THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL APPROACH TOWARDS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Ntombfikile Mazibuko

ABSTRACT

This article is strengthened by the current changes in the South African higher education environment and its impact on community development involvement within the University Sector. The South African Education White Paper (1997) and the National Plan for Higher Education (2001) are very specific when it comes to the role that higher education institutions should play in the development of communities and as a result contribute to well-being of the nation. The article is based on a case study of the Community Development Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The importance of the management of community involvement through various sources at the university is the main focus. The distinctive advantages of having the infrastructure at the university are critically looked at.

1.   INTRODUCTION

The University of KwaZulu-Natal has reformulated its mission and identity to demonstrate a greater commitment to the social environment and to seeking solutions and responses to the social issues facing South Africa, Africa and the world in the 21st century. This position is in line with the scholarship of public engagement, national imperatives and the South African Education White Paper (1997), a programme for education transformation, and the National Plan for Higher Education (2001) which outlines the need for higher education to become more responsive to societal interests and needs. This position suggests that communities become an active collaborative partner in the core activities of higher education in so far as searching for solutions and improving the quality of life. Higher Education is taking seriously the notion that "there are many kinds of knowledge, developed and held by different sectors of society" (Wiewel & Broski, 1979).

The University of KwaZulu-Natal, like most South African universities, has deliberately and intentionally committed to the concept of public engagement as part of the primary scholarship activities of teaching and research. It is therefore not surprising that institutions of higher learning are beginning to show serious and reflective interest in traditional medicine, healing and counseling, community-based care, and indigenous knowledge systems (IKS).

In 1994 Sheldon Hackney, the President of the University of Pennsylavania said "we will be expected to contribute in directly understandable ways to the solution of the pressing public problems….for the universities to stand aloof from the task of revitalising our nations school and communities when society has clearly decided that it is an urgent priority, simply will not be tolerated" (p.9). The policy position adopted in South Africa and the Pennyslania statement suggest that institutions of higher education integrate into their core

functions teaching, research, and service, community service with a clear deliberate strategy of collaborative interventions. Community service or outreach becomes more than an essential component of professional qualifications in higher education institutions. It becomes an essential and strategic component that defines social relevance and the development agenda in higher education. American institutions are ahead in systematically and strategically integrating community service into their conventional functions of teaching, research and service. The Great Cities Program, UIC Neighborhood Initiative is examples of such collaborative initiatives.

The mission statement of UKZN embraces the concept and culture of engagement. Public engagement has been a strong practice in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the ex-University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal. It is therefore not surprising that the new merged College of Humanities and Education has at least independent 28 research and development units attached to some of the nineteen schools within the college. These units and centres play a critical role as a public link and mutual search for solutions and critical engagement with social issues. They prepare students and the public for action in a democratic society, conflict management, healing, developing new and refining existing poverty eradication strategies, enhancing service and community based learning. Centres, such as the Centre for Civil Society (CCS), Centre for Creative Arts (CCA), Centre for Housing promote critical and open debates on contemporary social issues, between academics and public intellectuals and train necessary human capacity for sectors such as housing and health. Engagement becomes not only an imperative for programmes and disciplines such as social work, community work, psychology and development studies. In line with the higher educational policies and the contemporary issues that embed on training and education, it becomes essential as an institutional practice and a necessity for scholarship of engagement and collaboration.

Ethical responsibilities in development and initiatives such as research, the Moral Regeneration Movement, NEPAD, etc. demand specific engagement and academic involvement. Through conventional academic teaching and research programmes located in Schools of Ethics and Philosophy, Community Development and Social Work, Development Studies, the UKZN builds its image and positions on matters of development. The public engagement is enhanced and strengthened through units (located within the college of humanities) such as Unilever Ethics Centre and UKZN Community Programmes. For quality assurance and meaningful collaborations, these units and research centres are resourced by qualified professors, research fellows and staff. The faculties of Agriculture, Education and of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences continue to play a major role in implementing social change, training and providing expertise for social development. In my opinion these are the faculties that can provide a critical mass for outreach and public engagement in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, given its demographic profile.

A discussion document prepared by the Joint Education Trust (JET) and the South African Qualifications authority (SAQA) identified some revealing facts

about higher education and community service (Makgoba, Soni & Chetty, 2004). Some of these are:

- Mission statements of most South African institutions in include community service or outreach.
- Generally most South African universities engage in some form of community service or outreach.
- Generally the community service component is not a carefully thought out or deliberate institutional strategic response to any social issue or issues.
- Overall, there are no policies or strategic agendas of outreach or community service.

Historically South African universities have had ad hoc and optional tradition of public engagement. The post apartheid political and policy environment dictate that this tradition is taken seriously by being integrated into the ethos and core scholarship activities of academic institutions. Scholars, academics and students participating or driving outreach must be recognized and rewarded by the higher education institutions. Public engagement through collaborative initiatives, outreach and service learning are no longer options but activities that enable mutual service of local and national needs in a systematic and accountable approach.

The vision and mission of the University of KwaZulu-Natal reads "To be the premier University of African scholarship………". The social responsiveness component is the one that is most appropriate for the contextualization of the subject. The theme is further contextualized within the four key scholarly academic roles as outlined by Boyer (1990) namely, teaching, discovery, application and integration. The disciplines of humanities, social sciences and education are best located to engage in the discourse and critical analysis of the role of the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards community service. Historically the universities in KwaZulu - Natal have a tradition of involvement with community organizations, agencies and other social formations. These liaisons and contacts were informed by a variety of needs, such as student placements, providing a home, implementation of specific programmes. In the post - apartheid South Africa, they become an imperative as part of the national development agenda, need for defined collaborative partnerships in implementing and delivering services at local level and providing relevant knowledge and competences.

The four scholarly academic roles as outlined by Boyer (1990) are essential in contextualizing higher education and community service in a broader but focused sense. Firstly, teaching scholarship according to Boyer (1990) is transforming and extending knowledge by a process of debate, a continued process of discourse and a challenge of both the content and the form of knowledge. Teaching scholarship suggests recognizing other forms of knowledge that exist in the communities and how these embed on our conventional forms of knowledge, hence the critical interest in indigenous forms of knowledge, indigenous forms of clinical interventions and local intellectuals. Secondly, Boyer refers to the scholarship of discovery (research)

as a pervasive process of intellectual excitement rather than just a concern with outcomes in the form of new knowledge. Thirdly, scholarship of application defined as a professional activity in practice and service and scholarship of integration makes the connection betweens between knowledge and models. It is through the scholarship of application that an institution of higher education becomes an "inner circle" member bringing its special resources to the table. Together with the community, which could be an NGO coalition or local government entity, the institution of higher education determines and defines the application and utilization of the combined resources through agreed upon collaborative and accountable processes and plans. These academic roles identified by Boyer (1990) can be tested and implemented through strong del berate community service or partnerships which are rooted in the socio-economic circumstances of communities.

In South Africa, the university approach to community service becomes an imperative, particularly to the development, education and humanities disciplines, because of the centrality of community development as a strategy for local development in social development (Social Welfare White Paper, 1997). Social responsiveness require higher education, particularly social sciences and humanities, to be central and visible in the discourse and academic dialogue of understanding and interpretation the material conditions of society, theories and models that have to be tested, utilization and advocating of resources in collaboration with communities. Within the institutions, researchers and academics in professional disciplines such as social work, town planning, architecture, health sciences could enrich community service by implementing comprehensive and co-coordinated intra or multi disciplinary programmes. These projects can be structured as joint student placements. The notion of community service, in the context of the Constitution (1996) national development frameworks and the university missions, immediately enable institutions of higher education to move away from the deficit model of engaging with communities to that of mutually beneficial partnership. It allows space to explore and harness the different kinds of knowledge developed and pursued by different social sectors.

Community development in a HE environment takes place within specific contexts. Some of the contexts are the national policies and imperatives, decolonization and deracialisation of social issues, developing a national identity, African scholarship, and transformation of the higher education. Community development as an approach is grounded on theory as a strategy and an intervention, on models. Institutions of higher education therefore, remain critical players in generating theories and models informed by practice. They assume the critical responsibility of shaping the thinking on community development and creating intellectual spaces on academic and social dialogues. At UKZN, the operative expectation is that besides producing human capacity for local development and service delivery, the intelligentsia and social science academics must drive change processes through critical thought. Secondly community development is not only a political assignment or programmes (policies, legislation) but is also an "intellectual project enforced through intellectual apparatus" (Mamdani 1999, p130). The intellectual apparatus is generally determined and driven through institutions

of higher learning, hence the School of Social Work and Community Development, the School of Development Studies. The localized nature of community development as a strategy therefore informs the parameters of this paper. Universities and universities of technology are party of the knowledge industry. Part of this industry is producing knowledge, interacting with other knowledge forms within society, and embedding on both internal and external knowledge spaces. In addition, an emancipator pedagogy which allows critical analysis and dialogues on global, national and local social issues, sources of opportunity, sources of want and deprivation and sources of possible solutions in and outside communities becomes essential in an educational system that adopts a collaborative approach . This approach and context justify and explain the academic units such as the School of Social Work and Community Development, School of Politics offering Public Policy, Community Health within UKZN.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal has redefined itself through its vision and mission. In relation to the broader mission of the country, the university's is focused, specialized and limited. The mission of this University draws inspiration primarily from the social environment partly by generating developmentally relevant research, be socially responsive and to provide community service. The African context and the global approaches shape the role and relevance of the higher education in the 21st Century. In order to acquire and transmit knowledge and skills that work institutions of higher learning must be rooted into the social reality of their times (Ajayi, Lameck, Goma & Johnson 1996; Loomis, Hellwig & Banks, 1977; Miller, 1999; Wiewel & Broski, 1979). This is particularly relevant to humanities, professional and development disciplines that respond to social issues, concern themselves with quality of life, problem solving and seek solutions that work.

The mission of the University raises a number of questions for the development, human and social science disciplines. Some of the questions are:

- How to develop the necessary socio-economic environment conducive to quality academic pursuit?

- How research can be made to contribute to and play a more active role in the elimination of poverty, hunger, diseases, ignorance as well as production of excellent and creative graduates?

- What kind of graduates does our society need in order to face up to the new challenges? How can such graduates be developed into international scholars, professionals or academics?

- Developing of ongoing monitoring and programme evaluation strategies to measure the success or gaps of social security, social services and development programmes.

In line with its vision and mission the University of KwaZulu-Natal has also established a portfolio of institutional outreach as part of its area of focus and

in its executive management. This is in line with the programme of transformation of higher education (White Paper, 1997), and our mission which articulates the central objective to be higher education institution of social relevance and responsiveness. In addition UKZN has a portfolio of Organisational Culture which drives the process of reexamining the institutional culture in relation to the vision, national imperatives and the curriculum. This portfolio interfaces not only with the internal stakeholders but other stakeholders outside the institution.

African universities /universities in Africa are not only expected to be centres of "academic excellence" but because of the developmental imperatives, they also have to be "centres of relevance". Again here, a number of questions come to mind: Do communities look upon our university to provide answers and explanations to issues that bother them? Are we seen to be improving the quality of lives of people? Are we seen to be providing conceptual guidance and critical social analysis on community development, African Renaissance, reconstruction and development, unemployment and underemployment? Are we providing moral guidance and sense of values in the present day South Africa? Where does the academy fit in the debates and programmes of Moral Regeneration, regional and national developmental agendas? Do we produce knowledge that takes the African conditions as its central challenge? Can the knowledge or studies we produce embed relevantly both on internal and external spaces of knowledge? The next section shares a UKZN academic Community Development Programme.

2.   COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

This programme is part of the School of Social Work and Community Development, two programmes that can shape and be a face of social relevance of the university. The Community Development programme continues to offer under-graduate and post graduate degrees as in the past. It is currently engaged in aligning the names and objectives of some of the modules with the overall objectives of Community Development.
Details of the Community Development Programme are as follows:

Qualification	Courses/Modules	Credits
Masters Degree	▪ Advanced Community Development Policy ▪ Sustainable Community Development ▪ Advanced Quantitative Methods ▪ Advanced Qualitative Methods ▪ Community Economic Development ▪ Politics of Community Development	16 16 16 16 16 16
Bachelors Degree	▪ Introduction to Community Development ▪ Introduction to Community Development ▪ Theory 1A	16 16 16

Open Learning	▪ Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods	16
	▪ Community Development Theory 1B	16
	▪ Community Development Facilitation	16
	▪ Community Development Policy	16
	▪ Community Economic Development	16
	▪ Community Programme Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation	16
	▪ Community Health Planning, Implementation & Evaluation	16
	▪ Advanced issues in Community Development	16
	▪ Development Local Government & Community Development	32
	▪ Independent Study	
Diploma	▪ Principles of Community Development	32
	▪ Major Issues in Community Development	16
Certificate	▪ Project Management & Sustainability	16
	▪ Facilitating Community Development Practice	16
	▪ Ethical Issues & Social Responsibility	16
	▪ Independent Study	32

The community Development Programme has identified its research mission as to undertaking innovative research that is relevant to the needs of the people of South Africa and to advance disciplinary knowledge particularly through concentrating on locally specific knowledge systems. While the focus would be the most pressing concerns within locally specific contexts, this does not preclude international collaborative research and an understanding of how the multiple and complex forces of globalization impact local communities. The aim of the school is to produce quality research that addresses the most salient concerns of our society in areas such as HIV/AIDS, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, conflict resolution, informal settlements, street children, globalization, participation in building civil society, capacitating of government institutions and emancipatory citizenship education. These are all niche areas that staff have already engaged with which that reflect local, national and regional/international development priorities. Some staff share specific interests in the clinical aspects of Social Work such as family therapy and in the area of spirituality and Social Work, and have been undertaking research in these areas. In addition to this, discipline specific concerns such as the services provided by social workers, and salaries and services conditions will be investigated in an attempt to address the problem of the mass exodus of social workers from South Africa.

Given the value perspectives of Social Work and Community Development, much of our research utilizes participatory action research strategies that are democratic, inclusive, affirming of research participants, and aimed towards the capacity-building of people in the process of research. Research, as with field supervision of students, tends to be extremely labour intensive. Despite

this many staff has over several years met the national benchmark target of at least one SAPSE publication per year, with some staff surpassing this target.

The School currently has recognized researchers, [for example one staff member is regarded as one of the top 30 researchers on the Howard College Campus]. These researchers will be able to provide research leadership to build capacity, access funds and promote SAPSE publications. In addition, the school plans to put in place a number of strategies which will support staff. These include:

- Teaching plans must allow staff members to have time 'off' (i.e. a half-semester) from teaching in order to concentrate on research, including field work.

- A seminar programme must encourage staff to report on their findings and receive feed-back / initiate dialogue on their analyses.

- A plan outlining relevant national and international conferences must be circulated well in advance so that staff can prepare papers.

- A mentoring programme should support less experienced staff in their writing efforts.

The distinctive advantage of the new merged school is that we will have more staff, be able to share teaching and supervision loads and hopefully be able to create greater space for research and publication. Staff will have more latitude in planning for and taking sabbatical leave for this purpose. The School of Community Development is located within the College of Humanities. This College is constituted by the Faculties of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences. Common to both faculties are the professional qualifications with a strong development orientation and mutual /reciprocal relationships with other social institutions, CBOs, NGOs. Established community organizations and agencies are critical as "laboratories for social sciences". The reciprocity comes in by the way the Social Work and Community Development Programmes embed on their knowledge and experience spaces.

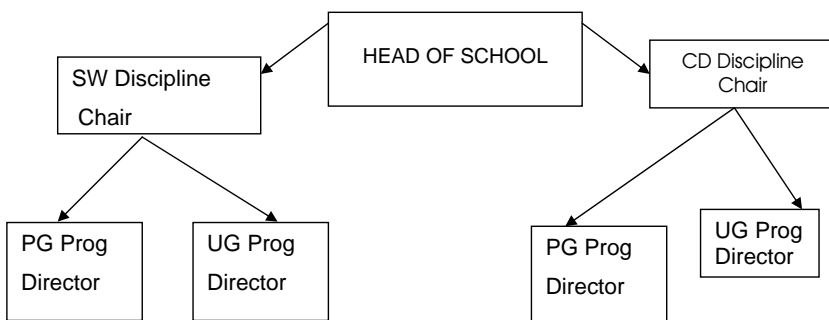## 3. COMMUNITY SERVICE AND RESPONSIVENESS

Social Work and Community Development, since their inception has been responsive to community needs. In Social Work, the voices of communities are included via community needs assessments that are completed by each student doing a field placement through participatory and inclusive processes. In Community Development, non- governmental organizations and community based organizations define research and work-related problems areas which students take as the basis for applied research and practice. Community- or field based education places emphasis on learning by doing and on service provision during the process of learning. At present our fieldwork practitioners/partners inform our curriculum through regular supervisors' meetings. The academic staff, in partnership with unpaid agency- based field

supervisors, assume responsibility for field supervision. As service organizations are coming under greater financial pressures, they are requesting payment for services rendered to university students. This is one area that UKZN might have to pay attention to in the future.

The School's resources and expertise can be harnessed by creating a University based student unit that coordinates community outreach activities from campus e.g. networking with academic departments to provide mentoring and subject-linked tuition at primary and secondary schools, and HIV/AIDS and conflict resolution schools based programmes. Currently the Family Therapy Clinic at the Westville Campus provides services to families in the second semester. We believe that to optimize its functioning, a full-time co-coordinator needs to be appointed. This will prevent dependence on service delivery by students only and ensure continuity. There are three community based Social Work student units on the Howard College Campus. These are: Austerville (Social Work has a community centre), Bhambayi, and the Violence Prevention Project. Students undertake community work, group work, casework and research. Students placed in the Violence Prevention Project primarily do fieldwork and research in the rural area of Ugu North. These projects are all financed by a registered Not-for-Profit Organization, the University of KwaZulu-Natal: Community Outreach and Research (UKZN: CORE), which was developed and has been managed by Social Work since 1972.

All staff are involved in outreach activities. These include holding workshops at welfare organizations, non-governmental organizations and service agencies. Training programmes are run in urban and rural communities, as well as to government officials. The expertise of the staff in the School could be harnessed to develop credit-bearing modules towards the Continuous Professional Development requirements in the Social Work profession. In addition, Community Development's expertise will be used in the Mentorship Programme to guide enrolled community members and government officials. The School plans to organize teaching in such a manner that it is accessible to community members and government officials, i.e. in the evenings, during weekends and through 'block teaching'. The School makes a deliberate decision to adapt to student times, an important practice for access.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Note: all positions to be on a rotational basis. Terms to be used as per general university terminology. The Discipline chair could also be Post Graduate programme co-ordinator.

Decision making processes: Within the guidelines set out by Senate, a collegial decision making process will be used. A s*chool executive committee* consisting of the above portfolios will meet regularly to deal with joint planning, decision- making, budgeting, teaching, field placement etc (adapted from: the School Plan of School of Social Work & Community Development, September, 2004).   The merging of these two programmes enhances integrated and focused interdisciplinary, clinical and developmental approaches to multifaceted social issues.

4.   CONCLUSION

Social sciences and humanities have a definite roles and intellectual responsibility in the post apartheid and globalizing world. Benefits in scholarship of engagement and community collaboration include:

- Fulfillment of the institution mission and goals in and outside the institution.

- Demonstrate direct involvement in joint designing, modeling and evaluation of development programmes.

- Exploring third stream revenue to sustain social science and humanities community-based initiatives.

- Challenging boundaries of knowledge as informed by practice and enhancing interventions of a wider range of disciplines and social formations within the communities.

5.   BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amin, A.
2003. *Maladevelopment: anatomy for Global Failure.* Tokyo: United Nations University Press.

Bates, R.H.
1983. "Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa." Cambridge University Press.

Bitzer, E.M.
2004. Scholarship and professional profiling: possibilities for promoting quality in higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education.* University of South Africa 19-37 Vol 18 (1).

Charton, N.
1985. "Resettlement in the Ciskei." in Giliomee, H. and Schlemmer, L. Eds. "Up Against the Fences: Poverty, Passes and Privilege in South Africa." David Philip, Cape Town.

Daphne, P.
1982. "Community Organisation through Cassava Production: Towards a Mobilisation of the South African Peasantry". Centre for Research and Documentation University of Zululand Empangeni.

Department of Transport KwaZulu-Natal Umnyango Wezokuthutha
Budget Speech 2002/2003 presented by Minister J S Ndebele, Minister of Transport.

Department of Transport KwaZulu-Natal
"The Road to Wealth and Job Creation: A Road Needs Assessment". Department of Transport KwaZulu-Natal: "The Road to Wealth and Job Creation: A Plan to Create Jobs and SMME development for Rural Population". A KwaZulu-Natal Pilot Initiative, February 1998.

Department of Transport KwaZulu-Natal
2000/2001 Annual Report, 31 August 2001.

Derman, P.J. and Poultney, C.
1986. *"Agricultural Reconstruction in a Consumer Society. The Mboza Village Project."* Paper Prepared For Discussion at the Land Tenure And Rural Development Workshop. Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

Gilbert, A.
1980. *"Agricultural Modernisation and Employment."* Paper Read at a Conference on Agricultural Modernisation : University of Zululand, Empangeni, 15-17 August 1980.

Hackney, S.
1994. Reinventing the American University: Toward a university system for the 21st Century. "Universities and Community Schools, 4, 1 –2, 9-11.

Hasenfeld,Y.
1983. *Human service organizations.* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Hasenfeld, Y.
1992. *Human services as complex organizations.* Newbury Park SAGE Publications.

Lee, J.A.B.
1994. *The empowerment approach to social work practice:* New York: Columbia University Press.

Lenta, G.
1982 "*An Area Study Of Kwa Zu*lu" Department of Economics, University of Natal Durban. Working Paper.

Mamdani, M.
1999.   There can be no African Renaissance without an Africa-focused intelligense Makgoba MW (editor) *African Renaissance: The new struggle*. Tafelberg: Mafube.125-134.

Mayfield, L.H., M. & Banks, B.
1998. *The Chicago Response to Urban Problems: Building University/Community Collaborations.* Great Cities Institute: College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs: University of Illinois at Chicago.

Mazibuko, F. & O'Brien, F.
1997. Responding to Poverty: The contribution of social work to social development. In Gray, M*. Developmental Social Work in South Africa: Theory and practice.* Cape Town: David Philip Publishers. 136- 150.

Mazibuko, F.N.M.
1998. Transformation or organized fragmentation? Exploring a way forward with social workers formations. *Social Work/ Maatskapllike Werk 34,* (1) 99-111.

Mba, C.K.
2004. Population ageing and survival challenges in rural Ghana. *Journal of Social Development in Africa.* Vol 19, (2) 90-112

Meer, Fatima.
1994. "The Myth of Black on Black Violence." In Rhoodie, N. and Liebenberg, I. Eds. *"Democratic Nation Building in South Africa."* HSRC Publishers. Pretoria.

Mgijima, B.
2003. *Best practices in social dialogue in public service –emergency services in South Africa*. International Labour Law Office, Geneva.

Miller, C.
1999. Partners in regeneration: Constructing a logical regime for urban management. *Policy and Politics, 27* (3) 343-358.

Ministry of Education
1997. White Paper on higher education: *An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation.* Pretoria. South Africa

Muchie, M.
2003. *Making of the African Nation: Africanism and the African Renaissance.* Adonis & Abbey Publishers.

Ministry of Education
2001. National Plan for Higher Education.Pretoria [http: //www.polity.org.za]

Outcalt, C.L., Shanon, KF., & McMahon, K.N.
2001. *Developing non-hierarchical leadership on campus: Case studies and best practices in Higher Education.* Westport: Greenwood Press.

Rost, J.C.
1991. *Leadership for the 21st Century*. New York: Praeger.

Republic of South Africa
1997. *Higher Education Act (Act 101)* Pretoria : South Africa.

Zulu, P.M.
1985. "The Rural Crisis: Authority Structures and their Role in Development." in Giliomee, H. And Schlemmer, L. Eds "Up Against the Fences: Poverty, Passes and Privilege in South Africa." David Philip, Cape Town.

Zulu, P.M.
1996. "The Political Economy of Rural Livelihoods in KwaZulu Natal " In Michael Lipton, Frank Ellis and Merle Lipton (Eds.) *Land, Labour and Livelihoods in Rural South Africa,* Volume Two: KwaZulu Natal and Northern Province. Indicator Press.