

Beyond@Ivory.Tower — From Traditional University To Engaged University

Botes L*

Centre for Development Support, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

Abstract

The traditional university has often been characterised as an ivory tower, unconcerned with its surroundings and paying scant regard to the real world. The engaged university is an institution that bridges the gap between itself and the surrounding community. The combination of real-life experience and expertise with academic knowledge can generate socially-engaged knowledge benefiting both the university and the community, whether business, public sector or NGO. This paper is therefore a plea for a scholarship of engagement.

This paper will firstly share some views on development and development studies and academic entrepreneurship in the research context. If human development is defined in its broadest sense as *expanding human capabilities* it opens up a plethora of opportunities for engaging communities in any planned development intervention. Secondly, the paper will argue the necessity for policy-related research (PRR), practice-oriented research (POR) and implementation-driven research (IDR) as elements of a scholarship of engagement. In this regard it will be argued that quality development research should always have elements of academic entrepreneurship and engagements with local community knowledge, i.e. Indigenous knowledge. Different contexts of socially-engaged scholarship will be explored. Thirdly, it will reflect upon four case studies, to illustrate how we have pursued research for development beyond the ivory tower, i.e. as an entrepreneurial engagement of communities in the South African context. Lastly, the paper will elaborate on the essential conceptual building blocks of scholarly entrepreneurial engagement.

Keywords

Scholarship of engagement, development studies, policy research, implementation-driven research, academic engagement, academic entrepreneurship

Some introductory remarks

I am glad for the opportunity of sharing some thoughts on development studies as a form of academic entrepreneurship and a discipline of social engagement with you. On the few occasions that I have travelled abroad, one of the most difficult things — besides facing unfriendly customs officials and coping with the dollar/euro:rand exchange rate — was completing the 'occupation' category on the immigration questionnaire. As a trained sociologist one would expect me to know the requirements of questionnaire construction, let

alone how to fill out a questionnaire item. Let us just consider the options for a moment: 'Professor' sounds so very elitist and one could argue whether it is an occupation or merely a position; 'Scholar' sounds too noble and philosophical while, 'Researcher' sounds like somebody in the lab wearing a white jacket while treating his/her research objects. Perhaps these are some of the reasons why I have rather opted for 'academic entrepreneur' or 'knowledge worker', depending on whether I am wearing my capitalist or socialist jacket at the time.

I will firstly share with you my views on development and development studies and academic entrepreneurship in the research context. Secondly, I will argue the necessity for policy-related research (PRR), practice-oriented research (POR) and implementation-driven research (IDR) as elements of a scholarship of engagement. Thirdly, I will try, by sharing and reflecting upon three case studies, to illustrate how we have pursued research for development beyond the ivory tower, i.e. as an entrepreneurial engagement. Lastly, I will elaborate on the essential conceptual building blocks of scholarly entrepreneurial engagement as manifested in the type of development studies we have embarked upon at the Centre for Development Support (CDS)¹.

Reflections on development and development studies

Like so many other concepts, 'development' means different things to different people. Many use it as the aerosol word which they have sprayed over many contexts of poverty and deprivation. The concept 'development' has also suffered much abuse over the past fifty years. That is why this paper intends to address the question:

"What is development, and for that matter development studies, all about?"

The concept of human development is as old as philosophy itself. Discussions on what makes a good life date back at least to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and the Ancient Greek tradition. In fact, much of ancient philosophy concerns itself with the question of *eudaimonia*, i.e. 'the state of having a desirable life' (Clark 2002, p. 1). More than 700 definitions for development exist. Besides the first descriptions of development in terms of growth, technological advancement, progress, positive social change, and becoming modern, development is construed as: 'a rapid improvement in people's standard of living'; 'a process of enlarging people's choices'; 'equalising people's opportunities'; 'enhancing participatory processes'; and the 'ability of people of having a say in decisions that shape their lives'; of 'providing human beings with the opportunity to develop their full potential'; 'achieving greater self-expression and self-realisation'; and of 'liberating people's creative energy' (Botes 1999). However, many are also very critical of the term 'development' since it is been used and abused in various ways as rhetoric and fad. Often development approaches have turned out

¹ The CDS is a research and development unit within the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of the Free State, South Africa.

to be manipulative or harmful to those who are supposed to be developed. In the hands of powerful people development became a tool of marginalisation and disempowerment. So, for many scholars true to their critical understanding of development, development initiatives are nothing less than deliberate attempts at social engineering.

Besides these fairly general views on development, development is often also explained within a specific disciplinary context, i.e. as economic development, social development, agricultural development, political development, etc.

For the purposes of this address, I will stick to those conceptions with regard to 'human development' as "the expansion of human capabilities which is measured by an index of human development based on GNP per capita, literacy and life expectancy" (see Clark 2002; Sen 1999 and UI Haq 1998). I will argue that the capability approach (as pioneered by development economist Amartya Sen, feminist philosopher/gender studies scholar Martha Nussbaum) and the sustainable livelihoods approach, developed by Dianne Carney and Robert Chambers, are currently the best available frameworks for conceptualising human development. The primary use of the notion of capability is to indicate a space within which comparisons of quality of life are most fruitfully made. Instead of asking about people's satisfactions, or how much in the way of resources they are about to command, we ask, instead, about what they are actually able to do or to be (Nussbaum 2001, p. 12). So, it is not about a consumerist or utility perspective on development, but rather what people should be able to do — the capabilities of people. Human development and capability approaches, therefore, concern themselves with the development of people rather than the development of things. In this regard development is not something which is bestowed upon passive beneficiaries by benevolent benefactors, but it is a process driven by people themselves — a process of well-being and wellbeing: a process of being and doing. This reminds one of the title of a thought-provoking book of Eddie Bruwer (2001), *Beggars can be choosers*.

Development studies is the systemised attempt at cultivating critical reflections and discourses on key issues pertaining to human wellbeing, sustainable livelihoods, poverty alleviation, quality of life and human capabilities. Development studies, thus, are a deliberate attempt at helping people to understand the challenge that 'beggars should be choosers' through critical discourse (reflection) and systemised enquiry (research). It is quite obvious that central to this capability and vulnerability definition of development — and underdevelopment — are concepts such as poverty, human needs, quality of life, empowerment, livelihoods, capacity building, etc. Research for development is always a normative undertaking since it not only elaborates on what is (in a descriptive sense), but also on what ought to be. Value judgments about change for the better are thus inherent to development studies.

Academic entrepreneurship + indigenous knowledge + scholarly engagement = research for development

In stark contrast to many white South African scholars I have been fortunate enough to interact with the poorest of the poor in many of South Africa's townships and informal settlements due to my interest in issues of underdevelopment and poverty. Such exposure and experiences have fundamentally transformed my understanding of people and development, to the extent that I consider myself to be a pale faced African and also an eternal optimist who appreciates the challenges of human development. I have gained a new appreciation and respect for those at the bottom of society. Today, I truly believe that we, academics and other privileged people, have just as much to learn from the poor and vulnerable as they have to learn from us. This embracing of people's knowledge, also coined 'Indigenous knowledge' by some, is an important point of departure for any student of society, and, for that matter, knowledge worker/social entrepreneur in the field of development.

I want to share with you a tale of indigenous wisdom of an old Tswana lady from Galeshewe, Kimberley, which I experienced in 1992.

There was a specific situation in Tswaragano, one of townships in Galeshewe, where the housing demand in an informal settlement totally outweighed the proposed supply by six times. The question all stakeholders involved in this low-income housing project had to grapple with was the basis for selection of the most appropriate 270 beneficiaries. In this case more than 1500 households qualified according to the pre-determined socio-economic criteria or so-called 'means tests' to receive RDP houses. After extensive deliberations involving engineers, public managers, sociologists, project managers, civic leaders and even an economist failed to produce a solution, an old illiterate Tswana lady proposed a public zama-zama (lucky draw) overseen by respected religious leaders. This was acceptable to everyone and it worked wonders. We, the bearers of western knowledge could not come up with a solution so thoroughly rooted in the community. She taught us all that beggars can be choosers in a very particular way.

Somehow, I would argue, development studies boils down to the art of understanding indigenous knowledge and using it as a tool in the scholarship of engagement and applying it to the benefit of all in society. In a sense, development studies is the point of convergence between academic entrepreneurship, Indigenous knowledge and scholarly engagement or, put differently, development studies is Indigenous knowledge applied in an academic, entrepreneurial and engaged manner. Such a conception of development studies opens up a plethora of opportunities for engaged universities to internalise the numerous development challenges of human hardship, poverty and underdevelopment of the communities in which such institutions of higher learning are embedded.

Allow me but a few remarks on entrepreneurship in general, and on academic entrepreneurship in particular: Entrepreneurship constitutes the creation, renewal and enhancement of value, not merely for owners, but for all participants and stakeholders. At the heart of this process is the creation and/or recognition of opportunities, followed by the will and initiative to seize these opportunities. It requires a willingness to take risks — both financial and personal. Entrepreneurship is the ability to sense an opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction, and confusion (Smit 2002, p. 1; Timmons 1999, pp. 28-9).

Smit (2002) argues the case that one of the most important requirements for contemporary entrepreneurship is the ability to deal with change. What are needed to deal with this changing environment, are adaptability, flexibility, speed, aggressiveness and innovativeness. These five words boil down to one — entrepreneurship. If one analyses the contributions of Peter Rosseel (cf. Rosseel 2002) to the discourse on academic entrepreneurship, I should like to differ from Rosseel and argue that academic entrepreneurship involves much more than the mere creation of platforms to stimulate needs-based research. Rosseel's views on academic entrepreneurship are, in my opinion, based on too narrow conceptions of utility or basic needs, while ignoring the capabilities of 'beings' and 'doings' that contribute to a good life. The essential problem with equating academic entrepreneurship to needs-based/problem-solving research is that the researcher inevitably creates expectations which again fuel dependency. The over-emphasis of communities' needs also negates possible strength-based approaches to research for development such as the capability and livelihoods approaches which emphasise the capabilities, assets and activities required for a desirable means of living (cf. Carney 1998; Goldman et al. 2000; Max Neef et al. 1991; Nussbaum 2001; Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones 2002; Sen 1999; Tacoli 1999).

The issue of entrepreneurial universities has also emerged during the past decade. In this regard, Gallagher (2000, p. 21) has indicated that universities need to become much more demand driven and their primary goal must be to "develop graduates whose knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes are highly valued in the workplace and broader community". It is quite clear that both governments and industry/workplace expect or rather demand this from the higher education sector. Some have even taken the idea of an entrepreneurial university further and set the so-called 'engaged university' as the ultimate ideal type of higher education institution in the South African context. What is the essence of an engaged university? (Pretorius 2003; Erasmus and Jaftha 2004).

Ivory tower versus elephant sanctuary: From traditional university to entrepreneurial university to engaged university

The traditional university has often been characterised as an ivory tower, unconcerned with its surroundings and paying scant regard to the real world. The engaged university is an institution that bridges the gap between itself and the surrounding community. The

combination of real-life experience and expertise with academic knowledge can generate socially-engaged knowledge benefiting both the university and the community, whether business, public sector or NGO (Pretorius 2003). We need responsible and socially-responsive scholarship — remember ivory doesn't grow in isolation — it grows on an elephant.

Pretorius (2003) emphasises that an engaged university's relationship with society is reflected not only through specific activities, but through all facets of university life — its underlying theory/philosophy of knowledge, institutional arrangements, theory of learning, shaping of the curriculum, notion of quality, its systems, structures and academic process. In a true Weberian sense he also portrayed four ideal types of universities, i.e. the traditional university, the externally-determined institution, the pseudo/partially engaged university and the engaged university.

In my address today I want to answer the question as to how one aligns one's research endeavours to acquire more of the characteristics of an engaged university. In so doing, I shall argue that the essence of academic entrepreneurship (enterprise) in research for development lies in applied policy-related research (PRR), practice-oriented research (POR) and implementation-driven research (IDR). According to Van Rensburg and Pelsler (2000), the crux of social sciences research should be in implementation-driven research that can bridge the gap between research and policy, and between knowledge and action. In this address I shall argue that one cannot be an academic entrepreneur busy with research for development without PRR, POR and IDR. Thus the title of this paper:

Beyond@ivory.tower

From traditional university to engaged university

The importance of PRR, POR and IDR?

One could well ask why PRR, POR and IDR are so pivotal in the human sciences. Simply because poor people are tired of the 'esoterics of intelligentsia' or to put it bluntly, academic masturbation. Personally I know of a growing body of academics who are tired of theorising about development and underdevelopment, and are wanting to get involved in grassroots development work and dirty their hands and soil their pants in the process. Perhaps it is a symptom of the irrelevance of some of our past esoteric research attempts.

The world of deprivation and vulnerable livelihoods expects:

- scholars with a conscience and a sense of development ethics
- scholars with a passion for the poorest of the poor
- academic activists that want to get involved in change for the better, i.e. — action-oriented, strength-based and problem-solving research.

The case studies that I shall share will clearly illustrate how PRR, POR and IDR are essential vehicles for achieving true academic entrepreneurship and a scholarship of engagement.

There are at least five different contexts of socially-engaged academic entrepreneurship:

i) Research in partnerships or collaborative research

Noka e tlatswa ke dinokana — A river swells from little streams

Research in a team context is still one of the best ways to ensure that you include a multiplicity of views, thereby enhancing the validity and relevance of your research attempts. Some of you here tonight may say: "I do not like team research. It is too risky or I cannot part from my solo research drum. I want to be in control. I want to pursue my desktop work or my own individual research interest." I have news for you. Although you may feel that the risks are often higher in team research, the risks are also shared. To put it bluntly: great contributions, at least as far as research in development studies is concerned, are no longer the outcomes of single attempts of the genius in lacuna or of 'intellectual prima donnas' who perform lonely dances behind their laptops. (Perhaps the best example of research for development endeavours in teams is the *Human Scale Development Approach* of a group of South American scholars (theologians, psychologists, economists, philosophers and development practitioners) under the leadership of Manfred Max Neef and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework of Dianne Carney, Robert Chambers and the Department for International Development).

ii) Integrating post graduate teaching with research and research outputs

I would argue that postgraduate teaching provides a unique opportunity for fostering academic entrepreneurship, in that postgraduate students could be encouraged and coached in such a way that they become involved in more praxis-oriented research. I should like to invite my fellow scholars not to be shy to expose yourselves to academic engagement by involving your post-graduate learners in unique relationships of mentoring and coaching. Coach them how to reflect by asking critical questions. Often this approach works wonders with adult learners since they are encouraged to select a research problem from their own management context. Get them to take the risk of opting for publishable articles with you instead of dissertations or theses which only fill the shelves of libraries.

iii) Community service (learning) research (ensuring POR)

What is needed is not only needs-based research but also **strength-based research**. Encouraging communities and service providers (NGOs or CBOs) to (re)discover their inherent abilities to act and mobilise and to strengthen (accumulate) their own capitals (human, social, physical, financial and natural) to withstand external shocks in their attempts at helping other to make a better living. Not only problem-solving research but challenge-generating research (i.e. teaching them the art of asking some of the most important questions in research: Why? So What? How? Who? When?). It is about social action

research which entails research in partnership with the community and the service providers as the main drivers.

iv) Implementation-driven research

Often academics are criticised for not doing enough to share their knowledge in order to improve the design and management of policies, not only among the public and private sectors, but also among civil society. We need to develop an ability to package research in ways that are meaningful to decision makers and officials. The challenge is not simply to leave implementation to the consultants, policy makers, bureaucrats and project managers beyond the gates of universities to implement our research findings. By getting involved we as knowledge workers have an opportunity of influencing the way research findings are interpreted and applied. This also provides one with ample opportunities for research of an evaluative nature.

v) Commissioned research (Swimming in the third money stream)

Often, in contract research or commissioned research, the relevance/ivory tower versus elephant debate is already addressed because policy makers and their stakeholders have already identified, debated and conceptualised the research need(s) in a Terms of Reference (expression of interest) and the subsequent research problem for a specific theme/topic/policy/programme/initiative to be researched. When (the) researcher(s) conceive of a research idea there is always the danger of losing sight of reality. Thus commissioned research, I would argue, has an inherent reality check, thereby rendering research endeavours more relevant. Commissioned research, if planned and executed sensibly, i.e. in an academically entrepreneurial way, should be much more than mere paid consultancy. Commissioned research is also an important avenue for accessing a third income stream to universities which could be a vital source of additional income in the face of ever-decreasing state support.

Often these different types of research contexts are not separated silos of concern, but considerable overlaps occur, thus begging greater integration. There will only be optimal synergy of policy-related and practice-oriented research if we, the research managers and research brokers (research fraternity), allow team research, commissioned research, research with postgraduate students, community service research and implementation-driven research to thrive. Once this research convergence is achieved only then will we have created the space for a blooming culture of academic entrepreneurship and a scholarship of engagement, combining research, teaching and community service.

According to Atkinson et al. (2004), the following are some of the hallmarks of academic entrepreneurship and engaged scholarship (my own emphasis) that could be useful in research for development:

- A combination of theoretical research, empirical research and practical engagement, whether in communities or in the municipal or the national sphere of government
- Rapid response to public and private sector needs and demands, particularly in response to tenders and the rapid delivery of reports, to meet deadlines
- An ability to ‘package’ research in ways that is meaningful to government officials, politicians, municipal councillors and community organisations
- Anticipating government’s developmental needs and gaps, and a readiness to push knowledge boundaries, often in a very risky environment
- A readiness to conduct experimentation, consultation, trouble-shooting, and policy analysis — often simultaneously
- The ability to engage with a wide range of government and non-government stakeholders, often with widely conflicting standpoints
- Interdisciplinary and intersectoral work, often combining numerous academic approaches and several departmental orientations within one project
- Self-financing status, with limited government support to meet organisational or research overheads, and consequently constant financial risk
- The ability to cope with an intensely competitive situation in some research fields, and to work virtually unchallenged (and unsupported) in other research fields
- The ability to respond to rapid personnel changes and political changes in government
- A willingness to share knowledge with lesser skilled government officials or community-based workers, often as mentor, which requires specific skills and the application of various techniques
- A willingness to work in remote areas where there are no research facilities.

Why is academic entrepreneurship in development studies so important?

“There is more to research than the mere satisfaction of curiosity or to acquire knowledge for the sake of knowledge; there is a world out there that has to be served by research. However, research in social sciences and humanities is often conducted in ivory towers of disciplines and specialities, insensitive to real problems” (Van Rensburg and Pelsier 2000).

For the academic entrepreneur in development studies there is the constant need to identify research opportunities that could lead to actions that could enhance sustainable living. So it is all about a constant search and urge for potentials that could make a difference. Providing knowledge, skills, experience, systemised reflection, leadership and wisdom that could not only enhance people’s choices, but also people’s life chances. I believe this is also the meaning of Noble Prize laureate Amartya Sen’s Development as Freedom notion and his view of poverty as being capability deprivation.

The ultimate aim of any research for development is to what extent the research has contributed to a change in policy (the assumptions, laws and strategies that people embark upon in social engineering) or practice (the way people operate and implement plans, programmes and projects). The academic entrepreneur should constantly and consciously strive towards his/her research being an activity of systemised reflection that should guide intervention.

I should like to argue that academic entrepreneurship in research context not only provides more opportunities for trans-disciplinary research, but also more applied, integrated and relevant research. There are no one-dimensional answers to the development problems of our day because we live in a world of complex systems which also render development challenges complex. Simple, one-dimensional and uni-disciplinary answers to a problem are not only presumptuous but often very impractical and irrelevant. The idea of integrating a range of reflective perspectives to understand the challenges of development and underdevelopment should therefore be dominant in a scholarship of engagement.

Academic entrepreneurship has the ability to open up new ways of building research cultures and research institutions in that it acknowledges multiple forms of knowledge creation in a largely participatory manner that could inform decision-making and management for development. Community service research, for instance, is one of the best ways to bridge the ever-threatening gap between theory and practice, as well as between teaching and research and thus makes one's academic output more relevant.

The engaged university as the ultimate outcome/deliverable of PRR, POR and IDR

The question that begs an answer: How many academics, especially in the developing world, are equipped with hands-on knowledge and experience of the day-to-day challenges in the policy-making and programme/project implementation context and how to deal with them? Academic activity should be deliverable-oriented. One should start with the premise that informed decisions build better interventions. How many of our research endeavours in the humanities simply culminated in another report to gather dust on the shelves of the manager, or a well-argued article in an international journal which very few ordinary people will ever take note of? How many of our research recommendations were implemented in policy or practice? Or are we more concerned about the NRF rating and other academic accolades we achieved or should have achieved? How many of our research outcomes were used to make this world a better place (development) or is the citation index quantifying the number of times that other scholars have quoted us more pivotal to pursuing our academic careers or confirming our status as academic 'prima donnas' with overdeveloped egos? What do I mean by deliverable-oriented outcomes? Basically, a preparedness to walk the extra mile and to translate research findings and recommendations into implementable plans of action. In this, we, academics have much to learn, but also much to give. In walking this extra mile there are

also huge opportunities for academics, consultants and practitioners to join hands with those who have to consider and implement our research results.

Many may argue that bothering about the 'so what' part of my research is not my concern. My involvement stops the moment I submit my report and the dollars or euros get wired into my account (for the lucky ones) or the rands and malutis get paid in by cheque (for the less fortunate ones). I would argue that, by pursuing issue-focussed and program/project-focussed research, one is starting to engage in more appropriate research for development. Perhaps the most important outcome of deliverable-oriented approaches to research is a relentless preparedness to disseminate the research findings again and again and again². Secondly, there is an involvement in implementing research results and monitoring and evaluating implementation. Often we academics lose our credibility among clients because we do not want to dirty our hands with implementation because of the so-called moral high grounds of self-imposed plateaus of objectivity.

In the end, the final outcome of PRR, POR and IDR should be the movement towards:

“an engaged university as an institution in which the key functions are characterized by direct interaction with external constituencies and communities through mutually beneficial exchange (partnership), based on the assumption that these interactions enrich and expand the learning and knowledge capabilities, assets and outcomes of the academic institution while also enhancing community capacity to solve problems and meet challenges”
(Adapted from the initial definition of Pretorius 2003).

Scrutinising the cases studies

Where does one find more opportunities to indulge in academic entrepreneurship than in an applied development research context? In order to justify the central argument of this paper, I shall reflect on some of our research experiences at the Centre for Development Support (CDS) in developing and managing policy research partnerships, and, to a large degree making policy research partnerships our working philosophy.

I want to share with you the development research journey of the CDS, where I happen to make a living. My sincere apologies should cases and contexts that I will share sound like boasting, but this is my world of development research work onto which I want to give you an open window. To illustrate the research, teaching and service learning value that academic entrepreneurship could add, I would like to share three case studies of research for development with you — one case study each at the international, the national and the

² In one of our research projects on non-payment for services we sent out approximately 2000 faxes and 3000 emails to mobilise possible stakeholders to attend our dissemination workshop sessions. Some of our experiences will be shared in cases studies later in this paper.

provincial/local level. I trust that these stories of research for development will reveal some of the salient features of taking our research engagements beyond the ivory tower.

Case study 1

From a culture of non-payment to an inability to pay

From indigent policy to lobbying for free basic services

From using the stick to rewarding with a carrot

This case started with a phone call from the previous Dean of Economic & Management Sciences one cold day during the July recess in 1999 and informed me about a call for proposals from USAID. A team of researchers (mostly economists, sociologists and development study people) decided to propose a topic in the field of municipal cost recovery, i.e. the reasons for and consequences of non-payment for municipal services.

A process of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders underpinned this study. This study would not have been possible without the support of the National Department of Local Government and Housing (DPLGH) and the nine Provincial Departments of Local Government and Housing. Thirty-two local municipalities constituted the selected sites and their selected communities across South Africa.

When we started off with this research in early 2000, many people expressed their belief that the research was redundant, indicating that much research had already been conducted into the payment for municipal services issue. However, after scanning the existing studies we realised that the available research focuses very much on reasons for non-payment and other more cases study based research. For these reasons we felt confident that our research area and focus were different in that this research had a national focus in its use of both census and baseline survey data; but it was also unique in that more emphasis was placed on the consequences of non-payment for services and in seeking joint solutions for non-payment in an engaged manner.

Nine provincial workshops were arranged and facilitated by the CDS in collaboration with our research associates. Approximately 500 people from very diverse backgrounds, all with an interest in payment for municipal service delivery, attended these workshops of research dissemination. Thirty-three fieldwork personnel assisted in completing a baseline survey amongst a sample of 1600 black households in South Africa.

The main finding of our research refuted the idea that there is a general culture of non-payment for municipal service delivery amongst blacks in South Africa. It is not a matter of unwillingness to pay, but largely an inability to pay due to poverty, unemployment and a lack of income. Therefore, the study provided the empirical justification for the necessity of introducing indigent policies and, up to a certain level, free basic services across South Africa.

Outputs:

In the end, this research mobilised one million rand of third stream international donor money while it also achieved a variety of beneficial multiplier effects, such as:

- a national baseline survey consisting of 1600 households
- data dissemination workshops in all of the nine provinces of South Africa with the participation of approximately 500 people from more than 200 different institutions
- an opportunity to present to the Heads of Departments (HoD) and Executive Management of National DPLGH and lobby for free basic services or at least to entertain and strengthen so-called indigent policies — something which has been introduced and partially based on our research findings
- addressing a forum of international Donor Organisations from the North
- completing a follow-up study on indigent policies also involving scholars from public management from the UFS
- three accredited articles
- two papers, one local and one at an international conference
- three Master's students completing research dissertations on various dimensions of non-payment of municipal services, using the baseline data
- the signing of a three year research contract with Eskom as a result of our research exposure on payment for services. The research contract is to assist the national electricity supplier Eskom in the development and implementation of a customer loyalty reward programme with the ultimate aim of increasing consumers' payment levels of electricity accounts. Research for Eskom on the first-ever customer rewards programme linked to a public good like electricity provision. Studying the possible behavioural change and micro-economics and social dynamics of linking a loyalty rewards programme to electricity provision. This is a rewards programme that will reward customers for paying their Eskom accounts, or for regularly buying Eskom prepaid vouchers. Rewards will take the form of cash prizes in lucky draws or of redeeming accumulated points for household durables, etc. The pilot programme has been implemented only in Eskom's North East Region, comprising the Pretoria, Khanyamazane, Witbank and Nelspruit areas. Depending on the success of the programme in this region, it will be rolled out at the national level.
- completion of research for the National Housing Finance Corporation on the non-payment of mortgage loans and municipal services in Gauteng
- the completion of another household study (survey amongst) on non-payment for electricity in Soweto (households), in collaboration with Data Research Africa, a KwaZulu-Natal- and Gauteng-based research group, and with Eon Solutions
- a study on challenges facing municipal cost recovery for the Built Environment Support Group based in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Case study 2

On being young in the Free State, South Africa

The Youth Commission Research Partnership was an initiative of the Free State Youth Commission, with the aim of influencing youth development and policy in the Free State. However, the Commission lacked two essential aspects, namely well-researched information and the necessary capacity to do this type of research on their own. The Free State Youth Commission (FSYC) then contacted CDS, requesting the latter to assist them in developing a partnership to be funded by the Umsobumvo Youth Fund. In order to do this, a scan of youth activities and youth research in the Free State was carried out. This scan informed a mutually agreed research agenda consisting of six research cluster areas and 17 research topics. The research partnership further necessitated the CDS to build the capacity of the Free State Youth Commission researchers over a period of three years, to enable them to operate more independently in the future. This is another example of research engagement. This partnership involves academics from the Free State University, the Central University of Technology, the former Vista University, the HSRC and researchers from the private sector.

The CDS negotiated a research contract of slightly more than R3 million for the next three years. This is a true flagship research partnership since eight different departments/units/centres from three different faculties and the two universities of the Free State are involved in pursuing research on:

- a youth profile for the Free State province
- the integration of youth-related issues into government-related programs and structures
- successes and failures of HIV/AIDS and reproduction prevention/ care programs
- enrolment figures at all the tertiary institutions in different programs on an annual basis and on subsequent successes in finding employment
- the appropriateness of education and training of school leavers and individuals who complete tertiary education
- reasons for the failure and success of youth businesses
- the effectiveness and capacity needs of youth NGOs, and developing guidelines to improve their functioning
- the reasons for youth crime
- youth rehabilitation programs and placement programs.

The following outcomes have already emerged from this research partnership:

- Three published research reports
- An interactive workshop with the Premier of the FS and her Executive (MECs and HoDs) and the FSYC on the outcome of research findings after year 1
- A proposal to publish a special edition of African Insight (an accredited academic journal of the African Institute consisting of eight academic articles)

- Building the capacity of two young researchers of the FSYC in various research methodologies and research management
- The appointment and capacity building of a Master's student in Development Studies as research coordinator at the CDS.

Case study 3

Bridging mine closures: when mines turn from assets to liabilities

This research originated when an ex-student approached us with a view to presenting a short course for De Beers Consolidated Mines on Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) in Kimberley during 2003. We accepted and mobilised two current PhD students (one from Lesotho), to design and co-facilitate the SIA course. It went so well that we were asked by De Beers Koffiefontein to tender for a comprehensive SIA, and we eventually won the tender. In a sense this is pioneering research consultancy work and a first of its kind in South Africa in the context of the new mining charter.

As part of their application for a new mining right, De Beers Koffiefontein Mine was required by law to prepare and submit an environmental management program (EMP) that includes, inter alia, an assessment and evaluation of the impact of the proposed mining operations on the socio-economic conditions of any person who might be directly affected by the mining operation. A multi-disciplinary research team consisting of scholars from Rural and Agrarian Studies, Sociology, Geography, Development Studies & Gender Studies then conducted a social impact assessment (SIA) to inform said EMP, and more specifically to effect the compilation of a Social and Labour Plan as stipulated by the *Mineral & Petroleum Resources Development Act* of 2002.

For purposes of the SIA, it was assumed that De Beers would terminate their mining operations at Koffiefontein. The purpose of this research was to inform Koffiefontein Mine of the anticipated socio-economic impacts that might result from the future termination of mining operations at Koffiefontein, and thus the impacts of the subsequent non-involvement of De Beers in the affected environment. The report further recommended appropriate mitigation strategies for the anticipated impacts, and also provided a monitoring and evaluation plan to allow the client to monitor whether selected mitigation strategies were followed.

The methodological approach for the SIA involved a wide range of stakeholders and information gathering techniques during the various stages of scoping, impact identification and assessment. The stakeholder participation process included public meetings, key-informant interviews, focus group sessions, an extensive social survey and a one-day participatory workshop with strategic informants. Community observation, site visits and scenario simulation were further employed to inform and validate the projection and assessment of impacts. In order to systematise and focus the data gathering and assessment

process, interested and affected parties were grouped in the following categories: community members; current Koffiefontein Mine employees; ex-employees; the business sector; local government; and the public sector. The document emanating from this process reflects the aggregated and cumulative opinions, concerns and expectations of more than 700 participants.

Five broad sectors of impacts were identified to consolidate the cross-cutting nature of expected impacts, and also to capture the common denominators of concerns and issues raised by interested and affected parties. The sectoral impacts were grouped and assessed in terms of the following categories:

- Impacts on the demographic profile of Koffiefontein
- Impacts on the public sector at Koffiefontein
- Impacts on land use and infrastructure at Koffiefontein
- Impacts on the economic sector at Koffiefontein
- Impacts on the socio-psychological wellbeing of the community in the affected environment.

This case study research and consultancy work will largely enrich the teaching outcomes of several academic programmes at the UFS in the following way:

- It will be used as case study for the Master's in Environmental Management and the Master's in Sociology (Population and Environment) Programmes to illustrate the principles, methods and outcomes of an SIA
- It could serve as an example at the undergraduate level to illustrate how the Sociology of Environment and Population may be used to determine policy and provide information guidance to decision makers.

Centres, units and institutes as manifestations of a scholarship of engagement

From the case studies above, it is clear that there are numerous opportunities and contexts for a scholarship of engagement. I trust that the cases studies have illustrated the dynamics of academic entrepreneurship and the outcomes of research for development at the CDS as a community- and socially-engaged institution. Hopefully this has highlighted that centres, institutes or units are good conduits at places of higher learning, where scholarly engagement can come to full fruition. In many cases these institutes are the only form of the knowledge industry which actually reaches out to disadvantaged sectors of South African society. Managements of higher education institutions should therefore create more conducive environments for these centres of scholarly engagement to thrive.

There is, however, the imminent and often inevitable danger that such centres would be nothing more than consultancy firms, or what some label as market-driven or community-driven institutions, assuming that either the market or the community alone knows best. Such

externally-determined institutions (cf. Pretorius 2003) will often have little choice other than to function merely under the logo and auspices of a university, trying to satisfy the 'grin of Mammon'. The assumption is that the consultants that have emerged from such centres will function mainly to serve Mammon, the money God, and a consequent craving for making money rather than to adhere to the calling of scholarship.

However, I should like to argue to the contrary, that perhaps one needs to tolerate and even support these centres of academic entrepreneurship and social engagement, and not view them simply as places of pseudo-sciences or places posing a threat to true or proper knowledge-based education lacking in academic rigour. Most of the scholars at such centres — if not all of them — are not pariahs driven by a passion for money, but are scholars in a different way. These are knowledge workers who believe in the scholarship of engagement where a more hands-on approach and practical and solution-focussed research for development could make a difference in how people go about making decisions that could affect the lives of others.

Subotzky (2000, p. 113) is of the opinion that a fundamental shift is necessary for academics: from seeing the role of the university as one of producing basic knowledge and providing applied knowledge, to one of helping to solve problems, to regarding the university as being jointly responsible for social change, in partnership with relevant bodies in communities — the so-called 'engaged role' of universities. I agree with the argument that universities should become more relevant. However, our critical question in this paper relates to what the operational role of universities should be in this regard. Like the front and back house of any good restaurant, such centres, institutes or units are the display windows which the members of society view, rightly or wrongly, as acid tests for relevancy and being socially embedded.

Centres, institutes and units are often the best institutions at a university to access the so-called third money stream. Yet, how do we prevent them from becoming mere consultancy firms. Perhaps the best is to prompt synergistic initiatives in aligning teaching, research, community service and consultancy. This entails, inter alia, commissioned research in such a way that knowledge workers will be able to earn an extra buck; that postgraduate students will get on board with relevant topics which stakeholders in society have suggested and funded; that enough systemised reflection will occur to stimulate academic debate and publication; and that policy may be informed by means of research outcomes and by ensuring the implementation of research recommendations. In the case studies shared it was illustrated how some of these challenges in research for development may be approached.

Conclusion

From the above arguments it is clear that development studies and research for development should not only concern themselves with the big paradigms and debates regarding

development, underdevelopment and poverty. As an applied field and an engaged form of academic entrepreneurship, it is vital for them both to inform and enrich policy development and also the praxis of development (i.e. the plans, programs and projects that will guide interventions). Such an applied research for development will therefore empower those in power to design and implement the most appropriate sustainable interventions for addressing the challenges of human development in focusing on the capabilities of people and the contexts of vulnerability in which they are often entangled.

I have argued that there still is — among some scholars — a limited understanding as to how to operationalise academic entrepreneurship relevant to the socio-economic and environmental situation in South Africa. In some circles there is also limited appreciation for a more practice-oriented or engaged scholarship following the idea that applied research is second-rate research for those who should be viewed or labelled consultants rather than scholars (see Atkinson et al. 2004). There is also, hopefully, among the minority of scholars, a reluctance to contribute towards creating the ultimate engaged university. In this address I argued that the best way for us academics to deliver a service to a South African society in need is to engage as academic entrepreneurs by means of PRR, POR and IDR. Remember, a true academic entrepreneur gets excited about ideas, enjoys mapping out opportunities and lives to jump at challenges that may contribute to sustainable human development. By sharing with you some of the completed research and community service research endeavours of the CDS, I have tried to lure you into the exciting world of a scholarship of engagement. Such scholarship is about:

- providing real life opportunities for research, teaching and community service
- rendering scholars more responsive to the strengths and needs of communities, i.e. building some social responsiveness and implementation wisdom.
- making a difference to the research questions that are asked and the methodologies that scholars apply
- contributing towards improving the capabilities of communities and individuals
- strengthening the livelihoods of many communities and making them less vulnerable in the building of a robust and resilient nation.

The challenge as to how we are to go about institutionalising a scholarship of entrepreneurial engagement remains. By encouraging people to conduct scholarly work in an entrepreneurial way, we actually enable people to do extraordinary things. I want to invite you, my fellow scholars who share the ideals of 'universitas', to live academic entrepreneurship in your research, teaching and community service endeavours and always to remember — in the spirit of true scholarly engagement — not to be scared of taking risks. Come with me and log on to the proverbial email of Beyond@ivory.tower in moving *your* research and teaching endeavours beyond the ivory tower in a constant effort to render your academic effort relevant. Come, let us recommit ourselves to the university's enduring service to society.

I conclude with the wisdom of two great South Americans. One is the Brazilian business entrepreneur, Ricardo Semler (2003):

"It is better to beg forgiveness than to ask permission".

The other, the social entrepreneur Che Guevara who once said:

"Let's be realistic. Let's demand the impossible".

Best regards from an academic activist who wants to pursue the ideals of an engaged university beyond the ivory tower.

References

Atkinson D, Bekker K & Botes L 2005, Consulting and research in South Africa: Whither the "Grey Domain"?, *Journal of Public Administration* (forthcoming).

Blackburn J & Holland J 1998, *Who changes? Institutionalising participation in development*, Intermediate Technology, London.

Botes L J S 1999, Community participation in the upgrading of informal settlements: theoretical and practical guidelines, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

Bringle R G 2004, 'International trends in civic engagement and service learning', Paper presented at an Honorary Doctorate Graduation Ceremony, University of the Free State, 14 October 2004.

Bruwer E 2001, *Beggars can be choosers: in search for a better way out of poverty and dependence*, Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research, Pretoria.

Carney D (ed.) 1998, *Sustainable rural livelihoods. What contribution can we make?* Department for International Development, London.

Clark D A 2002, *Visions of Development: a study of human values*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.

Cook B & Kothari U 2002, *Participation: The new tyranny*, Zed, London.

Eade D 2003, *Capacity-building: an approach to people-centred development*. Oxfam, Oxford.

Fourie F C v N 2003, Continuity and change, scholarship and community, quality and equity, Inauguration Speech as Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the UFS, 7 February 2003. <<http://www.uovs.ac.za>> (select "Download Centre").

Goldman I Carnegie J & Marumo M 2000a, *Institutional support for sustainable rural livelihoods in Southern Africa: framework and methodology*, Department for International Development, London.

- Guijt I & Shah M K 2001, *The myth of community: Gender issues in participatory development*, ITDG, London.
- Kraak A (ed.) 2000, *Changing Modes. New Knowledge production and its implications for higher education in South Africa*, HSRC, Pretoria.
- Laws S, Harper C & Marcus R 2003, *Research for development: A practical guide*, Sage, London.
- Marais J G L & Botes 2005, Putting the cart behind the horses: some thoughts on policy research partnerships and community service, *Acta Academica* (forthcoming).
- Max-Neef M 1991, *Human scale development, conception, application and further reflections*, Zed, London.
- Meszaros K 2003, *Science as a legitimator of ideological interests*, Zed, London.
- Munck R & O'Hearn D 1999, *Critical development theory*, Zed, London.
- Nussbaum M C 2001, *Women and human development: the capabilities approach*, Cambridge University, Cambridge.
- Pretorius D 2003, *The engaged university — towards a conceptual clarification*, University of Port Elizabeth — Institute for Social and Systemic Change, Port Elizabeth.
- Rakodi C & Lloyd Jones T 2002, *Urban-livelihoods: A people-centred approach to reducing poverty*, Earthscan, London, pp.3-22, 288-98.
- Rapley J 1996, *Understanding development*, UCL, London.
- Rosseel P 2003, *Developing academic entrepreneurship at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of the Free State*, KU Leuven, Leuven.
- Semler R 2003, *The seven-day weekend: a better way to work in the 21st Century*, Random House, London.
- Sen A K 1999, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University, Oxford.
- Shipman M 1997, *The limitations of research*, Longman, Essex.
- Smit AV 2002, *Entrepreneurial Universities: A Financial Survival Perspective*, Professorial Inaugural Lecture, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.
- Subbotsky G 2000, 'Complementing the marketisation of higher education: new modes of knowledge production in community higher education partnership', in ed. A Kraak, *Changing Modes. New Knowledge production and its implications for higher education in South Africa*, HSRC, Pretoria, pp. 88-127.
- Tacoli C 1999, *Understanding the opportunities and constraints for low-income groups in peri-urban interface: The contribution of livelihood frameworks*, Development Planning Unit, London.

Timmons J A 1999, *New Venture Creation: Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century*, McGraw-Hill, Boston.

UI Haq M 1998, *Reflections on human development*, Oxford, Delhi.

Van Rensburg D & Pelser A 2000, 'Navorsing en implementering deur die Geesteswetenskappe', *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 59-69.