaans university which has been struggling with its transformation process.

term, to be themselves, whatever situation they come from, whatever brokenness [they experience]’.

Jan, one of the lecturers valued a capability which he referred to as ‘emotional intelligence – understanding people and their needs’. He said that the science of theology was oriented towards making a difference in people’s lives. Ministers needed to work with people, love them and care about them. In order to do this, they needed to examine their own reasons for being a minister, their commitment, life experience, virtues and integrity. They needed to ask themselves the question, ‘Why do you do what you’re doing?’. While Jan identifies this capability as emotional intelligence, it is linked to reflexivity. His association of love and caring with capability for reflexivity resonates with Nussbaum’s integration of the emotion of love with thought. She argues that the emotion of love and patterns of action associated with caring are best understood as involving ‘quite a lot of thought and interpretation, especially evaluation’ (Nussbaum, 2000: 265).

3.3 Resilience

As in the case of all of the caring professions in our study, there was a great need for the capability of resilience. André van Wyk and Niels Landsman, both coloured alumni working in underresourced churches in extremely poor rural communities, were concerned about the danger of burnout. Both of them were serving communities over a large area and needed to travel extensively. This was physically tiring and the emotional demands of working with people under conditions of social and economic deprivation were draining. André van Wyk said,

[if I’m not careful I will] be burnt out within the next year. I hope that I can get something in place, also within the congregation in order to assist me, something like self care; a group that can help me, that can care for me in order to [avoid burnout].

The ability to sustain and care for oneself is a vital capability for a public good professional. Moreover, it is not only an individual capability but needs to be integrated into community practice, or organisational structures, depending on the context. Thus a public good professional would need to be aware of this and be able to set up structures for self-care if they were not already present in the work context. One of the students said that their lecturers had spoken to them about the possibility of burnout. He felt that a minister needs a ‘support base in terms of networking ... so that you feel that you’re not doing things by yourself’ (Aidan).

André drew a parallel with the poor people he was working with, seeing it as one of his tasks as a minister to help to build their resilience through religious faith. He spoke of the need to ‘spiritually strengthen [people] with the Word [of God] so that they ... inwardly have the energy needed to rise above their conditions ...’.

One of the elements of resilience with which students identified was the ability to balance idealism with realism. Peter, a student, said that professionals should not set out to solve the problems of the world, because they were bound to get disappointed. He said,

... yes, we’re going to face challenges, we’re going to sit there and we’re gonna go “How on earth am I supposed to solve this?” but then we should be taught that ok, you are going to have challenges that you won’t be able to solve but that shouldn’t throw you off line, just work through it ... but don’t get distracted from what lies ahead.

He implied that professionals needed to develop a realistic sense of what it was possible for them to achieve and to persevere in working towards their goals in order to fulfil their larger vision.

In world of uncertainty and change, graduates needed to develop a creative approach to their professional careers as they could not be assured of getting a conventional job. Jan Hofmeyr commented that when he studied Theology he knew that he would get a job in the Ministry, and his future was set out for him. Current students didn't have that security and they needed to be more creative in the plans that they made for their lives. Creativity was used in this context as an aspect of professional resilience.

3.4 Affiliation and respect

The capability of affiliation was foregrounded by informants in the Theology context. Functionings related to affiliation were described in terms of relationship building, treating people with love, respect and dignity, listening and being 'present' in relationships with people.

Two of the students emphasised the capability of 'being who you are and just being present when you work with [poor people], not coming with the sense that 'I'm a facilitator and I'm only working with this type of goal' but building relationships and giving them voice and listening to them is really important' (Adele). A number of informants, both students and lecturers valued the functions of 'being' and 'being present' in interactions with people. Jan Hofmeyr, one of the lecturer said that before 'you do a lot of things' it was important for a minister to be 'present and not only physically present but present with your full attention'.

While we group these relational dimensions of capability under the core professional capability of *affiliation*, they also relate strongly to Nussbaum's central human capability of *emotion*, 'being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves' and the capability of loving others, which is regarded by Theology informants as a valued aspect of professional capability (Nussbaum, 2000, p 79). An aspect of Nussbaum's concept of affiliation is 'to be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation' (ibid). She also refers to this particular dimension of capability as 'narrative imagination' (Nussbaum, 1998, 2002),

This means the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have (Nussbaum, 2002: 299).

She stresses that narrative imagination is not uncritical, as people always bring themselves and their own judgments to the encounter with another. Imagination is a valued capability of theologians both with regard to vision and relational functionings. The cultivation of imagination as a valued component of pedagogy within the Theology curricula is discussed below in the section on educational arrangements.

In the contextual section we touched on the historical ethos of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), which was paternalistic, racist and sexist. This manifested itself in the relationships between ministers and church members in both the DRC (traditionally white branch of the church) and associated Uniting Reformed Church (URCSA) (traditionally black). Furthermore, according to all coloured alumni, the paternalistic approach of the DRC to the Uniting Reformed Church was still very much in evidence. In poor communities ministers often treated congregants in a patronising way. André, one of the alumni, said that church leaders often tried too hard 'to think for the people. ... We so often think that we have the answers for these vulnerable people and that we don't really give them space for them to just talk, so that we just listen, so that we just listen to what they need' (André 4). In order to relate to people in this way, ministers should not put themselves on a pedestal, but rather show humility. If ministers were humble and related to poor people as equals, people would 'really be at ease when they talk to you. [They would] take the opportunity when it arises to go and talk to you. [They would] be open and frank ...' (Niels).

Linda, a coloured minister, who was on a temporary contract with a Dutch Reformed Church, said that she was challenging paternalistic attitudes to community development and outreach within her church. In discussions she raised questions about poverty, saying 'its not just material; people have something to give – it doesn't matter who they are, where they are or where they come from, they have something to offer us, and if we cannot receive that then we're actually not helping, we're actually not doing anything, we're not doing good'. She was trying to shift church members' attitudes towards community development to be more, respectful, based on a reciprocal form of interaction.

The Dean of the Faculty stated that human dignity was one of the overarching values in the Faculty. One of the students, using the pronoun 'we', referring to the Faculty, said that everybody, poor and wealthy has dignity and 'we want to ensure that that dignity is always maintained and even enhanced so that people have a quality of life in line with that dignity that everybody shares as being made in the image of God' (Aidan). Informants also thought that as ministers or community workers they needed to build people's self esteem, particular those people who had 'been devalued and devalued themselves' because of poverty (Linda).

3.5 Knowledge, understanding and practical skills

In order to act on one's vision it needs to be informed vision. Thus it vision needs to be rooted in relevant knowledge and understanding. Lecturers, and students to a certain degree, emphasised the need for theologians to have an understanding of the political and socio-economic context of poverty and inequality, and an understanding of the historic and current location of the church within this. While alumni did not explicitly state this point, in their discussion of their practice, they demonstrated underlying knowledge and understanding which informed their vision.

Lecturers, alumni and some of the students thought that it was essential for ministers to have a critical and analytical approach to society and to theological interpretation. This required knowledge of global conditions as well as an understanding of the South African context. Saul, an alumnus said that there was a need for,

theologians with a critical mindset who can really discern between things, who can analyse what's happening ... You need theologians who are good with hermeneutics, interpretation, who're able to interpret what's happening in the world, and the text, bring it all together and steer away from literal fundamentalist interpretations.

Ability to interpret biblical texts (hermeneutics) was valued by all the lecturers. Jan, a lecturer, emphasised knowledge of the social and historical construction of the theological canon, in order to interpret texts. To this end it was necessary for students to read 'the reinterpretation of that text during the history of the Christian Church. In other words, understanding tradition – what is our faith tradition? Where does it come from, and why did we make certain choices over other choices?'. Furthermore ministers needed to be able to communicate their interpretations to congregations or members of faith communities. One of the students expressed the need for ministers to have the ability to communicate with uneducated people and should not use 'highfaluting terms'. Theology students learned 'complex things here at university, [which needed to be] translated in simple terms that people [could] understand and relate to' (Aidan).

Students expressed the following views about the role of knowledge in facilitating understandings of poverty and development which would inform ministers' practice. Karl argued that in order to do developmental work, a minister needed to have a broad knowledge of development issues drawing on a number of different disciplines. He said 'we have to know what's going on in economics ... in psychology ... in sociology. We have to know a bit of everything in order to help people [and] shouldn't only be focussed on

one set of expertise'. Furthermore public good professionals should 'know what's going on in the rest of the world when they approach development or when they step forward as leaders'. Peter thought that it was important for ministers to have some knowledge of economics in order to develop a deeper understanding of poverty. He said that if one asked poor people what they needed, they would say, 'food ... money ... shelter and I already know that, so it gives me absolutely no insight into that'.

Nico referred to the value of (theological) academic knowledge which should be incorporated into a minister's practical involvement with her or his congregation, and involvement in community development work. He asserted that ministers should 'always remember their roots in academics academics [which] should always be part of the way you actually interact with the people in your congregation'. He believed that ministers should not focus exclusively on social problems and 'forget about what [they] learned at university'.

In addition to academic knowledge ministers needed to be able to *implement* programmes and practices that were part of their role in a congregation or community. Jan, a lecturer, categorised these abilities as practical skills. They included the ability to preach, to attend to their pastoral role, and to set up and facilitate programmes in the congregation,

How do you have a conversation with somebody that's got a serious problem in a pastoral situation? How do you care for the sick? How do you get a programme off the ground that [addresses] HIV/AIDS in your congregation? People who're living with HIV/AIDS, how do you give support for them? In other words, practical skills to ... make a difference.

In terms of our understanding of capabilities, the abilities associated with a pastoral and community development role are more than practical skills and rely on capabilities relating to affiliation as well as leading and managing processes within a community.

One of the functionings which was valued by a student, Aidan, was the ability to listen. One has to 'listen intensely,' he said, 'not just what people are saying but the way they say it, their body language, all of that and so I learned to be more observant in terms of that active listening'. Here he is talking about a *practical skill* of listening, which contributes to the relational aspects of listening, an essential part of the capability of affiliation.

Jan pointed out that theoretical knowledge about pastoral care and community development would only translate into functionings through actual practice, both in practical components of a training programme as well as future work contexts. He said 'you can have a wonderful conversation model for pastoral care' but it is only in conversation with a person who has a real life problem that a student can test out whether the model helps with providing the care.

3.6 Social and collective struggle

3.6.1 Leadership

Leadership, informed by vision was seen as an essential capability for a theologian or a minister. This capability would enable them to fulfil a number of possible roles in the profession. Ministers provided spiritual guidance to congregations or faith communities. Furthermore they were in positions where they could facilitate social change within their faith communities. Students argued for the need for 'public theologians' who provided leadership within the broader society from a theological perspective.

Saul Fouché, an alumni and minister of a traditionally white Dutch Reformed church in Cape Town, made a distinction between ministers who play a maintenance role in their congregation and those who lead congregations in a way that contributes to social

change. The former would serve in a congregation and 'just maintain [the church as it is] - make sure everything's up and running all the time' whereas the latter would see her or his role as 'transforming the people' to take responsibility for the running and direction of the church,

.... so we're tackling some issues, say for example, homosexuality is on the agenda of the Church Council here. In other churches I know it's a big fight, it's really bad. Here with us they handle it in a professional adult fashion. And we've got a whole programme up and running [working] towards inclusivity and making this almost a safe congregation in that sense.

All of the informants believed that a minister needed to be able to motivate and inspire people. They achieved this though preaching to their congregations in a meaningful and motivating way. Furthermore they needed to know 'how to form a community', develop a shared vision and motivate people 'to take the vision and work with you' (Jan).

It was important, particularly in poor, depressed communities to provide a role model without placing oneself 'on a pedestal'. Niels, an alumnus, was a coloured minister in a very poor, rural community. He himself had come from a poor background. He had studied at Fynbos University and then Acacia when the training facilities were merged. He was registered for a doctorate at Acacia University at the time of the interview. He said that he was able to inspire and be a role model for some people in the community because of the path that his life had taken,

When I came here, I told people where I came from, who I am, what I did ... and how to approach me ... and that I am a normal person. And in the end one boy said "Then I can also do that". A small boy: "I can do it. I can also do that".

Many of the white students saw their role as facilitating change within traditionally white churches. Karl spoke about the need for a minister to be able to motivate church members to become aware of and involved in community development. He said, 'it's just basically awareness ... inside of the church of community development and like I said, then connected with really good leaders to get them motivated, interested and active within that area'. In addition to developing awareness. Aletta, one of the students thought that theologians needed to motivate (middle-class people) to feel committed to staying in South Africa and contribute to overcoming problems,

... lots of people go overseas because there's more money overseas or they're so negative about the country and that is where I think theologians and the church can play a very big role in being positive about the country. Yes, not being naïve, obviously you can't swat everything under the mat and pretend that we don't have problems, we have a lot of very big problems, but address those problems, be positive and create in people a love for their country and being proud of being a South African and living here.

3.6.2 Facilitating social integration and bridge-building

I think we're going to need ministers who are willing to break barriers, to build bridges between communities and groups that normally would not tend to interact (Ignatius, a student).

Most of the informants spoke about the need for ministers to work to facilitate integration and 'bridge-building' between divided sectors of society. Bridge-building was also needed between those in more established, mainstream sections of church communities and those who were marginalised and judged by them. Various informants identified different groups who were divided by prejudice, ignorance, or narrow-mindedness. They referred to divisions between different denominations, races, rich and poor, male and female, straight and gay, able-bodied and disabled. Ministers needed the capabilities to heighten awareness, increase understanding, engender tolerance of diversity and facilitate interaction between people.

In one of the focus groups the students discussed the relationships between different race and class groups in contemporary South African society as being characterised by fear of crossing the boundaries of their own comfort zones. Peter gave an example of a situation in which a minister could contribute to facilitating integration in a church community,

If there is a primary school rugby game going on, the minister must be there `cause he must know the context ... and that is where he can see where the division between people is. The boys might be playing in the same team, but some people will be sitting on this side of the stand and they would actually refuse to mix with the people on [the other] side and that is where you should be able to draw the line there and say ok, this is the problem and you have to get them back together.

Linda, one of the alumni, was a coloured congregant of a traditionally white Dutch Reformed church and had served on a contract as a temporary minister at that church. She saw herself as 'a bridger of gaps',

I see what has happened in the congregation just because [my husband] and I are present. And that is how gaps between people are bridged. So for my professional life I see myself in a Dutch Reformed Church, but being a link between people. One of my colleagues and I speak of me as a cultural coach. I am his cultural coach, because he's a white man and he doesn't always know what to say, how to say, when to say [something] in certain situations. So I would usually tell him "You know, when there are women are present you cannot say that, you cannot do that. In a coloured or black context, that type of language is not going to work".

As discussed above, bridge-building was a highly valued functioning for Saul Fouché, the DRC minister who spoke of transforming a congregation into an inclusive, safe space for all its members. Bridge-building, fostering inclusivity and promoting interaction between different groups was seen as a struggle by many of the informants because of the legacy of a deeply conservative, patriarchal and racist church. Much of the church leadership and many members were limited by these attitudes and values. Thus to challenge these views required a deep commitment to social change, confidence, assertiveness, perseverance and resilience on the part of a minister.

Some of the students thought theologians should develop the capability to be a 'public theologian'. Public theologians engage in 'taking theology into the public sphere' in areas of public concern. They would contribute to public debate in government or civil society. The students cited the Dutch Reformed minister and anti-apartheid activist, Beyers Naudé⁶⁴, as the earliest practitioner of Public Theology in South Africa. Adele, one of the students, elaborated on this concept, saying there was a need for public theologians who address ethical and moral questions about prominent problems in South Africa, such as corruption. (Adele 12). Sara gave the example of bodies such as the South African Council of Churches, an ecumenical body which was 'really involved at government level and also public places which have an influence on how policies are made in the country'. Public theologians and progressive Church bodies played a significant role in the struggle against apartheid and have played a role in the transition to a democratic government. Theologians such as Desmond Tutu⁶⁵ have been involved in processes aiming to

⁶⁴ Beyers Naudé (1915 to 2004) was a renowned South African anti-apartheid cleric and activist who originally came from a staunchly conservative background as an Afrikaner minister in the Dutch Reformed Church (Villa-Vicencio, 1985, 1995).

⁶⁵ Desmond Tutu was the first black (African) Archbishop of the Anglican Church in South Africa. He was an outspoken anti-apartheid activist and was one of the leading figures in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC was held from 1996 to 2003 with the task of uncovering and documenting the gross human rights violations during apartheid. It aimed to illicit full disclosures from the perpetrators and to provide reparations to the victims of these violations (Krog, 1999).

facilitate reconciliation. Arguably public theologians can make a significant contribution to processes of public deliberation about ethical and moral issues in a young democracy, which is struggling to heal from the wounds of the past and to move forward in a constructive and transformatory way.

3.6.3 Empowering approach

A central aspect of the vision of the Faculty as a whole, including the alumni, was that ministers needed to facilitate the development of poor people for self-reliance rather than creating and perpetuating dependencies. One of the students expressed this as making a difference to people's abilities to fulfil their basic needs 'in a way that they're not dependent on you, but to teach them to be self reliant ... to move forward and develop' (Nico). There was recognition on the part of both students and alumni that traditionally the approach of the Church to community development has been predominantly based on collecting money or food to give handouts to the poor. As two alumni, said, 'the Church is very big on outreach' (Saul). 'There are relationships established but it's a very 'haves' giving to 'have nots'. There isn't a participatory relationship ... It's really handouts, giving, giving...' (Linda).

Most of the students and alumni stated their opposition to this approach. It was evident that their Practical Theology programme had made them aware of these issues and promoted a participatory approach. As David, one of the students, said, 'we really need people to encourage the wider congregation to get the poor to participate in any projects so at the end of the day [they] can help themselves'. Lukas said the role of a minister or church group with regard to community development was to assist [poor people] to face their challenges and their problems head on by themselves'. He said that giving handouts 'might only prolong the condition or the situation in which they find themselves'.

A theme which was strongly expressed by some of the students and alumni was that ministers (or community development professionals) should not impose solutions on poor people and communities. Rather they needed to provide spaces for people to clarify what their needs were and assist them to address their problems. Marie, a student, said that ministers should work with poor people and not 'come from the outside with models that have been worked out by a bunch of rich people sitting in a boardroom and tell them "this is what we're gonna do"'. A minister needed to ask members of communities what they would suggest and to have their own input, so that they are part of the process and not just people who are being developed. Since most of the students had not had direct experience of practising as a minister or doing development work, there was a sense in which they agreed with an empowering approach to community development without fully understanding what it would involve. The alumni who were interviewed had all had experience of either working with poor communities or in the case of Saul working in a congregation where he encouraged the church members to take responsibility for changing the direction of the church.

Linda, the coloured alumnus working for the Dutch Reformed Church argued that going into communities 'is not a right ... it's a privilege'. She said that development professionals tend to 'tell people what their needs are' but it was the people in communities who 'know it best, they know exactly what's going on'. She argued for working with communities to expand the agency of people in these communities to implement the change that was needed,

... so often because of poverty people have been devalued and have devalued themselves and don't remember what their values are. Ja, and just listening to that. Listening to what the intrinsic values of communities are – and then working with what they have.

Through her experience, she had learned 'to always be curious, to always go in [as] a curious outsider but an outsider who participates, who comes with gifts and skills but not to impose'.

André, one of the coloured alumni who were working in very poor, rural communities made a similar point, saying that church leaders tended to 'try too hard to think for the people. ... We so often think that we have the answers for these vulnerable people and we don't really give them space for them to just talk, so that we just listen, so that we just listen to what they need'.

Both Linda and André expressed their role in terms of facilitating people's own personal and spiritual growth. Linda viewed her role in the following way,

... helping people to place their lives in theological frameworks in understanding where God fits into their lives. And that is my job. It's not to give people answers, but it's really to journey with people and to help people find out who God is within the framework of their lives.

André encouraged people 'to take ownership themselves of what we are called to be in the world. ...' He tried 'to help people develop new perspectives on themselves, their situations ...'. These ministers' understandings of their roles could be interpreted in terms of expanding the capability of practical reason of the people whom they worked with. Practical reason is defined by Nussbaum as 'being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life' (Nussbaum, 2000: 79). Nussbaum perceives 'liberty of religious belief, membership and activity' to be among the central human capabilities (ibid, p.179). However citizens should be able to choose whether to pursue religious or non-religious conceptions of the good. She argues that being able to 'search for an understanding of the ultimate meaning of life in one's own way' (ibid) is one of the important aspects of a life that is truly human. Furthermore one of the ways in which this has been done historically is through religious belief and practice.

Both Linda and André emphasise the point that they don't have answers or solutions to impose on people in their faith communities. They speak of the roles in terms of listening, facilitating and encouraging people to take ownership of their lives (which could be interpreted as expanding their sense of agency). While Linda appears to take a more open-ended approach to people's 'journey', one could infer from André's discussion of his role, that he is directing people to take ownership of their lives within a very particular Christian framework of meaning and purpose.

3.6.4 Networking

One of the alumni and a student mentioned the importance of networking. André, the alumnus had found that networking was essential to acquire resources for community development. These included financial resources as well as access to outside expertise, skills and training. He said that there was pressure on him to serve a large, poor community with very few resources. He was 'surrounded by good people with skills,' but he needed to access 'resources that could develop those skills which could then be utilised for the broader community'. While there were such high expectations of a minister in poor communities, 'people don't realise you are just one role player ... you need to network with other people in order to make a difference'.

In addition to a minister establishing and sustaining networks for community development, André saw his role as expanding the capabilities of leaders within the community. 'People have really strong leadership in themselves which just needs to be developed' The impoverished community in which André worked was close to the extremely wealthy Acacia university, and it was necessary for community leaders to network with relevant departments at the university. They needed to understand 'that

the community is not an island, they are part of the global world, if they can just get over that constraint it can help them a lot not only to be in contact with those resources' but also to create a more sustainable approach to community development. He saw part of his role as influencing leaders to work effectively in the interests of the community as people tended to often 'channel their leadership abilities in a negative way by getting involved with their own agendas'.

Adele, one of the students emphasised the need for networking between public good professionals in different development-oriented fields in order to contribute to change, ... so that lawyers don't just do what they think is needed in the country, but that and education and agriculture, everything builds towards the same future, so we need to get communicating with each other, so that we don't just go in one direction as theologians, while others are working towards something totally different, but to really start working together.

3.7 Integrity, honesty, responsibility and accountability

Informants valued a number of capabilities associated with integrity, honesty and responsibility. An aspect of integrity which was emphasised was honesty about one's human fallibility as a minister. Ignatius, a student, said that ministers needed integrity, 'not having that old picture of the minister that's infallible and not capable of sin. People should know that you're human and fallible'. At the same time, she or he 'should strive to be an example'. Linda, an alumnus, said that they needed to be 'real people' as opposed to pious ministers 'who think they know all the answers'. Aidan, a student, felt that ministers and professionals in a pastoral role should relate to poor people in a way that recognised their common humanity. He said 'we all struggle in one aspect or another. My struggles might be more visible whereas yours might not be, but there's a commonality' which needed to be expressed.

Aidan also emphasised the need to be honest with regard to one's limitations, for example not make promises to provide resources, when one may not be able to deliver. He added that ministers or community development professionals should be honest with poor people, who were 'quite street savvy and they are well aware of the reality out there'. He said 'if we go there sugar-coating things' people would be aware of that. A professional should say, 'I come here with certain abilities and I can't promise you beyond that'.

Accountability was referred to in association with responsibility, and was one of the capabilities which the Dean of the Theology Faculty wanted to develop in the students. Students needed to learn to be accountable for their actions and for the stand that they took in relation to social issues. They needed to 'articulate and to account for [their] own position ... not be apologetic about that, but to be affirmative about [their] position and to account for that in respectful ways'. This links to capabilities that were emphasised by Social work informants – integrity, confidence articulation of one's ideas even if they go 'against the grain'. The reference to 'respectful ways' brings up the valued capability of respect and refers to learning appropriate ways of articulating one's position.

Marlene Brink, the Faculty manager recounted a first year student saying that she'd just learnt that 'there are choices ... and you must always be savvy, know that your choices have consequences' (Marlene Brink, Faculty Manager). Students needed to learn that ministers hold power in communities and that their actions influence others. Ministers needed to recognise that they held substantial power in a community. One of the students said that ministers needed to 'use the bible in a responsible way, not to abuse the Gospel and the word of God for your advantage, but actually to use them in a responsible way' (Nico, a student).

Karl, one of the students, argued that white theologians who were working mainly in middle-class, traditionally white communities should be aware of the overall socio-economic and political context that they were located in. He felt that there was, a great responsibility for white theologians ... who end up back in their middle class, suburban or upper class churches, where there's not a lot of poverty or [which are] not always that active in community development. I think there's a great responsibility on them to remain active in it.

He added that this did not only apply to theologians but to professionals generally. He implied that the needed to take responsibility for applying their professional expertise to development in some way. This is a view that has been put forward by a number of the students in the different research sites. It fits with Sen's argument about the obligation of effective power, that 'if someone has the power to make a change that he or she can see will reduce injustice in the world, then there is a strong social argument for doing just that' (Sen, 2008: 335). Karl argued that this sense of responsibility needed to come from an intrinsic source as there was not 'a lot of force from outside to do so'.

4. Educational arrangements

We introduce the section on Educational arrangements with the story of the incorporation⁶⁶ of the Fynbos Theology Faculty into the Acacia Theology Faculty, since this had such a significant impact on the history of the latter.

4.1 Merging of two training faculties – the meeting of two different worlds

In 1999 in the Higher Education sector in South Africa, a process of rationalisation and merging of institutions and programmes began to take place. There had been Theology faculties at both Acacia and Fynbos universities. The Faculty at Acacia provided professional education and training for the Dutch Reformed Church exclusively and the Fynbos Theology Faculty provided this for the Uniting Reformed Church (URCSA). As part of regional rationalisation in the Western Cape, the training programme for URCSA ministers was incorporated into the Theology Faculty at Acacia in 2000. From the mid-eighties the Acacia Faculty had been moving towards a more open approach and a starting to grapple with social transformation issues. (The opening up process started with interaction with other African countries and a diversification of postgraduate students.) The merging of the two faculties in 2000 and the integration of the undergraduate programme was seen by lecturers and alumni as a significant catalyst which intensified the process of transformation of the Faculty.

From its earlier mandate of training white, Dutch Reformed ministers exclusively, it became ecumenical, opening up to students from different faith traditions. Some of the staff members from Fynbos University joined the Acacia Theology Faculty. The student composition diversified in terms of racial composition and socio-economic class. Thus classes became multicultural, multilingual to a limited degree and there was a range of students from wealthy backgrounds and extremely poor students. A parallel process, though not directly linked to the merger, has been the increase of women studying to be ministers. In recounting the story of the merger, lecturers acknowledged the difficulties involved, but they all saw the merger as a landmark event in their history, with huge symbolic significance. They felt that the process had been extremely beneficial for the Faculty in the long term,

Everybody was talking about how are we going to accommodate ... them coming over next year ... the anxiety and the angst was there and I had resistance and

⁶⁶ It may be more accurate to use the term 'incorporation' for the process that took place, but we also refer to it as a process of merging because of the symbolic significance of the integration and mutual influence of the two groups of students.

complaints in my own class ... its not been without pain ...yet it seemed to have happened more smoothly than people anticipated (Marlene Brink, Faculty Manager and lecturer).

Daniel, one of the lecturers, described the merging of the faculties as 'one of the most wonderful things that could have happened to us,' when the Fynbos students 'came and joined forces with us'. He did recognise that the process hadn't been easy, saying 'sometimes it's been quite difficult, because we had to sort out a lot of things, our histories, conflict etc., but I think it was very enriching'. He said that the diversity in the class raised conscious of the white students and helped them to understand poverty more.

Most of the South African black and coloured students who joined the BTh programme came from poor communities. Daniel said there was dialogue in class where students interacted from their different perspectives. He said that consciousness was raised about inequality and poverty. For example, there were Xhosa speaking students from very poor, rural areas, and the lecturers and students could no longer 'talk in an abstract manner about poverty' because these students would tell 'real life stories' about their experience of poverty.

The lecturers tended to talk about the merger in glowing terms, to the extent that new lecturers who had not experienced this event themselves, spoke about it in a reverent manner. The biographical journeys of the lecturers who were interviewed were outside of the scope of our research. However the central narrative was one of individuals and a collective (the Faculty) who were by in large open to and positive about the changes in the country. One can infer that within the university context, and possibly within the church context, these changes were happening slowly. The merger of the training institutions within the Faculty, accelerated that process of change and forced the Faculty to engage with it concretely.

Three of the four alumni who were interviewed had been among the first cohort of black students entering the Faculty at an undergraduate level. They focused on the difficulty of the process for them but reinforced the view of the lecturers about their role in transforming the Faculty.

Niels, an alumnus and minister in a poor, rural community, reflected on the experience of joining the Acacia Faculty,

When we came there we came with certain baggage, from a certain background. And the white guys from the NG Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church) that were there had their baggage; and in the end I think our coming from Fynbos to Acacia showed them a little bit of our world and we experienced a little bit of their world.

He provided some concrete examples of how the inequalities between the two groups of students manifested themselves in their interactions,

None of us who came from Fynbos University had a car, and in the winter Acacia is wet and cold. And all of us were living in the same hostel, half an hour's walk from the Faculty. And in the morning when it came to the class all the Uniting Reformed Church people will have rain coats and they were wet and they were hanging their umbrellas outside. The NG Kerk will sit there high and dry [laughs]. And in the end we had a chat and then they experienced some of the things we had to experience. For instance, the way we talked about our expenses, the things we had to cover with money – the way they talked was totally different. In the end something happened and I realised that my grandmother with her pension kept me at university. ... I made the discovery that we are coming from two different worlds.

Linda, a coloured alumnus who started her BTh in 2000, had initially experienced 'a lot of racial tension' in her class. She described the merger as 'a risk that both faculties took

and it was a risk worth taking. So just the fact that they'd taken the risk helped us to form Theology'. She argued that having to confront the tensions enriched the ability of students to 'deepen their Theology'. From the comments of the staff it appeared that the merger had influenced the conceptualisation of Theology within the Faculty broadly.

Linda was critical about the content of the Practical Theology programme that she had experienced, saying 'the content of the course didn't always help, but the fact that we were there helped'. She also gave her insight into the process of integration that took place, and how it had happened. In her opinion it was not through facilitated processes in class, but through informal interactions amongst the students. She said that lecturers would facilitate processes to mediate the tensions in the class, but 'the facilitated process would always just lead to more tension'. The intention of these processes as she perceived them was for 'everyone to ... lay their hearts on the table – and that's not where things happened'. After some time, the students and lecturers came to understand that 'the conflict in class is not bad. It's a good thing; we get things out. It's necessary conflict ... we were honest about it at least'.

Linda said that the spaces where integration took place were the informal spaces, and it did not include all the students,

Things happened when after class we would go and drink a coffee or a beer and then people would really get to know each other. Students started reaching out to each other. It was not the facilitated processes; it was inviting each other to each other's homes that made the difference ... It wasn't forced. And for some of the students it happened once we'd left the Faculty and we realised we cannot work [in isolation]. We need each other to be able to work together.

Linda's account draws attention to the agency of the students in facilitating integration and interaction across race and class lines. A strong case of students' initiating change was related to the ordination or legitimisation event in which graduates of the professional programme are ordained as ministers. Initially there were separate legitimisation ceremonies for the URCSA and DRC students, based on a difference in the practices of the two Churches. A few years after the merger, the students who were to be ordained insisted on having a joint ceremony, which has since become standard practice.

The opening of the Theology Faculty to a more diverse group of students meant that it had to confront the issue of medium of instruction which had previously been only Afrikaans. As, Jan, a lecturer said, 'diversity became a reality, suddenly we can't only teach in Afrikaans, we've got to switch the whole time because there's students that do not understand Afrikaans'. Acacia's language policy has been a controversial issue with the central tension between interest groups wishing to sustain and promote Afrikaans and those who think that the dominance of Afrikaans excludes a large majority of South African students who are not fluent in Afrikaans. There are two main models of instruction, parallel medium where streams of English and Afrikaans lectures are run on the same topic and dual medium, where Afrikaans and English are used intermittently in the same lecture as medium of instruction.

The Theology faculty decided to use a dual medium approach, which was handled in quite an informal way. This was possible because of the small student numbers. Daniel, a lecturer, said that the use of language depended on the profile of the class. He said, if there are people who cannot understand Afrikaans, we will do this in a way that they can follow. So we will mostly do it in English or some of the stuff in Afrikaans on the board or whatever way around. So we've developed a policy of language inclusivity as far as possible. We don't have separate classes, it was decided against that.

Jan described it as 'second nature' in the faculty to teach 'in both languages to make sure your students understand'.

There is no doubt about the significance of the merger and the contribution of the meeting and interaction of two different worlds to the transformation of the Theology Faculty. It provided a catalyst for the Faculty to confront some of the realities of their emerging vision of their role within their own workplace and classrooms. It made an impact on teaching and learning and on the Faculty institutional culture. It led to a far richer experience for the students who were undertaking the Masters in Divinity and the Licentiate in Theology (Ministerial practice), which were required to be ordained as a minister. However, from the interviews with the 2008 group of fourth year students, there was a sense that in their period of undergraduate study (from 2005 to 2008) there may have been some complacency in elements of their teaching and learning experience which took place in the years after the pioneering group of students had moved on.

4.2 Curriculum

The Practical Theology programme has been through significant changes since 2000, which can be tracked through the data from the various informants. The alumni provided insights into the curriculum between 2000 and 2004. The 4th year students interviewed in 2008 provided data about their experience of the programme. We were also informed about changes to the Practical Theology programme at the first year level in 2008. This data was not triangulated with student data as we did not interview 2008 first year students.

4.2.1 Early implementation of Practical Theology course

The Practical Theology course was a long established part of the BTh curriculum. It aims to lay a basis for the practical aspects of the work of a minister, and includes subjects such as preaching, pastoral care and congregation studies, and more in recent years, community development and youth work⁶⁷. In the late 1990s the Faculty employed Jakob Steyn, a coloured minister and academic, specifically to 'to give the faculty a more social direction [and to train students] in social analysis and community interaction'. He introduced a course on Community Development into the Practical Theology and it has developed into a sub-discipline of Practical Theology.

The three alumni who had started their BTh degrees at Acacia University in 2000 were highly critical about the Practical Theology course during their undergraduate studies. One of the main areas of dissatisfaction was that the Practical Theology course was not located in a South African context. It was based on a model which emphasised the role of the 'minister in a congregation' rather than a pastoral role. The curriculum was based on an American model, and according to Linda 'didn't train [the students] to be ministers in the South African context ...'. She said there was an idealised view of ministerial practice in which 'you would have to have certain things in place in order to be an excellent minister' who would be able to do his or job effectively. This caused tension for the 'students who felt that they weren't trained to be a pastor in the really poverty stricken communities, where the structure was just never in place'.

Niels Landsman, an alumnus who was a minister in a poor, rural community, commented that the materials used were American 'and the complaint we had [was that] America is not South Africa, different backgrounds, different people, different in the way they think. Why not a South African book? And the simple answer was there weren't any'. Linda added that 'the process wasn't facilitated for [the students] to form theology with a South African context'.

4.2.2 Balance of theory and practice in the programme

⁶⁷ At first year level, Practical Theology is one of six courses in the BTh programme.

Much of the discussion of the curriculum focussed on the balance between theory and practice in the Theology programme. There was evidence of the overly theoretical nature of the curriculum in the experience of the cohort starting in 2000, as well as the 4th year students who were interviewed in 2008. However as Jan Hofmeyr, a lecturer observed, the Practical Theology curriculum was currently being transformed to include a far stronger practical component so that theory could be contextualised in relation to practical experience.

André van Wyk, one of the alumni, expressed the view that the Practical Theology course had not been successful at that time at helping students to integrate theory with practice. He said that in his experience of professional practice when 'you're confronted with issues that you struggle with...you are not prepared for that anywhere'. He said that in the curriculum, 'we did do a bit of community development from a theological perspective, but it was pure, cold theory'. He said that students tended to have a 'romantic idea about the ministry' but 'you don't just walk into the community as a Minister and then just think that you will make a difference'. He thought that there were ample opportunities in the area surrounding the town of Acacia, for students to be exposed to development projects,

[The Faculty should make use of these opportunities] to equip us better for when you go into Ministry, how to steer such a project for instance in the broader community, for the church ... Things like community projects, care of HIV/AIDS people, vegetable gardens, assisting people on the farms with basic rights, with basic knowledge, employment projects ... At the end of the day that will also empower us with certain skills and how to utilise that in the community that we are going to serve.

Many of the 2008 cohort of fourth year students indicated that during their period of study there was still very little practical component to the BTh curriculum. There was a practical experience scheduled for the third term of the fourth year which had not yet taken place at the time of the interviews. Aletta, one of the students said that she while she understood that a university focussed 'on our intellectual thinking and academic side', she criticised the fact that there wasn't enough practical experience integrated into the curriculum. 'We are training to become ministers, so it's not only about sitting at a desk with books'. She said that she and some of her classmates had had a lot of practical experience through involvement in church groups, which they had joined out of their own initiative.

In 2007 and 2008, the Theology faculty started introducing service learning components into some of their courses. Service learning is a pedagogical approach which integrates teaching and learning experiences with community involvement. It is being strongly promoted at Acacia University, as part of their drive to advance social engagement as one of the three pillars of their core activities.

In 2008 a six-month service learning course was introduced into the Practical Theology curriculum. According to Jan Hofmeyr, the lecturer in charge, the course is introductory and aims to give the students 'a practical theological framework in which they can start to interpret culture, the needs of people within different communities and look at the different ways in which faith communities operate'. In this course the students are required to do a fairly simple investigation of a faith community in which they are involved primarily to find out what the needs of the faith community are. The needs which come up differ amongst the different communities, but many of the communities are dealing with poverty and problems like HIV/AIDS. The course also provides an opportunity for students to learn about different aspects of Christian practice, such as 'people coming together in small groups to worship' and 'service to the community'.

4.3 Pedagogy

4.3.1 Challenging belief systems and fostering critical thinking

There was a common view amongst the 2008 fourth-year students that they were exposed to a range of perspectives in their courses and that their lecturers encouraged them to be critical, open-minded and independent thinkers. In the programme, students' belief systems and preconceptions were challenged and they were challenged to reflect on their own viewpoints and attitudes. Students reflected on changes that they had undergone which were facilitated by pedagogical practices in the BTh programme. Nico said 'you come here with a lot of views and perspectives on what you want to do, conceptions of what theology is about and what the ministry's about and then you get here and you start to realise that what you actually thought it is beforehand, is not exactly what it is'. In the programme, sheltered white students had to engage with difficult issues such as poverty. As Karl said 'we deal with these issues that really eat at you, so studying theology has really changed our perspectives on many things. It's hard to walk out of here not being changed at all'.

All students were encouraged to develop a more complex and nuanced understanding and religious issues and social problems. As Aidan put it,
you don't have a situation that's black and white ... there're a lot of grey areas In those grey areas there's ... room for creativity to come forth ... When something is cut and dry, black and white, there's no real struggle, 'cause it's clear, but in the grey area there's a struggle, there has to be a self examination on your own viewpoints and other people's viewpoints and what the church teaches and how to make sense of all of that and so I think it opens up your mind definitely to different perspectives.

Students were challenged to position themselves in relation to difficult issues. According to Aletta, the lecturers confronted them 'with different theories and different opinions and raised questions which gave the students a responsibility to think through them and decide "Now where am I on this, where do I stand?"'. She said they had been challenged to think through issues during the programme which she had not thought about before. Marie had been raised in a very strict, judgemental Calvinistic home and through studying Theology she had become much less judgemental than she used to be about moral issues. She said 'now I really just think that you can't judge, you should try to live as well as you can, but you don't have the right to judge anybody else'. She expressed her openness to learning which had been reinforced by her Theology studies. She said that she had learned that 'you can't have all the answers and that you never reach a point where you're not able to still learn something'.

Some of the students identified the first and second years of study as the place where their belief systems had been most challenged. Peter gave an example of Old Testament studies, saying 'you've being taught things for twenty years and now suddenly a lecturer walks into a class and says 'You know what, Daniel was never in the lions den, it's a folk myth, it's a tale they told in Exodus to get people's morale up' and you sit there and [think] I based my religion on that'.

4.3.2 Experiential learning and reflective practice

The service learning courses introduced above were based on an experiential learning approach, linked closely to a 'reflective practitioner' model (Schön, 1983). Jan Hofmeyr, a lecturer, said that students were required to 'link what [they] did immediately during that week in practice ... be it through a mentor or having a conversation with a person on an individual basis',

... there's a conversation the whole time so that when they come back and they give feedback, they've also got to write down what they experience there and bring it back to class – you've got a theory-practice interaction the whole time. So you put the theory on the table and then they go and experience it and come back and

reflect whether the theory is sound or whether they experience different things from what the theory is teaching.

Jan described another service learning activity in the Masters of Divinity programme. In this case he took students to an informal settlement of people who had been farmworkers, had then become redundant and had been evicted from the farms. The purpose of the visit was for students to get exposure and develop some understanding of 'what does it mean to live in circumstances like that'. They did structured interviews with residents and community leaders, asking questions like 'what's life like in an informal settlement? In what ways can faith communities help you?' He aimed to get students thinking about 'what can you as a theological student and one day a person in a leadership role within a faith community do in this context?'

Jan aimed to raise theoretical questions for students to consider in the light of this practical experience,

What theoretical insights can we use from the Humanities? And then specifically being theological students what theological insights do we get from our normative sources which are the tradition and the scriptures? And then strategically what can we do to change circumstances?

4.3.3 Cultivating imagination

Like Nussbaum, Maxine Greene (1995: 1), values the role of imagination and engaging with narrative as a means of for individuals to determine their 'relationship to some idea of the good'. She argues that 'of all our cognitive capacities, imagination is the one that permits us to give credence to alternative realities. It allows us to break with the taken for granted, to set aside familiar distinctions and definitions' (ibid: 3).

Jan Hofmeyr described the study of the scriptures as a process of interpretation of narratives. He said that in the Biblical Studies courses, the lecturers were 'not only trying to teach the students to know the different narratives in scripture'. Rather they believed that 'the scriptures, in this case of the Christian tradition and Christian theology, do paint, imaginative alternatives' to the beliefs and practices of people in the societies in which they were set. He added that interpretations of the scriptures and an interpretive approach to history and text influenced all the other theological subjects, including Practical Theology. For example, the Faculty's approach to Church history was based on an approach that encouraged 'different ways of working with tradition and re-interpreting history', and listening to the voices that you've never heard before. For example, students were encouraged] 'to see history ... from other perspectives than [just] from the side of the powerful'. Imagination played an important role in 'listening to the voices of women in scripture or in history, or the marginalised' which tended to be silenced in traditional theological interpretations. Another example was the subject of systematic theology, which included the study of various theologies such as liberation theology or feminist theology which posed 'imaginative alternatives to the traditional theologies'.

Jan believed that it was imagination that enabled people to envision a new reality, and the transition from existing conditions to a reality closer to the ideal. The transition was not 'overnight' and imaginative vision enabled the 'movement from where we are to where we think we ought to be' in ongoing interaction with the context within which one was located. The interactions with people from poor communities in the service learning courses, depending on how they are facilitated, can provide opportunities for the students to enhance their capability for narrative imagination, to 'imagine that situation of another and to have compassion for that situation' (Nussbaum, 2000: 79).

Jan described a workshop which he included in the Masters in Divinity (MDiv) programme, which had rich potential for cultivating narrative imagine of the emerging

ministers. This was a 'Healing of Memories' workshop which was conducted by the Healing of Memories Institute. These workshops enable those who have been affected by apartheid from diverse groups and contexts to tell their stories. They are taken through a process where they experience a safe space in which to access painful memories, tell their stories and are guided through a process of interacting with these stories and memories by experienced facilitators (Kayser, 2000). According to Jan, many of these stories related to 'poverty and economic injustice'.

4.3.4 Discussions and debates

Both lecturers and students emphasised the value of the discussion and debates which formed a significant part of Practical Theology. Jakob Steyn, head of department of Practical Theology, described classroom discussion of material as a common approach in the department. He said that students had 'stretch their minds to apply [theory to different scenarios] ... and that they would thrash it out'. Lecturers, students and alumni referred to discussions about poverty and inequality in society, the role of ministers in the church and community. They also spoke about relational aspects of dialogue and the growth and individual transformation that could be facilitated through dialogue.

Sara, one of the students spoke about a class discussion on leadership. Towards the end of the discussion, the lecturer concluded that in South Africa ministers needed to be leaders who were 'committed to the community in which they live and where real problems and issues can be sorted out and be dealt with within a community in a safe space and with people really engaged with one another'. He/she argued that these issues needed to be raised and engaged with 'not only on media level, on government level, but really on ground level'. She said that she had not considered leadership in this way before and it had 'hit home'.

Daniel, a lecturer, felt it was important to engage with sensitive issues in class discussion, bring them into the open and confront and engage with other students' views. He said that this would cause conflict sometimes,

Actually we want that, we want people not to sidestep the issues but to talk. We've got a whole module on conflict management where sometimes the debates get heated ... The person lecturing will open up sensitive issues concerning poverty, race, gender ... sexual orientation, you can name it, because we want to stimulate dialogue, we want to bring this out into the open and we want these people together when we dialogue about that.

The students' appreciated the way this particular lecturer facilitated discussion and opened up space for them to grapple with sensitive issues and enhance their capability for critical engagement. 'He encouraged growth, whereas other people, where you would raise an argument or a concern or so and it would just be shut down, just talked around it ... and if we're going to start talking around problems, then nothing is ever going to get solved' (Lukas). One of the students made a contrasting observation about her experience of class discussions,

I wish that the lecturers could help us to be made aware of the challenges and issues that we face right now within our class, within the people that we have sitting right in front of us. I often feel that it's all about how you will become a minister, but that you should instead be made aware of [how to relate to other people] right now in this context. I think as you look around you're thinking of a problem [which] you're going to change, but we're not made aware that the same things that we're talking about on a big scale, are actually in the same scale in our class. I mean sometimes you would notice that there would be a line of white people on one side and coloured people on another side and the separations that we experience in the macro world, we see here, but we're not aware of them (Inez).

4.3.5 Role models provided by lecturers

Adele, one of the students spoke warmly of her lecturers in Acacia university, including those in the Theology Faculty. She said that her lecturers had influenced 'not just [the students'] way of thinking, but a way of being, somebody to aspire to'. She valued 'the way that they treat us ... as people with intelligence who can think for themselves and can ask and answer questions'. She said this 'gives you a sense of identity and ... inspires me to go and give that to somebody else as well, when I go and work in a community'.

Students in two of the focus groups spoke of one of their lecturers as a role model of how they should behave as a professional. Peter observed that the lecturer was 'a world renowned professor, he's brilliant in what he does, but yet he comes into the class and he's a human being. You sit here and feel so welcome in these surroundings and despite age, race, colour, gender, he treats everybody equally'. The lecturer gave them 'room to grow academically and otherwise' (Karl).

The students noted that there were also long established lecturers who maintained the conservative views which had characterised the Faculty in the past. As one of the students put it, 'you sit in their classes and you still get this faint aftertaste of apartheid in your mouth' (Peter).

It was important for students to have black lecturers as role models. The Faculty's recruitment of Jakob Steyn in 1998, to set up programmes on Community Development, was seen as significant by a number of informants. In 2007, the Faculty still have a significant majority of white lecturers (69%), while 23% of the lecturers were coloured and 8% were African (Acacia University Institutional Research and Planning Office). It was symbolically highly significant for the University that the Vice Chancellor was black, and the Theology Faculty was particularly proud because he had previously worked in the Faculty.

4.4 Cultural ethos of the Faculty

We have discussed the orientation of the Faculty towards social transformation, the drive toward building a Faculty which is engaged with society based on the belief that Theology can make a difference to society. Lecturers highlighted the Faculty's concern with poverty reduction and the value attached to human dignity of all people. The Dean and the lecturers valued what they perceived to be the growing diversity in the Faculty. This was highlighted by the Dean with regard to consciously building an ethos in the Faculty of recognition of diversity, tolerance and respect.

The Dean spoke of 'embracing', 'celebrating' and 'encouraging' diversity and argued that there was tremendous potential within the faculty to build this culture further. The Dean and other informants spoke of diversity in relation to culture, language, race, religion, church denominations, gender and sexuality. She argued that this needed to be done by 'creating spaces where people could account for who they are or what they believe, what they stand for' amidst the plurality in the Faculty and broader society,

We're really taking trouble and time to create these safe spaces and assist people in developing the skills to participate in unthreatened ways. We regard the teaching space, the classroom, very highly as the primary space for developing all these values and skills and arts because I feel that good communication and interaction is actually an art, it's more than a skill.

However transformation of the Faculty is an ongoing process and as Jakob Steyn, the coloured HOD of Practical Theology noted 'Every day we still have to struggle together [and] nothing can be taken for granted'. He said that at times he was concerned about dynamics in staff meetings, but that he felt free to talk to the Dean about these issues.

'Sometimes she'll say 'ok, we'll look at that again' or sometimes she might tell me, 'you're overreacting again Jakob''. He conceded that he did have a sensitivity to what could be racially founded comments, saying, 'given my past, I must guard against these things'.

The Dutch Reformed Church used to consist of white, male ministers until the early nineties when they began to allow women to be ordained. The Faculty had already been training women before that time, although they could not be ordained to practise as ministers (Marlene Brink, faculty manager). Marie, one of the female students who was in the Dutch Reformed Church said that in theory women were accepted as ministers 'but in practice if you go to more rural areas, then the people are still very conservative, they will definitely frown on that'. Linda, the female alumnus in the Dutch Reformed Church, spoke about how difficult it was for her to get a permanent post as a minister and Marie said that 'when women do get full-time positions, it's usually not as a full minister, it would be like a youth work post or specialising in pastoral counselling'. Marie said that in the Faculty they tried to make the students sensitive to gender issues. She said, 'we had a module on feminist studies and I think most people are open to women in the ministry'. However she mentioned that some of the male students made jokes that subtly undermined women. 'It's always in jest but ... underneath I think most people still have a problem with it'.

There were a number of references to events that were held in the faculty. The Dean referred to 'monthly events where students and staff participate in open discussions during the lunch hours where the students actually dictate the agenda'. Jakob Steyn, the HOD of Practical Theology and Sara, one of the students referred to the annual lecture given in honour of Beyers Naudé. These events were, interdisciplinary and open to all students. One of the lectures which was extremely well-attended been given by the previous Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a prominent anti-apartheid activist who has been mentioned in the Professional capabilities section above.

There was a culture of critical reflection and review of practice in the Faculty. This was evident in evaluation processes which were conducted. The Faculty reviewed their research and teaching programme as part of a national institutional audit in 2005, and before that there was an in-depth external evaluation of the Faculty's programme. Reflection and curriculum development has also been encouraged by the university's service learning programme. The findings of the reviews have contributed to an ongoing process of curriculum change, which is reflected in the data collected regarding the different phases in the curriculum. It was noted that a number of the concerns of the alumni about the lack of practical component in the Practical Theology course, were being addressed in 2007 – 2008. Another example of the responsiveness of the Faculty related to the lack of focus on community work with youth and children, which two of the alumni had pointed out. Independently, the Faculty Manager had indicated that youth development was one of the areas that the Faculty was expanding.

At Acacia University, there is a culture of student involvement in extramural community development work mainly through church or residence groups. This was evident amongst Engineering students as well as Theology students. We do not know what the nature of this community development work is and what type of relationships are being established, apart from the fact that there is an underlying Christian motivation. Adele's description below, does show that this type of involvement can provide students with opportunities for being proactive and creative at the same time as being exposed to realities in the township and forming relationships with people from poor black communities.

Adele recalled a programme which her church group ran in a poor, African township close to the university. She said that when the children of [the township] were on

holiday in December 'they have nothing to do, nowhere to go' and her church group decided to run a programme to 'entertain the kids',

In the mornings we [worked] with the small children - about four hundred kids that came every day speaking no English, no Afrikaans. But it's amazing, you just do a puppet show and one day you [teach them] about the environment and then you teach them how to grow a plant and you give them one. In the evenings we worked with the teenagers and there we had bible studies. [We stayed in the township] for three weeks and we were fortunate enough to work with the high school. So twenty of their learners ... worked with us and they were translators. So one of the Acacia students and one of the school learners worked together in a team.

We end this section with some of the lecturers' reflections on the contribution of the Theology education and training programme to formation of Public good theologians. Jakob Steyn, the Head of the Practical Theology Department believed that the Faculty was contributing to change in the Dutch Reformed Church, through engagement with the Church and training of students who were critical, knowledgeable about the South African context and committed to the public good. He said that over the last ten years 'we can see now that the church is more aware and willing because ministers are working at these things'. The new ministers who were entering the church were 'getting engaged in projects ... they're not existing for themselves any longer, they're really trying'. He felt that the Uniting Reformed Church had always been committed to the poor,

In the Uniting Reformed Church it's always been the case because it's the church of the poor. We're amongst the poor and doing our best and it was just about sharpening and giving the people the tools which they never had [such as abilities in management and sociological understandings] but now we have given it to them through the theology and development programmes.

It is clear that white ministers in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) need to transform themselves in order to contribute to the public good. However, arguably black and coloured ministers from poor communities in the Uniting Reformed Church (URCSA) also need to go through transformation processes. We have mentioned that URCSA like the DRC was historically rooted in a patriarchal, racist system, and the capabilities of ministers in this tradition would need to be expanded in order to work in a transformatory way. Furthermore alumni indicated that there were still unequal dependency relationships between the DRC and URCSA, which URCSA ministers needed to be able to challenge.

Lecturers and alumni were concerned about the impact that theologians could have on transforming the Church, facilitating the engagement of the Church with political, economic and social issues, both outside and within church structures. Lecturers in the Faculty hoped for students to be able to bridge gaps in relation to race, socio-economic class and church denominations.

Daniel le Roux emphasised how students in the Faculty had come to support each other and strive for unity across barriers of race, class and denomination. He hoped that the values and relationships which were being developed at university would filter through to changes in the Church and communities. He said that the Faculty was trying to form a generation of theologians who would understand issues of transformation in South Africa, particularly with regard to poverty,

[They were trying to develop ministers who] by way of Christian leadership, whether it's in a congregation, or an NGO or wherever ... can really make a difference [and contribute to social transformation] in the broadest sense of the word.

5. Concluding comments

In this case study we found that the Theology Faculty at Acacia University had a strong and coherent vision about the need for social transformation and poverty reduction and the role of theologians within this. We identified a range of capabilities valued by informants which were needed to contribute to poverty reduction. The Faculty staff emphasised practice contextualised within South African realities and an inclusive Faculty culture, which embraced diversity. The alumni articulated understandings of poverty reduction as expansion of capability of poor people (although not in these words). Their understandings were informed by life experience and work experience mainly after completion of their studies.

Practical Theology, the undergraduate course which we focused on, was dominated by theory and had few *practical* opportunities for students to develop valued capabilities and functionings. (It appears that the Masters in Divinity and particularly the Licentiate which were needed for ordination as a minister, were the main sites for experiential learning in the programme). However, the Faculty has engaged in substantial processes of evaluation and review, and the Practical Theology course has strengthened through curriculum review and development. Service learning courses have been introduced, starting in first year, which provide opportunities for involvement with people from poor communities and academic reflection on this. The fourth-year students whom we interviewed had experienced a highly theoretical curriculum. Moreover, many of them were from white, sheltered backgrounds. They spoke about the need for transformation, poverty reduction, and community empowerment, but in most cases their ideas were not grounded in practical experience. Some of the students had clearly had experience of working with poor people and communities, in many cases through church outreach work. One of the white students, in particular, was highly articulate and insightful, and involved in processes of reflection on her identity as an Afrikaans white South African in relation to apartheid history.

Two of the alumni who were interviewed were working in extremely poor, rural communities and it seemed that their studies in Theology had expanded their intellectual and interpretive capabilities and encouraged a form of practice aimed at building self-reliance and capability expansion of poor people and communities. They too were critical about the lack of opportunities for practical experience in the Theology training. The alumni who were working in historically white church communities were committed to building diverse communities and encouraging openness to diversity and engagement with social realities that were previously ignored and shut out by these churches. Furthermore they took responsibility for shifting dominant understandings of poverty amongst their middle-class congregants, encouraging an approach which respected the needs of poor people for dignity, respect and the building of resources and self-reliance. Thus in the case of these informants there was a strong congruence between the capabilities and functionings of the alumni and the vision and values of the Faculty.

A central happening in the story of the transformation of the Faculty was the incorporation of the Fynbos University's training facility for URCSA students into the Theology faculty at Acacia University. This incorporation or merger and the ensuing tensions, challenges and changes are seen by the staff and alumni to have had positive and transformatory impact on the Faculty. The Faculty staff present glowing accounts of this process and its impact, while also acknowledging the difficulties that were encountered. The coloured students, who experienced the incorporation from the point of view of outsiders coming in to the institution, recount the difficulties that they experienced and communicate more critical views of how the students from different worlds began to engage with each other.

The Theology Faculty is still far from representative of the demographic population of South African society. Yet the powerful impact of the merging of the two training facilities on the Faculty's process of transformation, underlines the significance of

diversity in the classroom for developing capabilities to be a change agent. The drama of the merging process is heightened in the story because of the small and contained undergraduate grouping of students and the conservative history of the Faculty. We are provided with a view into this microcosm of a larger process of change in historically deeply conservative institutions (university and church). Finally, this case study highlights the inner processes that individuals need to go through and the need to confront the 'bitter knowledge' inside all who have lived in a damaged society. It indicates that the agency to contribute to societal change is inextricably linked to the capability to transform oneself.

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1. Introduction: Law, Transformation and Social Justice in South Africa

'Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is a protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life' (Nelson Mandela).

By its very definition, law entails a concern with justice for individuals. Yet the relationship between justice and levels of poverty and inequality in society is contested⁶⁸. If our understanding of poverty incorporates social justice, rights and freedoms, as well as levels of resources, then lawyers play an absolutely key role in reducing poverty in South Africa. This is particularly the case if levels of resources, opportunities and rights can be seen as a matter of distributive and recognitional justice and transformation (Sen, 2009; Nussbaum, 2006; Akintayo 2007).

Yet the legal system has had an ambiguous role in South Africa's recent social justice trajectory. Under apartheid, the law was one of the key instruments for enforcing separation and different levels of civic freedoms and economic and social resources; and lawyers, prosecutors and judges were central to the implementation of apartheid policies. However, some lawyers also actively defied the apartheid regime (see for example, Abel, 1995; Dugard, 1978), arguing that violations of human rights were occurring in pass laws, forced removals, denationalization through the imposition of 'homeland' independence, and the destruction of community life⁶⁹. A number of organisations in South Africa, such as Lawyers for Human Rights (1979), the Black Lawyers Association, the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADEL), and the Legal Resources Centre, were set up under apartheid and were important in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Today, these organisations continue to work in the sphere of law and human rights.

Indeed, it can be argued that the practice of law is inherently in the public good (as many respondents indicated they felt, detailed in Section 3). In a speech to the Routledge-Modise Law School in Johannesburg in September 2008, Justice Kate O'Regan drew on Antony Kronman's theory that one of the main characteristics identifying the practice of Law is that it is directly concerned with the public good. Lawyers have a responsibility to foster the legal system and the rule of law; at times, this might require them to suggest new laws or legislations; at other times, it might require them to criticise judgments which may not appear correct; at other times, they may need to protect the rule of law itself (O'Regan, 2009). Yet many in the profession working for social justice perceive there to be a lack of such an orientation in lawyers today. Judge Mohamed Navsa, former chairperson of the South African Human Rights Commission, recently said,

There is a growing perception that in spite of South Africa's having one of the best Constitutions in the world; its legal practitioners are losing their social consciences. Whereas the Constitution has created many opportunities for the use of law to promote social justice and democracy, there are probably fewer

⁶⁸ The distinction between individual and social justice is explored further in Section 5.

⁶⁹ Dugard, a South African human rights lawyer, pointed out that under apartheid the legal system excluded 70% of the population from the franchise, excluded 70% of the people from owning 87% of the land in the country, deprived 8 million people of their nationality, forcibly relocated millions of people on account of their race, and formally executed 160 people each year (Dugard, 1978: 59-60).

lawyers practising in this area than was the case under apartheid. We must return to an ethos that existed at a time when lawyers were resisting and fighting apartheid (quoted in Sarkin, 2002).

Taking a multidimensional definition of poverty entails two key roles for law in the fight for social justice and transformation. First, a multidimensional approach defines poverty and disadvantage not only in material terms but also including a lack of civil and political rights (such as voting, the right to fair trial, freedom of speech etc), either in the sense that these rights are not guaranteed by the state, or that they are not enforced or realisable at that time (Wolff and de Shalitt, 2007). The elimination of poverty, therefore, entails that people should be guaranteed their rights by the state and legal system; be aware of these civil, political, social and economic rights; and be able to use and access the relevant legal institutions.

Indeed, one of the NGO workers interviewed for this study, Felicity Green, stated that one of the most important comprehensive capabilities for the population was understanding the law,

Having a general comprehension of the law: I think that's critical. That kind of informs the relations that we have in society and our obligations and the state's obligations. It's the glue that keeps it together, and people don't understand the law; they don't understand their rights at an absolute basic level – not understanding their rights it means they can't respect those rights and they can't access those rights.

However, there can be many barriers to people realising these rights, given the high levels of poverty in the country. For example, the inability to afford legal assistance is common; in these cases, legal aid clinics like the one at Fynbos play a particularly important role in enabling people to take a case to court⁷⁰. Moreover, insufficient knowledge of the law and their rights frequently hinders people in gaining access to the legal system. Low quality and levels of schooling in South Africa, coupled with a variety of different languages means that many people may not be aware of their rights; for example, leaving them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by employers. This is also especially the case with socio-economic rights as outlined in the Bill of Rights; a 2002 study by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) revealed that 69.5% of South Africans had either not heard of or did not know the purpose of the Bill of Rights (Open Society Foundation, 2005: 108-109). Also, they may not be so aware of possibilities and potentials of political involvement and activity.

The second key role law can have if a multidimensional understanding of poverty is employed, is that the law can guarantee economic and social rights, which relate to levels of resources and services, and which are also key to poverty reduction (see, for example, Tomasevski, 2005). At international level this has been recognised; Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states,

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

⁷⁰ The high financial cost of legal proceedings constitutes a significant barrier to realising equal access to justice. Without legal aid, legal advice is unaffordable to the average household in South Africa; in 2000, for example, the average black household income was R47.10 per day, meaning it would take a week's income to afford an hour's consultation with an attorney (Open Society Foundation for South Africa, 2005: 114). A single person with an income not exceeding R600 per month is currently eligible for legal aid (As, 2005: 57). For further discussion of financial barriers to access to justice, see the Open Society Foundation for South Africa (2005: 110-117).

Other international declarations have also addressed economic and social rights, including the World Conference on Human Rights (1993); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); and the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996).

South Africa's legal system also recognises economic and social rights. The progressive Bill of Rights (1996) guarantees, in principle, economic and social rights, as well as political and civic rights. This makes it unique in Africa: it is the legal system with the most comprehensive array of constitutionally guaranteed socio-economic rights. As the distribution of resources, opportunities and rights in South Africa remains skewed from the legacy of apartheid, through the Bill of Rights lawyers can have an important role in redistribution. For example, in *Government of the Republic of South Africa v Grootboom*, 145 section 26 (1) provision of access to adequate housing of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of South Africa (the Constitution) was invoked in favour of the homeless respondents in that case. The South African Constitutional Court made a declaration that that government's housing programmes did not pass the test of reasonableness and ordered the government to endeavour to make housing accessible to the respondents (Akintayo, 2007: 32).

One of the NGO workers interviewed for this study, Hazel Smith, felt that the constitution itself was cause for optimism that social transformation could occur, the constitution because it is unique in the fact that it *requires* transformation, it's not something that's optional....And I think that that's something that as a consequence, gives the opportunities for legal advocacy in South Africa a lot greater scope than possibly in any other country [emphasis added].

The Bill of Rights is no doubt a significant step in terms of guaranteeing individual rights guarantees. However, as the examples in the previous paragraph show, whether or not such cases are brought forwards depends on levels of political will and *collective* struggle to bring these rights to reality. As recent unrest in poor neighbourhoods has shown, despite the Bill of Rights, many basic services have still not been delivered to poor areas⁷¹. This divergence between law and reality is a pressing issue; Liebenberg (2005) uses the capability approach to argue that the South African state must address the current deprivation of basic human needs from the point of view that for equality of capabilities, people require equal dignity.

The lack of political will is compounded by the fact that, given the recent history of apartheid, and the continued divisions between rich and poor, the legal system can seem distant, confusing and oppressive to people from disadvantaged communities. For the Deputy Dean, lawyers can be part of transformation by facilitating a solid and trusting relationship between the state, the law, and the people. Thus enabling someone from a disadvantaged community, who may not have identity documents or a birth certificate, who lives outside of the law and views it with some suspicion, to become a legal citizen, is an essential part of transformation. They can then see that the law is not oppressive but has enabling elements, such as bringing proper employment practices and cutting down on corruption; 'you must make the people believe in the state institutions'. The Deputy Dean stated that, from the perspective of the poor, often the law can appear to be solely working in the interests of the wealthy and that the perception of the public is that the state is anti-poor, because it is not delivering on essential services like housing, education, health and water. In fact, as described later on in Section 5, he himself sees the Constitutional Court itself as anti-poor. But law itself is a resource where power resides, and the aim of lawyers should be to provide access for the poor to that power. Thus one of the difficult tasks facing lawyers who wish to work against poverty by

⁷¹ See, for example, the demonstrations and tension in a number of townships in July 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8163187.stm>.

providing access to justice is convincing the poor that the justice system is something which can work for them, rather than against them.

Perhaps the most obvious and direct means by which lawyers can contribute to poverty reduction is through curial enforcement (cases brought to court) of either political, civic, economic or social rights: through either working for poorer clients (pro bono work); or by specialising in human rights law (e.g. socio-economic rights, gender and family rights, children's rights). In theory, the South African government has undertaken to provide legal assistance to anyone who cannot afford it, which is usually realised through the requirement that lawyers undertake a certain number of pro bono hours per year (As, 2005)⁷². Lawyers may undertake this on an individual basis, but some firms are also taking these considerations on board. For example, Edward Nathan Sonnenberg was the first law firm to establish a pro bono office in disadvantaged communities in Mitchell's Plain (Cape Town), with a second recently established in Alexandra (Johannesburg). ENS lawyers are required to spend at least 32 hours per year working in one of these offices⁷³.

In addition to curial enforcement, however, there are other ways in which lawyers can contribute to poverty reduction. Akintayo (2007) taking a definition of poverty based on the capability approach, argues that human rights enforcement is an important part of reducing poverty in South Africa. Besides enforcing human rights through individual court cases, he suggests that by using their knowledge of the law, and their persuasive skills, lawyers are important to the protection and enforcement of human rights in other ways. Box 1 outlines the eight additional ways he identifies (2007: 7-8, 37-).

Box 1: Akintayo's eight ways that lawyers can contribute to poverty reduction, other than curial enforcement

- (i) public interest litigation (PIL)**, i.e. in the interest of communities not individuals; communities that may 'lack the requisite political and social capacities to help themselves'; he sees it as 'a very strong weapon in a rights based approach to poverty reduction' (2007: 38). If PIL is not allowed in a particular case then Akintayo sees it as the lawyer's duty to locate the victims of the violation and assist them to bring the case.
- (ii) strikes:** the lawyer can inform those who are in a position to use strikes as a tool that strikes are legal and legitimate way of realising their rights.
- (iii) mass protests:** lawyers can organise and lead poor communities to protest at anti-poor policies and programmes, and thus compel governments to take positive action.
- (iv) ensuring a vibrant civil society**, through forming NGOs to work towards poverty reduction by liaising with the poor.
- (v) lobbying**, such as through drafting and pressuring governments to accept human rights charters and treaties, which can subsequently remove many of the legal difficulties about the enforcement of constitutional socio-economic rights.
- (vi) promotion of socio-economic rights**, which can be achieved through mass media, seminars, conferences etc.
- (vii) education:** through educating society about the multi-dimensional nature of poverty⁷⁴, to

⁷² In recent years, most regional law societies in South Africa have introduced mandatory requirements that their members provide at least 24 hours of pro bono work each year; this was pioneered by the Cape Law Society in 2002. The Law Society of South Africa has now appointed a national co-ordinator to facilitate the process of pro bono nationally, and there is a pressure group lobbying for national norms and standards for pro bono work. For further details see <http://intprobono.blogspot.com/2009/09/pro-bono-in-south-africa.html>.

⁷³ See 'Bridging the Divide' in *Cape Times* Business Report, 28th August 2009, page 11; and also <http://www.ens.co.za/index.asp?pageID=probono/base.html>.

⁷⁴ As put by Ochoa: 'The magnitude of poverty in our societies demands a new conceptualisation stressing its human dimensions, enabling a vision of the poor not as ciphers or statistical data but

remove stereotypes which have a negative impact on efforts to reduce poverty; and through educating the poor, to assist them to have a collective consciousness about their situation, fundamental in creating and organising an effective movement to fight against poverty.

(viii) involvement in party politics: Akintayo argues that a faster route to political change than voting in elections is for lawyers to become elected to public office, and also to form parties representing the poor and encourage the poor to be active members.

Source: Akintayo (2007).

This is not an exhaustive list, coming only from one author, but it does illustrate the range of ways in which lawyers might contribute to poverty reduction in their professional lives. Akintayo argues that these additional means are needed due to the failure of six decades of curial enforcement to eradicate poverty. He warns that due to the vested interest of the rich in maintaining the status quo, such activities may incite opposition and on occasion even arrest and detention (2007: 43). Yet this is not without precedent: as outlined earlier on in this section, a number of leading figures in the anti-apartheid struggle, and the formation of the new South Africa, were lawyers, including Nelson Mandela.

A final but essential aspect of law's role in the transformation of South Africa is transformation of the demographics of legal personnel. Since the transition to democracy, the legal profession in South Africa has not yet become as racially representative as many had hoped. The Legal Services Sector Charter, created in November 2007, was designed to transform the profession. However a recent survey commissioned by the Law Society of South Africa revealed that white lawyers make up 70% of lawyers in the country, with 15% African, 7% Indian and 5% coloured. 80% of law firms are fully owned by whites⁷⁵.

2. Law at Fynbos University

The history of the Law Faculty at Fynbos is intertwined with the path of historically black universities under apartheid. Prior to 1991, as with the Faculties of Social Work, Nursing, Education and Theology, the main purpose of the Law Faculty was seen as producing graduates who would return to serve their respective communities, rather than cultivating critical minds. The return of law graduates to their communities after qualifying was in itself not necessarily disadvantageous, but at the time such public service was designed primarily to reinforce the existing racial divisions and limit career opportunities for black lawyers. For black lawyers under apartheid, there were few other career options.

After the transition to democracy in 1994 the Faculty has embraced a much broader understanding of the role of the lawyer. This has been encouraged by the fact that many senior ANC officials who served in the Cabinet had trained at the Fynbos Law Faculty – for example, the first minister of Nelson Mandela's cabinet⁷⁶. In an interview for this project, the Deputy Dean described how during this period the Law Faculty,

rather as human beings, with a story to tell and a dignity that must be respected' (Akintayo, 2007: 41).

⁷⁵ See 'Legal World Still a White Man's Club' in the *Sunday Times*, 18th January 2009. The survey also found that larger firms are more likely to have lawyers which are more representative of the population. See also 'Charting New Territory' in *Mail and Guardian SA Legal*, 9-15th November 2007. Also see Khoabane (2009) writing in *The Sunday Times* about the frequency with which black political leaders were appointing white male lawyers to represent them in legal cases.

⁷⁶ These comments are from the Deputy Dean; according to him, other prominent alumni from the Fynbos Law Faculty include: two professors who became and still are judges of the Constitutional Court; the national director of Public Prosecution; the Minister of Water Affairs and subsequently for Education; and the Minister of Public Service.

obtained a new vision of itself, or redefining itself and we began to see that we are not just a Law Faculty that churns out lawyers, but that we are a faculty that has the capability of churning out people who have access to the portals of power, people who can influence policy, people who draft legislation.

As the Faculty changed the way it saw itself, it also changed the way it saw its students, We began to see them no longer just as lawyers, but as agents of change, people who could go back to their communities, not in the apartheid sense of the word of going back to a particular community, but going there to help and to assist and to make a substantial change to the lives of people. That in turn meant that we had to increase our offerings or the variety of the courses that we operated in the syllabus. So we started introducing electives that had a really clear social focus and we began to develop research agendas that were meaningful to underprivileged people.

The Law Faculty's website refers several times to itself as having a strong 'culture of commitment to constitutionalism'.

However, as explored in the main body of this report, many respondents in this study perceive that in recent years a change has occurred in students' motivations to study law. The Deputy Dean recalls that in the 1990s many students had come to the Faculty because Fynbos was seen as being at the forefront of political transformation; with students taking a critical stance and asking questions such as, "What is the function of the law?", "Is this law relevant to us?", "What needs to be done about the law?", "Has the law marginalised people?", "What kind of law do we need?". Instead nowadays he felt that students are more likely to be pursuing law out of a desire to be someone who is 'wealthy, earns a lot of money, drives a nice car, lives in a big house and goes on the cocktail circuit'. As a prestigious profession, law is an attractive option for students seeking such outcomes.

The Law Faculty is a significant part of the university overall. In 2009, approximately 1600 students were enrolled in a course at the Law Faculty (almost 10% of Fynbos's total 15,000 students). The Faculty offers the Bachelor of Law degree (LLB), which can be taken by four or five year routes, and several Masters programmes. There is a part-time route for students continuing in employment. The LLB offers entry into many legal-related professions: Attorney; Advocate; Prosecutor; Magistrate; Judge; Corporate Legal Adviser; Legal Consultant; Law Lecturer and Legal Researcher. All of these have public good potential through practice.

In terms of the mainstream understanding of transformation as achieving proportionate numbers of students from different racial groups, the Law Faculty at Fynbos is relatively representative. The proportion of African students has recently declined somewhat, but the proportion of coloured students has risen; and there are slightly more female students than male⁷⁷. Fynbos strives to make education available to the whole community and as part of this has incorporated flexible and distance learning into its courses as much as possible. In line with this, the Law Faculty at Fynbos attempts to extend the ability to be a lawyer to many different parts of the community through flexible learning, and this is reflected in the demographics of the students. Some are mature students with families, and there is a high proportion of female, coloured and African students: 29% of students are African, 60% coloured, and 53% of all students are female⁷⁸. Students at Fynbos are therefore more likely to have come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are some of the poorest in the country (HSRC, 2007; REAP, 2008). As shown in later sections, interviewees often articulated the tension between serving the community as a lawyer, and wanting to take a career path which enabled them to earn a high wage. As law in South Africa has traditionally been a predominantly privileged, white profession, Fynbos's Law Faculty has played an

⁷⁷ Data obtained from the Institutional Planning Office at Fynbos University.

⁷⁸ Data obtained from the Institutional Planning Office at Fynbos University.

important role in opening up this profession to disadvantaged groups. Moreover, there are very large numbers of Law students at Fynbos compared to other universities.

One lecturer, William Brown, saw Fynbos's four-year course as 'one of the most comprehensive legal skills programmes in the country', with a legal skills curriculum that spanned the whole four years and which was taught mostly by academics who were also attorneys. All students are required to complete courses in legal reasoning, legal drafting, legal research and legal numeracy at various levels over the four years of their studies. However, this is only meant to represent an introduction to such legal skills, with professional education remaining the task of the organised profession (the Law Society and the Bar Council). William Brown pointed out that courses involving the development of legal skills have become more commonplace in South Africa over the previous decade in response to the decline in quality in law graduates; the current Dean⁷⁹ also voiced concerns that people are beginning to question the reduction of the five year degree to four years, as the skills graduates are leaving with are not adequate⁸⁰.

The students and alumni interviewed for this project were from the undergraduate LLB course, and had all taken the Legal Process elective. The majority of the lecturers interviewed also taught on this course. The sample is therefore unlikely to be representative: many of the students and lecturers chose to be involved with this course because they already have an interest in practical work and helping disadvantaged communities; and their experiences on the course will have also given them a different perspective from others who have not taken that module⁸¹. Table 1 gives the demographic details of those interviewed for this study.

Table 1: Interviewees⁸²

Name	Male	Female	African	Indian	Coloured	White
a) Students						
<i>Focus group 1</i>						
Nazia (Muslim)		x			x	
Lynne		x			x	
Sandra		x			x	
<i>Focus group 2</i>						
Michael	x				x	
Jennifer		x			x	
<i>Focus group 3</i>						
Tozi		x	x			
Bongi		x	x			
Peter (Namibian)	x				x	

⁷⁹ The current Dean of the Faculty has read a draft of this study and made comments via a telephone conversation on 1st December 2009, which are included in this version with their kind permission.

⁸⁰ This matter has also been discussed in the press; see, for example, 'Quality of Law Degrees Questioned', *Mail and Guardian Higher Learning*, November 2007.

⁸¹ This is one of the few non-academic modules offered to students. According to the Dean, students taking this module tended to already be leaning towards practical work, seeing themselves as future litigators, as opposed to the students aiming at high-earning careers such as businessmen (who would be more likely to take modules such as Tax Law, Advanced Company Law, etc). A recent study by LEAD, the Law Society of South Africa's Legal Education and Development division revealed that across South Africa, around 40-50% of students taking the law degree would not continue on to be lawyers.

⁸² All respondents have been given pseudonyms, as has the University. It should also be noted that some respondents not were interviewed in their first language, Afrikaans; quotes from interviews have been edited slightly to facilitate reading. We use the categories constructed by the apartheid government for race/ethnic groups. This is necessary in order to understand and trace current developments within a historical context. These categories are African, coloured, Indian/Asian and white. The term 'black' is commonly used inclusively to refer to African, coloured and Indian people.

Zubeida (Muslim) <i>Focus group 4</i>	x		x	
Yusuf	x		x	
Ashiek	x		x	
Alice		x	x	
Ebrahim	x		x	
Daniel	x		x	
b) Alumni				
Themba Vilikazi, State Legal Advisor	x		x	
Zolani Ncube, from rural Transkei, Private Law Firm	x		x	
Dumisani Bangeni, Private Law Firm	x		x	
Thandi Dlamini, Women's Legal Centre		x	x	
c) Lecturers				
William Brown, Head of Department, English speaking	x		x	
Helen Thompson, Professor, English		x		x
Rohan Mestrie, Lecturer, English	x		x	
Shamiel Jessop, Lecturer, Afrikaans	x		x	
Khatidja Bashir, Lecturer, English		x	x	
d) Other university				
Charles Lewis, Professor and Pro Vice Chancellor	x			
Leonard Smith, Deputy Dean of the Law Faculty	x		x	
e) Others				
Arnold Muller, Director of Legal Education, professional body	x			x
Robert Michaels, professional body	x		x	
Hazel Smith, Director, legal NGO		x		x
Johan Wentzel, legal NGO	x			x
Felicity Green, NGO		x		x

The Legal Process elective is a final year module for only 60 students, which usually has more applications than there are places. Most of the time on the course is spent working at the Legal Aid Clinic at Fynbos, where law students can get clinical legal education and training, at the same time responding to the needs of the local community⁸³. The clinic itself was set up in 1987 by a group of students committed to social justice, subsequently becoming incorporated into the Law Faculty's curriculum as part of its attempts to provide outreach to the local community; the clinic achieved formal law clinic accreditation in 1993. It now has a staff of 24 offering legal help to poor and marginalized communities; as well as its office on the university campus it also has an office in the largest nearby African township (population 600,000). It currently provides free legal services in a range of legal areas, most prominently family law (divorce,

⁸³ Information on the historical development of the Clinic, its role in the curriculum, and other aspects of the Faculty were gathered from Faculty reports from 2004 and 2008, which are referred to in this study. Please note that while these documents do exist, we cannot reference them fully without revealing the identity of the institution, so they are not listed in the bibliography.

domestic violence, maintenance), land and housing (evictions, disputes between landlords and tenants, farmworker tenure), general practice (motor accidents, contract, consumer rights), children's rights, and criminal matters confined to community courts.

The centrality of Law in bringing about social justice has also been recognised by other universities. In late 2008 the University of Cape Town announced that it would be launching a Masters in Social Justice the following year, run by the Faculty of Law, combining Law, Social Justice and Development⁸⁴. There is also a Student Society for Law and Social Justice, which works across several South African universities, including Fynbos. The society is concerned with advancing human dignity, equality and human rights; it aims to pursue 'how a progressive rule of law can underpin development and social transformation' and 'lead students across South Africa to engage in public interest legal work before and after graduation'⁸⁵.

3. Professional capabilities

This section turns to the capabilities which respondents outlined as being important for being able to act as a pro-poor lawyer. First, however, both students and alumni described some capabilities valuable to *them* but not necessarily directly related to social transformation in wider society. This, however, underlines the plurality of what makes a life valuable (Sen, 2009), and indirectly what makes for a richer professional life. The capabilities included: the ability to be self-aware and reflexive; being conscious of what they want to be doing as professionals; and, being able to decide which career direction to move in. Both groups also identified that it is important to have a sense of self-belief and self-confidence in yourself as a lawyer, and the ability to make choices about their careers. As detailed further on, students articulated this particularly in relation to the ability to choose whether to take a career path which involved helping the community, or to go into the corporate field which was more oriented towards earning money – it was felt that if someone wanted to choose to go into a higher-earning career path, they shouldn't feel obligated to do lower-paid community work.

Most felt it important that each individual is able to choose their path autonomously. Several felt that it was aspects of their law course itself which had given them the knowledge and empowerment to make such choices, as they had acquired decision-making and critical thinking skills (this is explored further Section 4 on educational arrangements).

A range of other capabilities, however, related more directly to transformation. In fact for many, being a lawyer in itself was inherently tied up with acting in the public good. Rohan, a lecturer, saw law as a profession that intrinsically involves acting in the interest of others, who lack the legal skills to defend their own interests,

If they try to do a little something on their own, draft their own will, if something goes wrong, ultimately they come to us. It's a case of they draft papers for court,

⁸⁴ For further details see <http://www.uct.ac.za/faculties/law/otherents/als/>, or <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/education/51371>.

⁸⁵ The Society's conditions are: 'Our commitment to justice is founded upon an understanding of the material conditions of our society, including the following: South Africa has a history of injustice and dispossession, in which law was used as a tool in the hands of the oppressive state. Lawyers, often in conjunction with mass movements, used law to resist injustice and to open spaces for political and social progress. There remains great inequality between rich and poor in South Africa. Responding to this must be a priority in order to make freedom meaningful for the majority of our people. Divisions of race, national and ethnic origin, language, sex, gender, class, sexual orientation, health, religion, economic position, culture, age, belief, opinion must be confronted so that we can unite around a common progressive political vision for our society'. For further details, see <http://www.sslsj.org.za/>.

something goes wrong, they must ultimately come to us. In other words, there is value in the training of the attorney in that it's a profession in the interest of other persons.

Similarly, one of the professional body interviewees, Arnold Muller, also felt that a sense of duty to the poor was an important aspect of the profession, in terms of raising legal understanding amongst the poor,

I think this is one big problem, in that people in those areas do not have an understanding of their rights or have a little understanding, who probably not have access to the media as much as others. So do they know their rights? I think that we as a profession possibly have a duty there and a law abiding fashion which is sometimes, you know, what is there to lose for them in terms of the law.

Respondents often explicitly referred to how valuable it was to them to make a difference in situations of poverty. Several alumni referred to how it is valuable to them to be able to make a difference more generally as well. Zolani described how it is important to him to provide such a service to society,

What really makes me sleep at night is the fact that I know that I've helped people who would otherwise not have been helped...it makes me feel proud and it makes them happy to be able to know that when we have a problem like this, there's somebody always available on the other side of the telephone.

Making a difference was also important to students, being a valuable goal for them in their working lives. Lynne spoke of the personal fulfilment from helping out at the legal aid clinic,

I was just happy that I could do something for her and that I didn't just chuck it out and say "Oh well, the legal aid clinic doesn't do this". I went the extra mile and so I appreciate that there is always something, when there is a problem, if there's a will there's a way, you can always solve it.

Another student, Tozi, said 'I love the way that I must help others so that they can help themselves, that's what this profession has taught me ...'.

In these ways, the legal profession was already seen by many respondents as inherently in the public interest by virtue of the fact that individuals are being assisted. The main body of this section, however, goes on to explore in more depth the specific capabilities which respondents identified as essential components for being able to act as a pro-poor lawyer.

3.1 Informed vision: awareness of diversity and poverty

For a lawyer to be able to act in a pro-poor manner, it is vital that they have a vision of the role that lawyers can have in reducing poverty in South Africa. In order to have this vision, it is first important that they are aware of the diversity within South Africa's population, to understand the constraints which they might face, and ultimately see how legal work can make a difference to the problems that individuals living in poverty might be facing.

One lecturer, Khatidja, emphasised that it was important for lawyers to be aware of different cultural practices in society, particularly when working with individuals from different communities. For example, a lawyer dealing with a woman from a Muslim family should understand the particular circumstances that she will be facing; similarly, matters concerning HIV required particular sensitivities and understandings.

One of the students who worked at the legal aid clinic, Lynne, recalled how her work with women who had been subjected to domestic violence had opened her eyes. She now understood why women in abusive relationships may not leave: they may not know

their rights, or even that their situation is not normal; and moreover the financial dependence of the women on their husbands may make leaving the relationship extremely difficult. Sandra also spoke of becoming aware of the financial dependence that many women were trapped in.

Johan Wentzel (NGO) felt that this sort of knowledge was possibly as significant as the knowledge of the law itself,

Knowledge of not only the theory but also, and maybe more importantly, a knowledge of what's happening in society, and to be aware of what, and how the rules of society operate and how those rules can be used creatively to find solutions to society's problems.

Robert Michaels, who works for a legal professional body, said it was important for professionals to be aware of the effect they can have through their work,

I think professionals can play a role. I think planners, engineers, and so on, must always, when they do the kind of work they do have in mind the makeup of society, that plan and engineer in accordance with that. So I firmly believe that professionals must always be aware of their role in society at all times.

This basic awareness of the realities of life for the majority of South Africa's population is essential for a lawyer to be able to understand the specific social and economic situations of their clients, enabling them to find more effective and appropriate solutions. Having an understanding and awareness of poverty then enables a lawyer to visualise how their own skills and knowledge can best be used to give people access to justice, and therefore also a range of socio-economic rights that may otherwise have been obscured, giving individuals a new relationship with the state. As Sandra described,

I think as attorneys, advising them that there's a way out, leads them to financial and economic freedom and in that way, I think that's the most important thing for them, to actually know that there is a way out, there's financial freedom and you don't have to sit in that same situation where you don't have anything 'cos that's the main thing of why people are disadvantaged, it's economics, they don't have any financial means to get out of it.

This awareness may vary significantly among lawyers; those from disadvantaged backgrounds themselves will have grown up with a greater level of awareness than those from the more privileged sections of society. As Fynbos has a higher proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds than many of the other universities, this may be less of an overt issue with the professional training. Indeed in many cases, an initial awareness of diversity and poverty may have prompted the decision to be a lawyer and make a difference. One alumnus, Zolani, described growing up in the rural Eastern Cape, just the conditions of the people in that area made me interested to think one day, you know, that I would want to do something that could change things around this community, that could change people's lives.

3.2 Social and collective struggle

Much of what the respondents spoke about related to how they could have an impact on individual's lives, as individual lawyers. However, sometimes respondents gave a sense that they saw their work as part of a collective effort.

One alumnus, Zolani, saw himself as part of the process of nation-building, emphasising the importance of recognising the responsibility of working to uplift communities and not just working to earn lots of money. South Africa needs lawyers who, decide that they want to take ownership of this country...who are going to dedicate themselves to this country and the nationhood...I just want to be an individual who one day tells his grand-kids, you know, that I contributed to what South Africa is today.

In this sense, lawyers acting for social justice is a collective effort, requiring affiliation with other, similarly oriented lawyers. That this need is felt is evidenced by the range of

national legal organisations focusing on rights, such as Lawyers for Human Rights, the Black Lawyers Association, the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADEL), and also including the cross-university Student Society for Law and Social Justice.

On the whole, however, this capability was not emphasised significantly by respondents. The Dean felt that while this capability might be useful to have, it was certainly not essential to being a pro-poor lawyer; feeling it was something of an 'over-hang' from the transition period; 'no-one is really doing that [now]'. Nonetheless this capability emerges as significant for other professional groups and must be taken into account in drafting core cross professional capabilities. While it might be less emphasised by law interviewees one cannot assume this makes it worth deleting from the draft list. It is the case also that different professional groups will weight different capabilities differently but must be able to justify such hierarchical weighting.

3.3 Affiliation

All groups spoke of the importance of respect and affiliation with their clients. Lecturers strongly advocated that a good, professional lawyer was one who treats people with respect, as dignified human beings, not prejudiced by the fact that they might be illiterate, wearing dirty clothing and be from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As described in the introductory section, people from disadvantaged communities may feel a level of distance and distrust towards the justice system. An important first step in providing access to justice is understanding how people from deprived backgrounds feel when they encounter the law, and communicating appropriately. For example, as the Deputy Dean described, if they are called to be witnesses in court cases, they may feel intimidated or not understand the procedures and find them alienating ('everyone dressed like batman'). People may then go away with a bad impression of the justice system as something that treats them badly rather than something that is there to protect them.

Affiliation is inherently important as everyone has the right to be treated with respect and humanity. Therefore, lawyers must not position themselves as superior and their clients as inferior; everyone must be treated with equal dignity and respect. Rather than seeing their clients as a way of making money and as 'dehumanised' subjects identified ('they're literally called by numbers, "accused number one", "accused number two"'), a lawyer first and foremost should regard their clients as human beings and provide a caring service,

the fancy clothing, the nice clothing, the dirty clothing, everybody should be treated the same (Ebrahim).

Affiliation is a particularly important capability for a lawyer working with people who have been abused and need sensitive treatment, such as battered women, as Nazia explains,

people that come here are looking for someone who can tell them everything will be all right and someone that just respects them and again tells them "Ok, you are a person, you are special, you have your dignity, hold on to that, you're not the person that he says you are".

Valuing clients and treating them with respect and affiliation is also important so that they are given the time and professional support to be able to understand their cases. Students felt it was important to treat people with respect, and value their humanity, by making the law accessible. Jennifer elaborated,

sometimes I think the attorneys, they don't lay down enough the simplest terms for them, they kind of speak like in law terms to people and, you know, they just expect people to understand what they're saying, they just hope to have their

problem sorted out, but like in it's most simplest terms as opposed to going through the intricate ways.

The ability to communicate about the law to clients, who may not understand legal terms and concepts, was identified by lecturers as extremely important. One lecturer, William Brown, stated,

You can't really do much with a lawyer who can understand the most arcane and complicated statute which is in front of him or her, but can't even translate that into proper plain English for a client.

Michael, a student, also highlighted the importance of lawyers being able to relate to and properly communicate with their clients, as the legal world can be very alien to people from different backgrounds,

From what I see my clients said, they go to court and then they don't understand what the magistrate is saying, so they come here. So I see them, it's more, they're more looking for someone to represent them and be able to speak the language, the law language. Even if they don't understand it, they trust us to know "Ok, what you're saying is correct". They're more looking for someone to speak in a different language.

In many ways, this mode of communication is related to seeing clients as human and respecting them. Another student, Lynne, stated,

What is important is that you don't indulge in this legal jargon with indigent clients, stick to the basic language and that's how you respect them as well...you don't make them feel like, you know, "I'm superior and you're inferior", you speak to them, you maintain that professionalism but you try to communicate with them on an even basis, so that they open up so you get more facts from them, so you can look at the merits of their case and see whether it's going to be successful, so I think that's also important.

For Jennifer, it was important that as a practising lawyer she remained the same as before she did her degree, rather than being set apart from everyone else.

Through using affiliation, lawyers can have an empowering role, because being able to communicate enables people to understand the law and to know what rights apply to them. The issue of language is important in communication in the context of South Africa's diversity; with one lecturer pointing out that another important skill was the ability to work with a client effectively through an interpreter⁸⁶.

However, this is not just because it was valuable to the lawyers themselves to treat people as they would like to be treated themselves, but also because it can improve the effectiveness of their work. If lawyers don't treat their clients with this respect, it puts a further barrier up between them and makes communication yet harder, which has an impact on their work.

Another aspect to affiliation is the notion of obligation to your fellow citizens. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds sometimes articulated the notion of accepting obligations to others in terms of 'putting back' into the community that they had come from. Lynne explained,

I wanted to do law, to be in a position where I can make a positive difference in people's lives...there's lots of disadvantaged people in our communities and I'd like to actually do something for my community. I just don't want to study and forget that I was poor once upon a time and that maybe I'd needed someone's guidance.

⁸⁶ South Africa has 11 official languages and the Western Cape region has 3: Afrikaans, English and Xhosa.

Another student also spoke of the aim of setting up their own small firm, and if so they would be able to help students in the future themselves by taking them on, once they themselves were established.

One lecturer suggested that this sense of affiliation and obligation need not mean devoting your whole career to social justice at the expense of earning a good wage, but spending a certain proportion of your time, perhaps after hours, to make their services available to poorer clients.

3.4 Emotion

Strongly linked to the capability for affiliation was the capability to feel emotion and empathy⁸⁷, particularly in cases where personal distress of the clients was great. One alumnus, Thandi, emphasised the importance of respecting and tolerating others' views, having empathy and through this finding an emotional 'balance'. In particular, because clients may have been through very difficult experiences, it was important to be able to empathise with them; not to advise them on particular courses of action, but to make them fully aware of their options, and valuing people's ability to choose their own options. Thandi described this in terms of treating others as you would like to be treated yourself,

how would you like to be treated if you find yourself in such a situation... what do you expect from the next person?.

One student, Nazia, spoke of the method they use for forging an emotional connection and relating to their clients in this way,

I try to sit with my client and to first make her feel that she's human again, you know, I try to give her advice and we sometimes laugh together with the client especially when they come to see you and they cry their heart out because they can't believe that they can get out.

3.5 Knowledge and legal efficacy

Another valuable capability for a pro-poor lawyer to have was the ability to effectively use their legal skills to reduce poverty. First, a thorough knowledge of the substance and content of the law is crucial to being an effective lawyer. But lecturers were keen to emphasise that a lawyer should not just have a sense of affiliation and knowledge of the law; they should also be able to bring their visions into effect. This required practical skills and knowledge such as how to open a file, how to manage a practice, and how to do pro-bono work; and actually providing access to justice. As Khatidja described, this involves 'a mindset change of how we provide legal services'. This is different to being a human rights lawyer (having good knowledge of the substance of human rights law). This lecturer also felt that a good lawyer should be able to bring these practices to a larger firm, if that is where they were based.

Such practical knowledge was an important capability in enabling students to find solutions. Empowering others was an important part of making a difference for Lynne (student), especially in relation to abused women,

basically I feel our task at the legal aid clinic is to actually advise these women that there's a different way, you don't have to go through this, you don't have to actually be financially dependent on this man.

Sandra also felt empowerment was an important part of her role,

⁸⁷ Recently the democratic governance and rights unit at the University of Cape Town has called for judges with empathy, compassion, humility, open-mindedness, courtesy and patience. Roberts (2009) cites the deputy chief justice as remarking that, while cowboys don't cry, judges do. This is something of a departure for the more traditional legal emphasis on distance.

I think as attorneys, advising them that there's a way out, leads them to financial and economic freedom...I think that's the most important thing for them, to actually know that there is a way out.

3.6 Assurance and confidence

A sense of confidence is also important to be a pro-poor lawyer; first and foremost in the sense of having the confidence that their work would be worthwhile. For Helen, a lecturer, having leadership qualities was important. A number of alumni also spoke not only of the importance of being able to make a difference to individuals and communities through their work, but also about the importance of being able to make an impact on public policy. Thandi, for example, stated that she preferred to choose cases which will change an existing law, for example challenging the principle of primogeniture to enable girls and illegitimate children to the right to inheritance, as these will have more of a lasting impact.

As picked up in Section 4 on education, the Deputy Dean saw the ability for lawyers to 'capacitate' themselves as very important, and that pro-poor confidence and leadership will also empower new lawyers themselves,

we have too many lawyers who are serving too narrow a band of interests ...particularly in the rural areas, we lack legal clout, we need people to influence and champion the rights for people who are poor. Some students have heeded this advice and have taken it to heart and have, in fact, gone there, have noticed that by developing or by "lawyering" their way through the problems of the poor people, they have capacitated themselves in the first place and have also capacitated the poor, so much so that these people, some of them, at least one person told me how he has helped people to establish businesses, you know, to get into contracts, actually to work themselves.

The Dean summed up one of the key capabilities for being a pro-poor lawyer as knowing when to take risks, and knowing when you have reached a dead end with a case and needed to stop, no matter what the personal circumstances of the client. Such lawyers 'know when to push the boundaries'.

3.7 Resilience

Having had experience of working with poor communities, many of the respondents highlighted that conducting work for the public good required special strengths to be able to continue to do such work in the long run.

One lecturer, Helen, pinpointed the ability to work hard as important. A number of alumni, such as Themba, saw commitment as particularly important; especially as socially-oriented work would be unlikely to be paid highly and could be emotionally draining. Alumni spoke of the importance of resilience and the ability to achieve an emotional 'balance' when working closely with difficult cases and proximity to extremes poverty and hardship. One alumnus spoke of the importance of being 'passionate' for public interest law, to overcome the fact that you were unlikely to earn much money compared to other sectors. In the same sense, one lecturer, drawing on the example of one of their students who was working on a prisons project, emphasised that it was important for a good lawyer to have the ability to be hard-working, with leadership potential, in order to keep going through challenging work.

Students also spoke of the need for resilience, particularly emotional resilience when constantly dealing with clients who have been through traumatic experiences, especially as they might not be able to offer help at the legal aid clinic. Tozi explained,

Some [clients] come here without having dealt with that emotional side, so you have to be the social worker, the psychologist and also be a legal person at the

same time... it's very emotional, it gets draining because you see how divided South Africa is.

Another student expressed that it was important to be resilient in order to commit for the long haul, both in order to not be overly affected by traumatic situations, but also so that they might be able to maintain the same principles over several decades of practice, and not be swayed by the desire for money.

For student Sandra,

you feel as though you're obligated to actually go to that person's house and tell them "You know what, is everything ok, do you have food?" you know, things like that, because you get so emotionally attached to your client, but you have to basically stop and break yourself off from that situation.

3.8 Integrity

An important corollary of commitment and resilience was having pride in your profession and principles, which was referred to by alumni; students also spoke of the importance of having strong principles and ethical standards of behaviour, acting honestly regardless of what branch of law you are practising in.

Hazel Smith (NGO) highlighted the importance of self discipline, having also not just the motivation to want to do, but the kind of self discipline that is required because, you know, there isn't necessarily first of all some kind of external either incentive or disincentive system and secondly, you know, in the sector there's really not the same amount of, there's not the same level of resources to deal with stuff in terms of some of the kind of rigours of systems of human resource management that come from outside, so a lot of it has to come from inside.

On the whole, the importance of integrity was spoken of more in relation to the skills and capabilities which the Fynbos Law Degree sought to foster, as explored in the following section.

This section has examined the capabilities required for lawyers to continue to work for transformation. As they were identified by those involved with the legal process elective, they may be more necessary for work in which lawyers were in close contact with poor communities than more abstract lines of pro-poor work. The following section goes on to explore the extent to which these are present in the Law Degree at Fynbos and how they might be included in the syllabus.

4. Educational arrangements

Table 2: Components of the Legal Process module

Main Outcomes	Main Content	
<p>Students will have mastered the following knowledge, skills and values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation techniques; - drafting; - negotiating; - trial advocacy; - strategic and analytical thinking; - communicating effectively; - the ability to integrate substantive law, facts and procedure; - professional responsibility; - bills of costs; - office management. 	<p>Lecturing Component:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation techniques with an emphasis on client-centred interviewing /consultation; - Diversity training; - Trial Advocacy; - <i>Capita selecta</i> from the Law of Civil Procedure, aspects of substantive law, Gender law, Socioeconomic rights, HIV/Aids as it relates to clinic work, aspects of practice and litigation, professional ethics. 	<p>Practical Component:</p> <p><i>Inter alia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposure to live-client clinical teaching methods; - participation in lawyer-client dynamics; - communicating with clients; - file structures, office systems and management; - interviewing clients; - drafting correspondence and pleadings; - developing a theory of cases; - preparation for trial; preparing bills of costs.

Source: Fynbos University (2008).

Registration for this course is limited to 60 students, who are admitted through assessment; the course runs over one academic year (200 hours total learning time, of which a minimum of 56 hours is to be spent in the Legal Aid Clinic) and is assessed through practical file assessments, interview assessments, trial advocacy, research assessments, and examinations.

4. Faculty culture

The introductory section to this report elaborated on the historical background of Law at Fynbos. In some respects, the ethos of the Law Faculty at Fynbos remains progressive and oriented towards transformation. According to the Deputy Dean, several key pieces of legislation with social justice implications have been drafted at the Law Faculty, including the Reconciliation Act and the National Prosecution Authority Act. The Community Law Centre attached to the Faculty is one of the leading research centres in the country on local government law, socio-economic rights, and women, children and domestic violence; there is not a specialism in tax law or corporate law, by contrast. The Centre was currently involved in drafting a Child Justice Bill for the government. Several senior members of staff are very much concerned with the links between law and transformation; the Deputy Dean's personal concern is,

How do you make people own justice, the poor people own justice, so they can believe in the justice system. It is something that enables and capacitates because they can see how it transforms their lives.

However, several members of staff felt that there was not a specifically pro-poor or transformation orientation, but a plurality of perspectives on the messages they should aim to give students. The Head of Department said,

Certainly the faculty has not engaged with that kind of notion in any conscious way. Even though the staff is young and enthusiastic, I think there are a lot of divergent positions, political positions. Anyway, there is a kind of broader, broad commitment to democracy and to human rights which is a big issue in law, but beyond that, I don't think we've consciously or seriously thought about or developed any kind of project for the kind of things that you're talking about.

The Faculty certainly seeks to present itself as a place where professionals are produced, perhaps partly to draw a conscious distinction from the negative stereotype of historically black universities as suffering from bad facilities and low quality training. According to several teaching members of staff, the Faculty strives to instil discipline, punctuality, reliability, and proper communication skills; the Deputy Dean adds that this is of particular significance as many of the students will have come from extremely deprived backgrounds and may have become accustomed to 'cutting corners' as a basic survival mechanism; or may have not been taught such principles because their schools were badly run. At the Faculty they aim to teach students to observe professional behaviour and values,

For example the fact that you are serving an illiterate or innumerate or underprivileged or undereducated community does not mean that you have to be less professional...we try and inspire or let these values rub off in the way we interact with the students in class, just to drive home the fact that being a lawyer means service and service to the other means being professional.

The Deputy Dean felt that while all staff members shared the concern for instilling values and integrity, there was significant variation on whether students should use their skills to empower those living in poverty (as the Deputy Dean felt), or whether these values were as important in working for elite law firms.

The rest of this section examines the educational provisions (and potential for educational provisions) in the LLB degree for providing the pro-poor professional capabilities identified in Section 3.

Informed vision

The Legal Process module is widely valued because it exposes students to the problems facing individuals from disadvantaged communities, and enables students to explore and

learn how their legal knowledge and skills can be used to make a difference. However, although some felt that the Legal Process elective should be available to all students, it can currently only be taken by a quarter of the students in that year.

Outside of the University, too, it was felt that building awareness of diversity and poverty was an important part of training to be a lawyer. Arnold Mueller, the Director of Education for a legal professional body, felt that raising awareness of poverty was a crucial part of professional education and training. In his view the Education section is trying to,

...create an awareness of how poor people really are. I think that there are too many people who do not know the true reality of people struggling, of single parents, people basically living from small informal businesses selling fruit and so on and having to put their children through school and university and there are simply, I think, people who have no idea whatsoever of really how badly people are doing. I think that's a matter that the attorneys should actually create a greater awareness of, of poverty, fully understand what it is...We started with gender law training a few years ago and despite some opposition...I think at least we have created a greater awareness with that, that people become sensitive in terms of appointments and family matters, rights of the various gender categories.

Similarly, Hazel Smith (NGO) spoke of the importance of, including in a professional education, broader social issues which might not be absolutely essential from the professional delivery point of view. They are quite important to understand society and how human beings work.

Johan Wentzel (NGO) saw a problem in that most of the courses in his organisation tend to focus on commerce, but that courses should make students aware that most of the population do not have an understanding of the law and that they could work towards ameliorating that,

I'm afraid that a big part of our law and our legal training focuses on commerce ... but the other reality is that by far the majority of individuals do not have access to the law and to justice in general through the legal system...it's for students to be aware of that and to take that reality into their practices and professions.

He highlighted the useful role of student work camps in raising awareness of the realities of poverty⁸⁸.

Another important aspect of informed vision for a lawyer is to have an understanding of how the profession is shaped by the current and historical socio-economic and political context; some courses include critical knowledge of the historical development of certain strands of law, and knowledge of human rights law. Historical development, for example, is covered in a number of modules including Advanced Criminal Law 431; Comparative Law 431; Constitutional Law 202; and Customary Law 121. Human rights issues are also covered in a number of modules, including Gender Law 431; HIV/AIDS and the Law 431; International Human Rights Law 431; and South African Bill of Rights 431⁸⁹.

Knowledge: integrating theory and practice

By definition, the law curriculum at Fynbos aims to instil graduates with a thorough disciplinary knowledge of South African law. As shown in the previous section on public good capabilities, however, respondents frequently referred to the importance of being able to use this knowledge and theory in practice.

⁸⁸ The Southern African Student Volunteers programme (SASVO), run by the Centre for Human Rights, enables South African students to work on projects in other African countries such as Nigeria, Mozambique and Swaziland.

⁸⁹ For further details see Fynbos University (2008).

Therefore, one of the most prominent aspects of their education that respondents spoke of was the need for practical experience as part of their training at Fynbos. Several alumni, having experienced the move from theoretical training to practising law in society, felt that greater practical experience as part of their university course would have helped in making them more effective pro-poor lawyers,

At 'varsity they tell you after the summons what follows, but they don't teach you how to draft a summons, so when you get into practice you need to teach yourself those things and you don't know what is saving and filing...(Thandi).

I think that there's very huge room for improvement especially the practicality side of the university degree in law, the LLB...I think they need to have students working in community organisations, they need to have students there (Zolani).

I think there's more that needs to be done in the area of writing, presentation, public speaking skills, other soft skills as well to better push yourselves. As students we're coming from more kind of like underprivileged universities and also kind of underprivileged communities as well. So we need to bridge that gap quite fast before it's too late, with skills (Dumisani).

This was a point which lecturers felt particularly strongly about as well. One lecturer reported that traditionally, Law courses have focused more on providing an academic legal education, leaving the skills and practical experience to be gathered once the students formally enter the profession (via articles of clerkship for attorneys or pupillage for advocates). In the last ten years or so, however, the lecturer observed that there has been a tendency for Law courses to offer the chance to gain legal skills during the course itself. The lecturers attributed this to the decline in the quality of law graduates, stemming from declining educational standards within secondary schools in South Africa (for example in literacy and numeracy).

As Rohan saw it, integrating theory and practice gave the graduated students a better starting point,

There's clearly a distinct move in the faculty to make the clinical courses more substantive with a view to ensuring that when graduates complete, when students complete and graduate, that they are a bit more empowered as opposed to merely having an academic or theoretical knowledge.

Shamuel also aimed to instil these skills during his lectures,

Simple things, for example, to draft a letter, simple pleading documents for example, a summons...that is my vision basically, to try and train students so that once they are out of university, they can go away and be properly prepared, not only theoretically prepared but also some practical experience, for example, we conduct mock trials here at the clinic with our students, our sixty students at the clinic.

However, both of these lecturers taught on the Legal Process module, and so were predisposed to prioritise the integration of theory and practice.

Students spoke of the significance of their experience on the Legal Process module, which had helped them understand how legal knowledge should be applied in practice. Moreover, even if professional skills are largely gained after graduation (especially for students who do not take the Legal Process elective), it is possible that pro-poor values and knowledge can still be fostered during the taught components of the degree.

Part of this pro-poor knowledge, therefore, was learning the practical skills of application, an importance accompaniment to abstract legal knowledge. As Yusuf explained,

you come into this class and...you have a supervisor telling you how to draft up a certain piece of paper, how to interact with clients, then you actually get the feel that now, like my supervisor ...he will sit down with the student and tell him,

"Look, don't draft your letter like this, the feel of the letter, the words are all right, but the feel is slightly off, don't try to be too demanding of your client, try to give him a bit of time, try to make him feel comfortable".

Jennifer agreed, 'It gives you the practical side of what you're going to do in law', as did Zubeida,

I think the legal process is excellent because it gives you practical experience and also forces you to see what type of incidents the people on the ground face...we have many cases of eviction and it tells you what it entails, the eviction, and how you go about it, how you can come to the maintenance [from an ex-husband]...which you learn about in theory, but you don't really know what it is until you get here.

David and Bonggi, also students, felt that the legal process elective was so valuable in this sense that it should be made compulsory.

However, while the course at Fynbos aims to provide legal skills (both through the whole curriculum, and through the legal process elective, as detailed in the introduction), other aspects of professional education remain decisively in the hands of professional organisations which students enter after completing their course⁹⁰. Arnold Muller (LSSA) felt that overall, universities in South Africa are not preparing students well enough in this sense,

We would like to see students coming out with a better understanding of life, an understanding of the environment in which they're going to work, about reality of practice, what it takes to be a practitioner.

Felicity Green (NGO) also discussed the importance of knowing how to apply knowledge, The curriculum of professionals must ensure that they are trained and equipped at least to have basic knowledge about a full range of rights that are necessary for the health and wellbeing of children and their caregivers in the context of what we're speaking about, [I mean] lawyers, doctors...Asking people to do community service is no good unless you actually equip them to go and do community service.

To emphasise the importance of being able to apply knowledge to practice, both lecturers and students felt that the current lack of practical experience on the course provided a constraint upon entering the profession, exacerbated by age and experience. According to Khatidja,

If they pass everything, a twenty-four year old can open up a practice. What does that twenty-four year old know about handling, consulting, dealing with clients? It's difficult and that is where you have problems with ethics.

Students mentioned this too; Bonggi said,

I feel the legal process should be imperative for each and every law student to be given. I think on the practical side of things, we don't have much assistance, that's how I feel.

There is also a loophole whereby someone can become an 'independent advocate' where they can practice without having sat the bar exams.

Resilience

⁹⁰ Before becoming candidate attorneys, many law graduates choose to spend six months at a School for Practical Legal Training (established by the Law Society) where they receive instruction in professional practice. A number of Fynbos law graduates who have been to the School for Practical Legal Training in Cape Town report that the faculty's skills programme prepared them well for professional practice and made their passage through practical legal training course so much smoother. Besides being gratifying, such reports sum up well the relationship between the faculty's skills programme and the practical legal education undertaken by organised profession'. (email January 2009, William Brown).

A number of aspects of the course help to engender resilience among the students. One alumnus, Themba, spoke of the importance of hard work on the course which prepared the students well for meeting professional deadlines.

To be honest, it's not an easy thing, it's hard work, those assignments, those late night sleeps, they're hard work. You're able to apply in your practical world because there are deadlines that you need to meet, there are projects that you need to work in and they should be successful at the end of the day, that's what's expected from you. So those things that we take for granted at the time, they build you for the future.

Themba also spoke of how learning to be emotionally resilient, an important professional capability, came through practice learnt via the legal process elective and the guidance of supervisors,

At first it was difficult to work with divorce matters because people were emotional and at the beginning I ended taking your problems and making them mine, but my supervisors taught me that I had to separate the two, and that I had to be objective. I learned slowly but surely that I was able to do that.

A number of students who had taken the legal process elective agreed, having had similar experiences, learning that a certain amount of emotional distance was necessary. Yusuf explained,

I find that's the hardest part for me, what do you tell the client, you know, once you go home you have to do this or that...we are not psychologists, even though we play the part of a psychologist, we are not, we can't solve this person's problem...So we try to make them as comfortable as possible, but also staying the attorney that they see, and it is very difficult....

Bongi agreed that it was easy to be affected by the situation of those you are working with, 'it's sad sometimes when you really can't help clients'.

In another example. Sandra, a student, was dealing with the case of a battered woman who had stopped replying to her letters. She wanted to go and deliver the next letter to the woman herself, but was stopped by her supervising attorney at the clinic, who told her, 'actually, you cannot go that far as to deliver the letter 'cos at the end of the day you have to cut yourself off'. In this way there is an important mentoring role that the supervising attorneys play in encouraging students to learn how and when to establish boundaries.

Integrity

There was little consensus among respondents about whether a professional course can and should foster particular ethical behaviour in the students. Some lecturers, such as Helen, were keen to suggest that the department itself prioritised transformation as a value, 'this faculty has got an extremely strong emphasis on socio-economic transformation'. In relation to this, Helen described the research within the Community Law Centre within the Faculty, which also follows a transformation focus; the four projects being Children's Rights, Gender, Socio-economic rights and Local Government⁹¹. Another lecturer, William Brown, was also keen to point out that at the Faculty at Fynbos the staff do not have 'the kind of baggage [of] the older Afrikaner lecturer', despite many of them coming from Stellenbosch – that they were willing and able to visualise a more equitable South Africa that is not divided by race and poverty.

⁹¹ The website states that the Community Law Centre, 'is committed to the establishment of a legal order based on a culture of human rights and democracy. Combining a strong academic tradition with a practical hands-on approach to change, the CLC serves both as a research and a resource of practical skills and expertise. The work of the CLC was influential in the multiparty negotiations which ushered in the new democratic era, and it continues to be involved in drafting and critiquing legislation and regulations, and in assisting with implementation and monitoring of policy'.

Such values, nonetheless, were plural rather than prescriptive. As described in the introduction to this section, the Head of Department felt that there was no particular bent towards a particular version of social transformation, which he attributed to the fact that so much effort had to go into learning as much Law as possible in a short amount of time,

There is a kind of broad commitment to democracy and to human rights which is a big issue in law, but beyond that, I don't think we've consciously or seriously thought about or developed any kind of project.

By this he meant that the Faculty, in its training of Lawyers, did not foster a particular orientation in training them in pro-poor, transformative values.

Students overall did not feel that the Faculty was encouraging them to follow any particular career direction. They felt that the course aimed to instil them with certain ethical behaviour, values and principles, including a professional etiquette of treating people with respect, rather than a specific perspective of engendering social transformation and working for the public good. Alice explained,

I think that with regard to the characteristics that the Law Faculty wants us to have when we go into the real world is just trustworthy, people are coming to you with their problems and they just want you to have the right etiquette... if you're coming out of the clinic they don't want you to be the lawyers that are into fraud and all these bad things. I think Fynbos wants lawyers to be trustworthy with respect and caring, not too caring, but those are the characteristics that are needed in South Africa.

Nazia also felt that such qualities were being encouraged by the Faculty, Even at the legal aid clinic they teach us well how to be a good lawyer, so it doesn't matter where you study, it matters what type of principle they instil. The principle the lecturers instil is of high quality.

In student focus group 1 there was general agreement that the Faculty was keen to instil values and integrity among its students.

Some students saw these values as a crucial part of Fynbos's identity, which they were proud of and wanted to show the world. Sandra said,

The ethics and my foundation that Fynbos has laid for me, that continues and stays with me and I can actually be an ambassador... and say this is the type of attorney, this is the women that Fynbos can actually produce...I actually want to be the person that shows everyone, you know what, I'm from a previously disadvantaged university, but look what I have become because of my foundation and that's my main thing, that's my success basically for the future...[what the faculty has taught is that] whether you're going to investment, commercial or community work, the attitude, the principle which has been brought across to me personally by the faculty is that in whatever field you go into, maintain principle, maintain what is right and what is the truth basically and be honest in whatever you do, whether in investments...if you're in a corporate environment, basically be honest and if you're in a legal aid situation, be honest.

More broadly, Robert Michaels (who works for a legal professional body) also felt that universities should encourage students to realise their responsibilities to society,

Responsibilities result in training not only in commercial or strictly legal matters but training the kind of responsibilities that I think society should require from lawyers in general. I still believe that lawyers can play the most crucial role when it comes to enforcing human rights, constitutional rights, and so on. And unless we make trainees aware of that, the role that they can play, and I think that training will also change their mindsets once they enter the profession – we're not going to get that kind of assistance out of young lawyers unless that training takes place.

Hazel Smith (NGO) felt that graduates today were not being taught enough about ethical issues, which might otherwise enable students to realise their own values and priorities,

I don't think we direct our attention in giving people a sense of right and wrong and I don't think that we do things which necessarily are geared towards making people the masters of their own destiny in the big sense of that.

Current professional training, 'lacks an ability to infuse people with a sense of mission about, you know, sort of the social good and working in the public interest'.

Affiliation

For some lawyers, learning to feel affiliation for clients from diverse groups happened largely through practical experience *after* their university course. For example, while working at a legal NGO which focuses on human rights, Themba learnt about diversity through contact with other ethnic groups,

At [the legal NGO], it was strictly about refugees. And to be honest with you, I think I was xenophobic at some stage, until I got an opportunity to work with them directly and understand why they are here and the suffering that they went through ...it was an eye-opener and you learn to be humble as a human being⁹².

But Themba also felt he had learnt such tolerance and empathy through the legal process elective at Fynbos, suggesting that there could be a place for this in the university curriculum overall,

It taught you to care about other people's situations and it taught you that there are people that are suffering outside in different ways, whether you're a refugee, whether you're a woman, it doesn't matter, but you learn a lot from it and that's how you find yourself.

Others also felt this component could and should be part of the university course. For the lecturers, empathy, respecting client wishes and understanding the position of the client is something which they actively strove to encourage the students to develop. Khatidja said,

We teach a student to deal with the client holistically, but also in a legal manner and to ensure that what she wants, she needs to get, but they must also understand her socio-economic circumstances.

Current students were also aware of these aspects of their training on the course.

Zubeida observed,

Advocacy teaches you how to be with the professional world, how to have court etiquette and how to be with your fellow people. I think this course [legal process] also teaches you a lot of that type of thing...if you look at your lecturers, some of them are practising attorneys themselves and they sort of hold the flag quite high in the profession, so you can sort of take your cue from them, how to behave and how to be with others and with people in your community. Most of them are people that are not only involved in the university but involved in a practice, and they do give back to the community.

The experience and understanding of diversity could also come from experiences in the classroom, as described in Section 4.2 on Pedagogy.

Assurance and confidence

The course at Fynbos aims to create lawyers who will be able to practice confidently and competently. Shamiel, a lecturer, explained how,

the focus is now more specifically on a certain area and trying to train the students to think for themselves and not only to study from the textbook. It's a

⁹² Due to the recent crisis in Zimbabwe, South Africa has received large numbers of refugees from the country in the last few years.

bit better now because it now allows the student to think for him or herself and not only follow what's in the textbook.

As also mentioned in the introductory section, the Deputy Dean spoke about how the Faculty used to train students to go back and serve their particular communities, but now focused more on cultivating critical minds, people who can influence policy and draft legislation.

Arnold Muller (LSSA) felt in particular that courses should teach leadership skills, which he felt was particularly important in the legal profession, in terms of factors such as the independence of the judiciary,

I think we need the strongest leadership at the moment from the Chief Justice, I think that is a man who must actually show where we're going with the country⁹³.

This was particularly the case in terms of the central role of lawyers in forming new policies and laws. Johan Wentzel (NGO) also felt that training could enable lawyers to work towards policy formation more,

to give lawyers a much wider grounding in law than just some theoretical subjects, but to link it subjects and courses that will give them more capability to use the legal profession. legally trained people go on and to take up important positions, whether it's as parliamentarians, making laws, writing laws in parliament, or people in the executive.

Hazel Smith (NGO) linked this to a lack of knowledge about how to use international legal instruments,

We really have a dearth of understanding of how people in the law could and should use international legal precedent as well as international treaty and international obligation in the pursuit of domestic issues.

Such confidence and leadership skills are particularly important in South Africa today, where an overall lack of political will appears to be hampering the realisation of socio-economic aspects of the Bill of Rights.

But in addition to this confidence, lawyers should be able to choose their own career path according to their own interests and values, as highlighted in the previous section on professional capabilities. Respondents felt it centrally important that a law course should enable students to discover their authentic, valued goals, and enable them to pursue them in their professional life.

Among the teaching staff there was some debate about the extent to which the Faculty should encourage a pro-poor career path, or facilitate choice (which would be likely to lead to many, even most graduates choosing high-earning paths). Lecturers saw the importance of students being able to choose their path, and especially not feeling pressurised into choosing an overtly pro-poor / public interest path, particularly as many students had chosen law at least partly to try and escape a deprived background.

Khatidja explained,

We cannot put the expectations of "You must go and work at the Legal Aid Board now and just give back". If you understand that student, if they become a lawyer they don't just have one person to feed, they've got a family to feed, the mother, the father, the siblings, everybody's hopes and dreams are in that student which means that we must let them succeed within the private field and we must provide them with that skill.

Helen felt that enabling students to graduate with this freedom of choice was as important as enabling the students to succeed in the first place.

⁹³ In recent years there has been controversy over the degree of independence that judges have from the government. For example, see 'Tension eases between courts and government', *Mail and Guardian*, 11th July 2009.

While the Deputy Dean felt that the Faculty should be encouraging students to work towards social transformation and poverty reduction, he acknowledged that others had different views and that choice should prevail,

There might be some of us who will see that there is a need for transformation, to use law as a tool for transformation which necessarily implies a degree of social care and to some extent a charitable inclination or a pro-poor bent and others would say to you no, and I know some colleagues who say "No, we're not missionaries".

According to the Deputy Dean, this also meant empowering students not only to work in areas of law directly relevant to the community, but also areas of private law which also might enable people from disadvantaged communities to rise to new positions of power and experience,

We believe that empowerment of our lawyers is also constituted in making it possible for them to interact in those areas of the law where they will not be accustomed to work...they must be given an across-the-board education which makes it possible for them to be of use to the community in a private law sphere as well... So on the one hand as I say, we have the social inclination, but on the other we also have to ensure that we are not just seen as a kind of faculty that leverages people into just helping, you know, poor communities, but also to make it possible for them to use those esoteric areas of the law to help poor people who want to aspire into those positions.

While the Deputy Dean was keen to point out that the research at the Faculty focused on social aspects of law as opposed to tax or corporate law, he also emphasised that there had recently been a conscious effort in the Faculty to strengthen teaching in *all* areas of Law so that students would be fully 'empowered' and equipped to tackle any field they wished to go into; this was particularly in virtue of the fact that they will take underprivileged positions and mostly be criminal lawyers.

In some ways, therefore, the Law Faculty saw offering this sort of choice as part of the process of transformation. This is a significant shift when compared to the faculty's early history and its role in providing lawyers to work only in coloured communities, offering the real possibility of individual transformation rather than social.

On the other hand, this potentially poses a problem if transformation is to depend on the production of pro-poor lawyers. Khatidja noted that currently, only a small proportion of students committed themselves to pro-poor work after leaving, 'it's a small handful of students, it's not a lot'. The Deputy Dean explained that sometimes returning to your community was seen in terms of 'going back is a kind of a giving in'. These comments suggest that there could be a greater role for the Faculty in enabling students to choose pro-poor career paths.

As a result of this, there were mixed feelings among students and alumni about the extent to which the course at Fynbos provided the capability to competently and freely choose their career direction. As the lecturers had noticed, freedom of choice is valuable to the students because many come from a background they want to escape, rather than continue to work in; according to Michael,

If you come from a community where you struggle, you work harder 'cos you want to better yourself, you don't want to be stuck in the same, you don't want to go back to the same environment you've come from.

Yet many of the student comments suggested they felt freedom but also a lack of guidance and support. One alumnus, Thandi, emphasised how choice was important and felt that it had been offered at all stages during her time at Fynbos, rather than being pushed into certain fields of law,

I think they are able to produce anyone, wherever you want to go.... [but] even for the electives, you just choose yourself, there's no-one guiding you, you know?.

Zolani agreed,

You are given a chance to select what you really want to be... you can decide where you want to go, so you can go human rights or you can go commercial, you know, or you can go to criminal law.

Many students also felt they were not currently being pushed into any particular field of law, with Bongi observing,

There isn't a specific thing that they say like "Ok, you should follow this after your degree" or something like that.

Some lecturers will tell you that law is about helping people and some lecturers will say, like the commercial lawyers will tell you law is about making money (Nazia).

This perceived lack of support is discussed further in Section 4.3. However, some students felt that it was only through the legal elective that they were able to find their way. For example, Zubeida said,

I think that the university pretty much leaves it up to the student to decide which facet of law he wants to practise in...this is the type of course, the legal process, that actually gives you that grounding to decide where do you want to go because it gives you the practical experience to decide do I want to do this divorce matters or work in personal law or do you want to go into corporate as opposed to family.

Other students described how, through the experiences on the legal process course, they had considered many different paths before realising what was of most interest to them,

Through [legal] process you can actually see, you're drafting these documents, you will be consulting with clients, you get a feel and a sense of how it's going to be one day (Ebrahim).

It's the range of subjects that we have, we can choose from and also the extra curricular activities (Tozi).

Some alumni spoke of the usefulness of the outside speakers invited to come and talk to the students on the course, which helped students to understand the variety of career paths open to them.

The students, overall therefore, seemed to be getting no clear message from the Faculty. When asked whether they felt there was a message, one focus group's responses were:

Nazia: I think they want you to be like, maybe like commercial, contracts and corporate and banking and to be more focussed on the business path, commercial.

Sandra: I totally disagree.

Lynne: We have a course on the bill of rights and constitutional law and we did various sections of the bill of rights and we discussed it in depth...it's not just respect for the commercial side, we have those lecturers and we have our other lecturers, so it's like...I think it's up to the individual, the individual decides.

There were similar comments from other student focus groups,

At times I just feel we are not informed enough or, I'm not sure, are we supposed to go out and research about each and every aspect of the law, I think that's what we're supposed to do, but I'm one of those people who didn't do anything, so I don't know a lot (Tozi).

There isn't really that much of a push from the lecturers to be any sort of attorney, they're not trying to mould you into something specific (Yusuf).

In the issue of career choice, therefore, there appears to be a tension between different interpretations of transformation: between the Faculty facilitating transformation in the sense of enabling students from disadvantaged backgrounds to choose high-flying and lucrative career paths, supporting their families and communities this way; and the

Faculty producing students with excellent pro-poor professional capabilities, well equipped to work towards transformation in South Africa when they graduate.

This may not be a zero-sum scenario; ideally, while the Faculty should not channel students into particular lines of work, it should provide students with the variety of experience to support and inform their choices. Professional training can still have a role in enabling choice and the realisation of values, without prescribing a particular career path, and it seems that the experiences on the Legal Process course in particular helped with this.

Social and collective struggle and **emotion** were barely mentioned by respondents in relation to educational arrangements.

4.2 Pedagogy

This section considers some of the teaching methods used on the Law Degree, and whether there is any particular significance for the fostering of pro-poor capabilities among law graduates from Fynbos.

One important and unique pedagogical aspect of the Legal Process elective is the opportunity to engage in practical experience at the Legal Aid Clinic, which may well serve as a particularly powerful means of instilling awareness of poverty and diversity in the students. The faculty pays for the salaries of two clinicians so that students can learn through practice in this way, and since the late 1980s has allowed students to obtain course credits through working in the Clinic⁹⁴. Khatidja, a lecturer on the Legal Process elective, is keen that the clinical model should be adopted for all students for all four years, so that no matter what career direction each student chooses, they have been given some form of social consciousness, which they believe cannot be taught through lecturing; 'social consciousness, you can't teach in class, it's impossible'.

Moreover, the idea of the clinical experience is not that it gives students a specific orientation to go into community-level work, but that it gives them a range of skills and experience which makes them well-equipped to go into a variety of branches of law. The concern with learning through practice is encouraged to continue after graduation. The Deputy Dean recommends students don't go to the larger law firms after graduating, despite the fact that they offer the opportunity to do pro bono work that smaller firms cannot offer; because if students go to work in smaller rural practices they will gain the hands-on experience of learning the actual 'tools of the trade' – 'learn how to interview, how to litigate cases, how to make decisions, how to run an office'.

Awareness and understanding of diversity could also, however, come from the experiences within the classroom itself, not just from the Legal Aid Clinic. Lecturers also spoke of the importance of the diversity of the student body in raising awareness of different socio-economic backgrounds. At Fynbos this was particularly the case considering the small but increasing numbers of white students at this historically black university, and also a proportion from outside of South Africa, and the mixed age range and religions of the law students. Shamiel noted that the socio-economic diversity was physically evident in the different means of transport to the Faculty: the different sorts of cars, and some using public transport. This diversity was drawn on by the lecturers in their teaching,

We look at background, where they're from...so you can draw from that experience and that also assists not only students but myself as well as the person standing in front [at the legal aid clinic], drawing from their experience and also applying that, not only in the class but also in my life.

⁹⁴ For further details, see Fynbos (2004).

One student, Jennifer, also spoke of the value of this diversity in class, which helped them to be open to the views of their future clients,

Some of [the students] are even from other parts of South Africa, like Eastern Cape, and even Zimbabwe, so that also helps you to be able to understand the race of Africa, not just be limited to Western Cape. So also being able to interact with so many different people and cultures, it helps a lot...[not being receptive to diversity is] not exactly a good way to look at it 'cos then you're closing yourself up to what you could do for them and how you could also help them in your little ways.

4.3 Educational constraints

All groups also identified a number of constraints to the development of an educational programme and general environment which would produce public good professionals.

Crowded curriculum and limited facilities

First, efforts to introduce a pro-poor orientation may suffer from the fact that the curriculum is crowded already, as the lecturer William Brown noted,

It's a kind of paper-chase basically in the Law Faculty, it's about trying to get students to understand as much law in as short a time as possible... I imagine that the pressure to get as many students through the course in as short a time as possible diverts quite a lot of energy and attention away from developing a kind of decent value system.

Helen Thompson also drew attention to the large numbers of students, which, for example, can get in the way of proper marking processes. Correspondingly, in more recent years the university has put a cap on numbers, accepting only students with higher matriculation grades, which has hindered the acceptance of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Further, there is a cap on the number of students who take the Legal Process elective, because the Legal Aid Clinic can only contain a certain number of students working there each year. Only 60 students can take this elective, out of a total of 240 students in that year.

This was one factor which prevented more professional practice being embedded more thoroughly in the LLB degree. Students felt that the curriculum did not contain an innovative enough pedagogy – for example, feeling that they would benefit from more role-plays to get them accustomed to situations in practice. This is perhaps the result of the length of the LLB being reduced from a 5 year degree plus two years of professional practice to now being a 4 year integrated degree.

The overcrowding of the course has led to a narrower curriculum. Arnold Muller outlined that,

In the old degree, people were exposed to other subjects like criminology, they did more language courses, they did political science sometimes, some of them did economics related courses and I think we just had a better rounded student or graduate at the end of five years.

Also due to time constraints, the students did not do research as part of their course. These factors limit the possibilities for shifting the curriculum in a more pro-poor direction.

Few black role models

Zolani, an alumnus, identified that there were very few black lecturers in Law, even though Fynbos is known as one of the more progressive institutions; among the 38 members of staff at the faculty, none are African. This may have an impact both on

those becoming practicing professionals, and on those who might consider staying in academia.

Helen Thompson spoke of the difficulties in encouraging graduates into academic teaching,

The thing is that it's not a desirable profession, [university] teaching, because it's not very well paid, in fact it's extremely badly paid [compared to private practice]. So we've had the experience that when we've appointed – one person I can think of, he lasted three months and then another university offered him a half-time job, double the salary and a scholarship to America. Two other candidates used the offer of an appointment here to get improvements of conditions at their own host universities. So we want to talk about transformation of the profession but we haven't even haven't even managed to get it here [at Fynbos].

The inability to attract good graduates to stay in academia and teach may well reduce the chances of progressive changes being made in the curriculum.

Student under-preparedness

William Brown, a lecturer, also noted that the low level of student preparedness due to poor levels of schooling when they arrived at university was a constraint; and that some of the pressures from home facing students from disadvantaged backgrounds was also a hindrance to learning.

Helen Thompson stated,

I had a student in here the day before yesterday, not from this faculty, crying because she hasn't got a decent course work mark with which to go and write the exam. I said to her "When did I see you in class?" She said "Well, I came to class in August, and then my mother died so I went home and my mother was looking after my children, and there was no one to look after my children". So she stayed away for seven weeks, that is an entire term, not even in Cape Town. Now this kind of thing is not an isolated, that's quite an extreme occurrence, but it's not an isolated occurrence of students disappearing for three weeks at a time, students not coming to class. The students coming to class, they don't take any notes. Culture of compliance, i.e., if there's a test you write the test, you don't automatically bring a sick note. There're lots of things that need to be addressed there, which all my colleagues will confirm.

Low levels of student preparedness, and the difficulties the university faces in handling this, is likely to constrain the fostering of pro-poor professional capabilities among students.

Not enough careers information to choose

While many students spoke about the importance of freedom of choice of career path, some also felt that their choices over career direction were to some extent constrained; for example, only particular types of law firm (larger firms) gave presentations to students and offered vacation programmes. One student also felt that while they valued the ability to choose the sector of law they entered, they did not currently have enough careers information to choose which route of law they go into.

Perhaps in contrast to some of the comments made by other students, Tozi felt that the course did not provide them with enough information to choose the path that was right for them,

I'm still undecided because I could do the human rights, but where will it lead me, that's my question, where I will go as opposed to the commercial law... there's a lack of information, I guess I'm supposed to inform more about, you know, enquire, investigate and do something like that. On my part, I haven't

done a lot as opposed to the other side [commercial law], the information is just, it flies, it's everywhere, it's more easily available to you.

This idea for a career path which prioritised making money was not necessarily encouraged by the faculty at Fynbos, but more the large private legal firms who come to present there; according to Michael, students who pursue high-flying career paths, get that [idea] from presentations from all those larger law firms that come to do presentations, lunch-times on Tuesday and that's where they get the idea from, that they can get money.

5. Social constraints

5.1 The nature of the law

One of the main constraints voiced by many of the participants was that the nature of the law itself was not comprehensive enough to work effectively against poverty, despite the progressive and comprehensive content of the Bill of Rights. As William Brown outlined, there might be a limit to the role of professional education in this regard, we can teach law students what they ought to do, you know, a decent kind of value system, but you come up against either an unwilling State or an incapable State.

Similarly, Johan Wentzel (NGO) stated that there was an absence of policy that might be used strategically to benefit the poor, with migrant and refugee communities in particular 'often forgotten by policies'.

The courts may make radical decisions, e.g. about the right to housing, but these can still be ignored by the state in its policies, and suffer due to a lack of political will. However, there may still be an indirect role for professional education in providing the bedrock of a new wave of political will for using the law to reduce poverty in South Africa.

In other cases, the provisions of the law itself are not sufficient for social justice. A number of students described how they had encountered situations which they felt were unjust but in which the law was not able to help bring about a solution. Zubeida, who had been trying to advise a Muslim woman who had been abused by her husband and was undergoing a divorce, recounted,

I actually went to my supervisor and said "What do we do in a case like this?" and he said to me "There's pretty much nothing you can do because she's got no legal right"⁹⁵.

When the law makes you unable to help in this way can be particularly exhausting, as Tozi explains,

It's very emotional, it gets draining because you see how divided South Africa is...what really hurts is if you can't help them and you have to turn them away...and then you can see in their faces "but I thought you were going to help me, what next?". That really hurts.

One of the lecturers, William Brown, described how law as a profession does not foster close contact between the practising professionals and their poorer clients. Lawyers might rarely see how their clients live, or learn about their backgrounds and the socio-economic context of their lives,

Thus thinking like a lawyer means smoothing out the rich complexity of real life problems in favour of abstract legal argument.

Indeed, he felt that within the profession, compassion was often regarded as something which might hinder the proper course of justice and therefore was not encouraged.

⁹⁵ Religious marriage has no legal or civil standing in South Africa.

Interestingly, a recent study by the Carnegie Foundation of Law schools in the US and Canada found that students there were also discouraged from relating legal cases to the complexity of real-life cases, or to think through the social consequences or ethical aspects of conclusions (Sullivan et al, 2007)⁹⁶.

Moreover, the way in which legal cases are constructed does not encourage lawyers to work towards poverty reduction, particularly comparing the confrontational nature of South African Law with the inquisitorial nature of European law. William Brown stated that 'Law is fundamentally adversarial, we fight basically, we teach students to fight', with the emphasis on winning, rather than fostering the notion of service, and social and community rights.

The Deputy Dean sees the Constitutional Court as anti-poor, because in practice it has turned people down when they cannot afford a lawyer, despite the fact that legal aid should be available. Also, the law is couched in non-accessible language. In this way, an unequal relationship is built into the nature of the law.

In the same line of thinking, William Brown described how the law itself was focused largely on individual justice rather than a notion of helping people collectively,

Law historically has never been for everybody, it's always been, almost an instrument available to those who rule...Law ultimately is about power whether we like it or not...Law is a structure which is almost fundamentally undemocratic which is why it can't handle the notion of social rights, of community rights. It used to be we had social economic rights in our constitution, most countries have them, but the rights, I think I've said this before, the rights were attached to individual people...I'm convinced there are areas which law does not allow you to, in a sense, penetrate. Things like making the law for the people, it's a wonderful idea, but in practice, there is no people as far as the law is concerned, ok, it's one person that you will represent for one particular issue...We matter for the law only as individual legal subjects and it's a totally alienating kind of thing.

In the same way that political struggle is needed to actualise the provisions of the Bill of Rights, a similar will is required to work around or revise these characteristics of the law which appear to constrain pro-poor activity.

5.2 Conservative attitudes and prejudice

A number of respondents also perceived that prejudice about some aspect of their background affected how they were treated and even sometimes inhibited the work they were offered, which would correspondingly have an effect on their efficacy as pro-poor lawyers, or their capability to realise valued functionings.

One alumnus, Dumisani, perceived that prejudice against African lawyers continued to pervade, meaning that African lawyers were more likely to be offered menial work before they had 'proved themselves',

Other people have got a perception that, maybe if you studied at a particular university or institution, or you're from the townships...It's quite evident that you can do what others can do, but it's just that there's that kind of a thing. It's a class thing or it's a race thing.

⁹⁶ The report concludes, 'In their all-consuming first year, students are told to set aside their desire for justice. They are warned not to let their moral concerns or compassion for the people in the cases they discuss cloud their legal analyses. This warning does help students escape the grip of misconceptions about how the law works as they hone their analytic skills. But when the misconceptions are not addressed directly, students have no way of learning when and how their moral concerns may be relevant to their work as lawyers and when these concerns could throw them off track. Students often find this confusing and disillusioning. The fact that moral concerns are reintroduced only haphazardly conveys a cynical impression of the law that is rarely intended' (Sullivan et al, 2007).

Both lecturers and students felt that Fynbos's history as a previously disadvantaged university meant that graduates were not respected as much as those from other more prestigious universities, and had a harder time finding employment. Helen Thompson explained, 'we might have access but it's not the same level of access'.

Conservative attitudes could also act as a constraint to bringing about pro-poor legal outcomes. One alumnus pointed out that particular religious beliefs could hinder social justice and be a constraint on being a transformative lawyer. Thandi recounted that, Sometimes people will come to you and say, my husband is abusing me and all those kinds of things, and you tell them "Then leave him or go and divorce him" but they tell "My religion, I can't divorce my husband"... Sometimes I tell them "Listen, I'm very religious myself, I go to church and all these kind of things" but I draw a thin line between abuse and what is religious and what is cultural.

5.3 Lack of funding

The lack of funding for pro-poor NGOs limited the number of people who could receive free legal help. Thandi noted, 'we have to turn lots of people away, and have to tell them because there is no impact' (i.e. because their case is not likely to bring about a change in the law).

Similarly, the need for lawyers to earn a certain level of income meant a limit to the number of pro-bono hours they could work. Zolani described how he needed to charge at a certain (lower) level for the work he did for an NGO. 'You wouldn't necessarily do work direct for free all of the time for them, we would reduce our rate instead'.

Felicity Green felt that there is a need to professionalise the NGO sector, where people typically were less highly qualified, leading to divergent performance levels, which may affect the willingness of people to donate funds,

It's that lack of professionalisation, and the thing is that I think that does contribute to some extent to the erratic kind of performance levels within civil society. We need to professionalise it; we're not a bunch of volunteers, we're doing something that is a profession...I can just speak a bit for example from a donor perspective who are very unwilling to pay for salaries...if you look at their requirements as well in terms of reporting requirements and their financial managements, they're professional requirements.

5.4 Material motivations of lawyers

All three groups identified that the material motivation of lawyers often prevented them from pursuing a more pro-poor career path. All alumni spoke about this. Dumisani observed,

Unfortunately things change in the country now, especially like for black lawyers who want money and it's not about like helping out and giving back. And not only lawyers basically, but that's a general trend, most black professionals...it's more about bucks – it's unfortunate.

Lecturers noted the same, particularly a trend in more recent students; William Brown noted,

I might be wrong, but I think the majority of law students are not here to serve, so to speak. They're here to get a professional degree. And to assure themselves of essentially a comfortable life and it's a peculiarity of this generation... The South African so called revolution has gone wrong, I think, in the sense that we've made a deal which has not been particularly pro-poor.

As Khatidja stated before, many students had the expectations and material needs of a whole family underpinning their motivation to train as a lawyer, which would also direct them towards more remunerative positions.

This also discouraged people entering the profession as university teachers, as Helen Thompson observed,

The thing is that it's not a desirable profession, teaching, because it's not very well paid, in fact it's extremely badly paid.

While university teachers earn a high wage relative to the majority of the population, these wages do not compare favourably to those received in private legal practice, or working for the government.

Similarly, students noticed the same thing. Jennifer noted,

I think about sixty per cent of black students enter law for the mere factor of the money that they're able to get out of it. So not many people will look at "How can I help my community?", they more look at "How can I help myself?", you know, "What I can get out of it".

Sandra empathised with those who made this choice,

Can you really blame them because they come from disadvantaged communities and that is what maybe their parents have pressured on to them "We send you to university, we spent thousand of Rands, are you going to do that so that you can become a community lawyer or attorney?"...I don't blame my friends for example who do come from disadvantaged communities, worse off than I was or my family is, who want to make money. I don't actually feel there's anything wrong with it.

The current socio-economic context and changing values in South Africa therefore is discouraging the development of pro-poor professionals, and the students do not see themselves and their experiences in higher education as being at the forefront of poverty reduction. As the Deputy Dean observed,

We operate against a tide that seems to be signalling other things and the new elite in politics and in regional economics are the new black elite. Other people who don't, who are not seen to be doing anything for the poor, they're multi-millionaires and they drive expensive cars to which an ordinary law student aspires, he sees that as a role model "I would like to become like that and you don't become like that by going to a little small, rural area, you have to mix with those people, that's how you", they're wanting to be like them.

We cannot assume that poor students see themselves as being professionals at the front line of poverty reduction; as William Brown sees it,

It's one of the big ironies of South African history that a lot of, most of our students come from fairly impoverished backgrounds and they don't see legal education, even higher education in general, as a general kind of poverty combating mechanism.

The Deputy Dean noted the same, with some sadness,

What is particularly...not frustrating, but disheartening, is that most of those who come from the most deprived areas, are the least willing to go back to those places, and understandably so.

But overall students may be better off than 15 years ago, even if some are still worse off than other students in South Africa. Anecdotally, for example, one no longer sees large numbers of students hitchhiking to and from the University; the number of cars, and the price and model, has changed significantly.

The roots of this lie in the social changes of the past 15 years. According to Robert Michaels, from a legal professional body,

The younger crop of lawyers don't come from the same background that those that qualified ten, fifteen, twenty years ago, where we basically were educated in the apartheid system and many of us through our education got involved in fighting against apartheid and forming an alliance. The younger crop...I must say I find them, personally I think apathetic and really just interested in their career as opposed to really driving other things such as social justice and human rights.

Felicity Green (NGO) also saw political change as being responsible for the decrease in lawyers,

wanting to improve society rather than “When can I start earning enough to own my Mercedes Benz?” And I think there’s been a huge shift; we’ve lost that political foundation which created a willingness individually and independently for people to want to give back.

The Dean explained that some significant changes in the legal profession in the last 5-8 years also mean that lawyers have to make a more distinct choice between ‘pro-poor’ and high earning career paths. In recent years, more and more small and medium-sized firms have merged into larger firms; these large conglomerates employ huge numbers of lawyers but tend to channel the less lucrative pro bono work through a small number of people (‘pro-poor lawyers will always be poor’), while other employees take more remunerative work. And the government’s recent ‘Black Economic Empowerment’ (BEE) requirements have meant that in contrast to previous years, now many more black students are getting much more private work opportunities.

Nonetheless, some students appeared to indicate that they still sought a middle path: a stable and lucrative enough career path that also had pro-poor elements,

I want to be able to play golf and stuff, but I also want to have the ability to be able to help in the community as well and ya, giving other people an opportunity to be able to better their life as well, so I want to be that person as well (Ashiek).

I’m not going to lie either, I’m not going to be able to go out every weekend and serve the community, I won’t be able to. So maybe even contributions with money or doing pro bono work or something like that would be at least something. I just want to do something, because in South Africa, there’s too many things going too wrong (Alice).

5.5 High levels of violent crime

Several students perceived that the level of violence and crime in the country was a disincentive to go into criminal law, because lawyers could end up being at risk themselves. Lynne explained,

I enjoy all aspects of law and I enjoy criminal law as well but in our country it’s a bit of a minefield because I don’t think the process is working at the moment because of the crime rate and you read newspapers and you read about despicable things and I would prefer not to go into the criminal law field.

William Brown saw that as part of this, attitudes to the accused had changed, also meaning that those from disadvantaged communities might be more likely to have to defend themselves,

because of the rampant crime, I mean even law students are beginning to say “Yes, the accused must prove that he’s innocent rather than the State having to prove that he’s guilty”. Now that’s quite a big thing.

6. Conclusion

After the transition to democracy in South Africa, the potential role that lawyers can play in reducing poverty has changed and expanded significantly. There are substantial institutional provisions in the Bill of Rights, and the provision of legal aid for the disadvantaged by the government. This potential for transformation is further facilitated by the opening up of professional training and opportunities to all black groups, recently facilitated by BEE requirements. Although not demographically representative yet, numbers of black lawyers are expanding, not only just at Fynbos but at historically white

universities⁹⁷. But high levels of poverty (in a multidimensional sense) mean there is a huge need for pro-poor lawyers; both to work on individual injustices facing disadvantaged people, but also to provide a political momentum for policy change and actualisation of the Bill of Rights through greater collective effort.

This case study has attempted to investigate the extent to which the Law Faculty at Fynbos produces Law graduates who have the capabilities to act as pro-poor professionals. Of particular importance has been the opportunity to translate legal knowledge into practice, the capability to feel affiliation and empathy with clients from diverse backgrounds, resilience, and the autonomy and confidence to choose career direction. Many of these capabilities are fostered through the Legal Process elective (Table 3). In contrast, the capability to participate in social and collective struggle was not touched on much by respondents; it seems that pro-poor legal work is largely conceptualised in individualistic terms, and certainly conveyed that way by the Faculty. This is perhaps related to the Deputy Dean's point that until this point the nature of the law has focused largely on individual rights and less on social justice for communities, despite the socio-economic provisions of the Bill of Rights. The slow process of realising the Bill of Rights is itself an outcome of lack of collective political will, both in terms of translating these into policy, and also in terms of enabling them to be realised at individual level.

Table 3 summarises the findings of this study in relation to the overarching framework of 'Public Good Professional Capabilities' identified by this project.

Table 3: Pro-poor lawyers: different professional capabilities in the Legal Process module

Public good professional capability	Related components of Legal Process at Fynbos
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with people from disadvantaged communities at Legal Aid Clinic to raise awareness of levels of poverty - Taught modules facilitate some understanding of historical, social and political development of legal system, and human rights aspects - However, no particular orientation to transformation encouraged.
Affiliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with clients from disadvantaged communities can foster affiliation and empathy. - Classwork with student from different backgrounds.
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally learnt through pressures of the course. - Encouraged by mentors / supervisors at Legal Aid Clinic
Social and collective struggle	Not specifically addressed; will depend on particular lecturers.
Integrity	Values such as trustworthiness, honesty, respectability and professional behaviour are explicitly encouraged by lecturers and are part of the image the Faculty strives to project through turning out good quality professional graduates.
Assurance and confidence	Lecturers are keen for students to demonstrate leadership qualities and confidence in choosing career direction.
Knowledge	Efficient and effective practice through quality teaching and curriculum; ideally also encouraging critical and lateral thinking. Integration of theory and practice is encouraged through clinical work.

The study suggests that students do not appear to be getting any particular message about career direction from the Faculty, with many of the lecturers having differing opinions about the role of the Faculty in career trajectories. Presentations from large law firms encourage students to pursue highly-paid positions; otherwise much of the emphasis for the students seems to be on ethics and behaviour rather than specifically

⁹⁷ See 'More Black Lawyers Needed', in *Mail and Guardian*, 22nd April 2008.

pro-poor values and capabilities. This study has however been influenced by the fact that most of our university respondents were linked to the Legal Process module which provides experience at the Legal Aid Clinic, so respondents were likely to be extra sensitised to poverty issues, and working against poverty through individual case work and curial enforcement as opposed to the ways discussed by Akintayo (2007).

This study has shown that in the Law Faculty, transformation is a somewhat haphazard discourse. Of course this plurality of perspectives may be a good thing if it generates public discussion and scrutiny in the Faculty; but such public reasoning does not seem to be a feature of Faculty life. There are tensions between an understanding of transformation as choice for students (e.g. people from disadvantaged communities can become lawyers who go into high-earning fields) and transformation as working for the public good⁹⁸. This tension brings into focus the important question of where the burden of responsibility and work for transformation should lie. Does transformation always have to rest on the shoulders of the disadvantaged, with the advantaged effectively being let off the hook? Is there an assumption that disadvantaged students must be the ones who must go back and help their communities? This tension is also evident in how the Faculty used to present itself during the transition period, and its more recent image as a place of equal opportunity and empowerment for individuals.

It would certainly be possible in theory for the Faculty to take a more proactive stance in providing guidance for students, particularly by expanding the Legal Process module so that it could be taken by all students, which would provide more exposure to the realities of working with disadvantaged communities. This would be a first step towards making students aware of the choices in working for transformation. As detailed in the study, many senior members of the Faculty are keen that students should take this path, whether in taking an overtly pro-poor career path, or making an ongoing commitment to pro-bono work. The Deputy Dean explained that the students themselves benefit from pro-poor work; even if it does not initially appear to be the most valid or high profile path to take, taking the initiative on social justice brings benefits to all sides,

There is no ready market, so we try to suggest to graduates, you know, you don't always strike when the iron is hot, you have to make it hot by striking it. In other words you have to give a profile to the legal problem because sometimes the social problems and the legal problems overlap a lot...if you help the people, you yourself develop experience and expertise.

Finally, in the light of some scepticism about social and collective struggle and its underplaying as a valued professional capability, it is helpful to note that, according to Justice Kate O'Regan (2009), the legal profession is seen to play a part in securing democracy in South Africa – surely a social and collective project of tremendous importance. O'Regan argues that lawyers 'have a public calling' and obligation for public service to foster the legal system and rule of law, including pro bono work to protect constitutional rights. Legal protection for individuals and constitutional litigation on behalf of the marginalised directly strengthens constitutional democracy, while also changing individual lives.

⁹⁸ See Sullivan (2007); in this study, students seemed confused on how to use moral concerns in their work.

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1. Introduction

The focus of this case study is the postgraduate programme of the Centre for Public Health (CPH) at Fynbos University. Our interest is in the expansion of capabilities of Public Health professionals to contribute to transformation and poverty reduction. The narrative is set against the backdrop of the struggle to transform the South African health system at a national level in such a way that the majority of the population would be able to live in conditions enabling long and healthy lives. The field of Public Health is also contextualised in relation to a global context of development. One of the reasons for this is that the Postgraduate Programme has a high number of students from other African countries. Furthermore the vision of the Centre is closely aligned to a global movement to promote a primary health care approach in underdeveloped and developing countries.

2. Background

Kautzky and Tollman (2008) outline the process of systematic damage to the health system in South Africa through the enforcement of the apartheid system between 1948 and 1994. It is not widely known that prior to this, in the 1940s, there had been significant efforts by progressive doctors in various locations in South Africa towards developing a more equitable health sector. These initiatives were crushed after the National Party came into power in 1948 (Kautzky and Tollman, 2008). From the 1970s, large-scale implementation of policy entrenching racial segregation and inequity inflicted tremendous damage on the health sector. One of the elements of this policy was the creation of ethnically based rural 'homelands' for Africans⁹⁹. Each 'homeland' had to administer its own public service systems, including health systems. Many of these segregated health systems were not able to provide adequate medical and public health care. They were poorly organised, inefficient and often ineffectively managed (ibid).

Throughout South Africa (not only in the homelands) ethnically based departments of health were established with separate health services for each racial group. This was inevitably grossly inefficient and wasteful. Health services for African, coloured and Indian communities suffered from lack of funding and deficiencies in health personnel, medical facilities and equipment (ibid). Africans were the most discriminated against in this system. Combined with similar policies in all sectors of South African society, working class and poor rural black communities and individuals experienced a growth in poverty and severe degeneration of conditions needed for leading healthy lives. Inequities in the health sector during this period were further exacerbated by the deregulation of the health sector and the privatisation of health care. There was an expansion of hospital-based curative services with the effect of further depletion of material and human resources for facilities serving poor, black communities in both urban and rural areas (Naylor, 1988 in Kautzky and Tollman, 2008). The health system under apartheid was succinctly described by one of the informants in the study as being made up of a combination of an 'elitist first-world medical system and very weak health

⁹⁹ We use the categories constructed by the apartheid government for race/ethnic groups. This is necessary in order to understand current developments within a historical context. These categories are African, coloured, Indian/Asian and white. The term 'black' is commonly used inclusively to refer to African, coloured and Indian people.

structures for poor people, who were predominantly black' (Jane Simons, Postgraduate Programme Coordinator).

After the end of apartheid in 1994, significant shifts in health policy were introduced. Policy goals signalled an intention to transform the system from one that was racially fragmented, inequitable and inefficient to a 'high quality, equitable, comprehensive community-based system' (CPH Annual Report 2008)¹⁰⁰. The system envisaged would be based on principles of primary health care. It would provide universal access to health care with the emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion (DOH, 1997).

The Primary Health Care (PHC) approach developed in the 1970s as part of an international drive responding to a worldwide crisis in health care. This approach was endorsed as a means to achieving universally available health care at an International Conference in 1978. The conference was held at Alma Ata in the former USSR. It was organised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Childrens Fund (UNICEF) and attended by 134 countries. At the conference the Alma Ata Declaration was adopted (Sanders and Alexander, 2008, Kautzky and Tollman, 2008). The PHC approach, as outlined in the Alma Ata Declaration, is underpinned by a strong socio-political orientation, which is directed at enhancing social justice. It aims to provide universal access to health care with the emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion. It seeks to 'redirect the health services to respond more equitably, appropriately and effectively to basic health care needs while also addressing the underlying social, economic and political determinants of poor health' (Sanders and Alexander, 2008).

In addition, a brief summary of the primary health care approach as defined in the Alma Ata Declaration includes the following principles: Nutrition, access to clean water and basic sanitation are prerequisites for healthy communities. Furthermore PHC approach recognises the role of other sectors apart from the health care sector in promoting health. These include sectors such as agriculture, industry, education and housing. Thus there needs to be coordination of the programmes of these sectors. It requires and promotes 'maximum community and individual self-reliance and participation' in primary health care (World Health Organisation, 1978). It relies on the provision of education about prevailing health problems and methods of prevention. It should be sustained by 'integrated, functional and mutually supportive' systems, and relies on a range of health workers who are suitably trained to work as a health team (ibid).

After 1994 the national Department of Health (DOH) formulated policy aimed at *inter alia* unifying 'the fragmented health services into a comprehensive and integrated national health system' (DOH, 1997). It aimed to 'reduce disparities and inequities in health service delivery and increase access to improved and integrated services, based on primary health care principles' (ibid). To this end it instituted large-scale restructuring of the health system. We will mention a few of the elements of the restructuring process which are particularly relevant in relation to the empirical aspects of this study, more specifically the capabilities identified in the interview data. Decentralised district health services were developed with the aim of providing increased access to comprehensive health care at a primary level. It was intended that target clients and communities would be able to access an integrated package of essential PHC services at the first point of contact (ibid). Furthermore the DOH aimed to establish effective referral systems at various levels of the health care system (DOH, 1997).

¹⁰⁰ Information on recent developments in the Centre, the curriculum, and other contextual information were gathered from reports produced by the CPH which are referred to in this study. Please note that while these documents do exist, we cannot reference them fully without revealing the identity of the institution, so they are not listed in the bibliography.

In the period after the release of the White Paper on Health (1997), the Department of Health worked on elaborating broad policy intentions into more detailed policies and regarding health system structures and implementing policy directives into specific programmes. One of these programmes is discussed by an alumnus of the CPH Masters programme in the section on professional capabilities and therefore is mentioned specifically here. This is the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) programme introduced by the Department of Health (DOH) in 2001. It aimed to counter the spread of HIV, focussing mainly on pregnant women, mothers, babies and young children.

In spite of progressive health policy and large-scale structural changes in the health sector, the health of the majority of the population has declined post-1994. This is shown by some of the key indicators of health. Maternal and infant mortality rose between 1990 and 2006, and life expectancy decreased significantly (Beresford, 2008). The poor performance of the health system is also evident in health service indicators such as vaccination coverage and tuberculosis cure rates (CPH Annual Report 2006). There have been numerous interrelated reasons for this. During a period of unprecedented growth of the South African economy, poverty and inequality have increased. Furthermore malnutrition, lack of housing, and access to basic services such as clean water and sewerage facilities have contributed to ill-health of communities.

Undoubtedly the HIV and AIDS pandemic has had devastating effects on the health of the population (Beresford, 2008). According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, in 2005 more than 5,5-million adults were infected with HIV/AIDS which constituted 18,8% of the adult population of South Africa, (Mail and Guardian On-line, 2009b). Recent statistics show that in the years from 1997 to 2008 the rate of death has doubled in South Africa, which is attributed to the extraordinarily high rate of AIDS-related deaths (Mail and Guardian On-line, 2009a)¹⁰¹. The high death rate has been exacerbated by the denialist policies of the Mbeki government

As a middle-income country undergoing significant economic growth, South Africa's health sector has not been significantly compromised by an absolute lack of finances or basic resources as has been the case in some other African countries. The central reason which has contributed to the poor performance of the health sector has been cited as the shortage of staff and lack of capacity amongst health professionals. This problem has been particularly severe 'in rural and poor peri-urban areas and at the lower levels – primary and community levels – of the health services' (CPH Annual Report 2008).

Restructuring of the health system has required health practitioners to engage in new roles and expand their capabilities and functionings to perform these roles. With decentralisation of health services to the district level a new layer of managers and middle managers was created. Clinicians, particularly nurses were 'pushed from clinical nursing into roles that they'd never had to think of before where they were managing a district and having to plan and budget and deal with a whole lot of those kinds of issues' (Jane, lecturer). Thus there has been a great need for 'training in primary health care and public health strategies, in epidemiology, in health promotion and in key health programmes such as nutrition and HIV/AIDS' (CPH Annual Report 2008). Furthermore, there has been an urgent need for expansion of management and leadership capabilities at all levels of the system.

¹⁰¹ The Health Minister, Aaron Motsoaledi revealed that in 1997 the total number of deaths in South Africa stood at about 300 000 per annum, and by 2008 has risen to 756 000 per annum (Mail and Guardian On-line, 2009a).

3. The Centre for Public Health at Fynbos University

The Centre for Public Health (CPH) was established in 1993 as a programme at Fynbos University when there was a surge of policy formulation in all sectors of South African society to prepare for the imminent transition to democratic government. The vision informing the establishment of the programme was that of contributing to the optimal health of people in developing countries, particularly Africa. The population of these countries should live in 'healthy and sustainable environments with access to appropriate, high quality, comprehensive and equitable health systems, based on a human rights approach' (CPH Annual Report, 2006:1). This vision was based on the concept of comprehensive and integrated primary health care, as defined in the Alma Ata Declaration. The programme was established to contribute to policy-making in the health sector, to 'strengthen education and research in Public Health and Primary Health Care ... and to build capacity in the health services' (CPH Programme Handbook 2009). Before the establishment of the programme, Public Health did not exist in South Africa as a 'multidisciplinary field for a ... spectrum of health practitioners' (Michael Andrews, previous Director of CPH¹⁰²). It was 'confined to the medical schools, where only medical doctors were given post graduate training in community health' (Michael). The need for Public Health to be established as a formal disciplinary field in universities was recognised by the Medical Research Council¹⁰³. The then Vice-Chancellor of Fynbos University recognised this need, and played a proactive role in setting up the programme at the University.

The Public Health Programme started as a one-person unit in 1993. In 1994 two more academic staff members were recruited as well as administrative staff, and the Programme took on one Masters student. By 2008 the Programme had evolved into a Centre for Public Health located in the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences at Fynbos University. It had 31 academic and research staff and 11 administrative staff members (Faculty of Community and Health Sciences Report, 2008). Eleven members of the academic staff had permanent positions (CPH Annual Report, 2006) which is extremely unusual for an academic institute with is largely funded by sources outside of the university. In 2006 there were 196 postgraduate students registered on the programme, which increased to 298 in 2008. A central role of the Centre is to contribute to addressing the crisis in human resources for the transforming health system in South Africa, and elsewhere in Africa through education of public health practitioners. This educational role has evolved into the Centre's postgraduate programme in addition to other courses for health professionals. The programme is aimed at a variety of health professionals in different sectors of the system and at different levels. These include medical doctors, nurses, allied health professionals such as pharmacists, physiotherapists and dieticians, environmental health officers and educators in the Public Health field.

CPH's postgraduate programme was initially run as a contact programme at the Fynbos University campus until 2000. In 2000 the format of the programme was changed to distance learning with an optional attendance at summer and winter schools at the University. At this point the intake of students increased dramatically. In 2002 the students were mainly from South Africa, but from 2004 to 2006 the programme attracted increasing numbers of students from other African countries until the number of students from elsewhere on the continent exceeded the number of South African students¹⁰⁴. We will discuss the structure and curricula of the postgraduate programme in Section 3 on 'Educational arrangements'.

¹⁰² The interview with the Director of CPH was conducted in 2008 before the appointment of a new Director. The current Director has also contributed to the case study.

¹⁰³ The Medical Research Council is a statutory body with a mandate to conduct medical research.

¹⁰⁴ In 2008 the number of international students on the Masters in Public Health programme constituted 70% of the total student number (School Annual Report 2008).

As discussed above, the work of the Centre for Public Health is based on a coherent vision of health within a social justice framework in underdeveloped and developing countries. This vision encompasses a clear picture of the nature of a health system and health system structures which create such environments, thereby expanding the capabilities of people for long, healthy lives and a high quality of life. The terms 'human development' and 'capabilities' are not used in articulation of CPH's vision. However, we argue that this vision is highly compatible with understandings of social justice, development and poverty reduction inherent in the 'human development' (UNDP, 2000; UNDP, 2003; ul Haq, 2003) and capability approach (Sen, 1999, Nussbaum, 2000).

Jane, the Postgraduate Programme Coordinator described the vision of the Centre in the following terms,

[The Centre's vision of health care involves] the transformation of what was a primarily centralised top down authoritarian, medicalised world view of health with human rights missing being transformed to a kind of people-centred, equitable multi-sectoral approach to health, strongly leaning on the side of health promotion.

From CPH reports and interviews with the Director and lecturers, it is apparent that the CPH's vision of Public Health as outlined in Sections 1 and 2 is commonly shared by all of the CPH staff. Jane Simons, the Programme Coordinator supported the claim of a shared vision, stating that the Director of CPH 'was entirely committed to PHC (primary health care) from the word go and therefore he shaped it and people are very reliant on him and I think people are very proud to be part of that ethos'. Paul Daniels, a lecturer on the programme, agreed that CPH did have a shared vision of transformation of the health sector. Moreover this vision informed all of the Centre's work. For example, it was 'discussed at every strategic meeting'.

Table 1 gives the demographic details of those interviewed for the study.

Table 1: Interviewees¹⁰⁵

Name	Male	Female	African	Indian	Coloured	White
a) Students						
<i>Focus group 1</i>						
Maureen		x			x	
Sipho	x		x			
Michael (from another Southern African country)	x		x			
Lila (from another Southern African country)		x	x			
<i>Focus group 2</i>						
Matthew (from another Southern African country)	x		x			
Malisako (from another Southern African country)	x		x			
Buyiswa		x	x			
Luleka		x	x			
<i>Focus group 3</i>						
Moiria		x			x	
Daniel (from another	x		x			

¹⁰⁵ All respondents have been given pseudonyms, as has the University. It should also be noted that some respondents not were interviewed in their first language, Afrikaans; quotes from interviews have been edited slightly to facilitate reading.

Southern African country)				
Tsidi (from another Southern African country)	x	x		
Hafeni (from another Southern African country)	x	x		
Thumi	x	x		
Mpho	x	x		
b) Alumni				
Laura Bailey, NGO	x		x	
Liziwe Mabi, Dietician, private sector	x	x		
Nomvuyo Langa, Programme manager, DOH	x	x		
Pamela Roberts, Occupational therapist, state hospital	x			x
c) Lecturers				
Jane Simons	x			x
Nobuntu Tladi	x	x		
Paul Daniels	x		x	
d) Other university				
Charles Lewis, Pro Vice Chancellor	x			x
Bongi Maseko, Dean of Faculty	x	x		
Michael Andrews, Head of Department	x			x
e) Others				
Felicity Green, NGO	x		x	
Mark Sacks, NGO	x			x

4. Professional capabilities (valued beings and doings)

CPH's vision of health care in developing and underdeveloped countries has shaped the shared conceptualisation of how a health care system should be structured and how it should function. This influences the capabilities and functionings of a health care professional which are valued by the academics and researchers in the Centre. The students, alumni and members of NGOs reflected a similar vision, although informants differed in the extent to which they elaborated on this vision and how the envisaged health care system would work. The overwhelming lack of capacity of the health system to improve the overall health of poor people is attributed largely to the inadequacy of individual capacity of health practitioners (CPH Annual Report 2008; Sanders and Alexander, 2008). It follows that in many cases in the interview data, valued capabilities are indicated through the capabilities and functionings which are lacking amongst health professionals and practitioners, to the detriment of the effective functioning of the health system, which would expand the capabilities of poor people for wellbeing and long and healthy lives.

When considering the capabilities valued by the students, it is important to note that the case study of CPH's *postgraduate* programme, differs fundamentally from the four other case studies in the research project which focus on *undergraduate* components of professional programmes. The students on the programme are practising as health professionals which informs their understandings of the health system and professional capabilities. This section reports on data from a range of informants about what they valued as professional capabilities and functionings of a health care professional to enable them to contribute to poverty reduction. To inform this part of our research we drew mainly on the interviews with staff, students and alumni of CPH's postgraduate programme, members of NGOs working in the public health sector, and documents produced by the Centre such as its Annual Report.

We have argued that the vision of health care of the Centre for Public Health, which draws on the primary health care approach, is compatible with the human development and capability approach in relation to expanding comprehensive capabilities of people living in conditions of poverty. CPH lecturers conceptualise 'capacity' building of health professionals, drawing on a model of curriculum design, which is centred on a framework of 'contextually derived ... competences' (Sanders and Alexander, 2008:5). Sanders and Alexander define competences as 'applied abilities, requiring both knowledge and skills which are applied within a particular context, and they emphasise the need to avoid instrumentalism (ibid:5)¹⁰⁶. In this study, drawing on our data including CPH documents, we categorise and elaborate on dimensions of professional *capabilities* needed to contribute to poverty reduction and transformation, through a capability lens. This research project is investigating capability expansion of professionals to contribute to poverty reduction, and is stimulating discussion in South African universities about the contribution of the capability approach to professional education. Educators in the Public Health field could draw on this research and consider whether a capability approach could enhance their approach to professional education and if so how this would be operationalised.

4.1 Vision and contextualised knowledge about health care

¹⁰⁶ One of the criticisms leveled against a competence approach to education and training is that it can take the form of a reductionist or instrumentalist approach, by focusing on discreet tasks or skills without adequately reflecting integrative practice (Kraak, 1999, Bradley, 2009)

A central capability which was valued across the range of informants was having a professional vision based on an informed understanding of the health care system both nationally and internationally, and a vision of transformation of the health system. This was articulated most strongly by the Director of the Centre and the Programme Coordinator on the programme. Closely linked to this was the ability to contextualise one's own practice in relation to such an understanding.

We have discussed the vision of the Centre which in summary was one of contributing to health care systems in developing countries, particularly African countries, which create 'healthy and sustainable environments with access to appropriate, high quality, comprehensive and equitable health systems, based on a human rights approach' (CPH Annual Report 2006:1). This corresponds to a clearly articulated international vision of primary health care, and informs South Africa's health policy, although as we have discussed the health care system as it is being implemented at present is far from what is envisaged. CPH's vision of health care is one that is shared by all of the informants – the lecturers, the alumni, students and NGO members. We begin by discussing underlying knowledge and understandings identified by informants which build up an *informed* vision on the part of health care professionals within this paradigm.

Knowledge and understanding needed for informed vision

Michael Andrews, the previous director of CPH, articulated his vision of the health care system, and how health professionals' practice needed to be informed by such a vision in the following way,

[Health care professionals should have] significant insight into ... the political economy of health - how economic, political, social structures affect health and health services and disease patterns ... [They should] understand very profoundly that health is political and it's not just a technical issue and the sorts of problems that they face in their day to day work and more importantly the problems that people experience in terms of their own health and interaction with health services are very much structured by factors operating at local, national and increasingly at global level.

Understanding the political and economic dimensions of health would increase professionals' sense of agency in relation to contributing to transformation of the health sector and systems. It would enhance their understanding of the possible contribution that they could make depending on their location in the health system, and what type of intervention was prioritised in that particular context,

[In order to contribute to transformation] health professionals have to operate where they can, at a number of different levels. And the way in which they operate will be different. They wouldn't do the same thing obviously at a global level as what they might do at a local level or for different interventions and skills in terms of writing, negotiation, implementation (Michael).

The need for awareness of the global context, was mentioned by Liziwe Mabi, a dietician and alumnus of the programme, who said,

We definitely need people who are broad minded, who are able to take the South African context into the world context and understand things in the bigger picture of these. Because if you do not have a knowledge of what is happening out there, you have no way of knowing what systems are in place in other places.

Similarly, Jane Simons, the Programme Coordinator, valued the need for knowledge and understanding of historical factors which have shaped health care,

We want to develop attitudes of inclusiveness, of community orientation, of recognition of why people are under-resourced and poor ... embedded in the whole notion of equity but also with an understanding of why that has come about, particularly through the colonial past and ... history.

Laura, an alumnus who worked in an NGO affirmed the importance of having a historical perspective. She said that understanding 'what led to all this evolution in health care services gave [her] a very deep understanding of why we are where health care is today'.

In order to function effectively in the health system as well as to contribute to transformation, health professionals need to develop understanding of the structures of the health system, the relationships between sectors of the system, and between public health structures, NGOs and the private sector. They need to have a vision and knowledge of how health goals could be achieved through the articulation of these sectors with each other. Their practice needs to be informed by an understanding of policy which emphasised integration of health services and understanding of where their particular work context fitted into the system. Informants in all of the categories said that often health workers were 'caught in the day-to-day dealings and just the crisis' (Laura 48) and were not able to see their practice within the bigger picture of the health system in South Africa. There are many different types of health practitioners in various components of the system, working at different levels. Thus the understandings of the health system mentioned above would vary in complexity and scope. Nevertheless all health practitioners needed to see 'the bigger picture'. Within the framework of a primary health care approach, university educated health professionals have a responsibility to work in a way which would expand the capabilities of health practitioners at various levels to work effectively in the health care system and thus to implement policy goals at the level of primary facilities. The capabilities of working towards achieving health care goals through articulation between different sectors of the system and through promoting integration of components of the system will be discussed further under the section on social and collective struggle.

The need for health practitioners to understand health care in relation to the multiple and interrelated social determinants of health is a central part of CPH's vision. Accordingly it was greatly valued as a necessary capability of health care professionals, as was the ability to address health care in relation to this vision where possible. This was evident in CPH documents, interviews with lecturers, student professionals and NGOs. Paul Daniels, a CPH lecturer, said that most health care professionals were aware of the effect of social determinants such as nutrition, clean water, proper sanitation, housing, social support networks the health of communities. However, few of them would see the need to address these social determinants as part of their role. 'Its hard to find one who would say, 'well that's a core function of myself as a district manager' (Paul). A recurring theme in the interviews is the need for health professionals not only to understand the factors affecting health, but for those in leadership positions to have a sense of their own agency to address these structural issues in some way.

In addition to knowledge about health systems in developing and underdeveloped countries, there was a need to develop a set of principles of a primary health care approach. The Lecturers and some alumni stated a view that health care professionals needed to adopt the principles of health promotion and prevention of illness and be able to apply them in practice. Jane Simons said 'one would want to develop a sense in the students of a set of principles underlying public health rather than the medicalised view that we address illness when it happens'. Nomvuyo Langa, an alumnus of the programme, who held a senior position in one of the programmes of the Department of Health, elaborated on this, supporting the need for a primary health care approach emphasising health promotion and prevention, and 'if there [were] any diseases, the early detection and treatment, then rehabilitation'. An example of health promotion provided by two of the informants was educating people about healthy eating and nutrition. Mpho, one of the students, revealed an understanding that poverty was not only related to material resources. She said, 'sometimes with poverty, people will have money, but they will have poverty because they don't know what to eat'.

Critical thinking

In the CPH Annual Report (2006) it is argued that because of apartheid education, 'many health workers in South Africa, although clinically competent, are unable to problem solve, interpret policy or manage and evaluate their own work'. One of the crucial factors constraining the ability of health workers to implement health policies and programmes is a widespread lack of capability for critical thinking. So while the national health policy promotes comprehensive primary health care, many of the policy makers, managers, and implementers of programmes are not sufficiently critical of structures and practices which work against the transformation of the health care system (ibid). These include structural elements, systems and practices carried over from the old health care system, as well as new interventions which contradict the principals of the stated policy¹⁰⁷. CPH staff valued the capabilities for problem-solving and critical thinking highly, and this theme was woven throughout the interviews with all of the informants.

Students and alumni thought that it was necessary to develop a critical approach to health care policy, practice and programmes. It was important to be able to read and analyse texts such as policy documents and research articles so as to be able to evaluate them and understand the resulting implications. Health professionals working with data needed to be able to interpret data in an informed and critical way. Furthermore health professionals needed to be able to appraise the arguments of colleagues when engaging in a team processes in order to contribute fully, and decisions needed to be informed by critical problem-solving abilities.

Community-centred, empowering and consultative approach

One of the principles of a primary health care approach is 'maximum community and individual self-reliance and participation' in health care (World Health Organisation, 1978). A community-centred and empowering approach to practice is implicit in the views of the lecturers of the Centre for Public Health. Students, alumni and NGO informants all explicitly emphasised the need for community-centred approaches to Public Health. They thought that health professionals needed to expand the capabilities of poor people to improve or change their practices with regard to their own health care and to contribute to change within their communities. Health professionals needed to act as 'catalysts of change within [their] communities and societies' (Peter, student). They needed to motivate people to identify their problems, and listen to their expression of their needs and their ideas for solutions. There was an overlap between this capability and the broad capability which we have referred to as affiliation. In order to work in an empowering way with poor people they needed to be able to respect people, listen and put themselves in the shoes of others (Nussbaum, 2000). In order to practise health care in a community-centred way, the capability of respect and treating people with dignity were highly valued by alumni and students.

Speaking as someone who came from a poor community, Buyiswa, a student, said that disadvantaged communities 'value respect highly in their hierarchy. And, you know, because they're poor they don't want to be treated anyhow - so that huge respect that you give them and give them that dignity, space and confidentiality'.

Several of the informants emphasised the importance of consultation with community members about interventions and the need to listen to what community members wanted and how they wanted to achieve their goals rather than impose solutions on them. Buyiswa said that community participation was essential for any programme to be successful. Liziwe, an alumnus who worked in the field of nutrition said that when working with vulnerable or poor communities, a professional should not 'use a talk-down

¹⁰⁷ An example of this is the introduction of programmes which are not integrated into transforming health care systems. These are 'often externally funded and driven by foreign donors' (CPH Annual Report 2006).

approach where you come and tell them what to do with all your fancy ideas about what is going to sort their problems out. You need to actually consult with them'. She also spoke of the need to find out about the organisational and leadership structures in communities and go through appropriate channels when approaching communities, [Sometimes] to us it looks like there's no structure or anything, but [communities] are highly organised. They've got their area managers ... or their indunas or their chiefs or whatever. You need to consult with those local structures before you even go into those communities; and hear what's going on and hear who are the decision makers and the people who actually steer things in which direction. And then you respect that; and then only you sit and you consult with them (Liziwe).

Developing an holistic and systemic approach to practice

One of the lecturers and some of the students expressed the view that health professionals needed to view their practice in a holistic and systemic way rather than treating patients in an individualised and compartmentalised way. This could be in relation to their approach to treating individual patients for illnesses that they presented with rather than seeing health care in a broader context in relation to preventative health care in communities. Paul Daniels said,

Most of the health care professionals ... are trained in professional degrees to look after a patient, one patient and then they work in a sector where the patient is paramount and they think about that. They work in centres which require people to come to them and then they attend to them, which means they have a narrow focus on attending to individuals, the ones who they do see, as opposed to the greater community, including those who they do not see.

Many of the informants observed that health practitioners were often caught up in day-to-day crisis management, without being able to work with a broader systemic understanding of the problems that they are dealing with. This problem was exacerbated by understaffing, poor working conditions and lack of resources. Laura Bailey, an alumnus of the Programme said,

health workers are caught in the day-to-day dealing with just the crisis and they don't understand, first of all, when you look at implementers, they render a service without quite understanding what the issues really are. They work just with one client with diarrhoea and they don't see, for example, whether is it just a single incidence of this or is it a bigger problem? [This is exacerbated by the] volume or multi-tasking that they have to do.

Another aspect of holistic approach to practice was the need to see individual patients as a whole person rather than just treating the specific symptoms that they present with. Maureen, a student and practicing dentist said '... if you limit yourself to just one aspect you have these blinkers on where you only look in one direction' whereas a health care professional should 'look it from every angle'. At the health facility where she worked she was regarded by other staff as 'only the dentist at the facility'. She added that,

... a lot of the medical doctors don't realise that we've got input with a whole range of things, HIV, we're going to be the first ones to see it because often the patients don't want to go to [the doctor] but they've got a carious tooth and they're coming to us. TB also, patients aren't going to go because they're losing weight or having a cough but they've got a tooth that's bothering them and they're coming to see us and we will pick up things. Even things like diabetes and hypertension - often patients don't realise that they are at that age where it's starting to kick in, so they don't go to the medical doctors but symptoms of these illnesses can be seen in the mouth.

Jane, the Programme Coordinator, spoke of a health professional on the course who had been working in a small hospital in the Eastern Cape (an impoverished region in South Africa). Noluthando, the student professional had developed a more systemic

understanding of health issues and had adjusted her practice accordingly. Noluthando had said that before her studies in Public Health, she would scold a woman who came in with a malnourished child, as if the malnutrition was a product of the mother's negligence, and treated it purely as a medical problem. As a result of her involvement in the postgraduate programme, she had learned to see malnutrition within a broader context. Jane reported that Noluthando had begun to ask,

[whether the mother was] getting the social grant. Suddenly she started to understand all the informants of that malnutrition and was able to react in a very different way and give different advice and deal with the post-hospital treatment issue, otherwise the woman would be back within a few weeks.

Any 'good' health practitioner¹⁰⁸ should have such a holistic approach to treating a patient, for example not just treating the particular symptom, but being aware of symptoms that can reflect an underlying disease. When treating patients from poor communities in a problematic health system this capability is particularly important because of the possibility of patients 'falling through the cracks' in the system.

Felicity, a member of an NGO argued that a health practitioner needed to be able to contextualise her practice in relation to the state welfare system more broadly. She said, the health professions ... are the one professional body of people who come into contact with pregnant mothers, babies and children, more than anybody else. They should be trained as part of their curriculum on the health and wellbeing of a child in terms of the broad range of factors that we're looking at. Not just in treatment. They need to know about the importance of birth registration and the importance of grants and what to do ... [All professionals should be] trained and equipped at least to have basic knowledge about a full range of rights that are necessary for the health and wellbeing of children and their caregivers.

She argued that they should not just refer to other professionals because there were not enough staff in the health and welfare system. She said,

... what is it for a nurse who's working at a clinic to assess the child's health, weigh the child and then ask the parent "Has your child's birth been registered?" at that first vaccination. It takes no more effort, no more time, the service is there. If that isn't done, that child whose birth is not registered is not going to be picked up on the system. They're going to be picked up maybe seven years down the line where there's a late birth registration. You have to get social workers involved, you know, the range of people that have to become involved and the range of support that has to come on board; it's just so much more dramatic.

Thus health practitioners needed to take more responsibility to expand the capability of poor people for overall wellbeing. In a context of extreme poverty and poor education and a depleted health and welfare system, it was not sufficient for health practitioners to see their work as a decontextualised clinical service. Felicity added that unless health care professionals were 'trained in ... comprehensive social security needs, what are they going to do out there other than a couple of disprins or whatever the case is'.

4.2 Social and collective struggle

From initial analysis of all the case studies and drawing on feedback from Research Working Groups at each participating university, we formulated a broad capability dimension which we called 'Social and collective struggle'. The capability of collective and social struggle would enable a range of functionings that could be achieved. We

¹⁰⁸ We use the term 'health practitioner' as a general term for staff working in the health care system. 'Health professional' is used for a health practitioner with a formal qualification. The term 'health worker' or 'community health worker' is used for a category of health practitioners who do not have a formal qualification. These health workers have been introduced into the health system to play a crucial role in implementing health policy.

identified a number of such functionings, including the following: implementing a community empowerment approach to practice; contributing to policy formulation and implementation, leading and managing social change; working in professional and inter-professional teams; training and educating others, building and sustaining strategic relationships amongst different components of the sector (for example, the health system) and networks with organisations and government departments and advocating social justice.

We discuss one of the interviews with an alumnus in a fair amount of detail, as her account has generated evidence of a need for a number of these functionings. The capabilities and functionings that she discusses in her interview are consistent with those raised by other informants, and we supplement extracts from her interviews with one from another informant. In order to discuss these functionings, we first need to provide some background to the context in which she was working.

Laura Bailey, a graduate of the MPH was a manager of a programme in an NGO which was assisting with implementation of the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) programme. The PMTCT programme was introduced in 2001 by the DOH with the central aim of decreasing the number of HIV infected babies born to HIV positive mothers. As part of the programme, a comprehensive package of interventions were developed and implemented, including voluntary counselling and testing, advising about infant feeding practices and appropriate administration of anti-retroviral drugs (DOH, 2008). The sector of the NGO which Laura managed focussed on integrating programmes on nutrition and infant feeding options into the PMTCT interventions. The work of the NGO included advocacy, programme design, integration of policy at a provincial level and working with programme managers at a district level to implement an integrated programme at selected sites. It also undertook capacity building and training of health professionals. In addition to managing her programme, Laura played a hands-on role in the core activities of the programme. This required a range of capabilities and functionings, which will be elaborated on below.

The idea that health professionals need to understand the complexity of the health system in order to contribute to transformation has been discussed above. Laura emphasised the need for health workers at different levels of the system to know and understand policy directives about how systems and processes should work in order to provide effective services to communities. Health professionals who are acting as change agents should be able to see the gaps between what is happening in practice and what policy is aiming to achieve. Furthermore, they should be able to identify spaces for change and implement strategies for facilitating change.

South African health policy promotes articulation between different sectors of the health system and partnerships and coordination between government and NGOs. Laura argued that in order to achieve this, health workers need to understand the structures of the health system and the relationships between different sectors. They should be able to participate effectively in processes requiring coordination, such as referral systems in order to provide adequate health care to poor communities. She said, 'health professionals are just doing the day-to-day crisis management. Patients go home but there's no link, or referral, or tie-up between what happens in the health care facility and the community'. She thought that the Department of Health had not communicated adequately about the need to form linkages, do referrals and support for sustaining programmes.

As part of the policy of decentralisation to district level, another layer of health practitioners, community health workers, had been established. Laura argued that community health workers were a 'a pivotal part of the system', essential for successful implementation, but health professionals had not taken sufficient cognisance of this. Moreover, there should be better coordination between health professionals and

community health workers. If these services were not coordinated, the clients would be disadvantaged 'because they go from one service to the other and [don't get] proper linkages, referral and follow-up care, treatment, support'.

Another problem that she identified in the system was that community-based and faith-based organisation played an important role in health services provision. However, while the government contributed funding to these organisations, they had not formally embraced them as partners in the health sector, and there was not sufficient coordination to benefit the clients. She described how she worked to facilitate linkages being formed between NGOs and health facilities,

I work with communities at selected sites, especially the coordinators and the leaders of the NGOs and make the linkages between the NGOs and the health facilities, get facility managers to organise themselves more in line with what the focus areas may be and how to get the integration because at facilities they're just doing everything in a vertical fashion (Laura).

The term 'vertical' is used to refer to programmes that are run in a separate compartmentalized way rather than through the integration of services across programmes (interview with current Director of CPH), for example, integrating the PMTCT programme into 'routine maternal, child and women's health services' (DOH, 2008: 14).

Many of the informants, particularly alumni and students emphasised the need to form partnerships between sectors of the Department of Health as well other government departments in order to achieve health goals. For example, Nomvuyo Langa, an alumna and manager of a nutrition programme in the DOH, said that her programme needed to work in conjunction with partners within the DOH, such as Environmental Health, Mother and Child and Women's Health. Furthermore, there was a need to work with other government departments such as the Departments of Agriculture, Social Development and Water Affairs. She mentioned these structural conditions for contributing to wellbeing and health of people living in poverty within the context of the lack of integration within government and the difficulties of collaborative work between programmes and departments. Nomvuyo's observation is based on an understanding of health which takes into account the multiple social, economic and environmental determinants of health.

In short, informants identified a need for coordination between different levels and components of the national health system. There needed to be linkages between different government departments in order to address health issues in relation to multiple determinants of health. Partnerships needed to be formed and sustained between health facilities and NGOs and used productively. Furthermore there was a need for public-private partnerships to achieve health care goals. In order to achieve these linkages and partnerships health professionals needed to be knowledgeable about the health care system. Students said they needed to be able to coordinate and facilitate. A number of informants emphasised the need for advocacy skills to promote a multi-sectoral approach and to influence decision-makers. They should be able to identify critical stakeholders and create platforms for lobbying. Furthermore they needed to be able to mobilise resources, and set up networking between different groupings.

Many health care professionals play a role of education and training other health practitioners and facilitating implementation of health policy. An important aspect of these roles is expanding the capabilities of health workers practising on the ground in health facilities. Laura spoke about the challenges for health care professionals of educating health workers, and the need to use pedagogical approaches that would enable them to apply theory to their practice. She said,

... The biggest problem is we are very good at telling people what to do but telling is not enough, and knowing it in your head is also not enough; people need to be shown how to interpret theory into practice. And that's what the big struggle is.

She acknowledged the difficulty of applying progressive practices where the weakness of the health care system provided obstacles to this, saying that people could learn concepts in the abstract but 'when they get into the real place they need the systems to be strengthened for them to be able to do their work' (Laura). She also spoke about her experiences of training health care workers which she felt had made a difference,

I work with trainee health care workers on the strategies [needed to implement policy] and then at the selected site we give them activities that they could do and then when they do that, we've seen a wonderful response where the community is willing and able to form partnerships with facilities, you know, with the health professionals in a way to address some of these problems or challenges that we find every day.

All categories of informants referred to the need for health professionals to have the capability to contribute to policy formulation and implementation. The informant who discussed this in most depth was Laura, who focused on her work in the NGO, educating health professionals about long-term health goals and aiming to improve implementation of policy. In the extract below she talks about raising awareness of predominantly university educated health professionals who are clinicians providing health services in a decontextualised way,

I want to try to find a way to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)¹⁰⁹. So one of the things I do is getting health professionals, the nurses and the dieticians and the doctors to understand what the MDGs are, for example. Many of them - we're already in 2008, many of them have never heard of the MDGs ... so how on earth can they let their work have any meaning besides just doing a day's job? So one of the things I try to do is to get people to re-look at why they chose to be in a particular profession; the decisions that they make regarding [themselves] as leaders. Are they in line with international goals and the instruments that have been put there, do they understand them? I also talk about the policies that are in place to guide us.

In the above extract Laura described a process of contributing to transformation and poverty reduction through education of other professionals about South African health policy and international perspectives on health care and the Millennium Development Goals. She did this by facilitating processes of reflection about their role as health professionals and their contribution to sustainable health and well-being of poor people and communities.

Laura also described how she and her colleagues assist community health workers to develop implementation programmes that are guided by health policy,

...we get to a selected site, we get all those policies out and interrogate them to say, 'you've got these issues, this is what the policy says - and come up with what we call an implementation policy which the health workers themselves play a pivotal role in coming up with for the different units, to say 'this will be the rule for this unit, this will be the rule'. And then if they've said it they will do it because they've made the commitment to do it.

In the extract above about the MDGs Laura describes a process of mobilising health professionals to orientate themselves towards contributing to poverty reduction and the

¹⁰⁹ The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. Four of the eight MDG goals are directly relevant to health care. These are 1) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 4) to reduce child mortality, 5) to improve maternal health, 6) to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other illnesses.

MDGs. In the last extract, she describes a process of health workers developing concrete strategies and programmes of action for their own contexts which are aligned with national health policy. In both cases she (and her colleagues) are facilitating collective processes of deliberation with the goal of enhancing health and well-being of people living in conditions of poverty.

Management and leadership aimed at transformation

As has been discussed, implementing new policies and transformation of the health system require strong capacity for management. In many cases the capabilities needed for management were lacking in health professionals who were responsible for implementing changes. One of the reasons for this was that health professionals who were in management positions in the old system had been trained in that system, and their approaches to management had been shaped by their experiences in that context.

We have discussed how the changes in the health system required that health professionals take on management roles although they had not been educated for those roles and had not had previous experience. All the categories of informants valued the capability for management as extremely important for transformation of the health system. This includes the ability to manage programmes, employees, finances and data. The ability to use analysis of data, monitoring and evaluation to improve or change programmes was seen as a significant aspect of management. I will discuss these capabilities below under 'Research'.

4.3 Research

With the adoption of a primary health care approach, there has been a strong shift in emphasis to applied Health Systems Research which is necessary to 'identify and elucidate problems, test models and monitor and evaluate interventions' (Sanders and Alexander, 2008: 6). It is used as a tool for health decision makers at all levels, providing them with data needed for informed decision making (ibid). The informants associated with the CPH postgraduate programme thought that health professionals should be able to do applied research and work with health information.

Daniel, a student practitioner, spoke about a capability relating to setting a research agenda within a broad Public Health contest. This was the capability for health professionals in leadership positions to be able 'to prioritise our problems to know exactly what are the problems of South Africa, or of Africa, and to narrow down our problems and maybe come up with the issues that are really relevant in our community'.

Thinking critically, analysing, interpreting and developing an inquiring approach all formed part of learning how to do research. Hafeni, one of the student professionals said she had gained a lot from reviewing literature. She said,

[it is necessary] to be able to read a paper that another person has written, to be able to see, okay, this is what it means and this is what it should mean; and you are able to see that and analyse it – interpret, analyse and see that critically.

Matthew, a student professional who was involved in training health practitioners pointed to the value of learning to understand research and evaluate research. He said,

... one of the things we do is [when training health practitioners is citing] cite studies done by other people. And certainly if you want to impart such kind of research, [you need to] find out exactly whether it was a credible study or it was not a credible study.

A number of current students as well as alumni indicated that they had become more critical and analytical in their approach to texts such as articles and policy documents.

They also felt that they had adopted a more critical approach to health care practice and implementation of programmes.

Informants in all categories said that health professionals needed to participate in or lead monitoring and evaluation processes. The ability to do monitoring and evaluation of programmes was necessary to inform management processes, as well as evaluate implementation of policy. Hafeni emphasised the importance of the capability of monitoring and evaluation, especially evaluation. This was necessary for the following reasons,

We have limited resources and for us to be efficient we need to always know the impact of our interventions or our programmes so that we can satisfy ourselves that we can repeat them somewhere else, so that we can improve as we go, so that we don't waste resources – because we're talking about poverty reduction, we need to be efficient with limited resources.

The ability to work with health information was valued by students, lecturers and alumni of the programme. Lecturers noted that they identified a need for applied epidemiological research rather than pure research. Students' comments about applied epidemiological research will be discussed in relation to one of the modules 'Measuring Health and Disease II' under Educational arrangements.

Apart from doing research, Mpho, a student and project manager, felt that it was critical for public health professionals to be able to disseminate research results effectively. Functionings associated with this included selecting which stakeholders needed to be informed about the research results and communicating the research results effectively. Dissemination needed to take place within 'a short span of time, from after we analyse the data, from the moment that we have the final report and the dissemination – it should be not far from each other'.

A number of the student professionals and alumni said that having experience in research made them more confident, and enabled them to contribute to team discussions. Lila, a student and laboratory scientist said the following,

There are times when we have meetings where you report on your findings and there are decisions to be made by supervisors. Before all I did was to agree on whatever they say, well, they are experts I'll have to agree. But now I have to look at whatever they say critically, and because I have results in front of me I am able to argue out things which I was never able to do before.

Thus expanding her capability to understand research and interpret research data resulted in an expansion of her agency to contribute to decision-making in her workplace. The contribution of research experience to health professionals' confidence and authority in the field is significant and this is corroborated further by other students and alumni in the Educational arrangements section.

Two of the student professionals talked about community participation in relation to research. Mpho spoke about the need for public health professionals to do 'community diagnosis',

[They needed to] work with a community so that at the end of it all you can deduce what they themselves figure out the problem [to be] so rather than you generating your own questionnaire [through] generating a hypothesis and then going into the community ... with this one it's visa-versa - you start with the community first and you explore what they have, their strengths, their resources. So community diagnosis is one of the important aspects that public health professionals need to have.

Peter, another student professional spoke about monitoring and evaluation in relation to the community participation dimension of a public health care approach. He said that

through doing the CPH MPH programme he had come to believe that as a manager one needed to involve health professionals and people in the communities in the process, expanding their capabilities. He reflected that,

[In the past] people brought their data, we did the data and we did everything; people were ignorant, they couldn't develop a monitoring and evaluation plan - it's totally different now because we have to develop the plan with them. We sit with the communities to decide which indicators we'll monitor and evaluate their activities. So it's a totally changed ball game altogether, and it's an agreement with involving people - people being the solution.

4.4 Affiliation – care and respect

One of the fundamental goals of a primary health care approach is to expand the capabilities of poor people to live healthy lives. There is an emphasis on community participation in health care and an underlying ethos of care and respect. All categories of informants in this study valued capabilities related to care for people and respect. Students emphasised that health professionals needed to care for and about people, and they needed to have an ethos of service. Professionals needed to respect their colleagues and learn from each other, regardless of the type of work and status of their colleagues. One of the students said that practitioners should have respect and care for all people indiscriminately, for example they should respect immigrants from other African countries. Alumni emphasised the need for health practitioners to have respect for and develop an understanding of poor people, and to be able to develop relationships and a rapport with them. An alumnus emphasised the need for respect for different cultures, belief systems and the ability to communicate with understanding and without judgement.

Affiliation here is a capability linked to relationships with people. Some of the informants expressed the view that health professionals needed to be honest and sincere about what they were able to provide and about their limitations as a health care professional.

Maureen, one of the student professionals thought that a professional functioning that was most valued by poor clients was being honest with them. She was the only dentist at the health facility where she worked and this limited what she was able to provide, When you're honest with [your clients] and say to them "These are unfortunately the restrictions we have; I'm here, I'm here alone, I can only see so many people. I can only do so much; I'm also human" they understand, so, yes, listening, trying to be understanding, but being honest with them.

She said that as educated professionals 'we often think "they're uneducated or they're poor, therefore they will swallow whatever you say"'. However, this was not the case, and it was important to be sympathetic and honest with clients who would then realise 'that she cares about the work and she cares about what she's doing' (Maureen).

In a similar vein, one of the alumni said that it was important to listen carefully to clients and respond sincerely,

... sometimes we want to give an impression and we are giving the correct version, just like a politician will do, for instance. So a sincere response; no promises of things that you can't deliver on - just be open and honest with them (Buyiswa).

5. Educational arrangements

The Centre for Public Health's postgraduate programme is predominantly a distance learning programme which makes it accessible to a range of health professionals both in South Africa and other African countries. All of the students are working and in most cases supporting families. So the distance learning format makes it possible for them to

do postgraduate studies with a course-work component while continuing to work and live in their places of residence. The central goals of the programme are 1) to increase and deepen the professionals' knowledge and understanding of the health system in the South African and other African contexts as well as in relation to global factors, and 2) to build the capacity of student professionals to contextualise their practice in relation to these understandings. When the teaching programme was changed to a full distance learning programme in 2000, the curriculum was 'reshaped at that time to meet the needs of what was then understood to be the needs of health professionals in South Africa particularly' (Jane). The staff of the Centre have engaged in ongoing, rigorous reflection on the postgraduate programme with the aim of building the capacity of health professionals to transform health systems to function effectively and in the interests of the majority of the people in South Africa and in other African contexts. To this end there has been ongoing review of the curriculum, the materials and means of delivery of the programme. This process has taken place through internal reflection, curriculum and materials development as well as external reviews.

5.1 Curriculum

The CPH Postgraduate Programme is offered through a combination of distance learning as well as optional contact sessions. The Programme consists of two postgraduate courses of study. Students can do a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health or do a Masters in Public Health which consists of course-work and a dissertation. Students doing the Diploma can either exit with a Diploma, or, if they do well, they are encouraged to apply to enter the Masters programme. The purpose of this structure is to meet the needs of different types of health professionals. According to the Programme Coordinator, the Postgraduate Certificate¹¹⁰ which preceded the Diploma was initially introduced to accommodate nurses who needed to increase their knowledge, expand their capabilities to operate more effectively in the health system, and to contribute to a changing health system. However they did not necessarily need to do a Masters degree or learn how to do research. Our focus in this study is mainly on the Masters in Public Health (MPH).

The open learning nature of the MPH programme allows students to choose whether to complete the MPH within two or three years. If taken over three years, the programme consists of three core courses, in year one and one core course in the second year with two electives. In the second year, the students also start working on their dissertation which they would aim to complete in the third year (2009 Student Handbook).

The MPH consists of 6 coursework modules and a dissertation. The modules are outlined below:

- Health, Development and Primary Health Care II¹¹¹ (Core module)
- Measuring Health and Disease II (Core module)
- Understanding Public Health (Core module)
- Health Systems Research II (Core module)
- Elective module I
- Elective module 2

(2009 Student handbook)

Discussion of specific modules.

¹¹⁰ From 2009 the Postgraduate Certificate has been discontinued and the Postgraduate Diploma is being redesigned to fit into national Higher Education Qualification structures.

¹¹¹ Some of the modules have the Roman numerals 'II' at the end of the name which distinguishes them from modules with the same name offered at the certificate level.

Jane Simons, the Programme Coordinator, described two of the core courses, 'Health Development and Primary Health Care II' and 'Understanding Public Health' which located public health within South African historical, political and socio-economic contexts as well as global trends in health care. These modules relate directly to the Capability for 'Vision and contextualised knowledge' discussed above. Michael Andrews, the previous Director and the lecturer responsible for both of these modules described the former module as follows,

It includes a notion of equity and the historical perspective on health improvement and an understanding of how globalisation is impacting on health and so on. And then what kinds of health policies are appropriate in response to this situation.

Michael said that much of the course was devoted to comprehensive primary health care and that it was 'concrete or applied to the extent that we do get students to engage with how they would apply these sorts of concepts and approaches in their own work settings'.

Thumi, one of the student professionals said that this module 'helps you to understand your context within Africa and within where you are in South Africa'. It raised their awareness of the social determinants of health and inspired a 'passion ... to campaign' around the issue 'that health is beyond health care'. There is a need for 'linking housing to health, linking sanitation to health, and making sure we are talking to the different departments – health, housing, roads, transport'. Another student, Daniel, commented on the relevance and applicability of the course, particularly the section on Primary Health Care. He said, 'everything is elaborated in the module, and we are able to follow it and put it into good use'. He specifically mentioned that the module had raised his awareness about the need for community participation in health care.

Jane said that the module entitled 'Understanding Public Health' had 'a whole unit devoted to the history of the South African health system which by the end of it you will want to cry'. She said, 'if apartheid was lodged anywhere, it was lodged squarely in the world of health, quite unbelievable'. A number of the students, Thumi, Tsidi and Hafeni criticised the way that the programme had been structured, in that the module 'Understanding Public Health' had been placed at the end of year, when, as an introductory course it should have been placed at the beginning of the year.

One of the student focus groups discussed the core course module, 'Measuring Health and Disease 11' and how it had helped to develop valued capabilities. (Most of the students in this group were in their first year of study and this was one of the few modules which they had completed by the middle of the year.) As outlined in the Student Handbook, this module aims to enhance measurement skills ... essential for effective Public Health practice. It examines the role of Epidemiology¹¹² in Public Health and provides tools for the assessment and interpretation of health problems (Student Handbook 2009). In addition to developing specific research skills, it aims to enable health professionals to bring a critical and analytical insight into Public Health decision-making.

Daniel said that this module had been relevant and applicable to his work practice. He described an aspect of the course content, saying 'For example when you get a disease outbreak – how do you go about making an investigation, and at the end writing a report that can be understood by everybody?' He said that he wasn't able to do that before attending the course, and the course was 'very informative to us as students and also as workers in the field'. A number of the students said they had found it very useful learning about the statistical software package, 'Epi Info' and learning how to use it in an interactive way. Tsidi, said 'you go and get data and then you have to analyse this data yourself, using the software'. Daniel said, 'now we are able to apply it and analyse the data of hospitals without any problem because of the training we have had'.

¹¹² Epidemiology refers to the study of causes, distribution, and control of disease in populations.

Thumi, one of the students, felt that doing the postgraduate programme had opened her world view. She illustrated this by saying,

I never used to like news that much, but now I watch news. And our topic on 'Measuring health and disease' and male circumcision in Africa. And now with the news I hear all this, the initiation schools that are happening, all that ... You want to know more and you want to keep up to date and you read the papers which was difficult [before] but now you're sort of forced to read it. You understand why you need to read the paper and you need to watch the news.

While the specific example mentioned by Thumi was the module 'Measuring Health and Disease', it is likely that the opening of her world view and the fostering of interest in keeping abreast of health issues was a result of the doing the programme more broadly. Becoming motivated to follow news about health care, as a result of her studies, would lead to ongoing learning and expansion of her knowledge about health issues more broadly which is an important goal of the Postgraduate programme. Thumi's comment also indicates an expansion of her capability for life-long learning which is one of the pedagogical principles informing the Programme.

Apart from the core courses, students needed to do electives. The curriculum was divided into streams which were relevant to public health such as health promotion, nutrition, human resource development and health research which each had electives within them.

Scope and coverage of the Masters programme

Lecturers who were interviewed reflected on the coverage of subject areas offered in the Masters programme. One of the characteristic features of the programme, compared to other programmes was the approach to Epidemiology and statistics. In traditional Public Health programmes, quantitative Epidemiology and Biostatistics, taught within a narrow biomedical paradigm, have been dominant in curricula (Sanders and Alexander, 2008). In the CPH Programme Epidemiology and Biostatistics are taught in an integrated way which aims 'to teach people a very practical approach' (Jane, Programme Director) as discussed above.

Paul Daniels, one of the lecturers, was concerned about the range of topics which were covered or emphasised in the programme. He felt that the programme was very much geared to the research areas of the researchers who taught on the programme. This could be a problem in that it led to a particular slant in the scope of the programme. On balance, though, he thought that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages in that it meant that most of the modules were drawing on research experience of the lecturers rather than 'book learning'.

One aspect of the curriculum which was the source of some debate was the management component. Some of the students thought that doing the programme had improved their ability to manage or contribute to management processes. One of the students felt that module(s) on management, financial aspects and human resources were helpful in this respect. An alternative view on this from one of the lecturers was that the module on management was an example of the 'book learning' referred to above because none of the teaching staff had had experience of managing in a health context, and that the management course was generic and not contextualised within the field of health specifically. One of the alumni implied that the programme had had a positive impact on her ability to manage, and through doing the programme she had been motivated to keep expanding her knowledge in this area. It is likely that the programme as a whole, and not only the particular components on management, had expanded her capability for managing a programme. This is because contextualised knowledge and understanding of

the Public Health system and its structures are essential capabilities for managing programmes within the system.

A functioning which a student professional felt was *not* being sufficiently developed in the programme, was related to advocacy. Tsidi said that at Masters level, she needed to go beyond 'having information and being able to write a report'. She said in her role in the Ministry of Health (in another Southern African country) she needed 'influential skills, lobbying, sitting in front of the minister to say, 'I want to establish this programme'. It's something because I will be having social determinants information, primary health care, and so forth – but how do I make this person really understand and get the grip of it?'. She said, 'I think we need some kind of module on that one. And I don't know if it is a module or what – something that can assist you on how, with all this ample information you have been armed with [to influence decision-makers]'. It is questionable whether a programme of study can develop the functioning of being able to influence, particularly a distance learning programme. It is possible that a programme can enhance the capability for influencing by providing access to knowledge and resources, developing skills such as writing reports, enhancing confidence, but it is only through practice that a professional will be able to translate these capabilities into the functioning of influencing and lobbying. This is an interesting question for the programme designers and lecturers to consider.

Research component

Producing a dissertation is a compulsory academic requirement for attaining a Masters in Public Health. Paul Daniels said that there was a debate amongst the CPH lecturers about whether students should be required to do this type of formal research in a professional Masters programme such as the MPH. Most professionals in the health services were not required to do formal research in their jobs. Nonetheless, they did need to be able to think critically, engage in problem-solving and develop an inquiring approach to knowledge and reflective approach to practice. Some of the CPH lecturers thought that student professionals needed to know basic research principles in order to be able to read and understand literature reporting on research and to apply knowledge based on research findings in their work (Paul). The value of doing research in order to develop the capabilities above was strongly supported by many of the students and alumni. Evidence of this is reported in the capabilities section above as well as the discussion of pedagogy below.

On the whole the alumni and students thought that the curriculum was extremely relevant to their practice in their work contexts, although a few gaps were identified. There appeared to be a close relationship between the goals of the programme and the content of the curriculum. This claim is supported by responses from alumni and students who indicated that the curriculum was directed at developing capabilities which they valued.

5.2 Pedagogy

Practice-based learning

The lecturers who were interviewed all spoke about how they oriented their curriculum design and pedagogical approaches to student professionals being able to apply what they were learning to their own practice. The previous director, Michael, said that the learning became 'concrete or applied to the extent that we do get students to engage with how they would apply these sorts of concepts and approaches in their own work settings'. Mark Sacks, one of the informants from an NGO emphasised the value of experiential education. He gave examples of 'community-based education on problem orientated type of educational methodology and other approaches towards teaching, built around cases or scenarios, so that the health professionals are really skilled in

dealing with things in context, in community-based contexts and are able to deal with problems very quickly'. Mark said that of the Public Health programmes that he was aware of, the CPH programme was more oriented to the paradigm of experiential learning. It was 'much more experientially orientated, practical, orientated around relevance ... and also gives quite a good thorough background'.

The CPH programme differed from the undergraduate professional programmes in our study in that the students were practising professionals. On the one hand the predominantly distance learning mode of the programme set up particular challenges for experiential learning. On the other hand the fact that students were practicing professionals provided rich opportunities for practice-based learning which needed a creative pedagogical approach. This relied largely on materials being designed in an interactive format, and the integration of experiential learning into the design of tasks and assignments, through relating them to students' work practice.

Since it was predominantly a distance learning course, the programme relied extensively on the quality of materials used in the modules. These were developed through collaboration between subject specialists and adult education specialists.

Students explained how assignments were designed in such a way that they required practical application. Tsidi said,

[Assignments are] structured in a way that you have to go to somewhere as if you are working there to get the information ... For instance, with the monitoring and evaluation module we were given an opportunity to look at a programme or an intervention that is running, and you do monitoring and evaluation on that programme. It gives you a practical theme and you also learn through that because you develop your own monitoring and evaluation systems to do it. And then in the second assignment you evaluate the programme. You do actual evaluation. And it is very good, I learned quite a lot from that module.

Most of the lecturers emphasised the advantage of modules that were based on the research that the lecturers were doing, '...there's quite a close relationship between the research work we do and the courses and some people are able to really infuse their courses with it' (Jane). They used case studies from their research or demonstrated how they went through a process such as Monitoring and Evaluation, so it was more conducive to students' being able to apply what they learned to their own practice.

Furthermore doing research and writing a dissertation provided opportunities for application of learning to students' own practice. They were encouraged to choose thesis topics which related to their own work contexts. Jane, the Programme Coordinator said that,

[Students] are directed towards looking at health services issues and looking for ways of improving health services in their own contexts, so you'll find attitudes to condom use amongst women and, you know, those kinds of topics, a couple of education topics now, but they're seldom highly analytical.

Since community participation is such a fundamental dimension of a primary health care approach, it follows that action research and participatory research are encouraged in the programme.

Pamela Roberts, one of the alumni, reflected on her experience of doing her mini-thesis, which helped her to develop confidence, and enabled her to explore the relationship between theory, her own understandings and her work practice. She said,

I think it gave me confidence in many ways; but maybe in one way where you ... confirmed that what you were doing was okay, the way you are thinking, the way you are reasoning, it was actually there in the books, it was there theoretically. Say for example you're starting a project and you don't always have all the answers,

you've just got the issue, and sometimes I thought, you know, these people up there they must be really clever because they seem to have all the answers. And then here you're busy with a project and you're struggling a bit and you ... realise that it's okay because the other people didn't just get there - it wasn't a smooth ride; they didn't have all the answers, but as they worked through things...It gave me that type of confidence, you know, even starting something new from the ground, something that other people might be able to challenge you on.

As mentioned in the section on Capabilities, students and alumni had reported on gaining confidence from doing research and another alumnus said that her confidence had increased due to gaining knowledge which enhanced her understanding of her work programme (Nomvuyo).

The programme was based on adult education principles. Jane, the Programme Coordinator said that the students were treated as colleagues and practitioners. The distance learning materials were written in an informal voice, getting students to formulate opinions and the lecturers showed respect for their opinions. She described the approach as a facilitated, constructivist approach particularly in the contact sessions, which involved a lot of group work and interaction. There was an strong emphasis on 'equalising the relationship between educator and student' (Jane). Alumni said that doing the programme had encouraged them to build equal, respectful and reciprocal relationships with poor people. This corresponds to a view expressed by the programme coordinator that the course materials were 'infused with that kind of professional ethics, community orientated, consultative, caring approach to communities' (Jane).

The apparent uniformity of the CPH lecturers' vision of public health and ideological approach to health may have led one to expect that they could be imposing their perspective on students. However, on the contrary, one of the alumni said that the lecturers had not imposed their views on students but had encouraged them to be independent thinkers. 'They were not dictators, they were trying to get us to be independent and to think and encouraged us and did support us' (Laura).

Benefits and challenges of distance learning

Sanders and Alexander (2008) argue that there is an important role for Public Health postgraduate education which is conducted through a distance learning mode. In this way the capacity of health professionals can be built without taking them out of the already under-resourced health system. The fact that the CPH postgraduate programme was mainly conducted through a distance learning mode has posed a number of challenges and the CPH teaching staff have had to work at achieving the goals of the programme while negotiating these challenges.

During the course of running the programme, the delivery had become more formalised. Jane, the Programme Coordinator said,

... we took on a lot of the problems that our students were experiencing, made sure that they had better access to libraries, annually produced a very detailed handbook for them to find their way around our facilities, tried to use the centralised facilities of the university more fully.

The students had been linked up to the university writing centre and postgraduate support programme.

Some students felt a need for more opportunities for face-to-face learning, and some would have liked the additional option of studying full-time on campus. Daniel, one of the students, would have liked to have come for six-week blocks and work on group practice-orientated projects. He said that 'outside in the field where we work, we are just alone there. It is actually very difficult sometimes to comprehend things'. He valued the

opportunity to learn in a group, sharing ideas with fellow students and lecturers. However, most of the students valued the opportunity to study through a distance learning mode for financial and other practical reasons.

This was articulated by Moira, one of the students who said that she valued the opportunity to 'come for winter school and summer school and have some contact'. She said, 'so even though sometimes you do feel very alone and you don't understand, you can always pick up the phone and call somebody, send an e-mail and they will respond to you'. Students who attended the contact sessions valued the opportunity for interaction with professionals in different fields. Moira, one of the students said 'what adds a lot is [that] most people doing Public Health have got different backgrounds [so] we've got all these knowledge bases that we pull in from – and we've got a multidisciplinary view'. These types of interactions also enhanced students' capability for working in multidisciplinary teams, which was needed in their work contexts.

One of the constraints on students' participation in the CPH postgraduate programme was a lack of time and resources to attend the contact sessions. While health professionals in government departments of health were able to access funding to study, there was very little financial aid for other health professionals such as those working in NGOs. Thus many of the students were not able to access funding to attend the contact sessions (Jane).

There were also constraints arising from the nature of distance learning itself. These were exacerbated for students who were located in isolated and underresourced areas, particularly deep rural areas, where there was a lack of technological and human resources to draw on (Jane). Jane's description of the experience of one of the students on the Programme provides insight into the extent of the difficulties of students in outlying rural areas. The student had received the Epi-Info programme on a DVD which she needed to learn and work with,

[The student] got the DVD, but no-one within the hospital she works in knew how to use it. There was one computer in the hospital and the doctor had tried to load it, but nobody had been even able to load the software that she had to use to do the analysis. So that was someone very, very excited by the programme, she got the Certificate, she wanted to go on to the Diploma, and she was knocked out by [the lack of resources in her workplace and community].

Jane also spoke about the lack of access to libraries in the rural areas. She said that the students had to conduct literature reviews in some of their assignments, for example, to understand a particular chronic disease. In order to access a library, students in the Eastern Cape¹¹³, had to travel far distances to Umtata, the biggest town in the area with a university. They had to endure 'the risk of working late in a library there, the isolation, the fact that it virtually had no resources' (Jane).

Jane said that students, particularly those in outlying areas, were encouraged to set up mentoring relationships. However on the whole attempts to set up mentoring structures had not been successful due to lack of knowledgeable people in those areas who were available to provide mentoring.

Many distance learning programmes have derived great benefit from the advances in information technology and web-based learning. There were limitations on CPH's capacity to use web-based learning methodologies for the following reasons. Fynbos University was under-resourced and one of the effects of this was inadequate information technology facilities, website and connectivity. Another constraint on web-based learning was the diversity of capabilities and access of resources of the students. The module 'Measuring Health and Disease II' included a web-based email discussion

¹¹³ The Eastern Cape is a large province in South Africa, which is also one of the poorest provinces.

forum that could be accessed by students. This provided an effective medium for interaction about the module particularly the challenges of the statistical tasks. It appeared to be regularly used. However, it was used by a relatively small group of students. There is much potential for web-based learning to be developed in the future. However, at present it is still constrained by lack of capacity at the university and amongst many of the students.

Assessment of student learning

The CPH lecturers were concerned about issues relating to assessment. The Coordinator saw the marking of assignments as a vehicle for student learning as well as a means of assessment. The policy on marking was that lecturers should give extensive feedback on students' assignments, and that there should be a turn-around time of three weeks. It was difficult to get some of the lecturers to comply with this. The Centre had also employed tutors to assist with the marking in order to meet these targets.

Attention had been paid to the fit between forms of assessment and the goals of the programme. As Paul, a lecturer said,

We want them to be able to apply what they've learnt in their own setting. That would be a key output for us, which is also why we don't have exams and previously we used to have open book exams. We've now cancelled that and why we teach in a problem based way with assignments and so on, and giving them an opportunity to improve upon their assignments.

Students were provided with the opportunity to send drafts of assignments and get feedback from their lecturers on parts that they were struggling with and issues that they needed to clarify (Jane).

One of the serious challenges that needed to be addressed in the postgraduate programme was the poor educational backgrounds of many of the students. This manifested itself in difficulties with academic writing. Jane noted that this applied particularly to South African and Namibian students. It also needed to be taken into account that for most of the students, English was a second or third language. A number of the strategies that the CPH team used to deal with this have been mentioned above: facilitating support for students by the university writing centre and postgraduate support programme; encouraging students to send drafts of their assignments for formative feedback, encouraging communication with lecturers by phone or email. Lecturers dedicated large amounts of time to coaching educationally disadvantaged students in research writing as part of the supervision process.

On the whole the alumni and students interviewed thought that they had benefited greatly from having done the programme or were benefiting from their studies on the programme. A composite summary of responses indicate the following. The programme had improved their abilities in the following areas. Students indicated that through their studies, they were broadening, sharpening and 'tightening' their understanding of Public Health. They were learning how to implement theory and policy in practice. Alumni said that the programme had broadened their vision of professional practice within the health system, and had enabled them to contextualise their practice in relation to a more complex understanding of the health system, and primary health care. Students said that the programme encouraged their ability to involve and facilitate capability expansion of other health professionals and poor people.

Lecturers, students and alumni all referred to ways in which the programme had expanded the capabilities of student professionals to do research and engage with research in the public health field. Students thought that the course had assisted them to manage health information, do monitoring and evaluation and apply the results to improving programmes. It had expanded their capability to do research and to read and

understand literature. Thus from the accounts of the informants, it appears that the curriculum and pedagogy of the programme are closely aligned with its goals and with the capabilities that have been identified as necessary for public health professionals to be able to contribute to transformation.

6. Factors constraining public health professionals' ability to contribute to transformation

As mentioned, a central goal of the CPH postgraduate programme was to increase the capabilities of health professionals to contribute to transformation of the health system. However, the lecturers were very aware of the factors constraining their students and alumni from effectively functioning as change agents in the system. Lecturers and alumni cited both structural constraints and resistance to change from professionals in the health system whose views and practices were shaped in the old system.

Jane Simons, the Programme Coordinator said that in the Centre there was,
... a great consciousness of the precariousness of the health system in South Africa, the immovability, the difficulty in transforming however many departments into one, the fact that most people were trained under the old system and therefore will carry much of that with them as they attempt to change it into a more people centred system, issues of poverty having probably put people in a worse position than they were previously.

According to the South African Health Barometer 2008, the health of the South African population declined between 1997 and 2005. The increase in poverty, the slow pace of change in basic living conditions and inadequacy of service delivery to poor communities have contributed to the worsening health of the poor majority of South Africans. The high rate of HIV/AIDS was the main factor contributing to the country's escalating rate of deaths. In spite of more people needing health services, there had been a decrease in numbers of health professionals compared to the overall population since 1994¹¹⁴ (Cullinan, 2009a, 2009b). These factors have made it extremely difficult for health professionals to affect changes in the health system.

Jane Simons thought that while CPH's postgraduate programme was making a contribution to transformation of the South African health system, it was on a very small scale. She attributed this to the low numbers of health professionals in management positions who study on the programme. She said,

... many of the people are working at a clinical level rather than at management level and many of the students who've come onto our course have said 'If only you could get our managers onto this course, then they would understand what we're talking about'.

Jane quoted one of the students, who had said,
You're alone, you come back with this new understanding and you can't get it through because you're alone with that understanding and you're silenced because it just annoys people who were trained under the old guard, however much they hated the old guard, they still trained under the old guard and they can't see beyond that.

Nobuntu Tladi, one of the lecturers, said that even where health professionals who were studying on the programme were in positions to implement change, there were structural constraints which blocked them. These included shortage of staff, staff rotation and lack of resources. She said,

... they're in the positions where they can implement the changes, but the health

¹¹⁴ In 2008 there were 1.1 nurses per 1000 people in comparison with 2.5 nurses per 100 people in 1994 – a decrease of more than 50% (Uta Lehmann in South African Health Review, cited in Cullinan, 2009a).

system is sort of blocking them in a way. So you can't just introduce that they come with their own ideas. We have to consider the whole system from the province and district and other implementation [sites] ...

She elaborated on the problem of staff rotation, saying that sometimes they trained health professionals who were 'willing to go and introduce change, but then even when you visit the institution you find that the person who has been trained in areas have been moved into others'.

There were a number of gaps that were identified between more educated health professionals who had developed a more informed understanding of health policy and the health workers on the ground who were essentially implementing the policies. Laura Bailey, one of the alumni spoke about constraints effecting the cycle of monitoring and evaluation and the translation of results into practice. She said,

At the next level the data gets sent to them, it's analysed, but they don't communicate it to the people, to the implementers, and the implementers are key if we want to really understand or address the problems. So the kind of health workers we need, we need people that will be able to work with data. You know, so many people do these courses but the more they understand it the further away they move from the actual place where this analysis needs to be understood so that we can make a difference. Even the communities need to be involved and understand the issues so that they can be able to come up with some suggestion of what can be tried. But I think the more people train and educate they get further and further away from implementation and they lose the focus on what being empowered to understand monitoring and evaluation, for an example, really means.

Laura was concerned that there was a disconnection between academic research being conducted and the results being used to inform people operating in the health services. She said that academics could do 'some very meaningful research, get some very good recommendations' but they tended to 'communicate it at such a high level, [that] the people that are implementing don't ever benefit from that'. She said,

we're all trying to contribute to the MDGs in a way, but the people at the facilities don't know how to understand this problem and the universities who may have -. I mean, I came across something the other day when I asked the World Health Organisation for some papers and I saw articles about studies that were done in Khayelitsha and I said "But do the people in Khayelitsha know about this?" How do you do it because maybe they are fed back to the very big directors and deputy directors. They just file it and then its business as usual.

Similarly, Moira, a student professional who worked at the Medical Research Council thought that the senior researchers in the Council were too removed from the contexts that were being researched.

In addition to gaps between research and affected communities, Laura also identified a gap between policies and implementation, saying,

... all these policies, many facilities have a stack of them sitting in a cupboard somewhere, many of them haven't been read, but [the national Department of Health] thinks that the policies have been sent down or disseminated. They talk about it at a senior level, explore what the policy entails. But it gets down to the people that really need to understand it, it's just a photocopy of the original and it's in a shelf or a file and nobody knows what's in there.

A further problem of great concern is that of health professionals leaving the government health services. Jane referred to a paper which argued that a response to HIV AIDS which focussed massively on the provision of anti-retrovirals, was having a draining effect on the health services. According to the paper many health professionals were drawn to the ARV projects which 'were often in NGOs because salaries are better, [thus] leaving the services even less resourced than they were before'. The 'brain drain' of

health professionals, particularly doctors and nurses, who leave South Africa to practice abroad, has had a negative impact on the health services (CPH Annual Report, 2008). There was also a movement of staff to the private sector.

Doctors in the public sector have been extremely badly paid, compared to other professionals in the public service, and have to work under appalling conditions with long shifts, insufficient staff and a lack of necessary medical equipment. The government's failure to respond to doctors' demands over a number of years resulted in strike action by doctors in mid-2009 (Malan and Ndlovu, 2009). Factors such as these further exacerbate the draining of health professionals from the public health system.

7. Concluding comments

We have discussed the vision and purpose of the Centre for Public Health at Fynbos University which is working towards achieving transformation of the health system to promote the health and well-being of the majority of the population in South Africa. An important area of its work is the postgraduate programme which is aimed at expanding the capabilities of health professionals to achieve these goals. The Centre's vision of public health is grounded in Primary Health Care (PHC), an international approach to health care which aims to provide universal access to health care within a framework of working towards social justice and poverty reduction. In accordance with a PHC approach, the approach to public health of the Centre is based on principles of health promotion and disease prevention. It emphasises the need to address the social determinants of health and to develop health systems which incorporate maximum community participation.

In our study we found a strong convergence of the views of informants about how the health system in South Africa should work and the competences needed by professionals to enable them to contribute to transforming the health system. The capabilities and functionings needed by health professionals have been clearly conceptualised by the Centre (without using these terms) and there has been ongoing development and review of curriculum and pedagogy aimed at developing these capabilities. There is a strong connecting thread between valued professional capabilities and educational arrangements. Within the constraints posed by a predominantly distance learning format, CPH lecturers have worked to facilitate practice-based and experiential learning related to students' work practice and real health service settings.

Students and alumni felt that they derived great benefit from their studies on the programme, as a result of expanding their knowledge and understanding of health care systems, learning analytical and practical tools contextualised within a primary health care approach, and developing confidence. This expansion of capabilities and functionings enhanced their agency to contribute to transformation of the health system and poverty reduction.

We have discussed structural changes and programmes which have been introduced by national government as part of a pro-poor health care policy. However, because of numerous reasons, including multi-dimensional poverty and the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the system has been failing dismally to meet the health needs of the majority of poor people in the country. In fact the health and well-being of the majority of the population has declined in the period since apartheid ended. The lack of capacity of health generally to meet the needs of a changing system is a major impediment to successful transformation.

In the case of Public Health there is a tension between the formation of health professionals with capabilities enabling them to contribute to transformation, and the severe constraints that health professionals encounter because of failure of structures

and systems of the health system. This case study has drawn attention to the challenges professional capability formation and particularly the translation of capabilities into achievable functionings within the context of largely dysfunctional systems.

Many of the informants in the study thought that the CPH professional programme was making an important contribution to developing professional capabilities needed to transform the health system in the interests of the majority of poor South Africans. However, such transformation would need a critical mass of health care practitioners in South Africa, who are capable of effecting the changes envisaged by CPH at different levels and sectors of the health system.

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