

**EXPLORING COMMUNITY BENEFITS IN COMMUNITY  
BASED LEARNING: A STUDY OF AN INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING INITIATIVE IN  
WENTWORTH, DURBAN**

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## DECLARATION

This study represents an original work by the author and has not been submitted in any form to another university. Where use has been made of the work of others it has been duly acknowledged in the text.



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March 24, 2010

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## ABSTRACT

Community Based Learning (CBL) is a pedagogy that has been fast tracked by the South African government as a means to make universities more relevant to local communities and assist with development initiatives sorely needed across the country. The approach is also gaining popularity in its own right in institutions of higher education in South Africa. But the issues of entering and working with communities are complex, and become even more complex when the students placed in local communities are international students.

The purpose of this study was to explore the CBL programme of the School for International Training (SIT) in Wentworth, Durban and to identify the benefits and challenges to the community from the perspective of the community. A qualitative, descriptive design was used to garner rich information of the perceptions and experiences of community members involved in the CBL programme. The study employed purposive, convenience sampling to select community members who have been involved as community workers or homestay families so as to 'illuminate' the research question. Personal interviews and focus groups were conducted with these community members. Content analysis was done on the data generated and to ensure credibility, data triangulation was done using a field journal and student reflection papers from selected semesters of the CBL programme.

The overall findings indicate that the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and the homestay families did benefit from the programme. The organizations did not want the 'help' of the students, and found their dwelling on service as patronizing. The community appreciated its dual roles of being teachers and learners: with organizations in particular having their experience and knowledge affirmed as teachers of Community Development (CD). The community believed that students could be strong role models for local youth. The presence of the students within the community also led to an increased interest within the community of Coloured history, culture and identity. In terms of CBL the presence of the students led to an increase in volunteerism amongst homestay families and other families wanting to host students in the future. The programme also led to a substantive, if brief, increase in the goodwill between the often feuding community organizations of Wentworth. Finally, there was also lingering hope that the students and SIT as an institution would deliver better prospects for families and organizations such as funding, building networks and lasting personal relationships.

The community also noted costs to the interactions, mainly in the form of inappropriate behaviour of some students, both in homestays and within the community in general. These included ethnocentric behaviour as well as the use of drugs and alcohol. These were cited as negatively affecting the impressionable youth of Wentworth.

The study concludes that benefits do accrue to the community, but the relationships within the programme need to be nurtured and the whole initiative viewed as a process. International CBL programmes can be fraught with intercultural concerns and misunderstandings and thus take significant time to nurture must be approached with great caution. Attention must be paid to power differentials that may exist, and visiting universities must be honest with communities in their needs and what they are prepared to give. These programmes, if not managed properly, have the potential to become extractive and follow patterns set by failed development projects.

# **DEDICATION**

To  
John, Jamie and Layla  
For your unconditional love, support and inspiration.

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This thesis has only been possible because of the people that make up the vibrant community of Wentworth: homestay families, community workers, colleagues and friends who have given so generously of their time and energy. Your determination to be active participants in the development of your own community is truly inspiring. It has been a privilege to work with such committed people, and with a community willing to face its challenges so honestly.

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Ngiyabonga Kakulu!

## ACRONYMS

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| CBL    | Community Based Learning                        |
| CBO    | Community Based Organisation                    |
| CBOFG  | Community Based Organization Focus Group        |
| CBR    | Community Based Research                        |
| CD     | Community Development                           |
| CE     | Community Engagement                            |
| CEL    | Community Engaged Learning                      |
| CHESP  | Community Higher Education Service Partnerships |
| CSL    | Community Service Learning                      |
| HFG    | Homestay Focus Group                            |
| ISL    | International Service Learning                  |
| SIT    | SIT Study Abroad                                |
| SL     | Service Learning                                |
| SL/CBL | Service Learning / Community Based Learning     |

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Community-based learning can be understood to refer to a dynamic process linking real community priorities, issues and problems with student learning, research and development. It is a process which should involve multiple and diverse participants and partners in a mixture of on and off campus learning experiences. Outcomes of the process include an integrated, problem solving, multifaceted learning experience for students, the production of new forms of knowledge in relation to societal needs, and broader civic and social development

Tim Nuttal (2003:55)

Community Engaged Learning (CEL) and Community Based Learning (CBL) are pedagogical tools that combine educational instruction with practical community work and reflection. Tim Nuttal (2003), a South African academic and CBL practitioner, acknowledges that this is a process that can bring with it benefits for communities and for students involved. CEL and CBL have the potential to make education more responsive to the needs of students, and strengthen “civic-mindedness” amongst the youth and local community organizations. Further, as will be discussed in this thesis, the methods are often put forward as encouraging of local communities to articulate their own realities and define their own development processes.

Much of the research in this field has been conducted under the banner of Service Learning (SL) and conducted in the United States. There has however also been significant interest in South Africa since 1994 when Community Engagement (CE) was identified as a way to get universities and their students in contact with local communities. To date, studies on CE have focused mainly on student outcomes and to a lesser extent on the benefits that universities and specific courses derive from their participation in these relationships. Very little work, however, has been conducted on whether communities benefit from being a part of these relationships and what the benefits, as well as the costs, are to the community. Indeed, Vernon and Ward (1999:30) state that “SL research has overwhelmingly tended to emphasise impacts related to student learning and pedagogical issues at the expense of community impacts...The voices of community members are almost completely absent

from the discourse of the effects of SL.” Thus, as recommended by scholars such as Cruz & Giles (2000), this study seeks out the community perspective of CE – what are the benefits and costs to the community from their participation in CBL.

The added impact of the international dimension is one that is equally absent in the literature. As higher education throughout the world embraces internationalisation for maintained relevance in a global reality, and universities from the North seek to create ‘global citizens’; International Service Learning (ISL) programmes, particularly those based in the global South have grown in popularity (Grusky, 2000). Such international programmes bring up issues of privilege, power and access. They bring with them the potential of creating transformational cultural experiences for privileged foreigners at the expense of local communities, and reinforcing old dependency type relationships. Sustainability and relationship building are also in question as international programmes may in some cases be more likely than a local university to move onto the next exotic locale when the market forces dictate.

The SIT Study Abroad/CBL programme in the community of Wentworth in Durban, places North American students in homestay families and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) for a week of working, living, experiencing, teaching and learning. This study was conducted to take a closer look at and explore some of these complexities and contradictions that arise from this programme; and to do so specifically from the vantage point of the community hosting the students. This research specifically explores whether, given the complexities of the field and practice of CBL, the community of Wentworth derives benefits from its participation in the SIT CBL programme; and to investigate the nature of these benefits. Likewise, the study also seeks to explore the possibility of any costs to the community from hosting foreign students in their homes and organizations.

## **Background to the Study**

In order to provide context for the findings of the study, the following section presents background information on SIT Study Abroad and its programme on Reconciliation and

Development in Durban, South Africa, the community of Wentworth, and the CBL programme for SIT Study Abroad students located in Wentworth.

### **SIT Study Abroad<sup>1</sup>**

SIT Study Abroad is an institution of higher education based in Vermont, in the United States. It is a programme of World Learning Inc, a non profit organization founded in 1932 as the Experiment in International Living, to “enhance the prospects for world peace by promoting understanding among peoples; the laboratory for achieving such understanding was the family, through the renowned Experiment homestay experience,” (Sommers 2000:64). World Learning’s portfolio of programmes consists of:

- The Experiment - providing cultural immersion programmes for high school students.
- SIT Graduate Institute - offering master’s degrees, graduate certificates, and professional development programs from a campus in Brattleboro, Vermont;
- International Development Programs - working with communities in more than 20 countries to design and implement development programs; and
- SIT Study Abroad - the undergraduate global campus of World Learning, offering 70 different semester<sup>2</sup> and summer programmes for undergraduate students enrolled in US universities and colleges. The programmes of SIT Study Abroad run in 40 countries around the world and offer instruction in several critical global issues such as Arts, Cultural Expression, and Social Change; Global Health; Identity and Globalization; Natural Resource Management, Biodiversity, and Environmental Policy; Post-Conflict Transformation; Social Movements, Education, and Human Rights and Sustainable Development.

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<sup>1</sup> SIT Study Abroad will be used interchangeably with SIT. While SIT Study Abroad is the official name of the organization in the US, most local partners in South Africa refer to the organization simply as SIT.

<sup>2</sup> A semester is a period of instruction lasting 15 weeks that is used in many American universities. On a semester system, the academic calendar has two terms, Fall (September to December) and Spring (February to May).

SIT Study Abroad is based on a model of field based learning that:

...integrates classroom teaching, student experiences, and analysis into an evolving understanding of local culture and themes. SIT Study Abroad programs immerse students in real-world contexts where they can examine critical, global issues from diverse perspectives and multiple sources of knowledge. Through an experiential approach developed over 75 years, students explore academic themes at the intersection of broad theoretical frameworks and personal experience, gaining a deep and comprehensive understanding of some of the world's most pressing challenges (www.sit.edu).

Students on an SIT Study Abroad programme spend much time during their semester abroad living with a homestay families to ensure that their learnings are grounded in local lived experiences, and those on the semester programmes also have the added opportunity to complete a month long research project or practicum known as an Independent Study Project (ISP).

SIT Study Abroad promotional materials boast that the study abroad experiences help to create global citizens who are interculturally competent. Dunn (2002:2) describes the use of the term global citizenship as referring to “a citizenry that knows and cares about contemporary affairs in the whole world, not just in its own nation.” Alvino Fantini, Professor Emeritus at SIT Graduate Institute believes that intercultural competence is critical: “those laboring interculturally must be able to adjust to new environments, work in multicultural teams, and speak other languages” (Fantini 2001:2). Fantini further notes that:

contact among people of different cultural backgrounds presents challenges, especially when the parties involved possess only their native competence. Monolingual-monocultural individuals, unaccustomed to dealing with people from other cultures, may be stymied, confused, or even repulsed by the differences they encounter (Fantini 2001:6).

It is thought that a study abroad experience therefore provides the means to attain this intercultural competence to become a global citizen.

## **SIT: Reconciliation and Development**

The SIT Study Abroad semester programme based in Durban, South Africa was first developed in 1992 under the theme of Reconciliation and Development.<sup>3</sup> The programme is based in the Cato Manor area of Durban and has a permanent staff complement of 5 South Africans. In many SIT Study Abroad programmes the Academic Director is a US American or in some cases a third country national, but in all cases the Academic Director must have significant experience in the country or a field of study relevant to the programme theme.

SIT: Reconciliation and Development receives two groups of approximately 22 students each year, with each group staying for 15 weeks. During their stay in South Africa the students attend a seminar on Reconciliation and Development<sup>4</sup>, take classes in Field Study Methods, take an intensive course in Zulu Language and Culture, and after significant preparation, complete a month long independent field study project or practicum on a topic or with an organization relevant to the themes of Reconciliation and Development in South Africa. The students spend a great deal of time out of the classroom talking with and observing professionals in the field, and visiting organizations and communities throughout South Africa. To gain a greater appreciation of the realities and complexities of South African life the students live in four different homestays during their time in the country: five weeks with Zulu-speaking families in Cato Manor, Durban, ten days with Zulu-speaking families in rural KwaZulu Natal, one week with Indian families in Chatsworth, and one week with Coloured families in Wentworth. It is during their week in Wentworth that students also embark on the CBL programme with a number of CBOs in the area.

The final month of the programme is known as the ISP. During this time, students conduct field-based research on a topic related to issues of reconciliation and/or development in South Africa. The emphasis is on the students sourcing and collecting primary data by

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<sup>3</sup> From September 2009 the theme of the programme was changed to Social and Political Transformation.

<sup>4</sup> For more on the syllabus for the Seminar in Reconciliation and Development which formed the backbone of the semester, please see Appendix 1.

talking to and interacting with local South Africans. The students are also permitted to do a practicum with a local NGO or CBO.

### **Wentworth**

Wentworth is an area of Durban which was designated as a Coloured area under the Apartheid regime's second Group Areas Act of 1963. It is one of five Coloured areas in Durban, the other four being Sydenham, Greenwood Park, Newlands East and Marian Ridge. The land that is Wentworth was originally set aside for Coloured people as early as 1939 although it was only officially proclaimed a Coloured area and settled from 1963, by families removed from Clairwood, Clare Estate, Sea Cow Lake, and Cato Manor (Jones, 1998).

Today, Wentworth is home to roughly 30,000 people (Meth, 2008). The name Wentworth actually refers to three distinct areas: Wentworth, Austerville and Treasure Beach. The Treasure Beach area is home to relatively affluent members of the community situated along or near the beachfront. The middle class area of Wentworth is primarily housed in either two or three bedroom houses. Finally, Austerville has middle class houses as well as crowded flats and sub economic temporary housing for the poor commonly referred to as "Rainbow Chickens" (Jones, 1998). Widespread poverty and a lack of available housing have left many families crowded 10-15 people to a flat. According to Charles Meth (2008) and Sharad Chari (2007), Wentworth is still victim to apartheid spatial planning where people were removed from various areas and regions and pushed into untenable living conditions adjacent to refineries and a noisy airport. Between ages 15 and 65, more than thirty three percent of men in Wentworth are unemployed (Chari, 2007).

Wentworth has earned the reputation of being a difficult community<sup>5</sup>. "Environmental pollution, drug infestation, and an epidemic of gangsterism plagued the area during the

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<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this research the word community will describe people with the shared bond of residence and/or affiliation with the geographical area of Wentworth, and interest and involvement in social activism in the area.

1980s-1990s” (Meth, 2008). Meth argues that the area is now experiencing a rebirth of all three epidemics. Additionally, the community also faces high rates of alcohol abuse, domestic violence, teenage pregnancy and rising HIV/Aids rates (Bolwana, 2004). A 2003 survey conducted by the South African Petroleum Refineries (SAPREF) among residents of the South Durban Basin gave residents an opportunity to voice their “opinions, priorities and concerns ‘in their own words’” (SAPREF, 2003). People of the community ranked noise and odour from industry followed by crime and lack of employment as their least favourite aspects of the area. Respondents identified respiratory ailments as their biggest health concern followed by HIV/AIDS, heart disease and lung disease. Seventy three percent of respondents said that the impact of industry on the community is “bad” because of pollution, health concerns and noise. The social and economic outlook in Wentworth are cause for concern, and indeed, against the backdrop of these serious problems, there are a number of organizations working in the community on changing and improving the standard of living of families in the area.

### **Civil Society in Wentworth**

Sharad Chari (2004: 11) has described an engaged civil society in Wentworth where:

many people are involved in civic and social organizations. In addition to the work of labour organizers and of the pioneers of cooperativisation, several people are involved in work aimed at the transformation of the terms of work, life, environment, family and community. Although I have suggested that Wentworth has become more “ghetto”, its residents refuse to move if they can help it because Wentworth is a vital, “vibey” neighbourhood. Even in the flats of Woodville Road, which Jane Glover calls “the ghetto within the ghetto”, they refuse to forget how cool it can be to sit at the front doorstep and see the whole world go by. Many residents have used their time and energy to engage in a variety of political, civic and social groups, many fronts in the fight for social and environmental justice. Today’s struggles coalesce around a range of concerns, including limited-duration contract labour in the petrochemical industry, air pollution primarily from the refineries and the Mondi paper mill, sub-standard housing, and care for those living with HIV/AIDS.

Alan Moolman (2004), in a paper for the Centre for Civil Society at UKZN further explains the phenomenon of community action in his home base of Wentworth:

[Wentworth] is a place populated by ordinary people engaged in a day to day struggle to improve their lives. Wentworth is a community - not a collection of

individuals with a singular purpose and shared mission to challenge Government or trans-national corporations. It is a real community of individuals and interest groups with often divergent ideologies and strategies to achieve their goals. This however, does not mean that there is no room for cooperation or collective action around issues that affect the quality of life of people who live there.

Both Chari and Moolman bring to life the vibrancy and engaged nature of the community of Wentworth. The sheer number of both service providers and social/advocacy organizations in the area (Tenney 2004: 21), coupled with an openness and dedication to fighting the problems facing the community make Wentworth and its people a natural choice for a community engagement. Here the SIT Study Abroad students have a foundation from which to interact with and learn about community and community driven development. It is this Wentworth that allows these students to witness the practical implications of the development theory and issues to which they have been exposed in the classroom and to see the honest attempts of a community to revitalize from within.

### **The SIT Wentworth Community Based Learning Programme**

During their 15 week stay in South Africa, the SIT students are placed for approximately one week in the Durban suburb of Wentworth. The placement involves living with a host family and working with a CBO, in areas as diverse as HIV/AIDS treatment and education, care of orphaned, abandoned, abused children, domestic violence counselling, women's empowerment, issues of service delivery in the community, environmental activism, and life skills training for at risk youth<sup>6</sup>.

The SIT Wentworth CBL programme first ran in March 2004. Prior to this SIT: Reconciliation and Development students were tasked with completing 20 hours of "community service." They could spread the 20 hours over the course of the 15 weeks or do it all in one week. Students were given a list of organizations around Durban and were asked to contact one that fitted their interests and schedule 20 hours of work. There were no specific assignments or scheduled reflection time allocated to process the experiences of the community service. In the view of programme management, based on observation as

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 2 for a listing of the CBOs that have been part of the CBL programme since March 2004.

well as feedback from organizations, this system proved too often a burden on the organizations in terms of time commitment, a lack of respect shown by the US American students on people's space, and demanding expectations that were beyond the ability of the organization to feasibly provide to a student. Programme management felt that there was a need and opportunity to experiment with a better coordinated, more carefully articulated, and more culturally engaged and immersive programming.

One student did have a very positive placement at an organization in Wentworth in Fall 2003, and she had such a powerful experience with the organization and in the community that she suggested that SIT Study Abroad staff speak with the person who ran the organization to see if we could do something in Wentworth for the whole group. It was my first semester as the Academic Director of the programme and as I was disillusioned with the current system of community service, yet certain that getting students of development out into NGOs and CBOs to see development in action was on balance a good thing. Discussions went very well. Without much knowledge of the world of service learning or community engagement, but with prior knowledge of Wentworth, I sat with the members of this organization and discussed and planned what an interaction for 22 American students would look like in the community. I went to a meeting of Wentworth Coordinated Service (WCS), a now defunct umbrella organization for CBOs in Wentworth, to explain the concept. The members of the four organizations present liked the idea but wanted some time to discuss it with their community workers and with members of other organizations in the community. After two weeks they decided that this was a programme that they wanted to support, and asked if the first organization that had made the introductions to WCS be responsible for coordinating the effort. This is where our discussions had begun and thus SIT happily agreed and set the ball in motion to begin the CSL programme in Wentworth in March 2004.

Over the years the name of the component has been changed to try to dissuade the US American students from thinking they are coming to "do" service, to "help," or to "make a difference." While in the best case scenarios programme interactions are mutually beneficial, programme management was concerned with the number of students coming to

South Africa, and into affiliate communities, with quite paternalistic attitudes that they were there specifically to ‘help,’ and that they knew best and were in a position to educate South Africans to the realities of development. This issue is explored at length in the study, but for present purposes, it suffices to say that the programme made clear moves over the course of many semesters to articulate the experience, including the component name, away from one that enforced such hierarchies.

Continued discussions with the organizations in Wentworth pointed to their valuing the information exchange with students; and not the work the students were able to complete in the week. The programme thus became referred to as Community Participant Learning, and in its current form is called CBL to reflect its place in the wider discourse of university-community engagements. CBL more accurately describes the holistic nature of the learning experience. The students have the potential to learn from the organizations, the homestay families, and the wider community, and in so doing see a more complete picture of the community (as complete as can be seen in a week). They see the problems in the community firsthand; hear their homestay families’ experiences with and responses to the problems, and then they see and hear what members of the CBOs are doing to stem the tide. The central goal and intention of the Wentworth CBL component is the discussion and sharing of knowledges between of the “outsider” students and the “insider” members of the Wentworth community, in order to dialogue on various issues including but not limited to those of reconciliation and development. The assumption is that the community insiders know their community and their situation and struggles better than anyone else does, and through dialogue the students have the opportunity to learn from this knowledge. In relation to Tim Nuttal’s quote used at the beginning of the Chapter, the study sought to explore with the homestay families and community organization their experiences with this process of creating sharing of knowledge in relation to their “societal needs” and “social development”.

## **Methodology**

The study employed a qualitative methodology to explore the meanings and benefits that participants constructed and attached to their involvement in the week long CBL

programme of SIT Study Abroad. The participants of the study were selected from a pool of homestay families and community organization which had been involved in the CBL programme in Wentworth since March 2004. The study comprised of individual interviews with seven members of homestay families and five members of community organization; as well as a focused group with members from eight homestay families and another focus group with members from five community organizations. I supplemented this interview data with participant observation during my time working on the programme and a field journal maintained during the research process. Further triangulation was achieved through reading and analyzing student reflection papers from their engagement in Wentworth. The major limitation of this study and possible ethical issue was the dual position that I held as the researcher and the manager of the programme bringing the students to the community. The process of doing the research and writing about it has become about ultimately negotiating this dual relationship.

### **Plan of the Dissertation**

This introductory chapter has outlined the scope and purpose of the study: to determine whether the community of Wentworth benefits from its participation in the Community Based Programme for the SIT: Reconciliation and Development programme.

Chapter Two discusses of some of the existing literature around SL and CBL. The Chapter will also look further at the complexities and contradictions of CBL in South Africa and International Service Learning (ISL) or CBL.

Chapter Three examines the methodology employed in the study. The study employed a qualitative approach to collecting data where interviews and focus groups were conducted with community members.

Chapter Four presents the data collected and generated, to the extent possible, from community points of view. The chapter explores six themes that emerged during the research process: Teaching and Learning; Impact on Family Lives; A Sense of Self; Community Development; Good Intentions; and Hope.

Chapter Five provides the analysis of the data presented in chapter four. The chapter provides an analysis and interpretation of the results, with iterative insights gleaned from the literature. The chapter also looks deeper into implications the results have on the practice of CBL and on CD.

Finally, Chapter Six presents the conclusions and recommendations for the SIT Study Abroad CBL Programme in Wentworth as well as suggestions for further research. Issues pertaining to CD in Wentworth are highlighted as is the complex question of ISL.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This review of the literature is divided into four main sections. Part one first unpacks SL and CBL, in terms of definitions and evolution. In part two, the role of and benefits to various participants in Community Engagements (CEs) are detailed. Here specific reference is made to the nature of community–university interactions and the words that are often used to define these relationships such partnerships, and reciprocity. Part three looks at CEs in the field of CD and the state imperatives for South African universities to champion such programmes. Finally, part four outlines the dilemma of cultural interaction in the CBL context and the growing popularity of ISL. It is this nexus of ISL and CD, specifically in the South African context where the SIT CBL Programme in Wentworth rests, and this becomes the point of departure when discussing and analysing the findings of the research.

#### **Redefining CBL and SL**

##### **Community Based Learning**

Community-engaged learning (CEL) and CBL are relatively new terms in the university-community engagement literature, and much of the literature related to these themes comes from the body of research defined as SL. Jacoby (2003) argues that CEL is a much broader term than SL and as such spans a continuum of curricular experiential learning opportunities that are linked to the community. This continuum includes practicums, field placements, internships, and SL. Nuttal (2003) explains that a term as broadly defined as CBL can:

provide many angles for incorporating learning experiences outside the classroom into curricula and research within higher education. The term is also located firmly in the idea of university-community partnerships; it is potentially less student-centred than ‘SL’ in that it suggests that off campus partners have both a teaching role to play and opportunities for their own learning and capacity building (Nuttal 2003:56).

In the South African context, CEL and CBL are terms that are used more often than the term SL to describe experiential learning opportunities for students that link directly to

community, (Fourie, 2003; Nuttal, 2003). There is a national imperative initiated through the White Paper on Higher Education of 1997 and the creation and subsequent formation of Community-Higher Education Service Partnerships (CHESP) to focus on these types of relationships between Institutions of Higher Education and communities. There is also a recognised societal need to integrate these centres of education into the wider social context around which they exist and a desire to uphold the local indigenous knowledge that has accrued in these communities. Mulroney (2001) cited in Fourie (2003:32) argues that this demonstrates “a willingness to begin from local communities, to spend time in and with the community, analysing the community’s needs for the present and its aspirations for the future.”

In this study, the use of the term CBL signals a distinct movement away from a “service mentality,” and places emphasis on the dual teaching and learning function of the community, acknowledging that the community organizations know the situations in their own communities the best, and presenting the CBL Programme as a way to learn from, about and with the community. Of importance in this evolution in community-university engagements is the emphasis placed on learning about the social, economic and political environment in which the CBOs function – thus the students are learning from the entire community.

### **Service Learning**

SL is a term that in recent years has gained increased attention and almost uncritical momentum in spheres of higher education. SL is a pedagogy based on the experiential and democratic learning theories developed by such educators and critical thinkers as John Dewey and Paulo Freire (Hironimus-Wendt & Lovell-Troy, 1998). Bringle & Hatcher (1995:112) define SL as “a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organised service activity that meets identified community needs.” Stanton (1990:67), a pioneer in the field of SL, describes it as being:

an expression of values — service to others, CD and empowerment, reciprocal learning — which determines the purpose, nature and process of social and educational exchange between learners (students) and the people they serve,

and between experiential learning programs and the community organizations with which they work.

SL is said to provide students with practical application and context to contextualize and make use and sense of theory, and this is a strong motivation for SL programmes to be integrated into curricula of higher education. Indeed for the programme under review and discussed later in the study, the intersect of theory and practice is the central objective laid out in various forms of documentation received by both students and community organizations. SL theorists and practitioners combine service and learning objectives with the intent that the activity changes both the recipient and the provider of the service through self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content. Advocates of SL programmes claim that at its core is the design and intention is to be transformative (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Mezirow's (1991, 2000) transformational learning model can provide a theoretical framework for evaluating this transformative learning processes in SL. Transformational learning is a process whereby learners make meaning of their experience through critical reflection on assumptions and engage in discourse in order to arrive at more dependable and justifiable 'meaning perspectives' or 'frames of reference' for guiding individual and social action.

Morton and Troppe (1996:3), note that SL has no singular or simple definition and is: "informed by a range of intellectual traditions and values systems, many of which seem to contradict or compete with one another." Indeed in the sea of positive reviews, a few criticisms of SL stand out to acknowledge these contradictions. Eby (1998) and Albach (2002) warn that considerations of who enters communities, why they want to enter how they enter and how long they stay must be made. In his essay "Why SL is Bad", Eby (1998) argues that volunteerism and student placement is often approached by schools and organizers as too "simplistic" hinging on an "anyone can serve" mentality. Corroborating this, students on the SIT Study Abroad programme in Durban often comment that some of their less dedicated peers behave in certain ways whilst in placements that trivializes the work being done by community volunteers and the passion seen in community organizations.

Eby (1989) points out another glaring contradiction in the SL landscape, that of students using SL to appease a socialized need to help the less fortunate, to “make themselves feel good.” He also criticizes the desire to become involved in SL projects and classes in order to strengthen resumes, building up a portfolio of experiences that will make participants more marketable in the real world. Albach (2002:3) is troubled by students who use local communities to further and build their careers, and then leave to go back to their safe lives in a different part of the globe. He says of these portfolio-building students:

Education is becoming an internationally traded commodity... to be purchased by a consumer in order to build a “skill set” to be used in the marketplace or a product to be bought and sold by multinational corporations, academic institutions that have transmogrified themselves into businesses, and other providers.

These sentiments are echoed by Morton (1995:19) who, looking at the work of Geertz (1973) discusses SL in terms of the integrity and depth of SL engagements from “thin” to “thick”; thin engagements being described as those which are “paternalistic, self centred, produces negative consequences, creates dependencies and false expectations.” Morton says there is not a continuum from one to the other, rather discreet sets of choices and outcomes for each. Illich (1968) in his speech to a group of American students on their way to Mexico entitled “To Hell with Good Intentions” makes the powerful point, still relevant almost 40 years later, that perhaps there is something deep within the US American<sup>7</sup> psyche that makes them want to “help,” and to feel they have a right to act.

You, like the values you carry, are the products of an American society of achievers and consumers, with its two-party system, its universal schooling, and its family-car affluence. You are ultimately - consciously or unconsciously - "salesmen" for a delusive ballet in the ideas of democracy, equal opportunity and free enterprise among people who haven't the possibility of profiting from these.

SL puts people that are mostly from positions of privilege who think they can and need to help, into less affluent situations where the community’s idea of helping differs from this preconception. This question of who is to be “served” and “why” needs to be central to

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<sup>7</sup> This is not to specifically single out US Americans, but Monsignor Ivan Illich specifically mentions US Americans, his audience, in his speech to the to the Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects (CIASP) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, on April 20, 1968.

thinking about SL. Some authors (Weah et al, 2000; Woolf, 2005) have pointed out that a “missionary” ideology has developed in the minds of many practitioners and students of SL, in which the “recipients” of service are considered to be less fortunate “others,” often the poor or needy. A similar sentiment is discussed by Kennard (2000:46) where she notes the challenges of moving students beyond a “superficial self-serving notion of service to a view of service that values a collaborative, partner relationship with the communities we work with.” She discusses the disappointment she feels when students speak of feeling good after helping those “less fortunate”.

## **Participant Benefits**

The SL relationship has four primary and interdependent participants: students, universities, community organizations and the community at large. Holland (2001) states, “The work of SL is complex and multidimensional; it depends upon a university community collaboration in which all parties identify shared goals but also have distinct perspectives” (Holland 2001:52). In principle, the idea behind SL is to create “partnerships” between institutions of higher education and communities, and place students within these communities to pull up their sleeves and assist on projects and problem-solving. In the following section I will sketch a range of benefits for various participants, demonstrating the lack of focus on community responses. I will briefly define each group; give an overview of what they get out of their participation in a CBL or SL programme. I will then move on to the different types of relationships that have been described within the world of SL and CBL.

## **Students**

Most of the evaluative work on SL has been conducted from the point of view of colleges and universities in a North American context to show how and why students learn in SL contexts and how universities and colleges can leverage that learning (Eyler, 2001). The potentially transformative nature of SL pedagogy for student participants has been documented by Eyler et al. (2001) looking at a wealth of SL literature from 1993 to 2000. Eyler et al. (2001:1-2) outline the following as long term student outcomes of SL engagement:

- student personal development such a sense of personal efficacy, personal identity, spiritual growth, and moral development;
- interpersonal development and the ability to work well with others, leadership and communication skills;
- reducing stereotypes and facilitating cultural & racial understanding;
- creating a sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills;
- commitment to service;
- being associated with involvement in community service after graduation.

### **Universities**

According to Eyler et al. (2001), the impacts of SL on colleges and universities studied have included: student retention; enhanced community relations; the introduction of compulsory SL at many universities; popularity and increased availability of SL offerings; and institutional commitment to SL curriculum. Ostrander (2004) defines other important components of SL as student learning, curriculum transformation, community-defined priorities, and knowledge production. Vickers, Harris, and McCarthy (2004: 129) suggest SL is “a conduit for the development and maintenance of meaningful, symbiotic relationships between the university and the community”. They further contend that SL can assist a university in re-energising curricula, re-engaging students in their own learning, promoting civic development an increasing their role in this development, and establishing linkages with the wider community.

### **The Community**

An area that bears much criticism in SL and CBL is that the community perspective is often left out of evaluations of programmes. To date, only a handful of studies have been undertaken that discuss community perspectives, even in the North American context; and the field acknowledges that this area continues to be under-represented in the overall SL literature (Birdsall, 2005; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Giles & Cruz, 2000; Jones, 2003; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Even where mention in made of community perspectives, benefits are often implied with terms such as “partnership”, “reciprocity” and “good citizenship” to describe community sentiment to SL underexplored and/or otherwise used in unclear ways which tend to cloud the analysis of

the supposed actual benefits that accrue to, or problems that might be experienced by, organizations that participate in these programmes.

In looking at the practice of students from the North who visit communities of the global South for SL programmes we need to acknowledge that realities between the different groups will be indeed be different and thus there exists the potential for damage to be done. But there also exists the possibility for benefits to accrue to local communities involved, and these should be documented as well. The literature is resplendent with tales of how and why student participants benefit from SL interactions (Giles & Eyler, 1998; Marais & Botes, 2005) but there are few published studies documenting the perspectives of community members (Furco & Billing, 2002; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Weah et al, 2000; Marais & Botes, 2005). One reason according to Sandy and Holland (2006) is that the definition or idea of who or what is a community is very much a contested one. For the purposes of this study, community evokes thoughts of a larger societal purpose, a collective that continues and reproduces through generations and through common bonds. In the case of Wentworth, community describes people with the bonds of residence and/or social and psychological affiliation with the geographical area and people of greater Wentworth. Nuttal (2003:56) maintains that “community-based learning generates a variety of intellectually and socially beneficial outcomes in the form of new knowledge, discourse and action for higher education students and staff, and for participant communities and service providers. There are numerous questions within the Service Learning/Community Based Learning (SL/CBL) literature that are embedded in the concept of community. In the next section I will discuss the concepts and literature around three issues that I see as being central to the debate: partnerships, reciprocity and CD.

### **Partnerships**

The basic idea of a relationship in SL is a partnership with shared control<sup>8</sup> – one that is developed between a centre of higher education and a community and community

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<sup>8</sup> Shared control is a concept of mutuality highlighted in Boyle-Baise et al, 2001.

organizations. For Bringle & Hatcher (2003:1), community partnerships are “a series of interpersonal relationships between campus administrators, faculty, staff and students, and community leaders, agency personnel and members of communities.”

Eby (1998) takes issue with the idea of equal partnerships. He believes that lofty educational credentials and financial control make the partnership tilt heavily in favour of the university’s ivory tower. In such cases, the service in SL, can very quickly serve the objectives of the university course or faculty member rather than the community, for example in putting together a short-lived unsustainable project for the university students to work on for the time they are in the community. The universities take upon a role of “development agent” who know better than the “beneficiaries” what the development agenda should comprise, what project should be completed, and who to staff them (Erasmus & Jafta, 2005:8). McKnight (1996) charges these so-called partnerships with bringing a set of interests that perpetuate dependency, masked by service. McKnight contends that such service can undermine a community's confidence in its ability to address its own problems, while masquerading as its more knowledgeable substitutes. Simon et al (1991: ix) describe this as a contradiction between serving community economic interests and the educational needs of their clients the students. Fourie (2003:34), however, argues that a new paradigm has been created where universities are not regarded as the only generators, transmitters and applicers of knowledge; communities have emerged as co-creators of knowledge, making the partnership more of an equal one.

### **Reciprocity**

Reciprocity, in some form, is almost always present in the text and subtext of SL, as a tenet and a prerequisite of effective SL programmes (Porter, 2001; Jacoby, 1996; Stanton, 1990; Porter & Monard, 2001; Henry & Breyfogel, 2005; Furco, 1996). Henry & Breyfogel (2005:21) describe reciprocity in a SL experience as:

the exchange of both giving and receiving between the “server” and the person or group “being served”. All parties in SL are learners and help determine what is to be learned....Such a SL exchange avoids the traditionally paternalistic, one-way approach to service in which one person or group has resources which they share “charitably” or “voluntarily” with a person or group that lacks resources.

The inclusion of reciprocity in discussions of SL highlights the equal footing of the various players in the partnership. Being engaged in a partnership does not necessarily mean that there will be shared objectives or that joint responsibility will be assumed; there should however be an active concerted drive to ensure a sharing of the information, power, knowledge, control and execution and the shared the benefits of the project. Subotsky (2000:115) cautions however that in practice “mutuality in partnerships is a highly illusive<sup>9</sup> ideal.” One issue is how and when partners know if and when reciprocity has been achieved (Sandy & Holland, 2006). Stanton et al (1999:15) emphasize respectful listening to “perspectives and histories, together with community-building and possibly advocacy in an environment that acknowledges difficult emotions and political choices that accompany these tensions on both sides” in order to work through rough issues in a partnership of this nature.

Many of the contentious issues related to reciprocity seem to revolve around six essential components, namely: goals, perception of power, partner identity, boundaries, outcomes, and scope of commitment (Enos & Martin, 2003). These issues manifest as questions such as: Whose programme was this? How were each of the parties invested in it supposed to benefit? How were the benefits being accomplished? Henry & Breyfogel (2006:29) and Mintz & Hesser (1996:36) identify reciprocity as a “fundamental or comprehensive concept” of SL. Without it, they claim SL providers run the risk “of exploiting or coercing both the community and the student”. Conversely the university organizers could think they are agreeing to certain terms and arrangements, only to find the community had a different perspective.

A fundamental breakdown in an otherwise reciprocal relationship can occur when parties enter into a CSL partnership with different expectations, goals and levels of commitment. Traditional hierarchical perceptions of power within a small community can also be an impediment to reciprocity, particularly if certain individuals or organizations are seen, or

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<sup>9</sup> Subotsky uses the term ‘illusive’ to emphasize that mutual benefit in service learning partnerships is not only hard to reach (as the word elusive might denote), but more so it is an illusion and unreal; and impossible to attain.

portray themselves as gatekeepers of the community. Some believe that financial remuneration to community partners should not enter the fray in reciprocal relationships Porter (2001: 108), for example, notes that:

it does start to feel extractive if community members and volunteers are not compensated for effort – particularly when we are talking about placing people who are comparatively more privileged in the midst of poverty, to learn. For example, a consultant would charge a fee to lecture to a group of students, so why not a community volunteer.

However, this compensation need not be monetary, but may comprise “reciprocal assistance sometime in the future in some meaningful form yet to be determined” (Porter 2001:108).

In CSL, reciprocity or sharing at various levels is said to lead to empowerment all round. The students are empowered by their ability to help, and community members are empowered by the new skills they learn from students (Cruz & Giles, 2000). As the scope and definition of reciprocity grows wider and more generative, empowerment can also extend into areas involving funding, human resources, and even assessment of student volunteers (Strand et. al., 2003; Henry & Breyfogel, 2006). Thus, for example, community organizers might take on the evaluation of some student assignments; budgets for the programme may be decided upon and assigned jointly and certain staff assigned to various projects based on a collective decision in the partnership. Ongoing student research on community directed project would also be an important reciprocal arrangement. Of course the short length of a SL engagement and short staffed community organizations might add to the challenges over the meaning and evolution of reciprocity in SL.

### **CBL and CD**

CBL can provide important insights into a community and into CD. When students enter the space of CD through working alongside community organizations they become part of the network of CD. SL provides a way for students to learn about CD and its bottom up processes. It also provides the space to become a part of that same CD. In assessing the

impacts of CBL on CD and on the social capital<sup>10</sup> of a community, it is critical to determine the larger changes for the people of the community in general, not merely the once-off programmes worked on by students.

CBL brings with it the potential to create new knowledge in the field of development which could be used for community empowerment (Kilpatrick, Barrett & Jones 2003, 4).

Bawa (2004:50) states:

it is necessary to assess whether these may be reshaped in such a way as to begin to enable the political empowerment of communities so as to foster their entry into the knowledge era on their own terms, as knowledge producers and users.

Students in a CBL context can act as knowledge brokers, engaged in both a transfer of existing knowledge and the production of new knowledge; discussing linkages between theory and practice, drawing community volunteers into discussion that would otherwise not be had. This production of knowledge can have a profound influence on community organizations, fostering CD, social capital and social equity within community organizations, informal networks and communities at large. Birdsall (2005) and Marais & Botes (2005:183) have identified improved networking and relationships within the community as a primary benefit to having CBL in a community. Similarly, Robinson & Hales (2007:1) look to the “stimulation through knowledge’ and self insight as important factors in determining sustainable success of community organizations. How can a local social system or community learn about itself, about people and processes within it? How can people within a community learn about and become engaged in *their own* communities? CBL offers a way for both of these to occur in community organizations through having ongoing reflective discussions with students, thinking critically about what programmes are done when and being part of a process of student research on community issues. Sandy (2005:26) points to “positive publicity and community credibility” as important benefits for community organizations that engage in CBL. These benefits can then be leveraged by community organizations into grant proposals for funding,

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<sup>10</sup> *Social capital* is a concept that has become very popular in recent years with relevance to community organization. Social capital is most commonly understood as the accumulation of trust embedded in the norms and networks that exist in community, (Putnam, 2000).

collaboration with other groups and universities, greater interest from members of their wider communities – in general the development of increased organizational capacity.

A significant movement in the field of CD and mirrored in CBL, has been the shift from focusing on the deficiencies and needs of communities, to highlighting the assets and resources available for development to occur (Kreztman & McKnight, 1993; Cruz & Giles, 2000). Unfortunately, many CBL partnerships (community organizations and university allies alike) are at times slow to fully embrace this shift with many programmes seeming to work on a level of coming in working on once off programmes to “solve” problems and then leaving. Marc Epprecht (2004) urges institutions to do more to address a range of possible negative effects on the communities that host them. Additionally, a common assumption in International Development departments which Epprecht wants questioned is that development-themed CBL study abroad programs are so intrinsically valuable that their benefits must outweigh any possible adverse effects.

### **CBL in South Africa**

As noted, the popularity of SL and CBL has extended to South Africa. The growing interest can be “attributed to the changing higher education paradigm and the requirement of the Government that universities should become more responsive to the socio-economic realities of the country” (Fourie, 2003:32). According to Subotzky (2000) there have been three distinct phases in the development of CBL in South Africa. The 1970s saw outreach programmes being developed by largely well resourced universities and the 1980s saw a shift to prioritise community needs in CBL. The 1990s saw the new democratic government of South African placing emphasis on CBL and encouraging universities to make community projects part of mainstream activities. The White Paper on Higher Education of 1997 saw the establishment of the government funded CHESP. According to Lazarus, cited in Fourie (2003:35):

the aim of CHESP is to contribute to reconstruction and development of South African Civil Society through the development and promotion of socially responsive ‘models’ for higher education. Central to these models is the development of ‘*partnerships*’ between communities, higher education institutions, and the public, private, and non governmental organization (NGO)

sectors. The purpose of these partnerships is: community empowerment and development; transformation of the higher education system in relation to community needs; and enhancing service delivery to previously underserved communities.

Fourie (2003:35) advises that colleges and universities need to become stakeholders in a movement that calls for a “re-examination of higher education as a civic enterprise with an essentially public mission.” Because former white universities were systematically kept so separate from black South Africans Fourie believes they must take on this opportunity for social relevance and become involved with the communities in their midst. Erasmus and Jafta (2002) note that previously disadvantaged communities, which would traditionally be regarded as the recipients of development aid have now, in this paradigm shift, a renewed ability to leverage their practical knowledge of CD to contribute fully to the reciprocal process of collective growth and development of all partners.

Fourie (2003) asserts that CBL can have an important role in enhancing sustainable CD. CBL can emphasize the capacity of the CBO to teach and learn – rather than setting them up as recipients of funding and used office equipment. But there needs to be attention paid to the sustainability of these relationships and of the development process of which CBL can form a part. Students need to see themselves as not doing something once off and leaving a personal legacy, but rather as part of on going relations of respect and knowledge. Mitchell & Rautenbach (2005) also warn that when working in the South African environment specifically, one needs to be aware of apartheid legacies of separation, and inequalities that can exist sometimes just minutes from each other. There are also issues of mistrust and between and within communities, struggles for resources and for acknowledgement. People within communities and in communities within close proximity to each other were pitted against each other in classic divide and rule strategy and many of these insecurities remain in our socio-political landscape. One needs to be equally cognizant of the history of people coming in and doing to and for communities (and not necessarily only disadvantaged ones) and the effect that has on how people that come in from outside organizations and universities are perceived and treated (Fourie, 2003; Mitchell & Rautenbach, 2005).

Mitchell & Rautenbach, (2005) also note that capacity in disadvantaged communities will be strained, and in CE relationships in such areas, money, power and decision making will usually lie more firmly in the hands of the CBL groups and their university coordinators than in the hands of the community. This places great responsibility on the part of CBL programmes and their coordinators, to use their “upper hand” to promote development and empowerment from within communities and not create a form of dependency. As Marais & Botes (2005) warn, if old development frameworks are reinforced in CBL programmes in South Africa, they will become equated to charity work, reinforcing the perception that poor communities are helpless. Perhaps the term “partnership” is simply less of an accurate word in describing these relationships in South Africa than in other places mentioned widely in the SL and CBL literature because of the inequalities that persist in our system.

CBOs are embedded in their communities and have a wealth of information to offer a student studying responsible reflective development practices. As part of this, a key potential “negative heuristic” would be that CBL in South Africa with a development focus can provide harsh lessons for students about undue power and access. On a more positive note, students learn the importance of respecting community knowledge and reflecting upon and discussing with local community members the historical and structural causes of poverty and inequality. The power dynamic and possibilities for misread partnerships becomes even more skewed when the universities in question are foreign based ones, and the students placed in CBL programmes come from privileged backgrounds.

### **CBL in an International Context**

If there are few studies looking at community benefits, there are even fewer studies have been undertaken to review the potential impact that the burgeoning field of International Education will have on SL/CBL, and specifically on communities involved (Jones & Esposito, 2006; Woolf, 2005). There are sensitive issues at play in any CE relationship and most engagements will have in all reality a combination of good and bad aspects. But these factors multiply when working in an international context where cross cultural and historical realities as well as the murky terrains of “othering” and “exoticising” must be

negotiated. When working across the North/South divide, issues of power, paternalism, and dependency must be confronted and discussed at the outset to prevent international CBL interactions becoming little more than neo-colonial missionary work.

Studies such as those pointed to in the survey of literature by Eyler et al. (2001) show SL/CBL to have real benefits for students working within their home (Western)<sup>11</sup> context. The current interest in the internationalization of higher education will undoubtedly have an impact on the SL/CBL debates. The two growing schools of thought are based around motives for this increased interest in movement and international experience for university students. Anette (2002:91) believes that studying abroad will “enable students to develop both an understanding of globalisation and an intercultural understanding of CD across national and regional boundaries”. Indeed for many study abroad programmes a stated intention is the creation of opportunities to develop global citizens. Dunn (2002:2) describes the use of the term global citizenship as referring to “a citizenry that knows and cares about contemporary affairs in the whole world, not just in its own nation.”

ISL can be seen to provide for developing networks for a global civil society and global citizen action. ISL can, through experiential engagement and reflective learning activities, enable students to recognise “difference” while developing a sense of shared global citizenship (Annette 2002:91).

The discussion around ISL and a movement of global consciousness is countered by scholars who believe the renewed interest from universities in having their students study abroad has been caused by a shift from “facilitating cultural exchange and creating increased understanding among people from different countries” to a practical one of “prepare(ing) students to work in a global context in which most complex organizations already have transnational operations or will have them in the future” (Kritz 2006; Wood 2006). Universities need to produce graduates with relevant experiences for the market,

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<sup>11</sup> Most of the data accessed for this study comes from the USA, with smaller amounts from Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

and if the market is requiring international exposure, then study abroad and ISL, are probably good places to centre the discussion.

There are a number of other concerns that, while present in a local SL/CBL context, become exaggerated in an international situation, and are worth mentioning here. Eby (1998) raises concerns that students' lack of cross-cultural sensitivity could pose a potential detriment to quality CBL particularly where "...many students have little experience working with people different from themselves or little exposure to the issues involved in their service community...Students may reflect ethnocentrism and racism in ways that are harmful." There are also fears that when participants from "developed" countries travel to "developing" countries under the auspices of "doing good" they could be creating and reinforcing paternalism, dependence, and quicken rather than lessen unequal power relationships. In a cross cultural context this can reinforce already dangerous notions of essentialising and othering, and coming to backward Africa (for example) to "help". Porter & Monard (2001), discuss communal work as needing to be strenuous, a "physical engagement with one's whole body". This can be highly problematic. Langseth (2002:252) advises that study abroad programmes in general and ISL programmes in particular need to acknowledge and discuss power differentials between incoming students and host country organizations and homestay families (if part of the programme). ISL could potentially weaken crucial local fabric and these pitfalls and inequalities must be examined further.

But SL/CBL can potentially offer real opportunities of unique exposure for all participants – from fields as varied as public health to development to pharmacy to business. Study abroad and ISL programmes therefore warrant further investigation, to see if claims of benefits to students and communities bear fruit in cross cultural settings. Moreover, the importance of investigation of constraints and opportunities is underscored. Altbach (2002; 2004:6) warns of a neo-colonialism project that is profit- rather than politics-driven, where "countries and academic systems and institutions in the developing countries become dependent on rich and powerful foreign providers." Conspiracy theories aside, we need to be careful that by having wealthy elites from wealthy universities coming to work

alongside poor communities we are not perpetuating a situation of inequality, paternalism, and inappropriate external “band aid” solutions offered to local problems. (Gruzky, 2000; Eby, 1998)

We must remain critical of study abroad and ISL programmes to make sure their impacts and implications are carefully monitored. If done incorrectly it could collapse into tourism wrapped in a shiny bubble of altruism or development tourism with few real benefits for receiving communities; even more dangerously it could cause greater damage by perpetuating notions of dependence in local communities. Having laid a theoretical framework for SL and CBL, CBL in CD, CBL in South Africa and SL/CBL in international education, attention will now be turned to the methodology used to explore the interactions and experiences of the community of Wentworth in the SIT CBL Programme.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter explains how this study was carried out. First, I will discuss the research design and the methodology that was used and why I believe it was appropriate for the study. Next, I will illustrate more fully who the participants were in this study and discuss which methods I employed to collect the data from (and with) them. I then touch upon some areas of doing this field work that presented some ethical questions. Finally, I will discuss how I analyzed the data.

#### **Research Aim and Design**

The aim of the research was to determine the impacts (both positive and negative) of the CBL programme of the SIT, on the homestay families and host community organizations of Wentworth.

The research used qualitative methods to gather and interpret data from participants. While quantitative methods may be used to gather and interpret statistical data from large groups where inferences can be drawn from the participants; qualitative research is frequently used to explore the meaning of the participants' experiences at a deeper and more personal level (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). More quantitative approaches, at least in theory, seek to prove or disprove preordained hypotheses in measurable and in some cases positivistic terms, while in more qualitative methodologies, hypotheses emerge as all participants actively engage in the research process. A qualitative methodology emphasises attempts to observe behaviours as they occur in their natural settings, and how people make sense of and draw meaning out of a range of experiences, perspectives and interpretations (Merriam 1988:19-20; Creswell 2002:145).

In this study I sought to understand the meanings, benefits and costs that participants constructed and attached to their involvement in the week long CBL programme of SIT Study Abroad in Wentworth. I was particularly interested in hearing and capturing the opinions of the various community participants in the CBL programme, and qualitative

methods afforded me the advantage (over more quantitative research designs) of having greater flexibility to ask probing questions, and to restate questions in ways that different participants would understand. As SIT Study Abroad and the community had been working together on the CBL Programme for several years, the methodology emphasized direct connectedness with the people involved and their lives, and therefore allowed for a conversation to take place between myself as the researcher and the participants from the community. True to a qualitative study, the findings which are presented in later chapters are offered in a narrative format and rely heavily on “thick descriptions,” not mere facts, but exploration of meanings and stories from the participants about their own experiences (Denzin, 1978).

## **Participants**

The population for this study was the community of Wentworth, incorporating the geographical areas of Wentworth, Austerville and Treasure Beach. Within this population, the sample for the study was defined as being the fifty-four homestay families that have hosted SIT students over seven semesters (Spring 2004 to Spring 2007), and various employees or volunteers of the seventeen organizations where the students have been placed for their community service assignments since the first group of SIT students entered Wentworth in March 2004. The selection of participants for the research was purposeful. Patton (in Glesne, 2006) notes the importance of purposeful sampling in qualitative research to choose participants that will add depth to the inquiry and provide rich stories of their experiences. Within this already defined sample of both homestay families and community organizations, I chose three broad categories of people/organizations to focus on: those who had hosted students for three or more semesters; those who had only recently started hosting students; and those who had stopped or taken breaks from hosting. The majority of participants in the study were women. In the homestay family category, only one homestay father was in attendance in a group of eighteen, and he did not speak once. I am certain that the low number of male participants was due to the homestay being seen as the domain of the mother of the family. In the community organization category, although again there was only one male out of eleven participants in the focus group, I was able to capture a few more male perspectives

through individual interviews with community activists. Again the sample was skewed towards females, but this is consistent with the gender dynamics of community work in the Wentworth area:

Usually called “community work,” these everyday labours of organising are often unwaged, though linked to circuits of formal and informal, legal and criminal waged work, and to gendered circuits of care and neglect. In contexts such as Wentworth, where much of this political work is carried out by unemployed women, there is much to be done in asking how they support themselves to continue the fight (Chari 2005:7).

In both groups, however, a number of different experiences with students and with the CBL programme were represented, and this contributed to a richness of perspectives.

### **Data Collection**

Research methodology that attempts to investigate the perceptions of people must find a means to access their internal beliefs and knowledge in order to develop an understanding of the world from their own viewpoint (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To this end, the data collection process included two focus groups and eleven individual interviews conducted between November 2006 and March 2008, a reflective journal kept during this data collection period, participant observation of and within the CBL programme from March 2004 to March 2007 and analysis of three semesters (Spring 2006, Fall 2006 and Spring 2007) of student reflection papers on their CBL experience in Wentworth.

### **Focus Groups**

Two focus groups were conducted as part of this study. The first was with homestay families, where eighteen individuals representing thirteen families were in attendance. The second was with community organizations where eleven individuals representing five organizations were present. Prospective participants were selected because of their involvement with hosting students either in their homes or in the community organizations where they volunteered. With homestay families (already categorised by length of involvement in the programme) I approached families with different characteristics, for example a young single mother, a Muslim family, a family where all members were unemployed, and a relatively wealthy family. The hope was that different perspectives

would be reflected in the interview and focus groups with this heterogeneous group. All participants were contacted by telephone to request their participation in a focus group. Homestay families were very eager to be involved, and many brought family members with them. The community organizations took some more coaxing to commit to attending. The lack of enthusiasm from CBOs could have been as a result of not wanting to talk about community politics in a group format. The other organizations may have thought of themselves as being removed from the community in some way. Many who could not attend indicated that they would prefer to speak with me in a one on one interview. The organizations showing most interest in the study appeared to be those started by people from Wentworth and whose primary focus was the community of Wentworth.

Both focus groups were very social and relaxed in nature. The homestay meeting was held in the early evening to allow people to make their way home from work. Food was provided in an attempt to make people feel relaxed and to acknowledge that many were giving up their family dinner times to be part of these discussions. The number of people who attended was a testament to the social nature of community, while twelve people confirmed that they would be coming, those twelve brought with them family members and friends, resulted in the eighteen that finally attended. Some participants came and left at various points of the meeting, and while this was disruptive at first, it became evident that no one but the researcher was uncomfortable with the flow of people. The CBO meeting was held in the late morning. The location for the both focus groups was the house of the SIT Wentworth coordinator. This was in a central location in Austerville, close to all participants' homes and was a place that they all knew and in which they were comfortable.

As suggested by Potter (2004) I arranged to have one of the participants draw a seating plan of each session to clarify which comments were made by each respondent. Both focus group discussions were audio-recorded with permission from all present. This allowed me the freedom to be a part of the conversation, and not preoccupied taking copious notes. I did however take some notes to help me make sense of who was saying what, as well as to note body language and facial expressions. I used a set of semi-structured questions to

guide each of the focus group discussions<sup>12</sup>. The semi structured nature of the questions meant that I could change questions, add some and remove others depending on how the discussion evolved. The focus groups were an important part of the data collection process as they allowed me to see the spontaneous reactions and ideas of the various groups; where the synergy of the group discussion generated “rich data that are cumulative and elaborative” (Fontana & Frey 2000:652). In both focus groups people knew each other and treated the meeting as a gathering of friends. This did not detract from the data collection. On the contrary, it allowed for an open conversation to ensue between group members. As Kitzinger (1994 as quoted in Bloor et al 2001: 22) argues, “above all it is useful to work with pre-existing social groups because they provide one of the social contexts within which ideas are formed and decisions are made.” The closeness of the participants and their discussions also allowed me the opportunity to observe some aspects of community dynamics and politics within the focus group.

### **Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with participants both before and after the focus groups. Those interviews that were held before the focus group helped to define both the questions and the makeup of the group. Those interviews that that were held after the focus group were used to build depth on the themes resulting from the focus groups. Glesne (1999:93) argues that the reason for interviewing is to

...capture the unseen that was, is, and will be, or should be; how [participants] think or feel about something; and how they explain or account for something. [This] broad-scale approach is directed to understanding phenomena in their fullest possible complexity.

In this study, I interviewed four participants from homestay families, three participants from community organizations and three individuals who were both homestay family members and community workers. During the data analysis I also interviewed two colleagues to provide their expert opinion on trends that were surfacing in the study.

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 3

In all but one of the homestay interviews the homestay mother took the lead in the interview. This was not surprising as it is usually with the mother of the family where the entry of a student into the family is negotiated, and where primary care and responsibility rests. In one case I interviewed a homestay mother and daughter together; and in another a homestay mother and father. These were both very productive interviews, which solicited a great deal of information, most likely because each participant in the pair could build upon each other's words and memories of their experiences. It also provided an intergenerational perspective and highlighted gender dynamics in the hosting of students. I found the venue of the interview to be important for the participants – usually a social setting. A coffee shop or restaurant provided more candid answers to my questions, while interviews in work spaces (even though some of these spaces are within people's homes) felt rushed. The preference for public spaces (in areas outside of Wentworth) was, in some cases, likely due to the reduced likelihood of being recognized or overheard by someone who would know you. In other cases, it could also have been for more sociable reasons, or perhaps a little escapism in wanting to get away from surroundings in which you both live and work. It could also have been to escape the frequent disruptions to the flow of the conversation in Wentworth, when an airplane would fly overhead to the nearby Durban International Airport. Interviews in work settings meant that interruptions were more likely. In two instances several members of the same organization joined in their colleagues' interviews, which made for a fluid group conversation, and underscored the social nature of community work in Wentworth which, as will become evident in later chapters, was an overarching theme of my research.

For each interviewee, I explained the goals and nature of my study. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions about my study and sign consent forms with the understanding that their participation was voluntary, and that any comments they made could be kept confidential. Each interview loosely followed a basic protocol, of ten questions<sup>13</sup> which served as starting points for in-depth discussions. All of the interviews were audio taped so as to give the participants my full attention, and to conduct the

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 3

interview in a more conversational manner. In all cases, the interviewees were asked whether or not they would be comfortable with the use of the audiotape – all indicated that they were at ease with the presence of the recording device. I still, in all interviews, opted to place the device in an inconspicuous position, and took minimal notes, mostly to jog my memory of things such as facial expressions and body language at particular moments in each interview. During the latter part of my research I conducted interviews with two people from outside the community of Wentworth; one an academic who does similar work in bringing international students into local communities; and another the founder of a small CBO in another area. Both these interviews were conducted to lend enhanced insight into findings that were surfacing during the data analysis process; the notions of students coming to “help” communities and the workings/politics between various community organizations. I also re-interviewed several key participants on a more informal basis than before, simply because I had ongoing contact with them and when they would ask about the progress of my research I had an opportunity to ask for clarification on various issues.

It is interesting to note that there was a large degree of crossover in the make up and the responses of the homestay and CBO groups. By crossover, I mean that many homestay family members actually volunteered with community organizations in various capacities. Since the homestays were coordinated by one of the community organizations it became clear as interviews progressed that the families selected to be homestay families were in some way connected to the organization. I saw some of the same faces in the Community Based Organization Focus Group (CBOFG) as I did in the Homestay Focus Group (HFG). The familiar faces meant that the two groups leaned towards similar issues and topics. I also found that the two groups referenced each other multiple times – for example when I was talking to homestay families they talked about the impact of the students and the programme on organizations; and organizations talked about the impact on families and the community at large. The private and the personal, the organization and the individual all seem intertwined in the context of Wentworth. Perhaps this is what makes CD in Wentworth flourish, perhaps this is also its downfall.

I expected that a key interview would be with the person hired by SIT to coordinate the entire week-long CBL experience in Wentworth. This is the person who selected the homestay families for the week, and facilitated interactions with community organizations. During the week the students are in the community, the coordinator is meant to liaise with students, community organizations and homestay families and is therefore constantly informed of happenings and issues that arise during the week. The interview was less productive than expected from the point of view of delving into experiences and benefits to community organizations and homestay families that may have been communicated to her during the course of the programme in Wentworth. The mantra of every interview and informal discussion with the coordinator was that 'everything was good', with no complaints from anyone. This I interpreted as a form of self protection and mechanism to allow the programme to continue unchanged. Nevertheless, each conversation was infinitely productive in opening my eyes to the web of politics within which this programme had become enmeshed in the community.

### **Participant Observation; Being an Insider/Outsider**

Perhaps the biggest asset in providing context and background to this study was the participant observation amassed during seven semesters of working with and within the community, directing the Reconciliation and Development Programme in Wentworth, and tangentially related, three semesters of running the Education and Social Change programme<sup>14</sup>. As Maxwell (1996:76) claims:

Observation often enables you to draw inferences about someone's meaning and perspective that you couldn't obtain by relying exclusively on interview data. This is particularly true for getting at tacit understandings and *theory-in-use*, as well as aspects of the participant's perspective that they are reluctant to state directly in interviews.

Interacting with the homestay families, community organizations and students during the planning, execution and debriefs of the week of CBL for seven semesters provided a

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<sup>14</sup> The Education programme began in the June 2005 and runs once a year. It has involved a 3 day camp with a youth organization in Wentworth, and in one case, a 4 day homestay preceding the camp. A new set of homestay families was recruited through the youth organization, and although not specifically part of this community learning programme, the debrief conducted with these first time homestay parents provided a fresh insight into the hosting experience.

window to the relationships that formed, the work that was done, and conversations that took place. The interaction with the programme also provided a window to Wentworth in general as I was also a participant observer in the broader Wentworth community. The continuum of participant observer ranges from full participant, or member of the group of people being “studied,” to being a mute outsider. While my particular role changed frequently over my years of working in Wentworth, what remained constant was that during the week CBL, I was a constant presence in Wentworth. I visited students in homestays and in their community organization placements, and took part in some of the activities designed for the students to carry out.

Another aspect of the participant observer nature of this research was the cultural and familial ties that I have in Wentworth and the wider Durban Coloured population. I recall having been asked by numerous people very early on in my dealings with Wentworth to explain my family name, affiliations and credentials. While I grew up in Zimbabwe, both of my parents are Coloured South Africans originally from the Durban area, and as such, in a community the size of Wentworth, many people knew of a number of my relatives. However, having grown up in the Coloured area of Barham Green in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, I did feel myself somewhat removed from the people and the situation of Wentworth. I furthermore have never and do not currently live in Wentworth, and would return to my home north of Durban each day after the student interactions and after my interviews. Indeed, I saw myself as an insider-outsider. For the purposes of this study this ambiguous status gave me access to people and places, a depth of understanding of the cultural meanings and relationships at play, and at the same time gave me a degree of critical awareness. However as Humphrey (2007:13) notes, the shifting “insider” label that I gave to myself was problematic, and upon reflection I have come to realize that I was more ‘outsider’ than ‘insider’:

...in retrospect it is clear that insider-hood did not furnish me with the proper survival kit to sustain me on this turbulent journey: my self-concept as an insider actor in relation to the SOGs (self-organized groups) meant that I was treating myself as an insider ethnographer and assumed that I would be creating a map or “graph” of the life of my own people or “ethnos” without disturbing the grassroots realities, relationships and world-views which sustained us.

Humphrey further points to the need of giving up a certain level of certainty and control, and the realization that researchers in these situations must learn to “appreciate one’s uniqueness as an insider-outsider and to cultivate the art of crossing-over between life-worlds” (2007:23).

### **Student Reflections**

The seven semesters of the CBL programme in Wentworth provided numerous sources of written data which were stored on the shelves in my office. These included student reflection papers, student research papers with field work conducted in Wentworth, and notes from feedback that I had received from families and organizations over the semesters. Although only the student reflection papers from Spring 2006, Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 formed part of the data of this research, I am still the richer for having read and processed with all of the students their learnings and their reflections on the community of Wentworth over the course of many semesters. In fact, students who knew I was conducting this research felt it necessary to share additional information on the community that they thought would be useful for the study. Student evaluations also became an important basis for triangulating data. At the end of each semester students completed an evaluation of every programme component including the Wentworth homestay and CBL experience. One question that proved useful was: “Why do you think your homestay family/community organization hosts American students?” This had students question their oftentimes fuzzy notions of “my family” to see the layers of motives on the other side for the interaction. Being present in the community for the week of the CBL programme, the students were often privy to more honest reactions than I as the manager/researcher was allowed to see.

### **Ethical Issues**

A source of ethical concern while doing this research was the dual position that I held as both researcher as well as director of the programme. The process of doing the research ultimately became about negotiating this dual relationship. As the director of the programme, I had control of the purse strings, and the power to require certain changes in the day to day interactions and running of the programme. As researcher I was asking

people for candid feedback that may or may not result in changes to the programme. At every interview and focus group I was careful to clarify and reinforce that within the context of the research I was a researcher from UKZN, and that I had an ethical duty to confidentiality throughout the study. Given this dual position, I nevertheless constantly wondered whether people were telling me positive things about the programme and the students for fear of losing the interaction, exposure and money that came with hosting students. By the same token I knew that if I heard something damaging to the welfare of my students or to individuals in the community, I would have an ethical obligation to respond and make changes to the programme where warranted. I tried to keep clear communications with the participants in the study, particularly regarding anything that might compromise the ethics of the study. Glesne (2006:146) notes that “the degree to which your research is ethical depends on your continual communication and interaction with research participants throughout the study. Researchers alone must not be the arbiters of this critical research issue.”

Another issue was with the use of real or pseudonyms for participants. No one requested anonymity when it was offered but given the difficult dynamics between various people and organizations, I decided to change the names of all interviewees mentioned throughout this study. While I understand the positions that these people hold in this small community may in fact identify them, as Merriam (1998:217) reflects “at the local level, it is nearly impossible to protect the identity of either the case or the people involved.” I still hope that the use of pseudonyms will ameliorate this to whatever extent possible, and emphasize that all participation in the study was voluntary. The feuds between organizations and personalities in the community are real; they existed before the SIT programme began in Wentworth and will most likely exist if and when we leave. Nevertheless, I would not want any information presented in this thesis to be misconstrued to provide “ammunition” in any ongoing disagreement.

## **Analysing the Data**

Data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, written and read so that you can make sense of the total research experience. Working with the data, you describe,

categorize, and interpret the data you have collected; create explanations, develop theories, and link your story to other stories. (Glesne 2006:147). Similarly, Bogdan & Biklen (2003:157) define qualitative data analysis as “the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others.”

In this research, I used an interview logging process (Glesne, 2006), where I recorded important quotations from each interview, focus group, field journal and student reflection paper in writing. I then sorted the quotations from these different sources into broad themes and arranged and rearranged them several times to make a coherent story for each theme. Some initial themes were anticipated but unpredicted themes emerged as well. As themes emerged I used ongoing data analysis (Creswell, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994), which meant that as I was sorting through these important insights from each piece of data, I was also conducting follow-up interviews, further analysis, and informal conversations with community members and students.

In presenting the data, I chose to add narratives of people associated with the CBL programme in Wentworth to add further texture and life to the themes uncovered in the research. The narratives emerged mainly from my field journal, descriptions of meetings and interviews and other forms of contact with the people I met in Wentworth. Each of the stories is true to an actual character that was part of the CBL programme in Wentworth, and who in some way defined the research and the place for me. Whereas vignettes have been used in research for collecting data, I used them in this instance to highlight and contextualise the data being presented. Hughes (1998:381) points to the stories, individuals, situations and structures which can make reference to important points in the study. It is this dynamic that I was trying to capture in representing the data.

## **Limitations of the Research**

There were two important limitations to this study. The first is my personal bias to the community and to the relationships that have developed there. The second is dual director/research role that I played and that has been mentioned previously in this Chapter. Awareness of personal bias is an important aspect of being an ethical researcher. Glesne (2006:308) describes the need for researchers to carefully consider their actions in taking on roles that use relationships that they have with participants, which advocate for a particular outcome, or that seek to intervene or reform. In her work with Peshkin in 1999, Glesne also talks about being tempted to talk to people with whom you have something in common or whose views you agree with. In light of these views, I acknowledge that my perceived shared identity with the participants could have been a factor in the types of questions I asked, their responses to me and in my presenting the data in a favourable light so as to preserve relationships and in-group status. Creswell (2002:487) however, cautions researchers about the need to embrace the bias in research and to discuss it, recognising that all research is value laden.

The second bias that possibly affected the research was my dual role as both a director of the CBL programme and the researcher asking questions about the impact of the programme. Throughout the research I was cognizant of a power inequity between myself and the participants which could have influenced the research. The programme paid the local coordinator a coordinating fee and homestay families were paid an honorarium to host students, yet as the researcher I was asking for honest feedback on the workings of the programme. Given these financial dynamics, perhaps the participants told me what I wanted to hear in order to not upset the status quo. Coghlan & Brannick (2001:94), warn that doing research where there are dual roles and power inequities is “an intensely political endeavour that involves you in concurrent and sometimes conflicting roles.” There are several issues that they advise researchers in this position take into account for the duration of the research and beyond: first, the power inequities could adversely effect the character of the data; second, the researcher will experience “role-confusion” both in conducting and in writing the data; and third, there could be political fallout after the research report is released. In the case of this study, the fallout could be in the reaction of

the community to the way they have been portrayed them in this study. It could also extend to SIT the larger organization and advocate of international SL programmes, and how they might react to my recommendations on these types of programmes. Throughout the research and subsequent to the field work I have I tried to be vigilant in recognizing emerging contextual issues and in involving others and going back to my field notes, when faced with possible bias and compromise. I am sure that this has helped to ensure the integrity of the data that is presented in subsequent chapters.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

In this chapter, I document the experiences of members of the community of Wentworth in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, as hosts and participants in the SIT CBL programme. Here the experiences of community members with visiting US students from SIT are recorded. For the sake of authenticity and accuracy of perception, community members speak for themselves. The sentiments of the community members – comprised of homestay family members and workers and volunteers at community organizations – are woven into six themes that emerge below. These were topics that kept coming up in discussions with various members of the community. These were: Teaching and Learning; Impacts on Families; A Sense of Self; Community Development; Good Intentions; and Hope. The experiences of the community of Wentworth in the SIT CBL project are examined to illuminate the impact that such an endeavour has on the community.

The findings are presented with liberal use of quotes from homestay families and community organizations to illustrate the major themes discussed. Interspersed through the findings are short stories of key community members that I have met along my journey in Wentworth. They represent a core group of people that I think of when I think of Wentworth, and in some way they have shaped my overall experience with the community. Understanding these people through the insight of these vignettes will allow the reader to understand why they do what they do. The names of these people have been changed, but the people themselves are real. I suspect that anyone with a close knowledge of community work and politics in Wentworth might be able to guess most of these larger than life characters. I hope that these stories will bring out the complexity and commitment of the people that form the basis of this research and the SIT programme in CBL.

***Community Member 1: Glynnis (Community Worker<sup>15</sup>, Homestay Mother)***

Aunty Glynnis runs a small community organization out of the living room of her small home in Austerville. She has been hosting SIT students in her organization and in her home since the first group visited in February 2004. Aunty Glynnis has what people call “Struggle Credentials” – some members of her family were in exile during Apartheid and those who stayed behind fought in various ways behind and in front of the scenes. She got her start in community work in the early 1990s when she founded a crèche for the women in her area that did not have a safe place to leave their children when they went to work. Aunty Glynnis has lived in Wentworth for much of her life, she knows everyone and everyone knows her. Her own children have moved out, and her husband has passed on, a victim of the toxic air that wafts continuously over Wentworth. Yet her home is a refuge for women and children from all over Wentworth. Pictures adorn the walls – pictures of her children and grandchildren, but these are outnumbered by pictures of her extended family of the community. There are weathered albums and scrapbooks close by and Aunty Glynnis can tell stories of each person in each picture – and if you give her the opportunity, she will. There are people in and out of this cosy home. You can sit on the faux leather sofa and watch Wentworth simply buzz with energy around you. Someone comes to buy a Fanta Orange from the tuck shop next door – and sticks their head in at the front door just to say hello. A tall boy carries in a small plate with a few roti on it and a bowl of steaming mince and potato curry, his mother knew Aunty Glynnis would be too busy to cook supper tonight.

Community work is Aunty Glynnis’ life. It is hard to find the place where her personal and professional lives begin and end. One Saturday afternoon I am walking down Austerville Road with Aunty Glynnis, returning from a meeting with another community organization. People wave to her as they walk or drive by. We see a small crowd of people drinking at a makeshift shebeen; as we approach, we hear shouting and screaming. A man and woman

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<sup>15</sup> I have used the terms that people used to describe themselves. Aunty Glyn described herself as a community worker. I take her use of the word ‘worker’ to denote a sense of humility as to what she does – she ‘works’ tirelessly at making the community better. Someone who calls themselves a volunteer might be not so entwined in the process of community upliftment, and someone who calls themselves an activist might want to convey the fight involved in how they see their work. The activist might be more familiar with terms used in academic and political circles.

from the shebeen are out on the road fighting. They are punching each other. The man hits the woman to the ground and then begins to kick her. She is crying, swearing at him and the people around for not helping her. Aunty Glynnis rushes to the scene and calls the man by name. She scolds him and says she is going to report him to the police (the police station is just one block away). I help her pick the woman up and lean her against a car that is parked outside the shebeen. Aunty Glynnis gives her a tissue to help her wipe away some of the blood. “My dear, let me help you, we can go now and press charges,” she says softly. The woman screams profanities at us, slightly foaming at the mouth as she stumbles away. Aunty Glynnis sighs. “I’ll visit her tomorrow. We’ll have a cup of tea and talk. You can’t talk to alcohol and goodness knows what else she’s got in her,” she says, as she wipes a flood of tears from her eyes and shakes her head. “That’s not even her husband – they are both with other people” she says. “I’ll talk to her. Hey, what is this doing to her poor kids? She is going to go home now and they will see her like that”.

Years later as we had a chance to reflect on her extensive work in front of and behind the scenes of the SIT programme, Aunty Glynnis levels with me: she has worked with the students and with SIT because the programme allows her to teach and to learn; and she can see others around her doing and being the same. Entry into her home and organization is a passport into a world of CD that you cannot simply read about in a book. She is aware that she can offer students brutally honest insight into a community and into the people trying to create change from within. This is “guerrilla development” as she calls it, harkening back to her days fighting apartheid. In return she says that she receives from the students their stories, about different ways of doing things, the organizations where some of them have volunteered, their travels to other parts of the world, and their ideas for change. She likes their “fresh eyes” to any situation that she talks to them about. “Shame, some of them came here and they really want to help and they can’t seem to understand that organizations don’t need that kind of help...for me, its more important than any ‘work’ they do here, it’s about sharing ideas”.

## **Teaching, Learning, Sharing**

Aunty Glynnis' story highlights a view that was expressed repeatedly during the interviews, focused groups and informal conversations; that hosting the SIT students involves some give and take. Carol, a part-time volunteer for one the CBOs, shares Aunty Glynnis' sentiments, calling the process of hosting a "two way street" (Carol, CBOFG, 27 March 2007). Roxanne, a homestay mother and nurse at a hospital in town, believes that the human interaction is key. She reminisces about the three students she has hosted in her small flat, "We would just sit and talk, talk, talk...Who we are, what we do, where we come from. At the end of the day we're all just people", (Roxanne, HFG, 26 March 2007). Roxanne lives in a block of flats in an area that is quite run down. During our conversation she talked repeatedly about her pride in being able to show her students her experience of Wentworth. "People don't want to come there by us - there is a lot of bad happening over there. But hey, there is also good, you know good people. They see that." She was happy that she could show the magnitude of the social issues facing the area, but also just how nice the people in her area were. Diane is the director of an internationally funded organization based in Wentworth that deals with HIV/AIDs. She believes that:

...the students have a lot to offer our community – information sharing, how they interact, how they live in their communities. And we can teach them, share what happens in our communities and then ask them what are the gaps that they see. And then they see things from a young persons view as well, and they give valuable input (Diane, Interview, 3 April 2007).

James<sup>16</sup>, the founder of a community organization focusing on youth development, concurs. He hosts the students in his organization because of the interaction between himself, his volunteers and the youth group he mentors, "its all about sharing, diversity, and opportunities for understanding. It's more the culture process than anything else", (James, Interview, 5 November 2006).

## **Cultural Exchange**

Homestays present the students with a powerful opportunity for cultural exchange. As James states above, it's the "opportunities for understanding," something different than

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<sup>16</sup> See Community member Profile 4.

your own way of life and way of doing things. The students live with families in order to learn about South Africa and South Africans from ordinary people. The families too acknowledge that they appreciate learning about different places in America<sup>17</sup>. Rosie and Karen (HFG, 26 March 2007) both mentioned the calendars, photographs and other trinkets they had been collecting from all over the USA, and how they were prized possessions in their homes. Karen told the families gathered at the focus group about her one student who grew up on an island. “I mean she actually lived on an island in the middle of a lake (Lake Superior), and had to take a boat to school!” (HFG, 26 March 2007). According to Aunty Glyn a number of homestay families that she has spoken with talked about “sharing stories of a different culture, a difference place, and a different life...the age of the children doesn’t really matter” (Glynnis, Interview, 24 November 2006).

Usually by the time they reach Wentworth the students have done a homestay in Cato Manor with a Zulu-speaking family, a homestay in rural KwaZulu-Natal with a Zulu-speaking family and a homestay in either Chatsworth or Newlands West with an Indian family. The homestay families in Wentworth found that through the students they were able to learn more about their own country. The students thus become cultural ambassadors for the other areas/homestays already completed in South Africa. A few of the families mentioned being happy to get to hear more about these places and people that they ought to know, but somewhat envious that the American students are given this opportunity that our local youths do not get, in learning about the different people and cultures of South Africa. As Cookie pointed out, “Our past has prevented us from opening up to each other” (Cookie, HFG, 26 March 2007). As a former teacher, she thought that the students could teach the youth through sharing their observations of their time in other homestays. On this matter, Charmaine said she hoped that the homestays could be an opportunity “to bring Chatsworth, Wentworth and Cato Manor together.” “They tell us about what they do in

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<sup>17</sup> Most of our students are from the USA, but over the years we have had a few participants from places such as Jamaica, Trinidad, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Columbia, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Sweden, and India. To participate on an SIT programme a student must be enrolled in a US university.

these homestays, and I just wish it was so easy for us to go there too,” (Charmaine, HFG, 26 March 2007).

Bernie agreed with having closer contact, and the role students could play in this: “They know those families, the Cato Manor families, better than they know us, so in a way we are connected”. Bernie’s family had been removed from Cato Manor in the 1950s and she thought that there too might open possibilities to talk to youth in Cato Manor about their common history (Bernie, HFG 26 March 2007). Students over the semesters have commented that they find people in Wentworth quite insular, not seeming to really know very many people from areas like Chatsworth and Cato Manor; and yet (or perhaps because of this) they are able to make broad generalizations about people from those areas. Many people in South Africa were purposely kept apart and taught to fear each other by the heavy hand and watchful eye of the Apartheid state. All of these areas are physically relatively close to each other, and yet the distance in lived experiences and the separation created by Apartheid is vast. Indeed the knowledge that the students can broker can be a powerful tool in demystifying the “other.”

### **Teaching and Learning about Development**

The knowledge of South Africa that the community craved extended to the theories and debates that the students learn about on the SIT programme. The students often come to the programme well read on South African history and in particular theories and debates in international and CD. The programme then builds the students knowledge of South African history as well as current social and economic issues, with lectures from local academics, engagements with local social movements and NGOs. Carol who works at an HIV/AIDs clinic and community outreach programme based in Austerville has enjoyed having conversations with the students on HIV/AIDs politics, policies and treatment; and supplementing her practical knowledge with their academic knowledge. She notes that the students

...have a lot of information about South Africa – with the classes they get and their readings, so they can share their knowledge with us. We do the things like home based care but they can talk about the theories and about what other people in other places are doing (Carol, CBOFG, 27 March 2007).

Carol also mentioned that one student who had worked in an HIV clinic before helped her with designing a confidential check in procedure in her reception area. Gayle, another full time community worker commented that they are so busy “doing” and attending to their daily work and responsibilities that sometimes they tend to operate in a vacuum. Charmaine and Gayle both talked about having discussions within their respective organizations about holding monthly community lectures in Wentworth, possibly drawing from people within the community at large and from the University of KwaZulu Natal. (Gayle, HFG, 27 March 2007; Charmaine, Interview, 4 April, 2007). Charmaine also discussed with me the need to build on alliances that each organization has and that SIT has in developing the knowledge of the community organizations. She mentioned the Centre for Civil Society (CSS) at the UKZN which invites organizations in the community to their public lectures and other events on campus. According to Charmaine, this type of information and interaction could be even more beneficial if brought to the community at a local level. Similarly the US American students gain the benefit of measuring some of the theory they have been learning with the practice of the experiences of these community activists; it would appear that the community also gains in testing their lived experience against the theories and “book knowledge” with which these young people come armed.

The members of the community organizations appreciate the opportunity to be placed in the role of the teacher when the students are in Wentworth. Glynnis said that she felt honoured to be able to share her ideas and practices with these students. “We don’t have degrees and all but we know this community and we know our people.” She later added, “it is nice to be asked to talk about things that we have been doing for years” (Glynnis HFG, 26 March 2007). David also mentioned not being highly educated, but having relevant experiences (David, Interview 26 March 2008). Dora agreed, “you know we all do have a lot to offer – we have seen a lot, done a lot...all our ups and downs. With all the experience in this room...” (Dora, CBOFG, 27 March 2007) Being asked to teach these young educated Americans about Wentworth and about CD was clearly seen as validating to the community workers, and as tribute to their work and lives.

***Community Member 2: Aunty Cookie (Homestay Mother, Community Volunteer).***

Aunty Cookie is a relatively new addition to the homestay family network in Wentworth, having hosted only 2 students. She heard about the programme through a friend who hosted, and approached the community organization responsible for recruiting homestay families. Aunty Cookie is a former primary school teacher, originally from the Eastern Cape, who moved to Wentworth in the 1990s. Now that she is retired, and her children have left home, Aunty Cookie loves to host students for the company and the chance to tell her stories. She is an engaging story teller with tales about her life as a young girl growing up in the Eastern Cape, her calling to become a teacher, moving to Wentworth, and she even manages to throw in a story about love across the colour line during apartheid.

Wherever our conversation takes us, she always brings it back to education. The students must have more contact with schools and school children. “They *so* need role models,” she says shaking her head. When I tell her she is a role model she laughs. “No, man, I’m too old, the students...They can teach our youth a thing or two about studies. About being disciplined. You can party, but when its time to get back to your studies – its serious.” Aunty Cookie says that after she hosted her first student she saw the impact they could have with the youth. She then approached one of the community organizations and has been working with them ever since. Aunty Cookie says she used to tell her student to bring her SIT friends home and they would all sit and talk about the work they were doing in each organization and what they thought of their experiences. She says that she was excited to hear about some of these organizations, and the work they were doing; and realised if she didn’t know, there must be so many others who didn’t realise the good work going on in Wentworth. Aunty Cookie concludes, “I don’t think community work is really in fashion right now, especially with the youth. It’s not like it was when our youth were angry and everything, now the youth I see are just sitting back. But when we take this programme to the schools and they see the American students doing things in Wentworth, maybe it will come back”, (Cookie, Interview, 19 February 2008).

## **Impact on Family Lives**

### **Positive Impacts**

The homestay families put a great deal of emphasis on the impact that students had on their families and in particular on the youth. Having the US American students living in their homes provided their children (and others in the community) with alternative role models and values. Families cited the apathy in their sons and daughters, a lack of ambition, the ease of falling in with a bad crowd, and looked to the SIT students to be a positive influence on their homestay brothers and sisters. Charmaine described her conversations she has had with homestay families:

The (homestay) parents talk about how the students are so committed to their studies – the level of maturity in comparison to our youth. . . .And a lot of learners here think that they are not varsity material. That is so sad. They sell themselves short. Maybe we can do something to change that mindset (Charmaine, Interview, 4 April 2007).

A comment in a student reflection paper confirms this mentoring role in the community:

There is nothing wrong with a strong culture of partying. But there is a difference between partying and partying stupid. I suppose instilling the difference has been part of having a mentoring role with the Wentworth youth. I've talked with a number of them about drinking and driving and I suppose I see that as some small contribution to hopefully making the problem better in the future (Chris, Student Reflection, 2007).

The positive influence also extended to the “brand envy” that families say rages amongst their children. Their children have to have the right brands of clothing, shoes, and sunglasses in order to fit in and be “cool”. Here, they thought the students were giving the local youth some important direction. Charmaine explained:

They come here dressed . . . just down to earth. Themselves. And it actually helps our kids – because our children think name brands; they can't go out the house if they are not wearing a certain type of shoe. They just come dressed comfortable. Comfortable. Some are to the extreme – untidy. But still it's just them. Now our children – are like “if I have to walk out like that, it's an eyeball”<sup>18</sup>. I mean look how we are accepting these young people coming all the way from America dressed like that, even their clothes everyday when you going to go out somewhere. It's fine. So that's another thing that helps our kids to say that we don't have to fuss like we do”, (Charmaine, HFG, 26 March 2007).

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<sup>18</sup> An eyeball or eyeballs – embarrassing (Durban Coloured slang).

A number of the community organizations also mentioned that the students can even be role models for the organizations and their clients. One organization hosted some students one semester that were not happy with the music the coordinator had chosen for an after school dance programme. The students pointed out that the girls should be exposed to music with positive words that celebrates them as young women and not as objects; similarly dance moves should not be sexually suggestive. “Sometimes we hear things we don’t like. But it’s good for us to question what we do and why, and be aware about things like what kind of music our children are listening to, what videos they watch” (Glynnis, CBOFG, 27 March 2007). James noted the importance of the students coming in contact with the youth that he works with, “The reaction from the youth is important for us... that human interaction between young people,” (James, CBOFG, 27 March 2007).

### ***Family Cohesion and Sensitivity***

Families mentioned that having the students living in their homes had the effect of drawing the family closer together while the students were there. They said the students gave them a purpose and a reason to come together and talk – extended families and families all living together under one roof. Karen notes that “when you have visitors you have to have a braai, and everyone can come meet them...the family comes from all over” (Karen, HFG, 26 March 2007). Another homestay mother agreed:

Whenever I go over to Aunty Pauline’s house and the student is there on the bed with their laptop and the music is on, and Pauline is there and the children are all on the bed. So that family thing is there. You know – it brings families together. Even if the families are arguing” (Glynnis, HFG, 26 March, 2007).

One homestay mother recounted the story of her student helping the younger children in the family with homework when the older sibling would not. The older sibling now helps his little brother all the time; she attributed it to the positive influence of the SIT student. For that homestay mother, the time her older son was spending with his brother was important in developing their relationships and in furthering education within the family. (Irene, HFG, 26 March 2007).

When it came to introducing topics to family discussions that might not have received adequate “airplay” in families, it appears that students had a special licence. Issues that homestay families talked about as being taboo, but that students often talked about were those such as sexual orientation, and sensitivity to people’s looks and differences. Cookie spoke about “being gay” in Wentworth and how no one wants to talk about it. She believed the students have shown her the importance of talking about sexual orientation with the youth in Wentworth:

It’s a wake up call to teach our children about acceptance and tolerance, especially when the issue of gayism came in. You see, we need to, because it becomes embarrassing for us in a situation where we are not doing much of this type of awareness with our children. These issues have been neglected – we need to learn how to address these issues with these students, hey with our *own* children (Cookie, HFG, 26 March 2007).

Dora talked about how her nephews call each other ‘homo’ as an insult. She agreed with Cookie about the need to teach the youth about sensitivity, tolerance and to start talking more freely as parents about homosexuality:

By them coming in they have made us experience what other families experience having a gay child. They are very open about it; and it teaches us. You know because although we can say we have a friend outside that is gay, in our homes we don’t acknowledge it so much. To our nephews and nieces we say things like – ‘hey why can’t you be like a girl’ or ‘what’s wrong with you’, you know. We try to stifle it. We are still very closed about it. So by them coming on like that I think it’s an opportunity for Wentworth (Dora, HFG, 26 March 2007).

Another issue that was mentioned was with regards to weight and facial features. The homestay mothers found the students very sensitive in the way they referred to people. One homestay mother said “you will never hear them make comments about weight or facial features, things like that. They are so sensitive to that. That comes through very strongly”, (Lillian, HFG, 26 March 2007). Lillian contrasted this to the blunt and hurtful comments she often hears in her own home and when she walks around Wentworth. She hopes that exposure to this type of sensitivity can help the youth of Wentworth to think about the effects of hurtful language on those around them.

***Community Member 3: Melissa (Homestay Sister)***

Melissa has been a Homestay sister from the very first group in February 2004. She comes from a family with strong community ties, but she has had a difficult family life over the years she has been associated with SIT. Her parents are no longer together and she has witnessed much physical and emotional abuse within many of her family relationships. Besides being a host sister, Melissa has been attending youth camps since 2005 with SIT students and she did her last one as a matriculant in June 2008. I have seen Melissa grow up, from awkward and shy to beautiful and confident, someone who is not afraid to speak her mind.

In June 2007 Melissa's family hosted a student after having taken quite a long break. The student complained from the beginning of the programme that she had paid a certain number of dollars and did not feel she was getting what she paid for, and questioned how her money was being spent. Whilst in her homestay, the student complained incessantly, within obvious earshot of her family, about the food, the heat, the cold, the neighbours, the dogs, the bed, the children in the house, the neighbourhood, the TV being too loud too late, and so on. She was even heard by the family talking to another student about the money she had paid to come to South Africa, and she has to stay 'here'. The final straw for Melissa was when the student shouted at her and her younger cousin for making too much noise in the room they were all sharing for the week, when she wanted to go to sleep early. Melissa confronted the student about being disrespectful to her and her family in their own home. The student demanded to be moved, contemplated leaving the programme; but since she only had a day left of the homestay before the start of a youth camp, we collectively decided that it would be best for her and the family if she stayed the last night in Wentworth. On camp, Melissa tried to include this girl in activities and put their disagreements behind her. When the student fell during an obstacle course and started crying quite dramatically, Melissa went to see if she could comfort her. The student would not engage with Melissa and talked openly about this week being the worst week of her life - she hated South Africa, this 'stupid camp', 'these people'.

Later during the camp, and again while I was doing fieldwork Melissa and I spoke about the incident and her homestay experience. “Aunty V, Why you gave us that girl?” she laughed. “How is someone going to come into my house for one week and tell me that I’m doing things wrong? Wasn’t she supposed to be here to learn about South Africa? Hey, she should have stayed at home!” Melissa was once a fan of anything American. At seventeen, Melissa was one of the young people the community wanted the students to influence and teach. The rude ethnocentric behaviour of the student was unacceptable to everyone who came in contact with her, including Melissa, and indeed it did teach her to stand up for herself in the face of bad behaviour.

### **Negative Impacts**

#### ***The Ugly American*<sup>19</sup>**

In terms of attitude, some students were found to be selfish and arrogant; displaying all signs of the stereotypical ‘ugly American’. Of particular concern was students not wanting to share (especially food), not greeting people (especially their elders), and coming across as arrogant. One homestay family member was outraged by a student that ate all of the family’s food but would not share the things that she brought into the house:

“[The student] brought a packet of chips into the house and started eating it in front of us. The baby was asking her for some and she wouldn’t give him any, she just put it in her room. So he went in and ate it. She said they were very expensive or something; he stole the chips. I mean really, he is a baby. I mean he shouldn’t have taken it, but we are trying to teach him about sharing. I just bought her another packet. (Linda, Interview, 27 June 2007).

Charmaine talked about sharing her home, life, work and culture with the students and her disappointment that some of them could not reciprocate. She explained:

We get some others that come from such sheltered lives and haven’t had that sharing experience and are really so selfish. There are a lot of them that I’ve experienced that are very selfish you know a bit of that catty, nasty, way to them. A lot of them are self-centred, and are overly sensitive about certain issues. And with me, I just don’t help them. If they give me that attitude then I just ignore them and let them get used of the new environment by themselves (Charmaine, Interview, 4 April, 2007).

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<sup>19</sup> “The Ugly American” is a term based on the 1958 novel by William Lederer and Eugene Burdick and has become an enduring label used to describe the loud, arrogant, ethnocentric behavior of American citizens abroad.

### *Partying, Drugs and Alcohol*

The homestay families and community organizations were both very vocal about their disappointment some aspects of hosting American students. Whilst the students can provide positive role models and assist the youth in learning how to speak about and be more tolerant of sensitive issues, some families did point out that students can also be a bad influence on their families and on their community as a whole, particularly with regards to behaviours and attitude. Families complained that the students go out too much and a very disturbing issue was brought up was that of drug and alcohol use while in Wentworth. In a community with escalating drug and alcohol issues that students that are treated as such role models by the local youth have the potential to do much damage in the community. One organization in particular talked about the work they were doing to prevent nightclubs from mushrooming in the industrial area of Jacobs just near Wentworth<sup>20</sup>. They saw that the students often frequent these clubs and found this to be problematic and counter-productive to their work. They advocated a curfew for students while in Wentworth, a policy that said they must remain with the homestay family at all times. Bella<sup>21</sup>, a homestay mother made this plea:

Can't they just stay here – do they have to go out. I mean because going out of the area anything can happen. Sometimes they do things and go places we won't even allow our own children to go to. I mean they are here just for a few days so why can't they just stay with us. And just be in the area – you know wherever the homestay is (Bella, HFG, 26 March 2007).

Lillian agreed with Bella and added:

They tell you that they are going to visit someone in this homestay and then they are making plans to go meet other people. We don't know these (other) people. How can we protect them then (Lillian, HFG, 26 March 2007).

Families took their role as protective parents very seriously, both in thinking about the safety of the students whilst living under their roofs; but also about their own children.

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<sup>20</sup> See Community Member 5: Brian for more on the nightclub issue.

<sup>21</sup> Sadly, since this interview Bella has passed away; another victim of cancer.

During the homestay focus group, Karen went on to relate a story about a student who was smoking dagga in her house. This incident actually saw Karen taking a break from hosting SIT students for a year:

You grow up your children in a very protective environment – and try to instil good strong moral and values and you never know who is coming into your home and what is this person bringing into your home. And for us that has been a challenge. Let me just give you an example, one of our students actually smoked dagga you know, she said that was her way of life. And she told me that she needed to tell me this, and how do you feel about this. Here I've got a 17 year old daughter and all my nephews in and out. And I said well ok, what do you, you do. I'm not going to try and change you, and not going to try and persuade you; but in my home that is totally unacceptable...just try to respect my way of life. So that was a challenge. We turned it into an opportunity – to educate our children. I know what they think about Wentworth but we as a family hadn't been exposed to that (Karen, HFG 26 March 2007)

Similarly, Glynnis said she felt very strongly about the students buying and using drugs in Wentworth. She felt betrayed by some students who knew the severity of the drug crisis in communities like Wentworth, and yet came in and used drugs amongst the impressionable youth:

For me on the drug issue – because right now the drug issue is so bad – it's really our biggest problem here in Wentworth. I would like to prepare the students in coming over to us – stress to them that it's just a no-no. Yes, its one of the things they find when they come here; but they just have to respect the fact that our kids look to them, watch what they do...it's just not allowed. There's no question. That is actually disrespectful to the very work we are doing in our community. You know, they are not even allowed to ask. (Glynnis, HFG, 26 March 2007).

The organizations said that they brief students on the social problems in Wentworth – issues such as gangs, drugs, and crime, but they don't expect they will become a part of that. One organization volunteer told me that they found it very hypocritical that the students were sometimes playing soccer with the youth in the afternoons, helping them with homework – doing this in the names of the organizations; and then asking the youth where to buy drugs and where the next “jol” (party) was (Nerina, CBOFG, 27 March 2007; Joyce, CBOFG, 27 March 2007). Reference was also made to a student who came back to Wentworth after the programme and lived in the community for a while – associating with known drug lords. Here a member of one community organization said very plainly – “with that one we failed and you know I think she failed us too” (Nerina, CBOFG, 27

March 2007). It is important to note here that the organizations did not appear to distinguish between individual issues and the students as a group. Even the actions of just one student, brought their collective view of the “SIT Students” or even “Americans” into question.

***Community Member 4: Charmaine (Host sister, Community Activist)***

Charmaine has hosted students in two different community organizations in Wentworth where she has done community work. She has also been a homestay sister hosting four students in the multigenerational home she shares with her mother, sister, son and daughter. Charmaine has tried her hand at various jobs in industry, but says this is where her passion lays - community work. Students, even the most difficult, always enjoy their stay with Charmaine, because there are so many different characters and personalities in and out of her home. That; and they say that Charmaine is “intense”, and apparently it is an intensity that they appreciate.

Charmaine has helped a lot of students with their independent research, helping to decide on topics to research, finding them contacts to interview, letting them stay at her house while they conduct research, driving them around Wentworth to experience the place and its people, even having them interview members of her family. A few of the research papers have been about Coloured identity and culture. Charmaine says that students are curious about Coloured culture, “They come here and they think we don’t have one,” she says, “and they can’t understand that even although we come from all over with all our mixtures and that, we still share something together; and those mixtures make up our culture”. She tells a story of a friend who recently had a crisis of culture. Her daughter’s class at school was celebrating heritage day, and each child had to dress up in their “cultural dress” or bring a “cultural dish” to share with her class. The friend and her daughter were embarrassed that they would not have that one thing that defines a Coloured that she could take to school. Charmaine told her friend that that’s what makes a Coloured. “Celebrate the mix – wear some Zulu beads and...I don’t know something British, and then take some Breyani for them,” Charmaine recounts. “You are all of that, *and* more.” Charmaine tells another story about a bi-racial student from New York who stayed with

her some years ago who had told her she would not chose between being Jewish or Black, she was both and yet something completely different from either. The student was upset by the way American society wanted her to choose. “She made me think,” says Charmaine, “She was happy being both, why was I not happy being the four or so different things that I am.”

All of this has got Charmaine thinking, talking and reading. She has developed a thirst for doing her own research on ‘Colouredness’. “You know, I am proud to be a Coloured. Some of the students want me to say I’m Black. They are surprised when we refer to ourselves as Coloureds. And this upsets some of them. I do it purposely sometimes to get a reaction from them, and I observe their reactions.” She continues, “I say things like “us Coloureds” for them to confront race in SA. They have an issue with regards to race. But they must understand it is for us to be proud of being Coloured. Not so-called coloured, not “coloured” using those things (gestures quotation marks)...I am a Coloured”.

Charmaine tells me that she is has been talking to her mother, and older relatives in order to begin tracing her history so that her children and their children will know where they come from. She stares me directly in the eyes, “Girl...we have a history that no-one but one of us will tell. So we must tell it”.

## **A Sense of Self**

An unintended but embraced spin off effect of the SIT encounter was the exploration of the history, culture and identity of the people in Wentworth. Families reported having great debates about using the term “Coloured”, what Coloured life was like under apartheid, familial and day to day relations between Blacks and Coloureds, the existence of the Coloured culture, and political representation in the new South Africa. Families said they talked with the students about things they had not talked about before so openly; the curiosity of these foreigners so eager to learn about this new culture opened up a dialogue within and between families. Cookie explains, “I had to try to explain what this Coloured business is. But I can only explain my colouredness. We are all probably different . . .with different mixtures,” (Cookie, HFG, 26 March 2007). People started family trees, and began

discussing within their families their ancestry and what it was that made them Coloured.

Dora talked about making her family tree:

I tell them about us, who Coloureds are. You know we have a history. Our children need to learn it too. We have something that's our own. You know, this actually made me start up my family tree. It made me think now...you know when people ask you? And it all came back to me. And I thought, no man I'm going to die just now and my children don't know where I came from. I need to make that tree, from the very beginning you know. And that's how it started (Dora, HFG, 26 March 2007).

Joyce enjoyed sharing her experiences of what it was like to grow up as a Coloured under Apartheid. She said that the students needed to understand her history to be able to understand her. She used everyday things like food to explain a slice of her history and life experiences:

I explained to them about our Sunday meal. I told them you see Coloured families we are very proud of making our Sunday meal. You know the curry and rice, the salads, the macaroni, roast and all. I think it stems from when we grew up, because of the apartheid system. We Coloureds never did the takeaways because it was expensive but also so embarrassing. If we wanted takeaway we had to go to a little hatch in the back of Wimpy. So we were very proud. Although we were brown and black and whatever it is, we used to make one big Sunday lunch for all the family to enjoy, (Joyce, HFG, 26 March 2007).

The acknowledgment of a Coloured history and culture, even a Wentworth culture was an important one for some of the respondents. David had grown up with parents who were part of the non-racialism of the United Democratic Front (UDF). For his family saying they were Coloured in those days was like saying they accepted the apartheid system, and accepted the non-status of being a 'Bruin-Ou'<sup>22</sup>. But he says that the context of South Africa changed and with that change came the realization that he was not fully Black in the eyes of the law and his parent's UDF comrades. So began an identity quest all of his own. "It is just a name", he says of the term Coloured, "but it is one that is true to my

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<sup>22</sup> Reddy, T. The Politics of Naming: The Constitution of Coloured Subjects in Erasmus (2001) provides an account of how Coloured people have been defined by the state. The Liquor Act (1928) for example defined a Coloured as "any person who is neither a European, nor an Asiatic nor a Native." Being defined as a negative entity has been cited by scholars such as Zimitri Erasmus and Zoe Wicomb as having far reaching effects on a sense of self worth within Coloured communities in SA.

experiences growing up here in Wentworth. It tells the story of my struggle”. (David, Interview, 28 March 2008). He says that the quest continues as the context shifts, but he maintains a desire to share this search with the students that visit from America, but more importantly with the local youth that he come into contact with. David recently sat in on a panel discussion for the SIT students about to enter Wentworth that was entitled “The Coloured Experience”. “Look, I don’t have degrees and things but I can talk about my experiences; and these kids like to listen; and they challenge you, talk back. It keeps you on your game. If you believe something you must be able to defend it.” His colleague James believes that it is his responsibility to share the culture of Wentworth visiting students and with Wentworth youth:

Wentworth has its social difficulties but people at the end of the day are extremely welcoming, warm hearted. They show respect, they show value, and you know to understand that level of tolerance between people is almost completely different to what other communities or provinces experience. Wentworth has its own culture born out of our challenges that we face as community – we have a responsibility to share that culture. (James, Interview, 5 November 2006)

***Community Member 5: Brian (Community Activist)***

Brian runs a small but well-oiled community organization in the Austerville area of Wentworth. Brian was a product of forced removals – his family was forced to move to Wentworth in the 60s. He has been active in the community and in community politics ever since he can remember. “Just being dumped out here, we had to protest,” he explains. “And then that protest turned into a so many different forms of protest and activism”. Brian walks around Wentworth daily “just to see what is going on, and who’s getting up to what.” David recounts a story of finding a child from Assegai Primary school stumbling to school late and drunk. He took the child home and then made several visits to talk to the mother (there was no father) to find out what was happening in the home. He referred the mother and the child for help, and checks up on them every once in a while.

Brian has been doing work with local primary school children. “I’ve asked the schools if I can do talks to the youngsters about drugs and alcohol” he says flipping through the pages

of drawings made by these children. The pictures that he has the children draw show their depiction of “my community”. Included are pictures of ‘skollies’ (hoodlums) sitting on street corners smoking ‘zol’ (dagga), the imposing smoke stacks of the massive refinery hurling toxic fumes into the sky, a kitchen scene with a far too clearly defined bottle of brandy at the centre of the kitchen table. “I look at these when I need a reminder of why I do what I do”, he says. Brian goes on to talk about the nightclubs that are starting up in the nearby Jacobs industrial area and the reluctance of the municipality to do anything about them. He sees my interest in his work and retrieves more folders for me to view, these with signatures of people opposing the nightclubs. There are clippings from local newspapers on gangs and drugs and the evil clubs. “These clubs will destroy this community” he contends, “But they don’t care. They will get their taxes while these clubs pump this community with drugs, and then the gangs will start up again...They say we are community leaders, but they only listen to us when it’s convenient for them”.

Despite his obvious commitment to Wentworth, Brian is not always spoken of favourably by people from other community organizations. He is impatient with them and uses his legendary sharp tongue to tell them so, often in community meetings. He is also unforgiving about taking funding from the industry that surrounds Wentworth. “We don’t take money from industry...its blackmail money,” he says. The inter-organizational tension in Wentworth is real and the vying that occurs for the right to be a community leader/spokesperson is also real. For this reason Brian says he has and will continue to steer clear of the homestay part of the CBL programme. He doesn’t want to be beholden to any one organization that is seen to have control over placing the SIT students. “The money you give homestays is a problem,” he says. “It makes this look like a kind of funding – one organization can dish it out to others, and then expect special treatment”. His solution is clear, “This is a project that all the organizations can work on but there shouldn’t be one that owns it. It is so important that we learn to work together on this project and others – not that one controls it. It can sometimes cause bad vibes, bad relationships.”

## **Community Development**

### **Community Networks**

The homestay families who were not immersed in community work expressed gratitude for being exposed to the different organizations and different types of community work being done in the area, as highlighted by Aunty Cookie in community member profile 2. Students came home to their families in the evenings discussing the work they had done during the day and also what some of their peers were doing in other organizations. In this way, the hosting experience gave ordinary working families living in the area a chance to learn more about the types of work and services available in their community. The students became a mechanism for sharing and disseminating information in particular among the younger members of the community. Roxanne says, “You know they were telling me about this person is doing this work and this place does this – so our own people get to know what’s happening here.” (Roxanne, HFG, 27 March 2007).

Similarly the organizations saw the students as being important in encouraging local volunteerism. Organizations reported increased numbers of community members taking an interest in their projects, and the community at large hoped that the local youth would see American youth volunteering and encouraging a sense of community volunteerism in Wentworth youth. Charmaine explains:

“It encourages homestay families to be proactive in their own community. It makes a huge difference. Our membership has grown... People are interested; people phone us and say what can I do? Is there anything going on? Can I help with anything? We never had that before. It’s because of the SIT students. Ja. We had it, with us talking to people, but since the SIT programme people are much more interested in getting involved. That’s been huge. It’s a huge benefit for us,” (Charmaine, Interview, 4 April, 2007).

Charmaine went on to lament the lack of interest in community work coming from the youth. With Wentworth having a reputation for community organizing, I was interested to hear her insight into the youth situation in Wentworth. Echoing Cookie, Charmaine said that they have trouble getting the youth to participate regularly in community programmes. She explained:

Our kids just don’t listen to us talking about the organizations and the work going on in Wentworth. With the students here, you know they are working

here, staying here. These kids will think ‘these outsiders taking an interest, why can’t we’. It can challenge their way of thinking. (Charmaine, Interview, 4 April, 2007).

In their reflection papers, the students also noticed this lack of youth participation. Eleanor (2007) noted, “The work of the social programmes in Wentworth simply put is hard. They are faced with a lack of support, a lack of good leadership, and little earnest participation from the youth.” Jasmin (2006), was also concerned by this dynamic “...I also noticed that there was a lack of involvement from the youth of the community and this bothered me a lot given their propensity to catch and spread the disease (HIV).”

### **Organizational Co-operation and Tension**

The process of hosting students provided organizations with a forum for sharing best practices. A number of the organizations talked about an increase in inter-organization cooperation stemming from the student’s visit. Organizations would meet either formally or informally to discuss what each would be doing with their group of students; and at the end of the programme they would do the same to share experiences good and bad. The tension between certain organizations is well known and was acknowledged by almost all of the community organizations interviewed. This project seemed to be one that brought the organizations together. Simone explained, “It’s a community effort... the organizations do a lot together. They work well together and every organization knows what the next one is doing and that’s good” (Simone, Interview 3 April 2007). Brian agreed, but had a word of warning about control, “We need to work together on this project – not that one controls it. It can sometimes cause bad vibes, bad relationships. Or make those relationships even worse.” (Brian, Interview 14 February 2007).

Glynnis is well aware of the discord between certain organizations and egos in Wentworth. She believes that the SIT programme has the potential to build some bridges that have been damaged by fights:

Networking between organizations – we come together to talk now when the students are arriving. So the WAAGs and the WOWs, the Wings of Loves and the SDCEAs – we make sure we all look after the students. So yes, it’s good for the relationships between the organizations – we’ve come closer. And that makes it good for the students too. (Glynnis, Interview 24 November 2006)

But, this co-operation is fragile, and students do not realize the delicate relationships that a misspoken word can harm. Speaking about people or organizations to others in the community without recognizing the impact was cited as a negative in the realm of community organization interaction. Glynnis says, “Students can be very brazen. Just say their mind. You know...talk about people. Other organizations and that.” (Glynnis, Interview 24 November 2006). Bella recounted a story of a student Cara, who overheard her homestay mother talking about a certain community leader and how he was hampering community cooperation, being hypocritical in things that he said and did in relation to the other community organizations. Cara just happened to be placed at this very person’s organization and decided to ask him about the things she had heard in her homestay. “They don’t realise we all know each other and when they go and talk about one person to another, it can cause problems.” (Bella, CBOFG, 26 March 2007).

### **Good Intentions**<sup>23</sup>

When it came to the actual help or work that the students were able to provide, three out of the eleven members of host organizations mentioned that they appreciated gaining brief assistance with the day-to-day running of the organization, special projects, or ad-hoc tasks. Lillian recalled the semester that her organization had a group of about five students working with them, “we got them to go around and get community responses for a number of our new project ideas. We could never have done all of that work in that short time, and there was such detail”. (Lillian, CBOFG, 27 March 2007). Colleen mentioned the time she put two students to work cleaning the storeroom. The students were happy because they felt they had accomplished a doable task, and she was happy, “For me it doesn’t matter if you are coming for 1 week or 3 weeks. Those hands help at the end of the day and you can plan to make the most use of those hands,” (Colleen, Interview, 5 November 2006).

Glynnis brought up the issue of typing, “The students are very clued up when it comes to computers – they help us with letters. All the students that we’ve had you give them a letter

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<sup>23</sup> *To Hell with Good Intentions* by Ivan Illich is a classic reading that I give to my students before they begin their CBL experience. Illich asks young Peace Corp volunteers in Mexico to not be so arrogant to think that they can come to ‘help’ – he tells them rather to come to learn. This sentiment was clearly echoed by the CBOs in Wentworth.

to type and in a few minutes the letters are done...With me, its two fingers pecking”. (Glynnis, Interview, 24 November 2006).

Most organizations in the study questioned the relevance of the help that the students could give them. Joyce explained, “We don’t want them to do for us, they must come and be a part of what we are doing.” (Joyce, CBOFG, 27 March 2007). Glynnis understood that many of the students came with an expectation to help, “some of them can’t seem to understand that organizations don’t need that kind of help. Maybe we need something different to what they are expecting.” She added that when some of the students realise they are not going to be doing something tangible and legacy-forming they give “those looks of boredom, that’s hard to work with. Sometimes I want to just cave in and have them dig a hole or something but then what is the use of that.” (Glynnis, CBOFG, 27 March 2007). Bella agreed, “Sometimes they just look so bored – they need to be managed, and so I can see why some organizations find them a bit of a burden”, (Bella, CBOFG, 27 March 2007). Bella reminded the group about one of the other CBOs that had requested a ‘babysitting fee’ after hosting their first group of students.

Brian, Simone and James, all from different organizations all said that the interaction should not be about menial tasks. They felt that the students can be more helpful to the organization by allowing them to teach them about their community and work. Brian said:

We should rather take them out and help them learn more, teach them about our community, our understanding of issues. And then that increase their understanding. Why have them do filing and that type of work, they don’t even know what documents are important. (Brian, Interview, 14 February 2007).

James (2006) mentioned that he had had some bad experiences with people from the outside who just “interfere with processes” that they could not possibly understand. “They *might* be valuable contributors to a process” he says, “but what if they aren’t, the price is too great,” (James, Interview 5 November 2006). Simone added that work the students should be doing something that is in keeping with what they are studying:

I feel very strongly that menial tasks are not what they should be doing. We need to give them an education, challenge them...its important to consider what they are studying. I would not want my children going over there and sweeping floors, (Simone, Interview, 3 April, 2007).

There appears to be a disjoin between student expectations about “helping” and “contributing” and the desire expressed by organizations to expose the students to their community and work. The anticipation that students have to “help”, in the physical sense of getting their hands dirty, is very real and something that comes through strongly in their journals. Gabriel (2006) began his reflection journal with this statement “I don’t think I made a difference in my week in Wentworth”. Benjamin (2006) was more confrontational on the matter, “I voiced my displeasure to the organization about doing admin work. I want to be out there...that’s why I came here... I received some weak response that they were ‘teaching me’”. Maggie (2006) shared similar feelings of frustration at not doing what she thought was meaningful work:

I was disappointed in the way activities were chosen for Beth and I. It seemed as if our time could have been more efficiently and productively spent on other things...I also think a failure to assign us to truly helpful positions during our experience is also a testament to some disorganization and inefficiency on the part of the organization. I wanted to make a meaningful difference but I wasn’t allowed to.

***Community Member 6: James (Community Worker, Homestay Father)***

James has been involved in community work since the mid 1980s. He started his involvement in youth movements in the final days of Apartheid, when the youth across the country tried to make this country ‘ungovernable’. He was born in Wentworth and says although he has seen many of his peers move out, he says he will not. He believes it would be hypocritical to tell the young people of the area to fight to change their circumstances and surroundings, if he were to leave these same surroundings. James carries a heavy work load – he plans projects, actively seeks funding, does administration work and then does the actual work of the organization too. He is often visibly tired, yet his passion for working with young people and helping them take control of their futures is evident. James has hosted students in his organization since the first group visited in March 2004, and he and his family have hosted five students in their home. They took a break from hosting as they found students in their home to be too high maintenance. They were also trying to sidestep the politics within the community organization network that came with being a homestay family. With one organization selecting homestay families, James says he felt

like they would expect ‘favours’ (such as supporting them in community meetings) for the ‘right’ to host a student. “Politics, politics...,” he says laughing, “Your students are a hot commodity”. James often gets frustrated at the “unprofessional” nature of community work in Wentworth, and he lets on a bit more than the other organizations might like him to. The students are worth something more to the community than just that one week CBL interaction.

While he is desperate for additional help at his organization, James finds the price of using SIT students “too great.” Yet James has been hosting students in his organization since the programme began in March 2004. When we discuss the apparent contradiction, James confides that the programmes we have worked on outside of the week of CBL are what keep him taking students for that week. He has seen good work come of students’ research projects – and for him a month is a much more manageable time period to ease someone into an organization and get something concrete and valuable out of them. He has used the research reports in developing new programmes and tactics in his organization; he has also been successful in using the reports to write funding proposals from local donors. James also mentions the collaborations with SIT to design and develop youth camps and homestays that bring local youth from different walks of life together for dialogue. For James, this is about the long-term.

## **Hope**

### **Motivations for Families**

There are obvious financial benefits for families hosting students, as each homestay family receives a small stipend to assist with expenses. And while only one person (the homestay coordinator) mentioned the impact of the money to some families, the obvious financial circumstances and unemployment in some homestay families made it likely that the SIT stipend was a welcome addition to the family income. Since all of our communication with homestay parents downplays the financial nature of the homestay arrangement and focuses on the cultural exchange, it is possible that families did not want to seem like they were doing it for the money.

The issue of status did come up a number of times in interviews. Families mentioned the increased status within community of having an American live with you. I'm including this finding under the category of hope, because it appears that people hoped that the interactions with these Americans and the increase in status might lead to more. The "more" could have been an increase in personal status in Wentworth in having American friends; or personal relationships and possible opportunities. James talked about the reaction of the youth to hosting the students, "The reaction from the youth is important for us...So for me it's just the human interaction. And for our youth – they've got Americans ...That makes them cool to their friends, it can boost self esteem," (James, Interview, 5 November 2006).

Glynnis and Karen talked about the possibilities of networking that families think about when hosting an SIT student "It's that whole American thing. American people are coming to stay in our house. The excitement about hosting Americans...They (the families) *also* see it as networking." (Glynnis, Interview, 24 November, 2006). Karen discussed sending her daughter to visit the USA, "I'm planning for my daughter to go over to visit...we make sure we keep in touch by phone... You know how they enjoyed being here in Wentworth, so I know they'll take care of her." (Karen, HFG, 26 March 2007). Indeed, families are aware of these possibilities. A homestay mother once asked me to send her a pretty female student. She hoped her son would marry the student and open up her family to the opportunities that carrying an American passport holds.

### **Motivations for Organizations**

With the exception of the one organization who asked for a 'babysitting fee', the CBOs did not did not seek immediate monetary compensation for hosting the students. The idea was soundly rejected by the other organizations, perhaps in fear that it would drive the entire programme away. The request for compensation would correspond with the feeling expressed by other organizations that sometimes the students needed to be managed. During my interviews this sentiment was not confirmed and some organizations still seemed embarrassed at the mention of money.

While instant financial gain did not appear to be the driving force, long term relationship building with SIT and individual students was something that organizations and indeed families did consider. James (Interview, 24 June 2007; Community member profile 6) was very honest in his assessment that for him it was all about the longer term relationship that he was building with SIT. He “tolerated” the week’s interaction to get to the month long ISPs and special projects with SIT such as the youth camps and the youth workshops.

James recently hosted a student at his organization week of CBL followed by a month of research. The student brought with her 8 years of youth development experience, an extremely positive attitude, and a willingness to learn. James commented, “Wow. Now I know what I was waiting for... (we) took all of the bad to get that one gem, and Sam was it – she just got it, she got us.” James elaborated, “I am amazed...although her time was limited Sam was able to complete eight peer facilitation lesson plans, support (the organization) in facilitating training in three primary schools, assist with funding proposals, help plan and host our Prize Giving and Award Ceremony.” (James, Email Communication, December 2008)

Glynnis and Charmaine both agreed that having the students in Wentworth was helping to get publicity for the community. While it was not clear what the publicity would be used for, it seems that increased tourism and funding for projects might be two possible scenarios. Glynnis said that she wanted to

...put Wentworth on the map... You have to put yourself out there. Soweto and all of these places are out there. If we are not marketing ourselves, who will? These students must be able to tell others who we are and expand our networks. (Glynnis, HFG, 26 March 2007).

Similarly, Charmaine suggested:

If we think that its almost 150 students that we have interacted with over the years. So there are 150 ambassadors out there who have been promoting Wentworth. And for me that’s so much – because there are people that come and say we heard about Wentworth, they exchange information on the internet...I mean its nice because you know they are out there and they are true to what they say. There are students that have gone back that are looking at how they can work with us here in Wentworth. And 10 years from now, even if

it's 10 or them or just 5, I feel they going to come back; they going to give back to us. (Charmaine, HFG, 26 March 2007)

In my first interview of this study, Glynnis explained her vision of the programme to me. She noted that if anyone were to look in the files of her organization, they would see reports and notes dating back to our first careful interactions in Wentworth. She said these all pointed to her wish for SIT to be involved in the long term capacity building of the organization and the community. "I have to say that I saw SIT as short term work but long term results. All what we are doing now is good as we go along, but it will bear fruit later." (Glynnis, Interview, 24 November 2006)

## **Summary**

In this chapter the findings of the study were presented. In terms of the impact of the students on the community, the responses were mixed. There were positives and negatives for both the community organizations and the homestay families. Being placed in roles that allowed for, and required, teaching and learning were important considerations for the community. The students had a lot to teach families and host organizations, about culture and life in the US, life in other parts and communities of South Africa, and putting theory into the practice of the community organizations. The organizations felt particularly privileged to be teachers to the students of community issues and CD in this situation. The students had influence over family processes and relationships – they could be strong role models for the youth, modelling both good and bad behaviour. The presence of the students within the community led to an increased interest in the history, culture, identity of Coloured people of Wentworth. In terms of CD, the presence of the students led to an increase in volunteerism amongst potential homestay parents, and an increase in goodwill between the often feuding organizations. The good intentions of the students to help are seen by the organizations as misplaced and somewhat patronizing; and organizations said they would rather have the interaction be about teaching, seeing and understanding, than about doing. Finally, there was hope that these interactions with the students and with SIT would lead to bigger and better prospects for families and organizations and in particular the youth of Wentworth. In Chapter Five I will develop these findings with interpretations

of the results, implications for practice of CBL, and for the field of CD itself, and directions for future research.

## CHAPTER 5

### ANALYSIS

This research was conducted to explore the perspectives of the Wentworth Community regarding their participation in the SIT CBL programme. In Chapter Four, I presented the findings of the research. The research showed that the community derived certain benefits from the programme, and the relationships it brought about with students, SIT as an organization and other participants in the programme. But the research also shed light on the costs to the interactions, as well as insights into the practice of CBL and of CD as it is lived and experienced in Wentworth. The chapter will follow the basic outline of the findings chapter, looking at each of the findings highlighted: Teaching and Learning; Role Models; A Sense of Self; Good Intentions; Hope and Community Development. I will discuss the findings giving my interpretation as well as drawing on literature in the fields of SL, international education and CD in order to consider those interpretations further. CD is placed slightly out of the order of the last chapter simply to facilitate the second part of this discussion; which is a look into the implications and lessons for CD, and for CBL in Wentworth.

#### **Teaching, Learning, Sharing**

...the students have a lot to offer our community – information sharing, how they interact, how they live in their communities. And we can teach them, share what happens in our communities and then ask them what are the gaps that they see, (Diane, Interview, 3 April 2007).

The findings of the study show that the community valued the sharing of ideas that came with hosting the students in their homes and organizations. They appreciated the ‘knowledges’ gained from interactions with students. The CBOs in particular valued their teaching role in the CBL programme.

The homestay families valued the exposure that the students brought: new ideas, new realities, and other ways of doing things. Respondents talked about broadening their world view with discussions about the United States and life in middle class America.

Increasingly students come to South Africa with previous volunteer experience at organizations in the US and having travelled to various countries around the world. They bring with them a view into how communities different to Wentworth function and in some cases, how CD initiatives work (or struggle) in other places. In a recent study based on the University of Cape Town's Faculty of Health Sciences placing medical students in to community organizations Alperstein (2007: 62) found that the host organisations appreciated the presence of students placed with them, saying they added "fresh views and identified shortcomings within the organisation...the students kept the organisation 'on its toes', which encouraged the organisation to maintain high standards". In Wentworth the organizations were "kept on their toes" too –for example with students questioning the use of vulgar music in dance classes for young girls and suggesting confidential office procedures at an Aids clinic.

### **Cultural Learning**

Community members also appreciated the exchange of knowledge about their own country; being able to learn more about life in the townships, rural South Africa or Chatsworth is an important nation-building tool for a country with such a divided past. One of the central tenets of Apartheid was restricted contact between different groups of people. Fifteen years after the fall of Apartheid, those barriers still exist. Group areas no longer exist on the law books, but they do exist in an area like Wentworth that is still almost exclusively Coloured. In a recent study about relations between different groups in South Africa, Finchilescu & Tredoux (2008:193) found a situation "of continuing and profound racial isolation. There is in particular little contact of an intimate kind, and few cross-race friendships or marriages are formed". To begin to break these barriers, they recommended that "understanding and combating resistances to interracial contact is an important step in improving intergroup relations". Some students over the semesters have mentioned trying sometimes bringing homestay siblings from different homestay families together, perhaps meeting for a day at the beach. At the very least, they share stories of their various homestay families' struggles and joys with their Wentworth families, and create an awareness of the similarities of family across the apartheid divide. In this way the students act as non threatening cultural intermediaries, facilitators and catalysts. They can provide a

non-threatening form of contact (not always physical) between their homestay communities of Wentworth, Cato Manor, Chatsworth and rural Amacambini, and play an important role in filling the void of information about the “other”.

Finally, the students have the theoretical “book” knowledge to complement the practical “experience” knowledge of their community hosts and this makes for an important exchange of information on both sides. The interconnections between theory and practice are magnified when the academic learning of the students meets the real life settings of the community organization (Rochelle, Turpin & Elias, 2000). The research shows that a constructivist view of knowledge co-creation<sup>24</sup> occurs in the interactions and both the student and the community organization are active learners and teachers in the process. Castelloe, Watson & White (2002:10) refer to this exchange as a “dialogic education” where the interaction of the parties involved takes place at a level footing in which both are co-speakers, co-learners and co-actors. Indeed, Enos and Morton (2003:25) describe a “dynamic, joint creations...all people involved create knowledge, transact power, mix personal and institutional interests and make meaning”. As Murphy (1999:17) has found:

Learning traditionally gets measured on the assumption that it is a possession of individuals that can be found inside their heads... [Here] learning is in the relationships between people. Learning is in the conditions that bring people together and organize a point of contact that allows for particular pieces of information to take on relevance; without the points of contact, without the system of relevancies, there is not learning, and there is little memory. Learning does not belong to individual persons, but to the various conversations of which they are a part.

### **Teaching and Learning about Development**

The community organizations spoke of being from a much less privileged background in terms of education than the students. They enjoyed the opportunity to teach those more privileged than themselves. At least three people each in separate situations spoke of not being formally educated, but having something to teach the students. (Glynnis, HFG, 26

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<sup>24</sup> Constructivism recognizes that knowledge is constructed through the interaction between and among individuals and their social contexts (Crotty, 1998). Constructivism assumes multiple realities, and emphasizes a process of co-creation of knowledge rather than the discovery of truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

March 2007; David, Interview 26 March 2008; and Brian, Interview, 14 February 2007). Brian referred to himself as an “ordinary fellow”, proud of his education on the streets of South Africa. He felt very strongly about being able to share his knowledge and experiences with the students. He believed that that his work and knowledge was being validated in being asked to teach students from the US who were studying at university level. (Brian, Interview, 14 February 2007). These ordinary people like Glynnis and Brian, with knowledge of their community and a history of working along side others to try to change it, were both willing and able to share their perspectives and experiences of Wentworth and of CD. In fact, teaching the SIT students was as an affirmation of the knowledge that they had accumulated; and indeed their life’s work. Sandy (2007:18) in a California compact study on community found that community organizations in her study had a deep motivation to educate. “Educating students was an initial motivation for these community partners, (and) their commitment to educating students may have grown over time as they became more experienced.” In the South African context, Fourie (2003) in much the same vein, regards valuing indigenous knowledge of local communities as a prerequisite for successful SL projects.

### **Impact on Family Lives**

...the student is there on the bed with their laptop and the music is on, and Pauline is there and the children are all on the bed. So that family thing is there. You know – it brings families together. Even if the families are arguing” (Glynnis, Homestay Focus Group 26 March, 2007).

### **Positive Impacts**

Another finding of the research was that the students had a positive impact on the youth of Wentworth – homestay brothers and sisters, youth volunteers and youth participants in community programmes. Some respondents found that they provided young people in the community with motivation to continue with their studies or take their studies more seriously. They believed that contact with the students would make their children aspire to do go on to tertiary education or to travel to see the world, or perhaps think twice before engaging in risky behaviour. These findings echo a study by Cashel, Goodman, & Swanson conducted at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (2003) in the evaluation of a mentoring SL programme conducted with at-risk youth. The study pointed to the success

of the mentoring relationship between children from the local community and university students doing a SL project. Parents surveyed from this community found that their children's grades had improved; the number of fights in the schools had gone down; and the children themselves enjoyed the fun, safe, activities that the mentors provided. Further, a YMCA study quoted in Coe-Regan & O'Donnell (2001:201) suggests that mentoring "keeps them (teens) positively engaged and less interested in engaging in risky behaviour. A structured environment with activities teens enjoy also helps them do better in school and prepares them for a more productive adulthood".

### ***Family Cohesion and Sensitivity***

In terms of encouraging family cohesion, families reported spending more time together when the students were living with them. They ate dinner together, organized functions with extended family and spent time simply talking and sharing. This is an important and positive step in a community where the family bonds are reportedly very fragile. In addition to spending more time together, families also talked about taboo issues that that would not usually have spoken of such as sexual orientation, HIV/Aids and gender roles. These family discussions could have long lasting impact in creating a sense of openness and tolerance, sensitivity to people's differences and resolve in questioning inequality. These are benefits that would assist in the social change in the community as a whole. Sumka's (2001:75) study on homestay families in Ecuador showed similar findings:

Family dynamics change when the student is staying in the house. Families eat more meals together, converse more, and go out together more. Some families claim that the father spends more time with the family when they have the exchange student. Other siblings say that they fight less, try to make a good impression for the student, and that this changes the daily routine in a positive way.

### **Negative Impacts**

#### ***The Ugly American***

In terms of attitude, some students were found to be selfish and condescending. The main contraventions were not sharing (especially food), not greeting people (especially their elders), not helping with any household chores and making comments about their organization's or family's "backwardness" to other students, and other community

members. Eby (1998:5) explains that American students often lack cross-cultural sensitivity which can pose a potential detriment to quality relationships and SL. He states that “many students have little experience working with people different from themselves or little exposure to the issues involved in their service community...Students may reflect ethnocentrism and racism in ways that are harmful.”

### ***Partying, Drugs and Alcohol***

Unfortunately, some students displayed bad and sometimes dangerous behaviour and poor attitudes that would not model good behaviour in the youth of Wentworth. Students went out to clubs too much and reportedly also used drugs and alcohol. In a community with escalating drug and alcohol issues, where students that are treated as important role models by the local youth, this type of behaviour has the potential to do much damage in the community. A local university student and activist Oliver Meth, in an article in *The Mercury* (2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2008), describes “A growing epidemic of drug usage and gangs is causing the death of too many of our youngsters. Violence is raging out of control. Nightclubs seem to be the main site, and gangs the main source”. Against this backdrop one can certainly see the need of the homestay families to keep the visiting students away from this scene of nightclubs and drugs; and to provide their children with positive role models who can show them a trail away from this lifestyle.

A former student on the programme who was not American (Jenny, 2006) explained (after she had left the programme), that this is the way American youth behave on their campuses – she lamented that her peers came from a part of American society where the consequences of recreational drug use were not high. She was critical of these students being selfish with their actions when the repercussions for local youth of Wentworth could be so dire. David, a youth development specialist in Wentworth commented, “If they see the Americans doing all this, then they’ll think its ok for them to do it too, it will be cool, you know – and that’s not alright.” (David, Interview 26 March 2008). The community relied on the students as role models, but perhaps they had unrealistic expectations of them, placing them on a pedestal and not wanting to see or hear their human failings. What is also problematic is that it appears that some of the drug and alcohol use by students was

known to some members of CBOs who choose to keep the information was kept from SIT, most likely to ensure that the students and the programme remained intact and unchanged.

### **A Sense of Self**

“they must understand it is for us to be proud of being Coloured. Not so-called coloured, not “coloured”...I am a Coloured”. (Charmaine, Interview, 4 April, 2007).

The acknowledgment of a Coloured history, culture, and identity even a particular Wentworth identity was an important realization for many of the respondents. Families said they talked with the students about things they had not talked about so openly before. There were great debates within families for the benefit of the student’s learning about topics such as using the term Coloured, what Coloured life was like under apartheid, family classification and separation to different group areas, the existence of the Coloured culture, pride in a Coloured Identity and political representation for Coloured people in the new South Africa. Families found students were fascinated and curious; and often the younger generations in a family used this interest to get their parents and grandparents to talk about their histories and family secrets. Once this powerful dialogue had started there was a desire to share the knowledge and the inquiry not only with the students, but also the local youth. The existence of a Coloured culture and identity is usually a hotly debated in student debriefs: the students are curious, because for an American the term “coloured” has a very different history and meaning than for South Africans. During the research, people used the word Coloured very strongly, and proudly – unashamedly and unapologetically. One member of a community organization chastised people for nullifying her experiences and struggles with terms such as “so-called Coloured”<sup>25</sup>.

Discussions around what makes someone a Coloured – not in the sense of the Apartheid classification but in terms of a lived experience proved very insightful in discussions with homestay families and community organization representatives. As social commentator Ronald Dyers, in his 2008 poem “Coloured in Technicolour” put it, “Call me not... a so-

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<sup>25</sup> Charmaine Personal Interview.

called Coloured. So, see me not as... an unidentifiable citizen, a so-called entity, a so-called being – dan's jy heavy confused, for you can't have a Rainbow nation without the Bruin-ou nation”.<sup>26</sup> Adhikari (2006:175) further comments:

Despite the emergence of a vocal, Coloured rejectionist voice within the non-racial democratic movement of the 1980s, the subsequent period has witnessed a resurgence of Colouredism, with many people who had rejected the identity reembracing it. Fear of African majority rule, perceptions that Coloureds were being marginalised, a desire to counter pervasive negative stereotyping of Coloured people, and attempts at capitalizing on the newly democratic environment in pursuit of political agendas have all played a role in fueling Coloured assertiveness in the new South Africa.

Erasmus (2001:23), in her edited collection *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place*, further highlights the phenomenon of being ‘politically black but socially Coloured’. She argues, that:

Coloured identities cannot be wished or explained away. Nor can they be subsumed under a national identity. We have to recognize that constructions of what it means to be “Coloured” have shaped particular black experiences in South Africa in a very real way and that these identities are meaningful to many. This requires respect for ordinary people and their subjective experiences which should be valued in their own right; such experiences and identities are not simply white-imposed.

Within the heterogeneous community of Wentworth, this research bore testimony to an assertiveness of this Coloured experience explained by both Adhikari and Erasmus. The situation is dire: unemployment is high, crime is high, affirmative action is seen to be only benefiting Black South Africans, pollution is relentless, and Coloureds are turning against Coloureds with the resurgence of gangs, drugs and violence in Wentworth. Community leaders admit that the rediscovery and rebuilding of the Coloured as valid South Africans is a project that needs to begin immediately in order to pull the community off a path of self destruction. Wicomb (1998:98) argues that Coloureds as a group have a deep-rooted, internalised sense of shame: for their slave origins, for the miscegenation which produced them, for being neither black nor white, and for the family separations of a cruel

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<sup>26</sup> Ronald Dyers is the Chairman of the newly formed South African Movement for Equality, a lobby group looking for representation of Coloured people in the SA broadcast media. [www.same.org.za](http://www.same.org.za). For the complete poem “Coloured in Technicolour – I am a Kullid” by Ronald Dyers see Appendix 4

classification system. The assertion of a Coloured identity and culture reflected in this study could be an important move in breaking the downward spiral of self esteem and self destruction within the community and contribute to the rebuilding and development work that community organizations do every day.

With a growing sense of pride in the Coloured community, some organizations mentioned the need to raise funds for CD projects from within the Coloured community because unless you knew the right people (either in government or in industry) you would not be able to sustain your organization. Organizations have often noted that the money for development projects will not find its way to Wentworth. One community leader noted that if he did not get up in the morning and do the work that he does, no-one from the outside would either. Perhaps the students' presence helped to bring attention to the work of community organizations within the community itself and increased internal funding possibilities.

### **Good Intentions**

Why have them do filing and things like that...they don't know what documents are important. So we don't give them that work. We would have to do it all over when they leave, (Brian, Interview, 14 February 2007).

For the most part, organizations felt that in such a short time frame of a one week CBL Programme, there was not much a student could do to "help" them. They also questioned the relevance of that help, and some found the help – or the desire to help – to be patronizing. They didn't want to spend time training someone on how the organization does things. Only two members of host organizations mentioned that they appreciated the brief assistance with the day-to-day running of the organization, special projects, or ad-hoc tasks.

Brandon & Knapp (1999:876) speculated on the effectiveness of pre-professional collaborations (i.e. internships), observing that many such programmes "make modest contributions in the form of service projects, [and] offer temporary internship assistance for discrete tasks." Community organizations in this study equated the notion of "helping"

to unwanted charity. Dewey observed that charity too often results in one class “achieving merit by doing things gratuitously for an inferior class” (cited in Morton, 1997:8). The community organizations in Wentworth were very insistent on this – you cannot help fix if you don’t understand; so a better use of time is to learn and to try to understand. A classic challenge to this dominant attitude is Illich’s famous address to the Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects (CIASP) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in 1968:

By definition, you cannot help being ultimately vacationing salesmen for the middle-class “American way of life”, since that is really the only life you know... The damage which volunteers do willy-nilly is too high a price for the belated insight that they shouldn’t have been volunteers in the first place... I am here to entreat you to use your money, your status, and your education to travel in Latin America...Come to study. But do not come to help. (Illich in Kendall, 1980:314-320)

Illich’s words serve as a stern reminder that “helping” can and often is a very selfish exercise, particularly if the help is not welcomed. Help reflects a dangerous and patronizing proposition of the rich (often white) saviours from afar swooping in for a week to save “the natives”, before leaving to return to their lives of luxury, patting themselves on the back and feeling personally fulfilled. Think of a group of American students who enter a rural village in the KwaZulu Natal with an unemployment rate of around 70%, and proceed to do this type of physical work such as painting the walls of a local clinic and constructing a pit latrine - only to feel that they have given back, and have left their legacy in South Africa. What long term effect might their actions have on the dignity of the unemployed people of the area? This sense of being patronised was also expressed by many of the community organizations in Wentworth who found the language of “help” and “service” condescending and not truly respectful of their roles within their society.

## **Hope**

“...they are going to give back to us”, (Charmaine, Interview, 4 April, 2007).

## **Motivations for Families**

The research did not reveal any stated connection between financial compensation and taking a student: although in the case of homestay families, the apparent living

circumstances and unemployment of many family members made it likely that the SIT stipend was a welcome addition to the family income. Money as a motivation for hosting was brushed aside quite quickly in interviews and perhaps this is because families did not want me to believe that they were doing this only for the money, lest it affected any decision to place students with particular families. But the possibility is that money was *not* a top priority for the community. If not for the help, and not for the money; the research suggests that the community seemed to be prepared to take on the work involved in hosting students for the CBL week, because of the potential future benefits from the interaction.

The increase in status in Wentworth also seemed to be important for the youth in particular – being seen with and around American college students might increase their popularity within their peer group. Homestay families hoped that personal friendships and relationships would develop with the students and members of the family. Many parents hoped that the interactions might push their children to study harder, achieve more and see that there could be more to their world than just Wentworth. Some even mentioned that they were planning travel for their children to the US, and hoped for a place to stay and hospitality from former homestay sons and daughters.

### **Motivations for Organizations**

Shamil is the founder of a small but successful community organization in Cape Town. While not directly related to Wentworth, Shamil has had experience with international SL students. He claimed that the only reason his and other organizations were so willing to host foreign students was for “hope”; the mere possibility that something more would come of the interaction. For him, speaking of his work with other programmes, this could be a possible future research assistant, and perhaps a source of funding. He also mentioned being invited to speak at a university about his work. But he cautioned that undergraduate students were not serious and that after being “burned too many times”, he would only work with graduate students who could devote significant time to his organization. He claimed that vulnerable community organizations needed to keep every viable option

funding and exposure possibility open. “When you are in this kind of position”, he said, “You never close a door”. (Shamil, Interview, 3 April 2007).

Maintaining a longer vision for participation in the programme is acknowledged in Bailis & Ganger (2006:70) who say “community impacts are often “cascading,” with immediate (primary) impacts on service recipients resulting in further (secondary) impacts down the road over varying periods of time”. For the community of Wentworth, these hopes included an increase in status within the community, increased possibility of travel to the US sometime in the future, networking for organizations and linking the community to outside resources, an increase in exposure for the community for tourism or funding, and a possible future research assistant who could stay for a month or more.

The future benefits for community organizations included the students providing or tapping the organizations into expanded networks that would increase the possibilities of international funding. As the student interactions in organizations are not chaperoned constantly, it is possible that students made promises of such networking to organizations. This would fit in with their desire to help, and this may seem like a way for them to extend some help. Organizations also hoped the interactions could result in increased exposure for Wentworth. Possibly this exposure would mean more tourism money to be spent in the area; or simply for familiarity or name recognition that might mean easier access to funding both locally and internationally. One community worker mentioned wanting Wentworth to be being like Soweto in that regard. Future benefits also extended to student research on specific organization directed projects and topics. Being able to apply the experience in hosting students and the products of research into funding proposals was also cited as a long term benefit of hosting students. Sandy (2007:21) notes that “Partners are often able to further their organization’s goals by garnering greater access to the prestige associated with the academic institution”.

### **Fair Exchange**

A benefit that the community seemed to have wanted from the experience, and asked about often, was the possibility of sending local children youth and community members from

Wentworth to programmes in the USA. Families and community organization volunteers ask every semester without fail about this possibility. Another question although less frequent is: “Can local students enrol in your programme?” For these types of questions to come up, as many times as they do from as many people as they do, this obviously matters to people in this community (and others, where the same question surfaces). While SIT might say their programmes provide for an exchange of culture and ideas, the questioning by the local communities suggests that they want more of an equal exchange. They host American students, and they want their South African students to go to America and be hosted there by American families. This was an insistence for a fair exchange.

### **Community Development in Wentworth**

Networking between organizations – we come together to talk now when the students are arriving...So yes, it’s good for the relationships between the organizations, we’ve come closer. (Glynnis, Interview 24 November 2006)

The research revealed a number of important insights about CD in Wentworth which I will discuss in this section. Community networks in Wentworth appeared to be very strong and the SIT CBL programme was building capacity by encouraging volunteerism of homestay networks in Wentworth. Also mentioned by the organizations was a sense of cooperation that arose between various organizations from having a non-threatening project on which to work. Finally the research was able to clarify the relationship between culture and development – the peculiarities of doing community work in Wentworth.

### **Community Networks**

Families expressed appreciation for being exposed to the organizations and different types of community work being done in the area. While it was agreed that this was a short stay, students came home to their families in the evenings discussing the work they had done during the day and also what some of their peers were doing in other organizations. In this way, the hosting experience gave ordinary working class families living in the area a chance to learn more about the types of work and services available in their community. Some of the families were already involved in some kind of community work, yet they still saw this sharing of local organizational information as being important for them and their

families and friends to learn about the other organizations and services being provided in their own neighbourhood. Similarly, the organizations saw the students as being important in encouraging local volunteerism. Organizations reported increased numbers of community members taking an interest in their projects, and the community at large hoped that the local youth would see American youth volunteering and encouraging a sense of community volunteerism in Wentworth youth. One semester, during a planning meeting with a group of community organization representative, a suggestion was made to have a group project where all the American students would work on one project for the week. The community organizations decided that the students could have the greatest impact on the youth of Wentworth; this was their attempt to get their own youth to actively participate in the community. We collectively designed a programme where the SIT students would work alongside a group of Wentworth youth for a week. The activities for the week included a “meet and greet” with different community organizations to discuss youth issues and work going on in the community; a trash collection drive; street soccer to keep the young high school drop-outs in the community off the streets; a creative project to get youth to define and draw their community; and escorting the elderly to a performance by the KZN Philharmonic. The culmination of the week was a march through the community stopping at various spots along the way to highlight specific instances of violence against women and children in Wentworth and to commemorate victims and survivors. The march drew significant interest from the Wentworth youth who were publicly showing their desire to work on the complicated social issues that plague the community.

The community organizations looked to the US students to be catalysts for youth interest in community processes and activism. Recent studies in the US (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Vogelgesang, 2005) suggest that service of young people of high school age can serve as a potential catalyst for the development of citizenship and volunteerism in other stages on their lives; although admittedly the longevity of community service participation among high school graduates is far from conclusive. Putnam (2000:131) contends that “Adult volunteers and givers are particularly distinguished by their civic involvement as youth [such that persons engaged in youth groups or youth voluntarism]

are half again as likely to donate to charity as adults and twice as likely to volunteer” than those not involved in either of these activities as youth. Elyer & Giles (1999) found that community service participation positively influenced certain outcomes of “citizenship” defined as a combination of values (social justice, community, commitment), knowledge (awareness of social issues, cognitive growth), skills (interpersonal communication, strategic thinking), efficacy (self confidence to effect change), and commitment (intention toward community participation). By combining the Wentworth youth in these CL projects with their American ‘Role Models’, there exists the potential to extend the benefits that accrue to community service participants (described above by Elyer & Giles), to them as well. The youth would then have their new found community citizenship to use in an ongoing relationship with the community organizations in Wentworth.

### **Volunteerism in Wentworth**

My research, observations and analysis of student journals confirm that cooperation between people in Wentworth is everywhere - in church groups, neighbours going in and out of each other’s houses, family and extended family groupings and the high level of volunteerism particularly in the women in the community. An unpublished community profile of Wentworth compiled by UKZN nursing students in 2004 found that most people interviewed said that they were willing to volunteer their time for “community upliftment.” The nature and extent of the relationships and cooperation in Wentworth suggest strong levels of social support. Dolan (2008:113) describes social support as “...the capacity of a community to informally and formally network and sustain its membership, and is central to social engagement. Social support functions are considered as essential both in everyday living and in times of crises.” Tess, a student on the programme commented in her journal:

A particular strength of the community could be identified in the closeness and tight links between its members. Walking through the neighbourhood with (members of an organization) most people knew them and similarly most persons they knew details of the lives of families – inquiring about a mom or a granny after greeting a child in the community. These close relationships make networking in the community efficient. It nurtures a sense of security and trust in the organizations as they are able to recognise the specific interests of individuals and small groups in the community rather than reducing everyone’s needs as issues that are homogenous. (Tess, 2006)

O'Brien & Caws (2008:53) point to the "the social capital evident in the communities...comprised groups and networks, that better fulfilled people's psychosocial needs for belonging, recognition and meaningful participation." There appears to be a broad understanding in the community of Wentworth that people within the community take collective and individual responsibility to work to change their situation. Much of the community work in Wentworth is based on volunteers, people offering their time and services and not receiving an income for it. For some, volunteer work is linked to religious beliefs and for others a broader sense on social justice. Certainly the extent of the social networks in Wentworth must surely be linked to the to the continued presence of a common enemy and injustice – first Apartheid, and now the industry and social issues such as gangs, drugs, prostitution, and HIV/AIDS. I believe that Wentworth displays a noteworthy level of volunteerism (albeit among certain sectors of its population) and cohesion, the presence of a social network, and the existence of relationships both within and between the organizations, agencies and groups that compose the social ecology of a community (Hughey & Speer, 2002). It is interesting to note then that some members of the community looked to the American youth to spark and revive a level of volunteerism in Wentworth. This would appear to be a contradiction. I believe the volunteer population in Wentworth is an aging one, and with the inclusion of the American students in community work the older volunteers hoped to make the work more appealing to their own youth.

### **Cooperation between CBOs**

The relationships between the community organizations in Wentworth are a complicated and complex issue, and further investigation raises important issues about CD in the area. The number of community organizations in Wentworth in relation to the size of the population is significant. During the course of my association with the area, I have placed students with, and have had contact with 17 different organizations.<sup>27</sup> This apparently vibrant civil society is a product of place and time. People forced from city and farm dwellings into cramped flats and "Rainbow Chicken" houses<sup>28</sup>, and sandwiched in between

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<sup>27</sup> See Appendix 2 for a full list of participating Community Organizations.

<sup>28</sup> The "Rainbow Chicken" Houses or (Barracks) are "sub-sub-economic flat roofed, two-roomed houses," (Rankin, 1982:45) which are named as such by the residents because they are said to resemble the Houses

heavy polluting industries such as ENGEN, SAPREF and Mondi. Unemployment is rife, the institution of family is deteriorating, drug and alcohol abuse is prominent and gang violence is again on the increase (Chari, 2006; Meth, 2008). It is easy to see why so many community organizations have sprung up to combat these social ills.

Putman (2000) argues that overall density of organizational connections in *a society as a whole* is the key to understanding that society's level of social capital and thus its capacity for continual self-examination and renewal. He also suggests that individuals and communities are better off when people have extensive networks even if those ties are weak. In addition, Putnam argues that membership and participation in this wide range of activities teaches social trust, which is the basis for collaboration and other forms of social cooperation.

The study confirmed that relationships between organizations were also enhanced by the CBL programme. Organizations reported that the week with the students, as well as pre and post CBL meetings brought them closer together. Simone talked about the week being “a community effort” (Simone, Interview 3 April 2007). Glynnis went further explaining how the CBL had facilitated this closeness, “... we come together to talk now when the students are arriving....we make sure we all look after the students. So yes, it's good for the relationships between the organizations – we've come closer.” (Glynnis, Interview 24 November 2006). This seems to confirm Sandy (2007:22) who points out that “Social capital among community partner agencies is often strengthened when universities foster linkages among community partners with whom they are affiliated. Sandy further cites research completed by Vernon & Foster (2002) which showed that “SL and volunteer programs are conduits for building social capital in a community.”

### **Tension between CBOs**

However, the tension between certain organizations in Wentworth is legendary and while there is evidence of cooperation, it is weak. The research confirmed this with people from

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that the Rainbow Chicken Company uses to house their chickens. They have been “officially” renamed Rainbow Gardens.

various CBOs making statements like ‘we don’t see eye to eye’ or ‘we don’t work with...’ or ‘there are some concerns about...’. As Brian outlined when specifically talking about the CBL programme, “We need to work together on this project – not that one controls it. It can sometimes cause bad vibes, bad relationships. Or make those relationships even worse” (Brian, Interview 14 February 2007).

Over a series of semesters, I have observed and been privy to discussions in the community about the egos and personalities of some of the leaders of the community organizations – it is a debilitating force; and harkens to an American adage I have heard from students about “Crabs in a barrel: always trying to pull each other down.” A few people in the study mentioned that the interactions between the organizations are quite cordial when planning for and hosting the students, since they were all working on a common project. But it was acknowledged, that the co-operation is fragile and fractured. Some comments from two different student journals elaborate on what these outsiders discover about the obvious tensions after just one week in the community:

When I went to the ENGEN meeting I saw another barrier that confronts change in the community. The different NGOs at the meeting did not work together for their common cause, but instead attacked each other and focused on their personal agendas and getting their grievances heard (Kristin, 2007).

An organization must have support from its community, including other organizations in the community, and it is essential that the tensions created between organizations do not hamper their ultimate goal to help the community (Rob, 2006).

Funding is a contentious and divisive issue amongst organizations in Wentworth. The ease of funding (although not in great quantities) from the large industries in the area for their Corporate Social Investment is probably another important contributor to the proliferation of CBOs in Wentworth. After the end of Apartheid, donor agencies put their support and money behind the new democratic government and funding for small organizations had to be sourced to a large extent through the government. A number of small organizations (including those in Wentworth) turned to the big corporations for assistance. One organization who refuses to take any funding from industry says that any organization that does take the money being bribed to allow the industry to continue to poison them all

slowly. They believe that corporations are breaking the community up into smaller groups that they can control with money, following a classic divide and rule strategy. The question of “who takes money from industry” is usually a hot topic in CD circles in Wentworth. So too are how much is spent on certain projects, how another organization or project could have put the money to better use, and who is misappropriating funds in the name of the community. Moolman (2004) a member of the Wentworth community, sheds further light onto these troubling dynamics:

A united community voice has always been slightly out of reach, with personalities often dominating inter-organisational relationships. The odd thing though, is that all the organisations (and the leaders of those organisations) agree that Wentworth is under threat because of the shifting socio economic and political environment. They also agree that that there is a need to respond to that threat urgently. Their analysis of where that threat originates is different and their strategies to deal with the manifestations of the threat are different, but they all agree that people have to act to change their lives.

A former SIT student, who spent considerable time in the community researching gangs and initiatives for curbing the beginnings of a resurgence of gangs, argued that CBOs in Wentworth operate in a similar manner to gangs. In her interactions with them she found them to be very territorial and prone to “taking people out” – figuratively speaking, in public forums (Maria, 2007). If one member of an organization felt they had been wronged either personally or professionally by someone there would be an all out declaration of ‘war’ against that someone and their organization. Similarly, Chari (2005:14) ponders:

I have been asking whether and how the spatial fragmentation and competition of gang turf battles takes new form in the recruitment networks of labour brokers, churches and civic organisations. The connections are sometimes apparent, but are rarely clearly functional or even causal.

### **The Culture of Community Work in Wentworth**

Students often comment on the social nature of doing CD work in Wentworth. The value of relationships and the time taken to build those relationships is just one manifestation of the culture that impacts the pace and scale of community work in the area. A number of organizations are run out of people’s houses and are intertwined with their family lives. Various family members and friends are involved in doing similar community work. It

seems logical then that CD in this context is more social in nature and the course of doing community work in Wentworth requires more social interactions. Rachel (2004), a former SIT student who conducted research on civil society in Wentworth noted:

It (community activism) is also highly social; the core group of women who do the work are friends and this is an opportunity to do community work but also to see each other. Many women in Wentworth dedicate massive amounts of time and effort in community organizations and are prominent leaders in the area, yet it is not surprising to see them drinking in a club a couple hours after a meeting or better yet, discussing their agendas at the nightclub itself.

I have observed the same. Meetings involve tea, snacks, lunch, discussions of family and family connections. Discussions of the business at hand are accompanied by invitations to dinner and days at the beach. At the end of the CL week we usually have a family/organization dinner which is a big event and is seen as being very important in SIT being a part of the Wentworth family. This is not to say that all interactions with all Coloured people doing development work will work this way – in a recent discussion, a business person from the more well off Coloured area of Greenwood Park made a passing remark that many Wentworth Coloureds have made it in life and move on (and out of Wentworth). Those that stay she added “blame everyone for their troubles... they should work as hard as we do and not just sit around all day talking, with their hair in curlers”.<sup>29</sup> This comment spoke to the stereotype of Wentworth within the larger Coloured Community of Durban as a place for “lower class Coloureds”, but also to their problems being their own. The suggestion that the person was sitting with their hair in “curlers” points to the socialising that occurs in Wentworth and as by straightening her hair this fictitious Wentworth resident was most likely preparing for a social gathering of some sort – instead of trying to get ahead in life.

Castelloe, Watson & White (2002:27) paint a picture that places the social interactions of Wentworth into context: “Community organizing practice is not nine to five work, nor is it possible to do such work effectively without developing personal relationships with community members. Such relationships take time and require sustained attention in the

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<sup>29</sup> Trying to make your hair straighter is a common stereotype within the coloured community – the idea is that the straighter your hair, the closer to white you were; and being whiter meant the possibility of more opportunities.

long term”. The authors go on to say that “participatory change is built on relationships, friendships, trust, and a sincere interest in the lives and concerns of grassroots leaders. Chatting, laughing, hanging out, and telling stories are the foundation upon which social change is built”. Thus the process of identifying and building friendships should be seen as a key behaviour in CD. For me, the importance here in terms of a discussion of development is in finding out the details and understanding the way things work and how things are done in a particular community. In terms of community learning projects, it highlights the importance of placing students in organizations as well as in homes within the community to learn the wider context of community work, which is so often much more than what they would see in a business 9-5 setting.

### **Branching Out**

When SIT began to branch out from the initial gatekeeper relationships with a particular community organization and forge new networks and programmes with other organizations in the community, the move was met with immediate indignation and distrust by members of that original organization. The “attacks” and “snubs” were not directed at SIT at first, but rather at members of the other organizations in question, who they accused of overstepping their mark and trying to steal SIT away from them. While discussing the situation with the initial organization phrases like “we brought SIT to Wentworth...we need to give permission” were used. This follows a finding in Sandy (2007:34) where “advanced community partners often feel that they are left out of the loop after a partnership with their agency has been established.”

The issue with the organization which “brought SIT to Wentworth” must be seen in a context of limited resources and came down to money and status. The particular organization which brought the issue up did receive a modest coordinating fee, but in helping to select homestay families (many of whom were their members) they effectively had control over where the homestay money went, as well as control over a community party to thank the hosts at the end of the CBL and homestay. The funding involved for the coordinating organization was both immediate and delayed. The delayed aspect occurred in using the experience to bolster grant proposals for both local and international funding. In

mid 2007, I received a call from the South Durban Area Based Management (ABM) a branch of the local municipality, to enquire about the relationship between this organization in Wentworth and SIT. The organization had submitted a proposal to ABM to provide homestay training for families who would then go into a database and potentially be used as accommodation for the 2010 World Cup. Their experience with SIT and their control over the homestay process was directly linked to this particular funding initiative. Van Niekerk (2008) mentions a similar dilemma which he refers to as “*swinging the tiger by the tail*”:

Service learning can lead to the creation and strengthening of community structures providing vital services. Such service agencies and structures can develop dependence on the university partnership, which has an obligation with regard to continued involvement and support. Can the support be sustained, and what implications does this have for the SL module convenor? How can I let go of the tiger’s tail? (Van Niekerk 2008:23).

Furthermore, the increase in status and organization membership could also be a factor in the coordinating organization not wanting to relinquish control over who else in the community participated and at what level. Without control over the CBL programme, another community organization might usurp its gatekeeper status, and be the beneficiary of an increased following in the community. It appears that the organization did use its control of the homestays to exact support from other community organizations in subsequent interactions. Two other community organizations made specific reference to not wanting to be involved in homestays because of the demand for “favours” that might go with it. James’ assertion that “Your students are a hot commodity in Wentworth”, is an interesting comment on this matter (James, Interview 5 November, 2006). This is the messiness of CBL and CD. O’Brien & Caws (2008) warn against privileging one community organization or agency over others as this could lead to tensions:

Planning with “the community” (and service agencies) involves those in authority in that community. While engagement with authorities is essential, efforts should be made to identify and engage also with those members of the community who will be directly responsible for the student(s) placed with them. Failure to do so often results in misunderstandings (O’Brien & Caws, 2008:47).

## **Money: the Elephant in the Room**

Finally, there have been numerous direct requests for SIT over some years to provide financial assistance to organizations in Wentworth. The requests have never been discussed as being related to the CBL programme, nor were they mentioned in the research as a benefit of hosting students, but they are obviously linked. While community organizations were not seeking direct payment, they did seek equity in the CBL relationship by asking that we support direct and indirect infrastructure and enabling costs. Bender et al. (2006:97) cite Blake & Moore (2000) in a discussion about the importance of maintaining *equity* (rather than equality) in partnerships where one partner has more resources than another:

Equity ensures that the necessary balance of power can be achieved and preserved by mutual respect and trust among partners and the sharing of credit for accomplishments in terms of outcomes. These partnership products and publications are an important component of building a strong foundation of trust and ensuring equity.

The donations that SIT has made to special events, building projects, and general fundraising for specific community organizations are certainly a benefit that the community organizations, and in turn the community in general, derives from the CBL programme. The fact they were not specifically brought up in any interview or focus group is interesting and perhaps points to the general aversion to discuss financial matters and having the manager of the programme think they were only after the money.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The research in the CBL programme of the SIT in Wentworth raised some interesting questions regarding the field of CBL. In the following sections, I will first summarise the major findings of the study, and will then explore the broader implications arising from the project and suggest directions for further research.

#### **Mutually Beneficial**

SL and CBL are at their core designed to be mutually beneficial enterprises (Furco, 1996). This was indeed the case of the SIT CBL programme in Wentworth. The student reflective journals were a testament to student learning and the benefits they derived from the engagement. SIT benefitted from having a fertile and willing community that in effect became a laboratory for students to discuss a variety of development issues and complications in the South African context. The organizations also gave credibility to SIT's affiliation and connectedness with grassroots initiatives for the benefit of attracting potential students via the SIT website and as a place to take visiting dignitaries from SIT in the US and some of our sending schools. The research also showed that the community did also benefit from their participation in the CBL programme. These benefits were both immediate such as limited day to day assistance; access to money through homestay payments; and increased status in the community. But the majority were long term, such as creating networks within the community; access to funding; student research and placement of longer term graduate internships; stimulating youth volunteerism; and encouraging the articulation of a Coloured culture and identity.

An important lesson has been not to be naive to the unspoken needs of community organizations in the process of CBL. The benefits the community wants might not be the ones you expect. They might not say directly, 'we'll take the students, but we'll expect some kind of payment (in cash or kind) in the future'. But that is the reality of the context that you are placing student to learn about in the first place. By placing students in these types of resource poor situations, the CBL university partner has an obligation to honour

promises that may be implied. Community organizations are looking to build networks and the university CBL programme gives them a means to do this. Universities therefore have an obligation and the resources to respond to these organizations and communities. The community organizations know when and how they need assistance from their university partners; and it is important to keep the relationships open and communication flowing to be able to receive such requests. This does not mean that the CBL coordinator in the university will be able to respond to every request for funding or scholarship money, but they should be aware that these may come, and have a plan for talking about and acting on them. Without this honesty in the process, the CBL relationship has the potential to be extractive and damaging to the communities involved and certainly not sustainable. Universities and university programmes should not just talk reciprocity and mutuality, but actually do it.

### **Building Partnerships**

“Partnership” and “reciprocity” are words that are used liberally in both CBL and CD. Partnerships are intentional, mutual cooperation between entities having common interests, privileges, responsibilities, and power. Successful partnerships link individuals and organizations through shared values, skills, knowledge, goals and resources so that they can accomplish more collectively than they could individually (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992). Butin (2006a:61) argues for a more nuanced discussion of partnerships and reciprocity:

...“How much voice should community members have in the partnership?” immediately becomes expanded and problematized: “Whose voices should be heard and whose shouldn’t?”; “How should such hearing occur?”; “What does it even mean to hear?” What becomes clear is that there will be (and should be) a spectrum of perspectives about the notions of reciprocity, respect, power, and knowledge production embedded in this extremely complex and multifaceted question.

Alperstein (2007:65) says that in the CBL partnership it is crucial that the

...roles and expectations of both partners need to be more clearly defined. Community organisations and members need to have more influence over decisions about the outcomes of programmes for students in communities, the

content, teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation methodologies to ensure their needs are also met. They should be actively included in curriculum design that adequately imparts knowledge and facilitates learning. It is not enough that they give limited tacit input while working alongside students.”

This particular CBL engagement between the community of Wentworth and SIT was not an equal one from the outset. The research has highlighted that capacity, power and decision making were always skewed in favour of SIT. The relationship did involve careful iterative planning with all community stakeholders, and CBOs had control over such matters as to whether or not to accept a student; the number of the students they could accommodate and the actual learning/work to be done. But, in terms of the responsibility over funds, whether to stay in Wentworth or move to another area just as eager for the interaction, the very nature of this partnership was unequal from the beginning, since the final decision making and purse strings were always with SIT. The recurring question of sending local youth to the USA or enrolling them on our programme in South Africa was a constant reminder that this was not an equal partnership – SIT gave the community what it could when it could. Marais and Botes (2005) warn that these unequal partnerships may cause organizations or individuals in the community to develop a dependency on the SL programme and perpetuate the perception that poorer communities are helpless.

### **The Terms of Help**

Students placed in community organizations can offer short term help with day to day operations fulfilling duties such as typing, cleaning, and filing. But this does not seem to be what the organizations want from the students. The research showed emphatically that organizations were offended by the notion of students wanting to “make a difference”, “do something meaningful” and “leave a legacy”. Short term help within the CBL programme itself was not what CBOs wanted. They wanted to be able to teach, to share their ideas and views of their community and of community work with the students. Balancing student wants and needs with community wants and needs became a necessary and tiring part of the programme as these were effectively at odds with each other. Early in the life of the CBL programme SIT dropped the word “service” from any discussion of the programme particularly with students. This lessened the outcry from students “to do something

constructive” and sent a message that the SIT CBL programme in Wentworth was about learning about and from the community and not about charity work.

But to say that the community organizations did not want any help at all would be misleading. They wanted help of a different kind. As one community member said, “some of them can’t seem to understand that organizations don’t need that kind of help. Maybe we need something different to what they are expecting.” (Glynnis, CBO Focus Group, 27 March 2007). When they defined the help they wanted it was long term in nature in the form of research assistants, committed long term volunteers, networking with organizations in the USA, links to funding and actual funding from the students and their networks in the US. The homestay families wanted role models to help change the behaviour of their youth, trips to the US, friendships and even marriage. The community wanted similar programmes for their children in the US and to be part of the SIT programme in South Africa. They also wanted funding and joint projects that SIT might be able to provide or facilitate in the future.

One of the guiding principles of CD is the bottom up approach, where the community itself determines needs, opportunities, and strategies for working towards them. In this case the community organizations decided what their role would be in the CBL engagement. What this points to for the SIT/Wentworth CBL programme is to better prepare inflated student expectations for the reality of what they will be doing in organizations, and its implications for the broader field of CD. Students need to be prepared to be learners; to not assume they know what is best for organization, family, situation; to expect that they know very little about any given situation; to stress that they are there to learn how a specific organization works in a specific context to overcome a set of specific community challenges. Discussions with students about their potential roles in providing the long term help the organizations are also important. Collecting community organization requests for research is just one way that could facilitate a student independent research project turning into a useful dedicated month long attachment with an organization on a Community Based Research (CBR) project designed by the organization. Students can also be prepared

to look into creating and developing networks for local organization when they return home to their campuses and communities.

### **CBL and Community Development**

The pedagogy of CBL lends itself exceptionally well to an examination of the field of CD (Fourie 2003; Erasmus & Jaftha 2002). The idea of students who are studying development coming into a community and learning from the grassroots workers is one that echoes the seminal work of Robert Chambers. Chambers (1997:56) believes that “Practitioners must learn from local people, directly, on the site and face-to-face, gaining insight from their local physical, technical and social knowledge”. Here the “practitioners” are “learner practitioners”, which makes their education on whose reality to value so vital for their lives and work to come. Learning about CD through placements at CBOs, brings with it the opportunity for students, be they from South Africa or America, to see and begin to understand, and participate in the building of communities. A word of caution, based on this research I am advocating “learning about development” under the guidance of a CBO and not students going out and “doing development”.

### **Working with Communities**

Communities as defined in this study are complex entities; they are made up of complex organizations and complex individuals, and between and amongst these are layers of relationships. In doing CBL in a community like Wentworth, you have to be prepared to work with the layers, tensions and ambiguities. Continuous assessment of the relationship between the CBOs and the university programme is necessary, and so is assessing the relationships between the community organizations so central to the CBL programme. If the CBL programme is causing tension between personalities and organizations then dialogue is needed between the parties involved. This can be time consuming and difficult, but working towards a CBL partnership requires commitment to the processes and to the individuals involved in CBL.

This particular CBL programme in Wentworth was brokered through a community based organization within the community. The organization and its founder/director essentially

acted as our gatekeeper; introducing them to the programme, to other organizations and assisting in the placement of students with homestay families. Our entry into the community would not have been as smooth as it was if not for the gatekeeper, but this came at a price. Elevating one organization above the others caused problems of ownership, entitlement and funding between participating organizations. The gatekeeper organization also had much more influence on SIT in guiding the processes of the CE, and speaking on behalf of other organizations and homestay families. In retrospect what was presented as the voice and the needs of the community were in actuality the voices of one or two people who shouted the loudest.

But gatekeepers are not necessarily bad and play a necessary role in establishing a CBL programme. Our gatekeeper organization provided fast access to people and organizations in Wentworth, and knew the local terrain of community work. SIT could have selected another means to facilitate introductions, but that would just be choosing a different gatekeeper with a different set of politics and agendas. SIT could have looked outside the immediate community, but working from within the community upheld the principles of local knowledge, and local actors setting the context for the engagement. It also contributed to the capacity building of that one organization. Gatekeepers do not represent everyone in a particular community and might promote certain people and organizations and stifle the potential of others to play a leading role in the CBL Programme. CE rightly involves these leaders but needs to avoid the pitfall of assuming that such voices necessarily represent all interests in the community by constantly seeking the voice of all stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

In terms of CD, the research highlighted the ‘messiness’ of a community polarized and paralyzed by long-standing differences among its local leaders. This could be true of different communities all over South Africa, particularly those that have been marginalised and where access to resources is limited. The politics should have been expected. Rivalry, debate and questioning of where limited resources go are perhaps necessary to keep community organizations honest to the broader community. The small size and closeness of the community of Wentworth means that everyone knows everyone else, and their

business. The sense of small community is both an asset in terms of social capital and yet it does have its shortcomings in making development decisions personal. The feuding between some organizations in Wentworth did take on a particularly vindictive and destructive bent that certainly warrants future investigation, and possibly links with the likening of CBOs to gangs. All of this underscores the importance of taking note of culture, politics, and relationships that already exist when you enter a community, for development projects and for CBL alike.

### **A Community Focus**

The research emphasized the importance of the homestay to the community in a CBL programme. The homestays families reported numerous benefits from their participation in the programme and for the students they provide an invaluable vantage point for learning about the community and context in which community organizations function. Homestays can open the complex worlds of the community at large up to the students, helping them gain insight into the direct issues that the organization is responding to, and how the organization works within the framework of its own community to address these issues. Students are exposed to the webs of relationships that make the organization function. Homestays also allow community organizations and homestay families to form bonds and relationships that can last much longer than the presence of the students. The addition of homestays makes the CBL engagement a holistic community endeavour, and at the same time allows the community the opportunity to present itself in a more realistic, unsanitized manner. As Nuttall (2003:56) says, “Community-based learning occurs in the ‘real world’; it cannot be divorced from its social context. It is a public encounter.”

The practice of including a homestay in a CE experience would work for shorter term encounters and need not be confined to a geographic community. The homestay could provide a student partnered with a LGBT organization the opportunity to stay with a gay homestay, a student partnered with a disabled organization the opportunity to stay with a “differently-abled” homestay. The point is to provide students with the real world social context in which this organization exists. In the South African context the addition of homestays for university students would be an outstanding way to increase local students’

exposure to the “separateness” of the South African society and their own biases. I have had experiences in another CBL programme where SIT students partner with counterparts from UKZN Edgewood in rural schools; and have had American SIT students do homestays while local South African students (and facilitators) are deeply opposed to the homestays saying it would be too difficult for them. This is precisely the attitude that in my opinion adding a homestay component to a South African CBL programme could counter. One would hope that students who are studying CD or sustainable development should be encouraged to be responsible development practitioners - *not* the kind who do top down, “drive-by” development; only visiting when necessary, conveniently situated communities to do their projects. Butin (2005) says that community involvement can encourage students to consider the dilemmas and ambiguities of how life often works. In other words, community based experiential learning directly linked to the community can help students to avoid simplistic thinking, helps them to come to better understanding of complex social problems, as well as possible remedies. It encourages more realistic discussions with community members and CBOs about CD.

### **Reflection for All**

Reflection is a central learning mechanism for students on a CBL programme. Structured, intentional reflection is required for students and provides the connection or “glue” between what is learned in the classroom and the application of that learning to the particular community problem (Eyler & Giles, 1996). Kolb’s well-known experiential learning model defines learning as “... the process whereby knowledge is constructed through the transformation of experience that occurs in the cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation” (Kolb, 1984). Even though it is only a week long programme, the SIT students are required to do both written and oral reflections of their CBL experiences – what they are seeing, doing, hearing in both the organizations and in the homestays.

Feedback to and from homestay families and community organizations in Wentworth has always been done by SIT facilitators on an individual and informal basis. During the research, community organizations and homestay families commented on how much they

enjoyed coming together and wondered whether we could hold debrief meetings more regularly. They enjoyed the chance to meet and talk about their experiences and learnings. The focus groups that were conducted during the research were seen by both groups as a way to give and receive feedback and have a group reflection on the CBL experience. The community organizations in particular felt that having a directed, facilitated discussion about the CBL programme would help them plan for future SIT groups and for other student programmes that they might do. These debriefs could give SIT facilitators a mechanism to relay feedback and from students and programme staff, the organizations would be able to think through ways to address any concerns and thus contribute towards capacity building of the organizations. Community debriefs could be used to encourage reflective practice amongst the organizations in Wentworth and give them the tools and attitude to inquire continually into their own professional practice. Organizational reflectivity is not a new concept to organizational management and NGO development; Schön (1983) coined the term “reflective practice” in *The Reflective Practitioner* and it has been adopted by wide range of professional groups. Schön (1983) suggested that the capacity to reflect on action can allow the organization to engage in a process of continuous learning. Community briefs could also allow organizations to feel a deeper connection to the programme and to each other. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the CBL programme provided a neutral rallying point for the community organizations and perhaps continuing with facilitated reflection in some form could be a form of a unique way to encourage inter-organization cooperation and dialogue.

### **Programme Length**

The complexity of the social world, organizations, and university requirements makes it difficult to gauge how many days, weeks or hours is appropriate in terms of contact time for any given CBL programme. Should the interaction be concentrated or spread over the duration of a term or semester? The SIT Wentworth CBL programme ran for one week each semester. But that one week was intense; with full time participation in the community based organization coupled with a homestay with a family in the same community. It was complete immersion in the work of the CBO and its social context. The intensity of the experience meant that the students were exposed to a great deal of

information and this took time to reflect upon and process. This was a challenge because within the context of a 15 week programme on Reconciliation and Development, this one week was but a small part of the whole curriculum. There simply was not enough time to do justice to the diversity of student experiences and facilitate student reflection and learning. From a facilitator's perspective, the time frame felt constrictive, and pushed many students to the point of disengaging with the process. During the research the organizations and the homestay families both asked for more time with students. Perhaps the short time frame involved caused the organizations to be reluctant to spend time on actual work with the students beyond purpose built programmes. In a longer term programme where the students and CBOs had more time together, it is likely that the organizations would be willing to assign more "real" quantifiable work to the students. Perhaps all of this combined this points to expanding an the CBL engagement to two weeks with a less "full" daily programme with the organizations, and more time for reflection.

### **Internationalization of SL**

International SL programmes are gaining popularity in US International Education (Grusky, 2000). Every semester a number of students join the SIT Reconciliation and Development programme having already participated in one or more service programmes in places like Guatemala, Bosnia, Kenya, Russia and India. The students are very much aware of the week of CBL that the programme offers. It is advertised on the SIT website as "Community Service" and while I have asked for this to be changed to "CBL", I have been told that "service" is the language that American college students know and understand. This can set unrealistic student expectations that are very much at odds with local community perspectives. Crabtree (1998) warns that:

While participatory development and SL may provide a strong grounding for cross-cultural experiences, the marketing of SL programs is also a significant concern. As the idea of SL comes increasingly into 'vogue,' university administrators and admissions officers will not fail to turn it into a marketing strategy, particularly at private universities. Trivializing SL components and minimalizing the social justice/empowerment approach in favor of a more charitable and vocational one undermines the credibility of the program itself (Crabtree, 1998:202).

Students in the SIT programme have to be continually reminded that they are not in South Africa to “help” or try to change communities. Real change has to come from within a community and the students often leave the programme determined to return to their own communities to become agents for change.

International SL needs to proceed cautiously. There are a number of International SL programmes “doing business” in South Africa as short term faculty-led courses run through a local intermediary. They do not have a permanent base of operations in the country. Usually a faculty member travels to South Africa with a group of students and a local person/company/university office is hired to set up SL placements. This type of arrangement can be problematic particularly in so far as the local conditions, politics and relationships are all several steps removed from the students and the faculty member. The exact relationships and methods of the local intermediary are not always known, and a number of questions arise:

- What happens before the group arrives?
- What happens after the group leaves?
- How are relationships with community organization cared for?
- Is this simply one of many consulting jobs for this local middleperson?
- Are these organizations used by any other programmes and will they become overworked, making the programme unsustainable?

Another challenge is the long term help that organizations in this Wentworth study wanted to get out of the relationship with SIT:

- Are international universities willing to give more, fund projects and programmes?
- If they do pay, what about local students?
- Will organizations favour the paying international students over non paying local students?
- Will the organizations risk becoming dependent on foreign money?
- If they do not pay the community organizations, does it make the arrangement extractive and somewhat neo-colonial in nature?

These are all questions that warrant further investigation, especially given the number of foreign universities and independent study abroad providers advertising SL programmes to

South Africa (particularly Cape Town). Grusky (2000:858) in an article entitled “International SL: A Critical Guide from an Impassioned Advocate” provides a word of caution:

International SL programs burst with potential and stumble with the weight of contradictions left unattended. Without thoughtful preparation, orientation, program development and the encouragement of study, as well as critical analysis and reflection, the programs can easily become small theatres that recreate historic cultural misunderstandings and simplistic stereotypes and replay on a more intimate scale, the huge disparities in income and opportunity that characterise North-South relations today.

### **Local vs. Foreign**

CBL in South Africa is wholly supported by the Department of Education. The White Paper 3, on the Transformation of Higher Education (Department of Education, 1997), spells out roles for higher education to contribute to “the common good of society” and to the “reconstruction and development” of the country. Another stated goal is “to promote and develop social responsibility and awareness amongst students of the role of higher education in social and economic development through community service programmes.” What is envisioned by government are CE programmes for South African students run by South African universities in collaboration with South African CBOs to contribute more fully to South African development goals. One wonders then what the place is for programmes that bring foreign students into the picture. The research has shown that there are problems and complicated power dynamics associated with these interactions. They are not regulated, making resource poor communities and community organizations vulnerable to exploitation. The programmes can also be viewed with distrust and suspicion by some South African academics that question the motivations of the Americans as well as the commodification of the CE process. As mentioned previously in the study, a colleague at UKZN asked that SIT not pay any money to hosting organizations, as this would set a precedent that local students and programmes would be expected to pay. As he did not have the budget to do so; he felt his local students could potentially lose out on CEs because of money.

And yet, the community organizations in this research wanted the opportunity to host both local and international students. The local students were their own children in a manner of speaking; they felt that it was their duty to contribute to their development and the development of their country (James, Personal Interview 2008). They gave differently to the different groups and learnt differently as well. They tended to push the local students harder, and tried to give them real work-related skills that they could use for finding a job. And finally the expectations and hope of future benefits were also different. The expectation was that the local student would go on to work for the good of the country; from the SIT student they hoped for more direct and tangible deliverables. The growing numbers of international programmes in South Africa doing SL programmes needs to be looked at more closely. in relation to impacts on local CBOs, impacts on the CEs initiated by local centres of Higher Education and potential guidelines from the Department of Higher Education that may be needed in order to provide some structure to these interactions. The research supports that the SIT Wentworth programme was built carefully, not extractive in nature and genuinely supportive of the interaction and open ended learnings between the students and the community. The people involved and indeed the programme itself became a part of the community. A concern is that not all international programmes or their proxies will have taken such time and effort to draw in the community and seek their honest collaboration and development. This must be guarded against jealously.

### **Final Thoughts**

This research has yielded rich information and insights into the impacts of the SIT CBL programme on the community of Wentworth. My hope is that the research process, findings, and recommendations of this study can contribute more broadly to the field of CBL and the work of CD organizations. On a more personal note the community explorations into a Coloured history, identity and culture were exciting to capture and they provided insight into the processes of community renewal, but sadly also of self-destruction. This topic has interested me for some time and in retrospect may have been a subconscious reason for choosing a Coloured area for a programme site in the very beginning. It is still an area that needs more research and documentation.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 SYLLABUS FOR THE RECONCILIATION AND DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR (RDS) OF THE SIT STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMME

### Course Overview

The Reconciliation and Development Seminar is an 8-credit course (120 class hours) and the seminar material will be delivered through the examination of five modules. Lectures and discussions aim to provide students with a solid grasp of the historical background to South Africa's apartheid system, contemporary developments leading to the dismantling of that system, the visions for post-apartheid South Africa, the political, economic and social structure of the future South Africa, and an anthropological and cultural look at South African society. A central premise of the seminar is the interconnected nature of issues of reconciliation and development in South African reality; it is difficult to analyze one without considering its relationship to the other. As such, when focusing in the first instance upon issues of reconciliation, we will also consider how the issue impacts and is shaped by particular patterns of development. At the same time, where the course examines a development issue, we must also reflect on how the issue may have important reconciliation components as well. It is the holistic interplay of challenges and opportunities relating to both reconciliation and development that characterizes the exploration of the program theme in the course.

### Objectives

- To examine contemporary reconciliation and development issues in South Africa through a multidisciplinary lens, as well as to analyze the historical, political, economic, cultural, and geographic forces that have shaped the South African experience;
- To introduce students to the unique resources available in South Africa through contact with host nationals of expertise, including local communities, practitioners, and academics;
- To encourage students, through written work and discussion sessions, to process and integrate substantial amounts of information, different schools of thought, and varied types of presentations;

- To delegate academic and social skill-building activities in such a way that students take initiative in and responsibility for their own learning; and
- To serve as the thematic base of the program to which other program components - FSS, language, ISP - will look in order to help contextualize field experiences within an integrated and thematic context.

### **Course Modules**

RDS material will be delivered through the examination of five modules, as found below. The approach will be integrative and experiential, and will aim to develop a multi-sided and historical understanding of the South African experience, with particular reference to reconciliation and development. Please note that module-specific syllabi, with readings and other detailed information, will be made available to students as the course progresses.

#### ***Module 1: South Africa: The State of the Nation***

Engaging a broad range of lecturers and activities, and taught at three sites in South Africa - Johannesburg, Durban, and the KwaZulu Natal South Coast - this introductory module works to develop a common frame of reference for students and staff to more fully explore issues of reconciliation, development, political economy, gender, and education in South Africa.

#### ***Module 2: Development in South Africa***

This module focuses on the political economy of development in South Africa and through the material students will be exposed not only to the major debates within South African development policy, but will also gain firsthand experience in the challenges of rural life and the methods of community facilitation and development. The module is run in both a rural and an urban setting. We will begin the module with some conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of development in Durban, and then we will move on to Amacambini, a rural community just north of the Tugela River in KwaZulu Natal. Here we will live in homestays and visit a number of development projects within the community. In Amacambini, we will work in partnership with the P.E.A.C.E. Foundation, a local non-governmental organization. Lastly, we will visit the University of Zululand, where we will

work with peers at this historically disadvantaged institution to share ideas and analyze issues of development, both rural and urban.

### ***Module 3: The Challenges of Reconciliation in South Africa***

This module will be taught in Durban and on excursion in the Western Cape. We will look at issues surrounding peace, reconciliation, and coexistence in South Africa. These will include the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), race, racism, identity and nation building, peace and conflict resolution in South Africa, South Africa's role in peace building on the African continent, the concept of Ubuntu and traditional knowledge systems regarding reconciliation, and the process of healing the wounds and memories of apartheid. This module will also look into the delicate issues of identity development and reclamation in the new South Africa.

### ***Module 4: Putting Theory into Practice: CBL in Wentworth***

This module is designed to enable students to have a more "hands-on" experience of many of the issues encountered throughout the semester. Students will live in homestays in the Coloured community of Wentworth, in Durban, and will work with organizations within the community for one week. The time with the organization is not about "work" but rather about being a "participant observer" and learning the complexities of CD from these grassroots organizations.

### ***Module 5: Focused Study: Development, Education, Gender, and Reconciliation***

Students will be asked to select one area of specialization and focus based upon interest and possibly on plans for ISP field study. The areas of focused study are: (1) development; (2) reconciliation; (3) education; and (4) gender. The purpose of the focused study is to:

- Provide an opportunity for students to study in greater depth a key aspect of the South African situation;
- Expose the students to a wider spectrum of issues within reconciliation and development in South Africa;
- Expand the scope of professional and academic contacts in the country; and
- Further the process of self-directed, independent study, and enhance opportunities for students to learn from one other (i.e., both intra- and inter-group learning).

Detailed syllabi for the focused studies are provided as the RDS course progresses.

### **General Reading**

In addition to readings, which will be assigned for each module, it is also the student's responsibility to keep up to date with current events. At a minimum, students are required to read the weekly *Mail & Guardian*; it is also recommended that you read a daily newspaper (perhaps alternating papers to get various perspectives) as well as a Sunday paper. It is advised that you watch a session of the news on "SABC" or "E" at least once a week, though this is in no way a substitute for keeping up with the print media. Familiarity with current events and a working knowledge of today's political and economic issues will be assumed in the RDS.

### **Assessment**

Students will be expected to prepare for, attend, and participate in the lectures, discussions, and field visits. They will be expected to complete all assignments in a professional, timely manner. The following breakdown of grades will be used to arrive at the final letter grade, which is determined by the Academic Director.

| <i>Assignment</i>            | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>Due Date</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Seminar Paper                | 30 percent        | 17 March        |
| Reflection Paper             | 20 percent        | 3 April         |
| Focused Study Response Paper | 15 percent        | 17 April        |
| Focused Study Presentation   | 15 percent        | 14 April        |
| Participation                | 20 percent        | Always          |

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **CBOS IN WENTWORTH**

#### **We Help Our Children**

We Help Our Children is a non-profit non-governmental organization that seeks to empower children of the community to make positive life choices. Through workshops, guest lectures, leadership camps and more, WHOC teaches the youth important life management strategies that allow them to plan for and create successful futures. The organization also aims to bring the youth in the community into contact with positive role models from a wide range of backgrounds, and to exciting and educational activities outside of the classroom.

#### **Wentworth Aids Action Group (WAAG)**

WAAG approaches the HIV/AIDS dilemma from a holistic perspective that includes: Home-based care, provided by trained volunteers to persons who are sick as a result of AIDS and who cannot take care of themselves; Voluntary testing and counselling; Education programmes targeted at high risk groups such as the youth; and Support groups for people affected by HIV/AIDS to share experiences and discuss challenges.

#### **Keep a Child Alive**

Keep a Child Alive is an American based and funded NGO that offers the chance for anti-retroviral therapy to be provided in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Rwanda, Uganda and India. Keep a Child Alive recently purchased the Blue Roof Clinic in Wentworth and is in the process of developing its programmes in the community. KCA is currently dispensing ARVs and KCA will soon conduct a number of AIDS-related projects, such as providing programmes for children, and safe places to do homework. KCA is staffed by residents of Wentworth, and the Blue Roof Clinic houses the Wentworth Aids Action Group.

#### **The Association for the Aged (TAFTA)**

TAFTA is a welfare organisation dedicated to the alleviation of distress and the promotion of the welfare and happiness of the aged. In Wentworth, the organization manages a state

subsidised sub-economic frail care facility able to house 52 persons. Services include accommodating and assisting the state geriatric clinic, a social club, activities and outings, occupational therapy assessment and advice, assistance at Addington hospital.

### **Wentworth Organisation of Women**

The Wentworth Organisation of Women (WOW) works to empower and develop women and the community in which they live. The organization works to provide opportunities for cultural upliftment in the community by organising educational events for the community, e.g. career, youth programmes, seminars; and by organizing sports and cultural activities, e.g. arts and craft classes, dance classes, and street soccer programmes. The organization also seeks to network with other community organisations working to create an awareness of community problems and programmes to address them.

### **Sunshine Trauma Room**

The Sunshine Trauma Room is an initiative based at the South African Police Service in Wentworth, but run by volunteers from the community. The Trauma room provides and ensures correct handling and follow through of all cases of a sensitive nature that are brought to the Police Station.

### **South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA)**

SDCEA is a coalition of citizens from communities all over South Durban, including Wentworth, Merebank, Bluff, Isipingo, and Umlazi. The area is home to some 285,000 largely disadvantaged people who live side by side with numerous polluting industries and hazardous facilities, including oil refineries, chemical manufacturers, chemical storage facilities and toxic landfills. The alliance speaks out for environmental justice and strives to bring higher environmental standards to the industries and communities that cohabit South Durban basin. Since it was formed, SDCEA has championed the constitutionally guaranteed right of communities to a healthy environment.

### **Mater Populi Hospice**

Mater Populi is an HIV/AIDS hospice, serving women (and sometimes children) with full blown AIDS. Many of the people come from desperately poor backgrounds and some have been turned out of their homes by their families because of the shame associated with their HIV status. This is a church-based organization.

### **Mater Vitae**

Mater Vitae is a pregnancy crisis centre where women and girls are cared for, and where they can have their babies in a dignified and secure setting. Many of the expectant mothers are teenagers "in trouble" face, who face unsympathetic families and partners. The home tries to assist the girls with questions they may be asking themselves: How can I be sure I am pregnant? How should I tell my family? Can I keep my baby? Can I continue at school? Can I keep my job? What about finances? Is marriage the solution? Where can I obtain good medical care? Where can I live until my baby is born? This is a church-based organization.

### **St. Monica's**

St. Monica's provides residential care to children committed to the Home by a court of law. These children may be orphaned, abandoned, abused and in need of special care. Their committal to the Home is seen as a temporary measure to help equip them for reunification with family or community.

### **Ocean View Place of Safety**

Ocean View House is a State managed centre for the temporary care of children living outside of family homes where their needs are assessed and met. It is a residential child and youth care facility established in terms of Section 28 of the Child Care Act, (Act No.74 of 1983) for the transitional care and protection of children and youth who are in crisis, and/or at risk, and involved in court proceedings, pending a final ruling. The Centre targets children and youth removed from their families in terms of Section 11, 12 and 15 of the Child Care Act, and the youth who are awaiting trial on charges based on the Criminal Procedures Act (No. 51 of 1977). The facility can accommodate 60 children including 25

percent boys aged 6 to 12 years and 75 percent girls aged 6 to 17 years. Ocean View provides the following service: Child and youth Care, Social Work, Health/Psychological Service, Education including skills training and staff development, Community Outreach and Networking, Co-ordination and facilitation of the Wentworth Family Preservation Project, and Learnership for volunteers and students in practical placement training.

### **Wentworth Development Forum**

Founded in response to the perception that there was “no delivery in the area and... no one voice for the community,” the Wentworth Development Forum (WDF) is designed to “address issues confronting the Austerville and Wentworth communities, and the youth in particular.” Although the original purpose of WDF was to address the needs of those members of the community who lacked housing or basic services – for example, those who have been evicted, who have had their water shut off or have had their electricity cut off – WDF has expanded its focus and now contributes to a wide array of community projects. So far WDF, in conjunction with local government, has arranged the construction of 4 parks has overseen the construction of a community centre in town and has worked to improve housing in the area. With regard to youth programmes, WDF has led hundreds of workshops and youth debating forums and has run many excursions and camps for young people in the community. The Wentworth Development Forum is also involved in a “Street Theatre Programme” that uses drama to educate the community, particularly the youth, around the issues of HIV/AIDS

### **Helping Hands**

Helping Hands is a Community Based Organization that has been set up to run and provide a feeding scheme for community members in need. The organization has recently been donated a piece of land which they are in the process of turning into a garden. The produce from the garden will be used by the feeding scheme project.

**The Metalworkers Co-op** (No Longer Functioning due to lack of funding, but concerned community members are trying to restart the organization)

The Metalworkers Cooperative is committed to providing an economic empowerment vehicle for the common good of the community and the alleviation of poverty. The Coop provides alternative income generating models consistent with sound CD and cooperative principles. The cooperative offers a wide range of services to provide opportunities for the huge pool of unemployed people in the community. These services include: Welding; Pipefitting; Boiler making; Plumbing; Tiling; Refuse removal; and Electrical work.

**Wings of Love** (No longer functioning due to lack of funding, but concerned community members are trying to restart the organization)

Wings of Love is a non-profit, community-based organisation (CBO), based in the Durban South communities in the South-Central Metro region of Durban. It was established to provide counselling services for victims of family violence - specifically women and children. Over the years the services have developed to be offered with greater specialisation and depth. The organization provides a range of service to the community: *Counselling* service to victims of violence and other family crises; A *Domestic Violence Office* where victims of abuse receive assistance with protection orders, advice and counselling; A *Safe house* where battered women are provided with short-term emergency accommodation; A *Maintenance Office* where women are assisted to apply for maintenance and given legal advice. This service includes facilitating meetings between the parents in an attempt to reach agreements on child maintenance; and A *Victim Empowerment Programme* for victims of domestic violence.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDES**

#### **Questions for Community Organization Focused Group**

1. Tell me about your experiences hosting an SIT student. Good and Bad. Interesting stories. Funny Stories. Etc.
2. What is it about Development and Reconciliation that you think the students learn from their experience in Wentworth?
3. What do you think they learn about Wentworth?
4. What are potential benefits/drawbacks for your organization as a whole for hosting these groups of students?
5. What are potential benefits/drawbacks for Wentworth as a whole for hosting these groups of students?
6. What advice and recommendations would you have for an organization that wants to host a student in the future?
7. What, if any, effect does the CBL programme have on the workings of your organisation?
8. Is CBL programme useful for your organization? How? Why?
9. What suggestions would you like to make for us to make improvements in the programme?

#### **Questions for Homestay Family Focused Group**

1. Tell me about your experiences hosting an SIT student. Good and Bad. Interesting stories. Funny Stories. Etc.
2. What is it that you think students learn when they spend time in Wentworth?
3. What do they learn about Development in Wentworth?
4. What do they learn about Reconciliation in Wentworth?
5. Why do you want to host a student?
6. What do/could you and your family learn from hosting a student? What are the benefits?
7. What are potential benefits for Wentworth as a whole for hosting these groups of students?
8. What do you suppose are the reasons Community organizations host students? What have organizations said; what have students said?
9. What advice and recommendations would you have for someone who wants to host a student in the future?
10. What suggestions would you like to make for us to make improvements in the programme?

## APPENDIX 4

### A COLOURED IN TECHNICOLOUR

My mense staan voor baie deure wat gesluit is,  
Sommige het hulle vir hulself gesluit,  
Sommige is deur andere vir hulle gesluit;  
Maar ons gaan dit almal saam oopkry, al moet dit hoe is!  
Al moet daar pyn is, al moet daar stryd is!

*Omdat ek 'n Kullid is!*

I was here before oom Van Riebeeck came,  
I was here roaming all these plains.  
I was here when uncle Shaka came,  
In this land, long before everyone came, I was the flame!

*I am a Coloured!*

I owe my being to the Khoi and the San, to the slaves from Java, Madagascar and Batavia.  
My DNA is richly shaped from the miscegenation of White and Black; the coming together  
of the Swati and English, Indian and Tsonga, Chinese and Sotho, Boer and Zulu, Venda,  
Pedi, Tswana, Shangaan, Ndebele, and Xhosa. Yet, those who formed me, deny me – deny  
me my true freedom, and deny me equality in this my own motherland...

This is who I am, even when I'm alone as a stone: I am a Coloured!

My name, my classification, was willfully and disdainfully bestowed on me, making me  
the laughing stock as an in-between person – not white enough, not black enough. Yet  
even the ridiculed name I proudly make my own.

I tell you today, if no one else is this today, I am a Coloured!

This is who I am – from Bonteheuwel to Springbok, van Buysdorp, deur Westernburg tot  
die laaste fisher town. From Eldos to Mitchells Plain, to the levelled plains of the Free  
State, tot waar die Heidedal. From Wentworth tot die Baai. Kry my in Keimoes, meet my

in Danville, orals is my Homestead. Ek's in Woodlands en die hele Reiger Park. Ek blom op [Bruin-ou.com](http://Bruin-ou.com), 24/7. Ek is wat ek is, regdeur Mzansi.

For sho! *I am a Coloured!*

Mandela en elkeen wat die feite ken, sal jou vertel wie ek is, en die waarheid beken.

I am a descendant of the first political prisoner on Robben Island, Harry die Strandloper; of Jan Bantjes wat se naam getjap is op 'n straat in Lichtenburg. I descend from the agterryers wat met die Boere die British ge-fight het; from the 1976 uprising where my brothers were killed in Noordgesig, al praat julle nou heeldag lank kamstig net van Hector Peterson – al check julle nie meer my contribution tot die freedom mission; I even descent from the longest standing army in Mzansi's history – die SAKK; from the founding of the United Democratic Front, en hiermee moet ek jou straight confront... Why do you still treat me as an outcast?

No matter what, *I remain a Coloured!*

All my dreams I am denied, through al die tik-tik gemors en one-sided affirmative action, I find my plight;  
denied, excluded, here in your full sight.

Here I stand today, prepared to be what I am, even if my own and other demons I must fight.

I'll fight you if you want to artificially create another strata of Colouredness;  
I'll fight you if you want to use my people with your empty promises.

I'll unite my people for their own better good, and get my aunties in a better mood.  
With all South Africa I want to live in fairness and mutual respect, for after all we're indeed one big brotherhood.

I accept that none of us is the main-ou, but together we can be the great-ou.

So take my hand and refuse me not, and I'll help you paint that last lost colour of our rainbow nation.

I am a Coloured!

Through my creolisation I brought you Afrikaans, and some took it from me.  
I make you pickle fish like no other. I give you the Cape Coons in all their glamour. And  
now I take my language back, I re-invent it for all to enjoy...  
“en hosh, my sizza en my broe, ek dalla jou die hele storie,  
slat jou in technicolor my hele movie, die volle mollevisie.  
Wie kan blom soos ek right-through al die opposisie?

Dis hoe dit is, die saak is soos [kakduidelik.co.za](http://kakduidelik.co.za), duidelik soos daylight.  
Al hals wie my ook en maak my swak, ek gwarra jou terug, want  
jy check, ek lyk net dof, eintlik is ek blind bright.”

*Ek is 'n Kullid!*

“Aweh, ma-se-nis! Izzit nie kla so nie? Ek baaiza nie. Deur alles speel ek my part!”

*I am a Coloured!*

Call me not... a so-called Coloured. Ek's nie een van daais wat deurmekaar is oor my ID  
nie. So, see me not as... an unidentifiable citizen, a so-called entity, a so-called being –  
dan's jy heavy confused, for you can't have a Rainbow nation without the Bruin-ou nation.

Let those grand academics – daais wat die domste boeke blaai, those 'so-called' leaders of  
my people, those who find themselves in sustainable, comfortable positions, looking and  
speaking from their insulated ivory towers of sell-out cornerstone media spaces and  
positions – yes, let those who deem themselves to be 'so-called' Coloureds, let them be,  
and let them be seen as exactly what they say they are: 'so-called' – fakes – not real –  
denialist of their own roots and people; too lofty and grand, just mere coconuts.

But as for me...

Call me a Bushie, call me a Bruin-ou, call me a Dushie, even call me a Kleurling as jy dan  
like. Dissie jy wat my kan tune wie ek issie: I tell you who I am, for I know myself more  
deeply than you ever would.

I am a Coloured!

En iemand met 'n moerse spine,  
Needs to take a little time;

And tell you about a heinous crime,  
A crime against my people perpetrated in daytime,  
where compassion and solidarity is denied to my bloodline.

I am a Coloured in Technicolor. I buy a colour tv, still all I see is black and white; for my Colouredness, my hele nannas, my music and language, my culture, my people, my being – you still deny, oppress and suppress... Hoe kan ek dan ook Vuka Sizwe? Miskien is dit jy wat moet skrik, al izzit net wakker, want ek is hier; vir nou en vir altyd.

*I am a Coloured!*

You can't wish me away...

You can't reason me away...

You can't pray me away...

You can't toor me away...

You can't legislate me away...

And hear me well today: You'll nevva broadcast my existence away...

I am a Kullid!

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