

**Ford Foundation / CHET Workshop on  
South African Projects in the Pathways  
to Higher Education Initiative**

**R E P O R T**



**Erinvale Estates Hotel,  
Somerset West  
22-24 November 2005**

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## **1. Programme and Participants**

The workshop was organised by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation. The following institutions participated: University of Fort Hare, North West University, University of Limpopo, University of Namibia, and University of Venda for Science and Technology. The programme and list of participants are attached.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

As part of its International Fellowship Programme (IFP), the Ford Foundation has developed a Pathways Initiative through which it funds numerous access programmes throughout the world. The overall intention is to assist those who are often excluded from pursuing an education that will develop their talents fully – because they are not part of the dominant race, religion, ethnic or language group, or because they are poor, live in rural areas or are female. Funding often takes the form of grants to higher education institutions to review their access policies and practices and develop new strategies and programmes for granting access with the means to succeed.

This workshop was intended to give those institutions in the Southern African region that have been the recipients of such grants a further opportunity to fully understand the objectives of the Pathways Initiative. Institutions would also review their achievements, critically assess challenges and obstacles in the way of full realisation of the project goals, and plan for the final stages of the projects.

The workshop took place over two days with the first afternoon devoted to clarification of the Pathways initiative objectives by the Ford Foundation Programme Officer for Higher Education, John Butler-Adam, and an overview of the projects in all five institutions by consultant to the project, Joan Houston. On the second day, each institution made a presentation that reviewed project objectives, implementation and challenges. Further workshop activities produced plans for the final phase for each institution.

The following report gives a brief account of each of these components. In reporting on the institutional presentations, the emphasis is on the implementation model adopted by each institution.

## **3. Ford Foundation Expectations: John Butler-Adam**

The Ford Foundation had made a five year commitment of \$ 50 million to the Pathways Initiative. In the period 2001–2005 approximately \$ 24 million, or \$4 - \$5 million per annum had been disbursed to 122 institutions in 13 countries.

Southern Africa had only 4% of those institutions but had been the recipient of 8% of the funds granted so far.

Applications for funding were made in November each year and grants were made early in the next year. Applications were reviewed by a panel appointed by the Ford Vice Presidents. Current members of the panel were Janice Petrovich (Chair), Jorge Balan, He Jin, Ondina Leal and John Butler-Adam.

The Pathways Initiative aims to address the entrance needs of school children who have limited chances of getting into tertiary education – girls, poor children, ethnic minorities or ethnic groups discriminated against, rural children, and so on. In order to do this it also aims at bringing about more long term, systemic change by changing the way institutions think about and manage access and admissions. This is why institutions (rather than groups or individuals) are the grantees as this promotes a higher level of institutional commitment.

The Foundation expects projects to address one or more of the following: readiness, application, admissions, and throughput/graduation. In all cases, Pathways grants are intended to support the institutionalisation of these activities through changes in policies and practices.

#### 4. Overview of the Projects: Joan Houston

Against the backdrop of:

- failure of schools to provide good basic and secondary education;
- poverty and marginalisation in rural areas;
- too few matriculants at the required level to enter degree programmes, and
- an overall skills shortage in Southern Africa, particularly in Science...

The Ford Foundation gave grants to help five Higher Education Institutions to find ways of providing access to students who would normally be excluded from degree studies.

The grants have been used to create the following access programmes:

- **University of Namibia** and **University of Venda for Science and Technology** – Science Foundation Programmes;
- **North West University** – Science and Commerce Foundation Programmes;
- **University of Limpopo** – Humanities, Management Sciences and Law Foundation Programme;
- **University of Fort Hare** – Agriculture Foundation Programme.

### ***Combined Outcomes***

The combined outcomes of all the grants for the period 2003-2006 include the following:

- Workshops to design foundation programmes based on appropriate models of learning and teaching.
- Workshops to promote acceptance of the need for a foundation programme with the goal of mainstreaming the programme and influencing the policy of the institution with respect to access.
- Influence on national access policies.
- Introduction of an operational programme by Feb 2004.
- Increase in the numbers of students admitted to the programme by Feb 2005.
- Increase in the capacity of laboratories to cater for the learning needs of the students.
- Appointment of student counsellors as part of the staff of the programme.
- Appointment of suitably qualified and experienced teaching staff.
- Development of staff, by offering PG studies and professional teacher's training.
- Development of appropriate curricula and materials, including technologically based curricula.
- Improved quality and capacity of the Student Mentor Programme.
- Development of selection tests.
- Evaluation and comparison of selection tests both internally and nationally.
- Tracking progress of students.
- Improved throughput rate of students by offering key foundational modules.
- Conduct and publication of research – on throughput rates, comparative studies, teaching and learning, lessons learned, etc.

### ***What worked well? What were the conditions for success?***

- When a member of the senior management (Dean, DVC or VC) in the institution gave his/her committed support to the foundation programme, the grant was well utilised.
- Well qualified, experienced co-ordinators of programmes were able to manage teaching staff, co-ordinate the activities of the students and administer the grant.
- When foundation staff worked together with mainstream staff they developed creative curricula and appropriate materials.
- All programmes were operational by Feb 2004.
- All programmes used selection tests for 2004.
- Some recruitment for 2005 has been undertaken.
- Where student mentorships have been developed they are largely successful.

- Where staff have been involved in student mentorship training and supervision there have been productive results.
- When the institution allocated sufficient physical resource support for the programme, such as laboratory availability or new laboratories, equipment for chemistry, physics and biology practicals, the programme “took off”!
- When laboratories were not available creative alternatives were invented.
- When the university management was committed to the programme, the university administration (including the Finance division and the Human Resource division) was helpful.
- Recruitment drives to high schools in the area resulted in personal contact and raised awareness in the community, distribution of information and good public relations for the programme.
- Student mentorship has benefited both the foundation students and the mentors.
- Involvement of staff members in Supplemental Instruction methods has resulted in increased involvement by the mainstream.

***What has not worked well? What conditions set constraints on the success of the project?***

- Lack of management involvement at the executive level resulted in the following problems:
  - inadequate authorisation of expenditure;
  - delays in appointment of staff;
  - delays in or failure to provide adequate facilities (laboratories, lecture venues and offices).
- Lack of management capacity at the programme level resulted in:
  - bad financial, administrative and educational decisions;
  - poor communication with staff;
  - absence of leadership of the staff team;
  - poor quality materials development for the courses.
- Uncooperative Finance Divisions in some of the institutions led to:
  - problems around the accessibility to the funding;
  - cumbersome requisitioning procedures;
  - delays in ordering equipment;
  - compromising of the educational objectives of the programme.
- In relation to staff appointments problems encountered included:
  - delays in appointments;
  - inexperienced or under-qualified appointments;
  - too few staff for the number of students;
  - scarcity of appointable people in the region.
- Constraints on research outputs were:
  - difficulty in tracking students;
  - little capacity to formulate research;
  - few results published.
- Problems in relation to curriculum development:

- use of current first year courses and first year materials;
- use of language-dense, outdated texts;
- foundation curriculum that is not based on educational research and cogent theoretical foundation;
- inadequate development of suitable, user-friendly materials.

### ***The Overall Picture***

All five Pathways grant projects are extremely worthwhile and all five institutions are in need of ongoing help from the Ford Foundation. The success of the Pathways grants hinges on the commitment of the university executive to the foundation programmes.

The biggest challenge is to identify and develop the human capacity to utilise the grants, i.e. to run and staff the programmes. The people “on the ground” need to be empowered to turn a worthy vision into a concrete plan which has measurable, achievable steps.

The five institutions can benefit from sharing ideas with each other – collaboration is not only desirable but necessary if time and money is not to be wasted.

### ***Lessons Learnt***

1. Extensive research is a prerequisite for designing an educationally sound programme to meet the needs of the students and the institution.
2. Effective access costs money! Projects will only bear fruit if the institution commits at the top. Then there will be plans for, budgets for and investment in access.
3. Throughput is the critical measure of success. Therefore research must be done on selection criteria, and on the comparative success of access and mainstream students.
4. Counsellors must be appointed who will recognise that unless the students needs are met they will not succeed.
5. Mainstream staff have to be involved in curriculum development.
6. Institutions should collaborate on selection tests and admission criteria.
7. Ford Foundation grants should be linked to professional training of teaching staff on foundation programmes.
8. Foundation courses must be evaluated – by students, peers and mainstream staff.
9. Institutions need to get involved with high schools to influence and upgrade teachers and learners.

### ***Other Factors***

The Department of Education has capped numbers at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). HEIs therefore need to provide access to the right students – selection is all important. Access is about retention and throughput to graduation, not only entering.

Access is not an optional activity for HEIs and cannot remain on the fringe of planning, budgets, staffing and core values of the institutions. It will remain an HEI issue as long as the schools fail to produce adequately equipped matriculants.

## **5. Institutional Presentations: Access and Foundation Programme Models**

The general achievements of the projects and the challenges they confront are captured in the Overview, above. In this section, the focus is on the models implemented in each of the projects which are presented for comparative purposes in the Table below.



## ACCESS MODELS

Institution	Model	Admission / Selection Routes	Disciplinary Areas	Number of Students	Additional Support	Research
<b>University of Fort Hare</b>	Pathways Foundation Programme (PFP) <u>Reduced curriculum model:</u> 3 mainstream modules and 2 value additional modules <u>Credit value:</u> 96 points <u>Duration:</u> one year	Three avenues: 1. Senior Certificate with endorsement 2. Senate Discretionary Exemption 3. Placement test	Science and Agriculture: B.Sc Agric & B.Agric	2004: 45 2005: 65	1. Educational tours 2. Supplemental instruction 3. Training of tutors 4. Development of programme staff 5. Peer Assisted Student Services (PASS)	Tracking of student results
<b>University of Limpopo</b>	Alternative Access Foundation Programme (AAFP) <u>Extended curriculum model:</u> 1 <sup>st</sup> year: 2 mainstream and 3 foundation modules 2 <sup>nd</sup> year: 3 mainstream and 2 foundation modules <u>Credit value:</u> ? <u>Duration:</u> two years	Standardised Access Test (SAT) for students without Senior Certificate endorsement	Law, Humanities and Management Sciences	No students thus far. First intake into Law Foundation Programme will be in 2006. In other fields 2007?	1. University-wide Student Mentorship Programme 2. Mentoring of the mentors through School Academic Development Practitioners	Comprehensive research plan to monitor impact of various interventions on retention and throughput
<b>University of Namibia</b>	<u>Pre-entry model:</u> Foundation programme to improve school-leaving results to meet standard admission criteria (25 points) <u>Credit value:</u> 0? <u>Duration:</u> one year	17 points on IGCSE (school-leaving) exam; good symbols in science subjects; teacher opinions; aptitude test	IGCSE Mathematics, Physical Science, Biology and English	2005: 60 students	Seek to increase support, staff and facilities	Plan to monitor success
<b>North West University (Mafikeng campus)</b>	<u>Pre-entry model:</u> Foundation programme <u>Credit value:</u> 0? <u>Duration:</u> one year	Matriculants without endorsement. Unclear whether any other selection criteria are used	Commerce and Science	No figures given	Plan to appoint postgraduate mentors	Currently track performance of students at end of first mainstream year
<b>University of Venda</b>	Science Foundation Programme (SFP) <u>Pre-entry model:</u> 12 foundation modules <u>Credit value:</u> 2004 – max 120 points at NQF level 4; 2005 – max 144 points at NQF level 4 No credits towards degree <u>Duration:</u> one year	Senior Certificate with endorsement; Senate Entrance Test	Science	2004: 75 2005: 198	Extra staff and tutorials provided	Tracking of student results

## 6. Future Plans

John Butler-Adam outlined some of the processes and alternatives that projects could pursue to bring them to conclusion.

### 1. No cost extension

This option should be pursued when a project needs more time to complete its work, but not more funding above the original grant. A letter should be addressed to JBA giving reasons for the extension of time, an indication of the amount of time needed, and how it will be used.

### 2. Close out – end of project

When projects end, final narrative and financial reports will be due. Narrative reports should detail what has been achieved for the institution, staff and students. Joan Houston may be consulted for assistance.

### 3. New (second) grant

In the event that further funding is needed, this would take the form of a new grant application which would be assessed in competition with other grant applications. Applications would have to be submitted by the November 2006 deadline for funds to be disbursed early in 2007.

A second grant will not be awarded until activities in the first grant have been completed and it would be important to show that significant outcomes have been achieved. Institutions should show how the project is tied to broader institutional plans and strategic objectives, and how present achievements could be built upon. An indication should also be given of how activities or practices will be sustained when external funding comes to an end.

Joan Houston provided institutions with practical templates to help with the next phase of planning – for the remaining objectives/outcomes; for managing the project, and for the sustainability of the project. She also provided examples of narrative reports and covering letters. All projects are due to come to an end in August 2006.

The outcome of further workshop activities is reflected in the Table below.

## Institutional Plans

Institution	Remaining objectives	No cost extension	New grant	New (further) objectives
Fort hare	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recruitment and development of staff</li> <li>2. Implementation of support systems for students</li> </ol>	Yes – 4 months Motivation: to complete academic year	Yes	Implementation of 'New Plan', i.e. integration of best aspects of PFP (reduced curriculum model) with existing, successful science extended degree model (STFP)
Limpopo	Research – comparison of performance of foundation and mainstream students; tracking of students out of the institution; promotion of Ms and PhDs in Education and Development	Perhaps – depending on whether Masters and Doctoral students have completed or not	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Further development of the mentorship programme</li> <li>2. Staff development to underpin whole process</li> </ol>
Namibia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop national policy</li> <li>2. Consolidate programme – equip labs; develop curriculum and materials; double intake of students</li> <li>3. Staff development</li> <li>4. Research</li> </ol>	Yes – 15 months Motivation: started one year late; need time for staff development and research; academic year ends in December	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Track Foundation students to graduation</li> <li>2. Consolidate programme and extend to other regions of Namibia</li> <li>3. Complete research agenda</li> </ol>
North West	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff development</li> <li>2. Lab equipment and software purchases</li> <li>3. Research and development of selection test instrument</li> </ol>	Yes – 6 months Motivation: to complete outstanding activities	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To complete equipping all labs</li> <li>2. For further staff development</li> <li>3. To set up research desk in department</li> </ol>
Venda	Research output – tracking progress of SFP students; gender study; fields of study; through put rate; comparison with mainstream students; employability	No	Yes	Continuation of present programme

## 7. Closure and Thanks

The workshop had been extremely successful and helpful. Special thanks were extended to Joan Houston for her support to the projects and facilitation, to John Butler-Adam for convening the workshop, and to Nico Cloete and Angela Mias of CHET for organising the event.



# Pathways Workshop

## Programme

22 – 24 November 2005

Erinvale Estates Hotel

### Tuesday, 22 November 2005

15h00	Welcome & Introductions <i>Dr. Nico Cloete, CHET</i>
15h10 – 15h45	Ford Foundation Expectations <i>Dr. John Butler-Adam, Ford Foundation</i>
15h45 – 17h15	Overview of Progress <i>Joan Huston, Ford Foundation Consultant</i>
17h15	Break
19h30 – 21h00	Supper and Discussions Continue

### Wednesday, 23 November 2005

#### Review Reports:

09h00 – 09h30	Fort Hare University
09h30 – 10h00	Venda University
10h00 – 10h30	Tea
10h30 – 11h00	University of Namibia
11h00 – 11h30	University of the North
11h30 – 12h00	North-West University

## Pathways Workshop Continued . . . .

12h00 – 13h00	Developing a Project Plan <i>Dr. Nico Cloete &amp; Ms. Trish Gibbon, Higher Education Consultant</i>
13h00 – 14h15	Lunch
14h15 – 15h15	Lessons Learnt from an Access Project <i>Mr. Larry Pokpas, University of Western Cape</i>
15h15 – 15h45	Coffee
15h45 – 17h30	Developing Institutional Project Plans
17h30	Break
18h30 – 22h00	Reconvene for Departure to Spier Wine Estate

### **Thursday, 24 November 2005**

08h00 – 09h45	Breakfast & Institutional Groups Meet to Prepare Project Plans
09h45 – 11h45	Presentation of Project Plans
11h45 – 12h00	Wrap Up <i>Joan Huston</i>
12h00	Snacks and Departure

## 9. Participants

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