

## FOREWORD

Publication of this book represents an historic turn for higher education in South Africa, and for service-learning worldwide. For South Africa this is the first publication addressed to academic staff that provides a comprehensive breadth and depth of information on how to design, implement and assess curriculum-based service-learning programmes. It will become an invaluable and essential guide, for those who seek to develop modules that include community service, as a 'text' to be read alongside more traditional readings and discussed reflectively in the classroom. This resource book also contains wise, detailed advice for those whose responsibilities are more institutionally focused – on both supporting and sustaining community engagement programmes and assuring their quality and conformance with national standards.

Viewed through a more global lens this publication marks a 'coming out' of service-learning in the southern hemisphere – not as replication of what has been practised in the North but, rather, with a particular South African emphasis on community development, social justice and institutional transformation. While clearly focused on curriculum and community development needs in South Africa, the book's comprehensive, theory-based and practical approach to service-learning will also interest practitioners worldwide.

When I first arrived in South Africa in 1999 to begin work with the Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships (CHESP) initiative of JET Education Services, service-learning was a new term and an untested concept. While interest was high among those academic staff and community people I encountered, few had any more than a passing acquaintance with an active pedagogy that integrates community service with academic studies. However, most resonated with service-learning's emphasis on active learning designed to empower both students and communities, and on reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships between campuses and communities – rather than traditional, 'top-down', philanthropic helping.

Since 1999 a quiet revolution has taken place. In these few short years service-learning has taken root in South African HEIs. This is attributable in part to external policy encouragement, such as the 1997 White Paper and the Founding Document, Audit Criteria and Programme Accreditation Criteria of the HEQC, and in part to determined effort by numerous academic and service provider staff and community leaders – who have had the courage and stamina to collaborate in creating higher education-assisted community service initiatives rapidly and, often, with very modest financial and other resources. CHESP has been the catalyst and convener for these efforts, supporting these pioneers with capacity building and other resources, linking them in a vibrant, collegial network, and assisting them in 'making their mark' through research, publications and policy development.

Having researched the far longer, 30-40 year, zigzag development of service-learning in the United States, I am very impressed with South Africa's accomplishments – both in terms of the rapidity with which they have unfolded and their substance. A milestone in the maturity of a movement is when some of its leaders can come together to conceptualise the work, demarcate it within a larger context, and begin to pass the torch of knowledge on to the next, larger wave of practitioners. This publication marks this moment in South Africa's movement for socially responsible higher education, and blazes a clear trail for colleagues here and across the world.

Individual faculty members will find invaluable information in the book's chapters: South African higher education policies that provide an urgent mandate for service-learning; human development and learning theories that form the pedagogy's foundations; models and implementation steps for partnering with communities and service agencies and planning and implementing experience-based learning curricula; and practical steps for facilitating and assessing students' service-learning linked to academic subject matter. Such faculty members, and their higher education colleagues with institution-wide responsibilities for curriculum development and quality assurance, will also find comprehensive, step-by-step guides to expanding and sustaining service-learning across the curriculum and evaluating its impact on everyone involved, including the institution itself.

It is an honour and privilege to have been invited to contribute the Foreword to this publication. Congratulations and thanks to the authors and their numerous colleagues who have made service-learning both innovative and 'proudly South African'!

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