

Revisiting planning education at the University of Pretoria¹

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Peer reviewed and revised

Abstract

This article discusses the way in which the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Pretoria is using three sets of projects in which it has participated over the past twelve years in revising its planning curricula. These three projects, namely improving intergovernmental development planning; enhancing community-based planning, and presenting and participating in capacity-building and certificated short courses, are discussed, in conjunction with what faculty experienced and observed, and what lessons were learnt with regard to the Department's planning curricula. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of the experiences and lessons learnt in the three projects for planning education on a more generic level.

HEROORWEGING VAN BEPLANNINGSOPLEIDING AAN DIE UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA

Hierdie artikel bespreek die wyse waarop die Stads- en Streekbeplanningsdepartement aan die Universiteit van Pretoria drie stelle projekte waarin die Departement gedurende die laaste twaalf jare betrokke was, gebruik om sy beplanningskurrikulums te hersien. Die drie projekte, naamlik die verbetering van interregeringsontwikkelingsbeplanning; die versterking van gemeenskapsgebaseerde beplanning, en die aanbied en deelname in kapasiteitsbou en gesertifiseerde kortkursusse, word bespreek tesame met dit wat die lede van die Departement ervaar en gemerk het, en die lesse wat geleer is ten opsigte van die Departement se beplanningskurrikulums. Dit word gevolg deur 'n bespreking van die implikasies van die ervarings en die lesse geleer in die drie projekte vir beplanningsopleiding op 'n meer generiese vlak.

HO TADIMA HAPE MORALO WA THUTO MANE YUNIVESITHING YA PRETORIA

Ho ya kamoo Lefapha la Moralo wa Toropo le Lebatowa le sebedisang dikarolo tse tharo tsa tshebetso (diprojeke) le bileng la kena kateng ditabeng tsena dilemong tse mashome a mabedi tse fetileng, ho tadimeng hape moralo wa dikharikhulamo oo ho buisanweng ka wona. Ditshebetso tse tharo, e leng ho ntlafatsa moralo wa ntshetsopele o kopanetsweng le mmuso; ho matlafatsa moralo o theilweng hodima baahi; le ho fana le ho kenela ho bopeng bokgoni le dithuto tse kgutshwanyane tse fanang ka lengolo la dithuto ho buisanwa ka tsona, ha mmoho le ho re ke lefapha lefe le fetileng moo esitana le ho bona le hore ke dithuto dife tse ithutilweng malebana le moralo wa dikharikhulamo wa Lefapha. Taba ena e hlahlangwa ke mathata a tseo ho thulanweng le tsona le dithuto tseo di ithutilweng ditshebetso tse tharo tsa moralo wa thuto boemong ba kakaretso bo nammeng.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Pretoria has over the past two decades engaged in a project of introspective, progressive rejuvenation. The aim of this endeavour has been to provide a progressive planning education that would assist both students and faculty in becoming and being assertive and serviceable agents in a joint project of 'empowering people' and 'creating enabling places' that would ensure 'real, 360-degree development'. At the same time, those involved sought to avoid falling into the trap of preaching something so foreign to the current context that it would face immediate dismissal or ridicule and risk simply be ignored, or becoming a servant to the present, and having nothing progressive to offer in pursuit of a better future, and facing a long

good-bye into oblivion. Two decades later, the Department is still trying.

Early in 2010, the Department's curriculum redevelopment project was given a welcome boost by the Association of African Planning Schools' (AAPS) 'rejuvenation of planning education project'. This initiative by the AAPS sought to ensure engagement among Planning Schools on the African continent in their planning curricula, and facilitate a process whereby these Schools could jointly develop the outlines of a new African planning curriculum. The project, especially the engagements it facilitated between faculty in Planning Schools, provided the Department with renewed purpose, new reasons for and modes of introspection, and new avenues for exploration.

Driven on by the APPS project, the Department embarked on an exploratory venture to use three learning and consulting projects/initiatives, in which it has been involved over the past twelve years, to revisit key components of its course. The objective of this ongoing venture has been to use the observations made, and the experiences gained in the projects, to critically explore the Department's approach, module focus as well as content and mode of learning in two of the themes identified by the AAPS, namely "actor collaboration" and "spatial planning, implementation and infrastructure delivery". An appreciative inquiry approach was used to extract progressive and useful developmental practices from the projects.

The results of this endeavour are presented as follows in this article. In the next section, the projects and their implications for planning education at the University of Pretoria are discussed. This is followed by a summary of the implications and a discussion of possible changes to the approach, mode and content of planning education on a more generic level. This is followed by the conclusion.

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Association of African Planning Schools Conference on Planning Curricula, 5-8 October 2010, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

It should be noted that the project of introspection, as discussed in this article, was only recently completed and the exploration of ways in which the planning programmes offered by the Department could be adapted in accordance with its 'findings' has just begun. Nonetheless, the intention and desired outcome is clear: to empower and enable faculty and students to become better at 'empowering people' and 'jointly creating places' where such empowerment can take place and express itself.

2. THE THREE PROJECTS

As noted earlier, three initiatives in which members of the Department were involved are being used to revisit the two planning programmes it offers. While the initiatives were rolled out in very different settings, with different role players and over different lengths of time, they, on many scores, do ask very similar questions regarding planning education. As such, they suggest a number of ways of improving planning education. Each of the projects and their respective implications for planning education are discussed in more detail below.

2.1 Project 1: Improving intergovernmental development planning

2.1.1 What it entailed

This is not really a single project, but rather a thirteen-year 'involvement', entailing:

- The provision of inputs in processes aimed at preparing legal and policy frameworks to ensure better integration, harmonisation and coordination, and improved alignment and sequencing of actions in and between different spheres and sectors of government, and
- The initiation of practical measures (in the form of pilot projects and the provision of technical support) to ensure this.

The central aim of all these actions was to ensure integrated, sustained and meaningful 'infrastructure investment' (roads, rail, ports, and so on) and 'development spending' (social services and transfers). While the actions were all very much along the same lines and shared this objective, the involvement took place in the form of seven

initiatives, each of which is discussed briefly below.

The first, and probably the most significant initiative, was research for and assistance with the preparation and review of the National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP), starting in the late 1990s. The NSDP had its origins in the Office of the Deputy President in 1998, in a project with the aim of (1) exploring uncoordinated infrastructure and investment spending and the resulting perpetuation of the apartheid space economy, and (2) generating guidelines to address it. The project went through many stages, which are covered in detail elsewhere (see Oranje & Merrifield, 2010; Oranje & Van Huyssteen, 2007) and culminated in a set of Spatial Guidelines for Infrastructure Investment and Development (SGIID) in mid-1999. This was followed by a National Spatial Development Perspective in 2000, another in 2003, and a reviewed version in 2006. The NSDP proposed normative, principle-led infrastructure investment and development spending by the State. The two key principles were that fixed investment should be focused in areas where the greatest development potential and greatest need coincide, and that there should be investment in people in areas with limited development potential. As such, the NSDP focused on 'people and not places', arguing that the focus of State action must be on eradicating inequalities between people and not on 'making places more equal'. The key driver behind this position was that many of the places of dense settlement in rural South Africa, and to which Africans had been banished by successive colonial and apartheid governments, had very little development potential, having been carefully selected with this attribute of limited potential in mind by these governments. This position was, however, misconstrued as being anti-rural and urban-biased and the NSDP was not enthusiastically received in a number of arenas.

The second initiative entailed the development of guidelines for the preparation of Provincial Growth and Development Strategies (PGDSs) and the review of a number of these strategies in accordance with these guidelines, in 2005. Preparation of these provincial strategies started in 1996 in a number of provinces eager to use the planning powers they were granted in terms of the 1996 Constitution (see

Oranje & Biermann, 2002). As these strategies were, in most instances, located in one of the sector departments in the provincial governments, other provincial sector departments and national line departments generally did not acknowledge or use them, and municipalities generally did not consider them when preparing their IDPs (Adam & Oranje, 2002). This resulted in a lack of implementation of these provincial plans, further exacerbating the uncoordinated nature of local government planning, investment and spending proposals as well as infrastructure investment and development spending by provinces (Oranje & Van Huyssteen, 2004). Nonetheless the PGDSs were viewed as crucial components in preventing this by ensuring that provinces and municipalities harmonised their planning, budgeting and implementation activities with the NSDP principles, and aligned these activities (using the PGDSs) to maximise their joint developmental impact.

The third initiative was a project for the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) in 2003-2004, which entailed a study of the challenges faced by different spheres of government in ensuring intergovernmental coordination, and putting forward proposals for improvement (see Oranje & Van Huyssteen, 2004; 2007). This analysis included (1) an assessment of the effectiveness of existing planning and resource allocation instruments in all spheres of government; (2) the preparation of a protocol in support of intergovernmental planning (Oranje & Van Huyssteen, 2004); and (3) the introduction of the concept of 'Intergovernmental Development Agreements'. These agreements were meant to ensure focused and joint action by the three spheres of government in district and metropolitan municipal areas. It was envisaged that such agreements would be the outcome of a process of high-level debate in which the three spheres of government would deliberate and reach a shared understanding on (1) the state of development in the relevant district/metropolitan municipal area; (2) the key development priorities in the area; (3) the required resources that were available for development in and of the area; and (4) the implementation of the required actions by each sphere of government in the area.

The fourth initiative entailed the preparation of a Harmonisation and

Alignment Framework for the Presidency and the DPLG, and the popularisation of the framework in all nine provinces in the country in 2004-2005. This framework, which was adopted by Cabinet, was based on the understanding that a set of coordination procedures in itself would not result in the desired outcome. As such, the framework sought to ensure that the prioritisation (strategic planning activities), budgeting and implementation by the three spheres of government were aligned through actual/physical joint planning and planning activities. Three key steps were to be undertaken in this process. With the NSDP providing a shared framework for discussion, the three spheres of government had to (1) reach a high-level agreement on the nature and characteristics of the space economy and the spatial location of development potential and need/poverty in all nine provinces and the then 52 District and Metropolitan Municipalities in the country; (2) align their infrastructure investment and development spending in accordance with the NSDP principles; and (3) mutually monitor and assess their planning, budgeting and implementation activities (The Presidency, 2004). A key and crucial departure in these alignment activities was the use of 'space' as arena for stating, contesting, mediating and crafting agreement on investment and development spending (see CSIR, 2007).²

The fifth initiative entailed the participation in 2004 in the preparation of the *Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005*, which sought to provide content to Chapter 3 of the 1996 Constitution dealing with Cooperative Governance by placing an obligation on municipalities and provinces to create a set of structures/forums to facilitate intergovernmental relations. The Act has subsequently seen the setting up of such structures with a varying degree of impact in terms of assisting in the streamlining of intergovernmental development planning, budgeting and implementation activities.

The sixth initiative was the provision of support to the Department of Provincial and Local Government (2005-2006) with the review of the *Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000)* to ensure that this crucial piece of legislation reflected the

'new thinking' in respect of the strategic role of the District and Metropolitan Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) in intergovernmental development planning processes, and to assist municipalities in preparing 'more credible IDPs'. This process saw the development of a framework in respect of 'what constitutes a more credible IDP', and participation in a number of workshops involving planning experts to assist the Department in this endeavour. The process was placed on hold pending a much bigger process of reform of the State architecture, which is still under way.³

The last initiative entailed involvement in a project undertaken by the Presidency aimed at contextualising the NSDP in District and Metropolitan areas. As such, it sought to position and use District and Metropolitan municipal areas as 'shared areas of intergovernmental concern and action' and explore ways in which District and Metropolitan Municipalities' IDPs could become more credible by reflecting the development plans of the three spheres of government (The Presidency, 2006). The initiative built on the guidelines in the 'Harmonisation and Alignment Framework', i.e. (1) high-level intergovernmental dialogue, using the NSDP guidelines as framework; (2) the reaching of a shared understanding on the development challenges and prospects of District and Metropolitan municipal areas; and (3) coming up with a series of 'strategic actions' to be executed by the three spheres of government for the development of these areas. The Department's involvement in this project entailed the conceptualisation of the pilot phase, the roll-out of the project in thirteen pilot Districts in 2006, and the implementation of the project in three more Districts between 2008 and 2010 (see Oranje & Van Huyssteen, 2010; Mathe, 2010 for more information on the project).

2.1.2 What was seen and found

The projects illustrated/demonstrated that:

- 'Space' can provide a 'shared platform for debate' and the generation of shared understandings and agreements on strategic actions in

intergovernmental development planning processes.

- Agency matters, i.e. that (1) 'champions' are crucial to the success of initiatives such as these; (2) if leaders commit to an idea, others do so more readily; and (3) participants who stay the distance are imperative for project follow-through and sustainability.
- It is possible for stakeholders to develop a shared (and richer) understanding of the different substantive aspects of development (institutional weaknesses, pressures, bottlenecks related to the economy, livelihoods, services, infrastructure, access to land, etc.). However, reaching an agreement on paper is far easier than taking these decisions back into the participants' own institutional environments and launching that understanding and agreement into a different system with a different language and set of 'discourse-action-triggers'.
- Moving through and beyond discipline boundaries is possible. Unfortunately, it can also be a function of a specific event, i.e. it may last only for the duration of the work-session, for as long as the participants are lodged in the specific 'trans-disciplinary arena/space'.
- Intergovernmental collaboration works better when there are incentives tied to such activities.
- The picture on the ground was often very different from the official data. This was especially problematic, as it meant a fundamental questioning of one of the most important components of planning, i.e. data. This also raised a number of questions, such as: how can planners ensure that the data they use is more reliable; can planners plan with 'non-official data' (i.e. 'local and indigenous knowledge'), and can planners use intergovernmental interactions to generate more reliable data?
- It is possible for participants in intergovernmental processes to examine, consider and view phenomena in new and novel ways. Roads were, for instance, not just treated as stretches of tar, but as conduits of

2 This notion was, *inter alia*, supported by the experience in area-based initiatives in the KwaZulu-Natal province (see Todes, Odendaal & Cameron, 2004).

3 While a Municipal Systems Amendment Bill was published in 2010, it did not deal with the far-reaching changes discussed at the time. The Bill essentially focuses on issues of human resources (South Africa, 2010).

hope and strips of dignity. In terms of this perspective, interventions in 'infrastructure provision and maintenance profiles' become far more than simply that – they shape, re-arrange and re-size space, place, community and people's lives.

- While it would occasionally happen, participants in the intergovernmental processes generally did not engage the really serious questions which the processes were meant to explore, i.e. the extent and the nature of the comparative and competitive advantage of the municipal area under consideration. This was especially true where the projects tended to question long-held beliefs about 'as yet untapped' local development potentials.
- Processes such as these can fall back into exercises aimed at ensuring compliance and raise expectations that are not lived up to, with cynicism often following in close pursuit.
- The 'longer term' tended not to be a very popular topic in intergovernmental planning debates.
- Conservative and traditional views on aspects such as gender, age and race, and a myriad of power dynamics make for very difficult discussions in forums specifically set up as spaces in which 'everyone can participate'.
- Plans are generally weak levers and cogs in the State machinery. Generally, they are just another (not very significant) voice in Government decision-making processes.

2.1.3 What was learnt – what it meant for the Department's planning programmes

There are, of course, a multitude of lessons that can be learnt from the processes and experiences discussed above. These are the key ones for now:

- While students need to be made aware of the complexity of the world in which planning is practised, this must not debilitate them and/or blind them to the crucial need for and possibility of action. Complexity

should instead be presented as a way of better understanding the world and mapping a workable way forward.

- It is crucial that students be exposed to the different 'languages' spoken by other professionals, politicians and civil society members and in intergovernmental forums. In addition, students must develop a proficiency in these languages, and have the ability to seamlessly move in and out of these different languages.
- Discussions on power in planning are crucial, but these have to move beyond 'the exposure of power' and the sense that nothing can be done about it. Power in the form of knowledge should also be treated and presented as something that can be used to open up a debate (i.e. elicit and advance discussions), probe new interventions, and focus attention on the longer term and the realisation of the much desired 'true development for all'. At the same time, students need to be exposed to, and prepared for the different kinds of power (e.g. tradition, culture, ignorance and inertia) which they are set to encounter in participatory planning processes.
- Spatial development planning skills are still/again crucial. However, 'talking spatial development' is different to 'drawing space' (i.e. design) and both skills are required. It is especially the skill of 'talking to and about space' to different stakeholders, with often very different agendas and professional and other backgrounds that is becoming increasingly important. In addition to this, while Geographical Information Systems (GIS) are crucial in intergovernmental development processes, they need to be tweaked to also provide for the spatial representation of data that in the past was not part of it, notably local information and knowledge.

2.2 Project 2: Enhancing community-based planning

2.2.1 What it entailed

While the involvement in this project was on a much smaller scale, and for a much shorter period than the two other projects (April-July 2010), it was not less intense, and provided an equally rewarding exposure and learning process. In this case, the project entailed participation by one of the members of faculty as a facilitator in an EU-funded capacity-building programme on Community-Based Planning (CBP) managed by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (DCoGTA),⁴ and rolled out in partnership with provincial governments and municipalities. The primary aim of the project was to assist Community Development Workers (CDWs), Ward Committee Members, Ward Councillors and officials involved in development planning in the areas of Ward and Community-Based Planning. The project was rolled out in two phases, with the first phase taking on a pilot format, and targeting a sample of 21 District and Metropolitan Municipalities in six of the nine provinces.

Key objectives of the project included the following: (1) exposing the target groups to the legal and policy framework for CBP; (2) providing participants with an indication as to where and how CBP could become an effective component in the State planning machinery and in improving local living conditions; (3) assisting participants with determining the roles they could play in development planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring and review processes, as well as discussing the accompanying responsibilities; and (4) enhancing the spatial and development planning skills of the participants. In addition to these objectives, and given DCoGTA's then 'new' 'Turnaround Strategy'⁵ for Local Government, the project also had to expose participants to the Strategy and invite and enable them to become active participants in it.

In terms of content, the project entailed facilitating learning at two-day workshops in each District by a team

4 This Department was the successor in title in May 2009 (after the most recent national and provincial elections in April 2009) to the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) referred to earlier in the discussion on Project 1.

5 This Strategy was developed in response to the weak track record in the areas of service delivery and planning in many municipalities, and the challenges encountered by many municipalities in conducting their activities in the 'one-size-fits-all' framework developed for local government post-1996 (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2009). As the name suggests, it was to herald a rapid turnaround and a vastly improved developmental performance by the State in the municipal sphere of government.

consisting of facilitators with backgrounds in integrated development planning, governance, budgeting, public administration and management, housing, spatial planning, local economic development, community-based planning and public participation. Workshops were generally run by two facilitators, but sometimes also by a single facilitator or three facilitators, depending on the size of the group, which varied between 40 and 130 participants. The workshops were held in community halls, town halls and halls rented from churches and the private sector. Catering was done by local service providers. The running of the workshops was planned and executed as an intergovernmental project. Provincial departments were responsible for municipal planning, and municipalities for the booking of the halls and the sourcing of caterers, as well as inviting the local participants. DCoGTA, in turn, channelled the funding and assisted the facilitators with logistical, technical and procedural support in the running of the workshops.

2.2.2 What was observed and found

Again, the experiences were rich and varied, with the following the main ones:

- While it should come as no surprise, it was very clear that communities are often highly capable of (1) making sense of their surroundings; (2) seeing relationships and the implications of spatial dynamics and features; and (3) coming up with rational and credible proposals as to how their living areas can be improved. It would seem that with a few more targeted training courses, most communities could become important players in development planning.
- While not evenly distributed, there were cases where there were exceptionally adept individuals, highly competent in what planning does and planners do. They had a very well-developed grasp of contextual issues and what they meant for their community, were able to explain these issues to the rest of the community, and come up with incredibly well-considered proposals for progressive change. In fact, it often seemed that a number of such community members would be able to prepare much better plans than many qualified planners could.

- While not the case in every district, there were also some worrying tendencies, such as the way in which well-intended State initiatives, such as the Community Development Workers Programme, had in some Districts caused deep tensions and aroused jealousies. Other such tendencies were the high levels of frustration, despondency and negative views of the State due to (1) a lack of follow-through on promises; (2) a lack of communication with communities; and (3) high-handedness displayed by some officials. This also extended into the CBP training programme, with some viewing the training with deep suspicion. In a number of cases facilitators were bluntly asked: "Why are you doing this training and who is going to gain from it?" In some instances, the facilitators sensed that there were gatekeepers who felt threatened by the prospect of a far more vocal and focused community when it came to planning. In other instances, the facilitators had the impression that there possibly were individuals who were interested in using the programme as a springboard into the next local government election.

2.2.3 What was learnt – what it means for the Department's planning programmes

As noted in the case of the first project, there are many cues to be taken and lessons (to be) learnt from the processes and experiences discussed above for planning educators. The following are the ones that stand out for now:

- The way we talk about communities, i.e. is it merely as 'beneficiaries, disempowered people, the poor, a source of information'? In addition, what we teach about communities; what we base our knowledge of communities on; where we locate communities in planning processes vis-à-vis professional planners, and what difference we believe planning can make in the life of a community, and for different members of communities?
- Whether we make adequate and appropriate provision in our curriculum for CBP in the broader planning system. Is it, for instance, perceived simply as one piece of the puzzle, and is it dealt with only in one of our modules, i.e. 'Participatory Planning', as if there are other kinds in which 'communities and CBP do

not matter'? And, having said that, how could the opposite be ensured, and how could CBP be turned into a contributor to true community empowerment on the one hand, and be used in the creation of more enabling spaces for empowerment, on the other?

- Whether we really expose our students (enough) and equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills and values, to engage with communities. Whether our students are equipped to enter into a mutual learning process; carry their proposals forward into different planning processes where they may not be present or have access to, and get other professionals, such as engineers and architects, equally involved in CBP and sensitive to the need and importance thereof? How we expand the focus of CBP beyond the municipal realm as merely serving the municipal Integrated Development Plan (IDP) (as it may be viewed in some quarters) and into the provincial and national realms as well?
- How we move beyond being fascinated and enthralled by the possibilities of CBP and 'informality' and the power of the poor, into the world of doing something about these conditions?
- How we factor CBP into philosophical and theoretical discussions about planning thought and planning practice in a realm that is, to a large extent, dominated by Northern planning discourses in which community initiatives are part, but not central to the literature?

2.3 Project 3: Capacity-building programmes and certificated short courses

2.3.1 What it entailed

Since the late 1990s, the Department has been involved in a range of capacity-building programmes which, over time, became more formalised and part of the lifelong skills development programmes of officials, municipal councillors and practising planners. These courses ranged from two-day courses with the aim of providing an overview, and creating an awareness of a particular aspect of planning, to officially certificated five-day courses. The courses included lectures, group discussions, group work (including role play), and video

material, typically documentaries. The courses covered the following areas: Integrated Development Planning; Spatial Development Planning; Land-Use Management; Long-term Planning for Public Infrastructure Investment and Development Spending; Intergovernmental Development Planning; Local Economic Development; Planning Theory, and Refresher Courses for practising planners. In some instances, the objective of the training was not merely about skills development, but also about the need for officials to collaborate and assist each other in IDP preparation and review processes. The following groups were trained: municipal councillors, managers and mayors throughout the country; officials in the national departments of Social Development and Environmental Affairs; officials in provincial sector departments and municipalities throughout the country, and practising planners from around the country who are active in a myriad of planning activities ranging from land-use management work to national and provincial planning. The training programmes were, in most instances, presented on-site in a venue provided by the beneficiary group, but occasionally also offered on campus. In most instances, the Department acted as service provider to the contracting agent, a campus firm called Continuing Education at the University of Pretoria (CE at UP). In others, lecturers in the Department were asked to provide specific inputs in programmes presented by others, notably the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), but also private service providers. The initiators of the training programmes included the three spheres of government; parastatals, such as the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the CSIR, and the Department itself.

2.3.2 What was observed and found

The courses were very useful from a variety of perspectives. These ranged from the preparation of the material and the development of the programmes to the engagement with different stakeholders in development throughout the country. More specifically, the participating faculty in the Department:

- Observed how different role players in planning viewed planning, what their concerns and misgivings with it were, and how they believed planning could be improved, or should be done. Faculty were also

exposed to new and novel ways of approaching difficult challenges in planning. Importantly in this regard, they heard a wide variety of councillors/politicians' views on planning and what they would like planning to do and what they 'thought' it could and should be able to do.

- Learnt about other sector planning processes (e.g. from population experts, social development workers, education experts and environmentalists) and how their activities and processes could be combined, coordinated and synchronised in development planning processes to do and achieve more, for more, with less, for longer.
- Found that while there were many officials and councillors who saw the need for planning and had no qualms with what it sought to do, many did not have the necessary grounding in development theory and practice to perceive where planning fits into a bigger developmental picture. At the same time, faculty encountered many stakeholders who viewed planning merely as another State function – something that the law prescribed and that had to be done, and not something that was capable of ensuring a better life for all. On the other hand, in some instances, 'non-planners' were unaware, and often suspicious of planning. Due to the limited number of success stories, planning was viewed as something that resembled politics – i.e. it lived and remained in the realm of rhetoric, promises and dreams.
- Observed the good and bad of short-course training on planning and/or key components of planning. While an appreciation of the need for planning, an understanding of planning processes, and knowledge on ways in which planning could ensure progressive outcomes were established and enhanced in many of these courses, there were also some less positive transfers. In some instances, the wish to secure buy-in from delegates and simplifications of complex processes resulted in something as complex as integrated intergovernmental development planning being reduced to a very simple recipe. Guide-packs, prepared by government departments and other stakeholders with very good intentions, and which in many instances sought to simplify planning for mass consumption, also

added to this highly undesirable situation. The short-course model was also not found to be all that conducive to the transfer of planning values and thought.

- Experienced first-hand the damage done by service providers not well versed in planning. In many instances, this had clearly contributed to negative perceptions about planning and badly informed views as to how it could and should be done.

2.3.3 What was learnt – what it means for the Department's planning programmes

The courses exposed members of faculty to a wide range of 'other' voices in development and a series of opinions with which to reflect on planning programmes and courses. The courses also enabled faculty to lecture to students with far more confidence than they would have if it had not been for the courses. In addition, they gave the Department an advertising space, as well as access to prospective students, especially postgraduate students.

With regards to its programmes, faculty learnt the following:

- To not negate the complexity of planning and the complex web of relations and interactions in which it is located, and to not underestimate the ability of non-planners to understand and function within this complexity.
- To make far more provision in the curricula for not merely 'talking about' the involvement of sector planning processes and activities in planning, but to also understand better what these processes and activities entail. In this way, the ability of planning to accommodate these processes and, in turn, add value to these processes, could be enhanced. This could also assist in deepening and broadening an appreciation for planning amongst specialists involved in such sector planning processes.
- To not underestimate the challenges associated with ensuring intergovernmental development planning, while at the same time constantly reminding themselves and their students that it can, has to be, and actually 'has been done.' In the case of the latter, the successful examples about which faculty were informed during the training sessions

were all achieved through careful planning, programming, networks and dedication.

- To, as is the case of the two other projects, appreciate the importance of, expose their students to, and equip them with as many of the 'different languages' that are spoken in the development and planning world. This includes emphasising how stakeholders often 'talk differently' about the same thing and how they perceive planning and plans. More than anything else, it also emphasised the value of exposing students to practitioners and academics from different professions, community members and officials in the three spheres of government, and politicians.
- To be far more optimistic about planning and about what it can achieve. While students should be exposed to and know the pitfalls involved in planning, the impression should never be created that it is a futile endeavour. Planning students have to be ambassadors for planning, and while they should be well aware of the challenges, they should not become despondent and forget the transformative potential it holds.
- To ensure that the values of planning and development are a key component of every aspect of the curriculum. This is especially important in the Department's short-course and certificate programmes that should not only cover technical and procedural matters, but also be strong on values.

Before moving on to the discussion, it is useful to capture the key findings in a summary matrix, as in Table 1 on page 8 below.

3. DISCUSSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING EDUCATION ON A MORE GENERIC LEVEL

It was noted at the outset of this article that the Department believes that planning education needs to assist in the pursuit of two objectives: 'empowering people' and 'creating enabling places' for this process of empowerment. By making use of the three projects in which the Department has been involved over the past twelve years, an overview of lessons learnt and implications of and suggestions for improvements in the planning curriculum and programmes offered by the

Department was provided. In this final section, some generic recommendations are made for planning education based on the experiences and lessons learnt in the three projects.

3.1 Planning education and planning educators must at heart be optimistic about planning

While it may seem strange to have to say this, it is unfortunately not. Far too many planning educators have fallen in a trap of cynicism and the production of papers that seem not to critique planning with the aim of improving it, but simply to expose and gloat about its weaknesses. It would even appear that some planning academics have built and/or want to build a career on the corpse of planning. If we as planning educators are not positive about planning, who will be? To paraphrase and slightly tweak a famous quote: *We need to be and become the confident professionals we want our students to be and become.* Planning is crucial for development, and without it, the prospects of a better life for all are deeply dimmed. In addition, and for our students' sake, given the challenges to which they are exposed from a variety of areas, they need to be confident about what they bring, what they stand for, what they are fighting for, who they are and what they can bring to State and public planning processes. All of this will require an appreciative, yet critical approach to planning, and not one based on gleeful cynicism. It should also be noted that at the same time that we as planning educators are introspectively doodling about planning, other professions and educational programmes are increasingly equipping their students with 'planning skills', and are eager to 'get a piece of the planning work'.

3.2 Planning education must learn from planning practice (and vice versa)

While the latter seems obvious, it is not. Planning practice will only learn from planning education if it has something useful to offer. For planning educators to have 'something useful' to offer, they must be aware of what is happening in the world outside academia. This entails being around, alive, active, visible and cognisant in the real world (of practice). Such exposure in, and to the outside world should not only generate a very important and useful consultancy

income (for travel, conference attendance and to be able to stay on in academia) through engaging in (existing) planning practice, but also test planning theory, thought, knowledge and values. Research should also be done in the lecturer's area of involvement in the programme, meaning a situation where that which is taught is based on 'own experience-driven/informed research'. In addition to all the other benefits, the experience with the outside world will also build the confidence of the lecturers, give them a persona and respect outside academia, and provide them with real-life stories/examples in the teaching environment.

3.3 Planning education should develop the language, facilitation and translation skills of planning students

Communication is central to all the activities in which planners are involved. This entails interactions with other planners, other professionals, (other) community members, the private sector and organised labour representatives and politicians. As such, it entails discussions with professionals in different spheres of government and with different mandates and agendas, time-frames and constituencies. It also means different styles of engagement, from listening and responding; 'teaching'; sharing and, of course pushing a case – i.e. arguing. All of these capacities rest on the ability to be fluid in many languages and aware of, and familiar with the meanings encoded in these languages. It also entails the ability to move in an out of technical languages/codes, narratives and rhetoric with ease. For planners to be effective in this, planning students need a thorough grounding in these areas, and this requires making it part of the competencies pursued in all modules.

3.4 Planning education should emphasise creativity and innovation, and be likewise

At a time in which the law and the budget have seemingly become far more important reasons for planning action than the desired output, it is important that planners seek and find novel ways of making the most of what the law requires and the budget provides. It also means that students need to be creative and innovative to find spaces for pursuits with progressive outcomes in these laws and with the limited funds available. Creativity and innovation

Table 1: Summary of the three projects, experiences and lessons learnt

Project	Key components	Core experiences	Key lessons for planning curricula
Improving Intergovernmental development planning	Involvement in the preparation of legal and policy frameworks to ensure and enhance intergovernmental relations (IGR) and participation in pilot projects to test the legal and policy frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space can provide a shared platform for making sense of the needs and potentials of places and for enhancing IGR • Commitment by leaders to IGR processes is crucial • Official data can be enhanced by 'the picture on the ground' and by local and indigenous knowledge • Participants in IGR processes can cross their disciplinary, spherical and sector boundaries • A focus on legal compliance and conservative and traditional views on issues such as gender, race and age can frustrate IGR processes • Plans are often weak levers and cogs in the State machinery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students need to be made fully aware of the complexity of the world in which planning is practised • Students need to be exposed to the many different languages spoken in the planning domain and in planning processes • Discussions on power must extend beyond the descriptive into the domain of progressive responses to it • 'Spatial design' and 'talking about space' are both important planning skills
Enhancing community-based planning	Participation in the roll-out of a EU-funded and DCoGTA-managed capacity-building programme aimed at assisting Community Development Workers (CDWs), Ward Committee Members, Ward Councillors and officials involved in development planning in the areas of Ward and Community-Based Planning (CBP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities are often highly capable of making sense of their surroundings, perceiving spatial relationships and participating in planning processes • There are community members with no formal planning training who are highly adept at doing what planning does and planners do • Well-intended State interventions aimed at enhancing planning and development can be hampered by in-fighting, jealousies and selfish ambitions in government and community structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities are complex entities – they are far more than merely beneficiaries or sources of information and need to be engaged as such • CBP is more than merely an input into standardised planning processes and needs to be approached, provided for, and utilised as such • It is not good enough to only be enthralled with CBP and 'informality' – planning educators need to actively engage the worlds in which they occur and the power structures in which they are located
Presenting and participating in capacity-building programmes and certificated short courses	Provision of short-term capacity-building programmes on a wide variety of planning-related topics and themes, primarily for non-planners, as well as refresher courses for primarily planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novel ways of considering planning and addressing challenges in planning practice • Sector planning processes and ways of meshing and integrating these in planning processes • There is a strong belief among many non-planners in the need for planning and what it can accomplish • Leaving planning education and capacity-building on planning-related topics to opportunists can cause severe damage to planning and the progressive goals it seeks to achieve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students need to be made aware of and be prepared to function effectively in the dense network of sector planning processes in which planning is located • While it is important to expose students to the dilemmas and challenges associated with IGR, they also need to be exposed to instances where it has worked and the reasons for the successes in such instances • Planning educators must be optimistic about planning and what it can achieve • The values for which planning and development stand must be part of every module and certificate programme, however short it may be

will also be required to ably respond to the challenges of resource scarcity, climate change and global warming, and planning education clearly needs to play its part in building these capacities. Teaching in pursuit of this objective will, of course, also need to be creative, to practise what is preached. At the same time, creative planning educators need to lead students in the pursuit of a space for an independent voice outside the State machinery and the trappings of the profession. From this place, creative and independent views can be expressed about the world in which we are living and how it impacts on the pursuit of development and improved life opportunities for all. Again, as in the case of the other requirements, this will require of planning educators to lead/create the way by boldly walking it.

3.5 Planning education should be about community empowerment and development and enable creative and responsive place-making

As noted throughout this article, community empowerment and the development of places that provide space for such empowerment, both as process and as outcome, should be paramount in planning practice, and hence in planning education. While this process can benefit from modules in participatory/collaborative planning, it is far more than merely this. It requires the mainstreaming of community empowerment and place-making in planning programmes, by incorporating it in all the modules that are taught in planning programmes. At the same time, it requires

the pursuit of better global, national and provincial outcomes by ensuring that locally-focused planning processes such as CBP do not remain focused on local matters and pursuits. This requires the search for innovative ways in which processes such as CBP can become part of, speak to and enhance sector, provincial and national planning, budgeting and implementation processes. At the same time, to ensure that education in GIS and spatial development planning and design, speak to, about and in support of community empowerment and enabling place-making. Finally, it requires focused and sustained research by planning educators and students into both these areas, and a lively interest and active involvement by both groups in 'community-and-place-related issues', such as (1) survival

strategies; (2) forms, content and uses of local knowledge; (3) uses/benefits of State development programmes; (4) movement/transport; and (5) youth development. This should not only deepen the capacity of all involved in planning to speak in a better informed and more nuanced way to and about communities, but also to become (1) more adept at recording, encoding and decoding community and place information, and (2) more competent in the development of 'enabling places'.

4. CONCLUSION

The article started off with the statement that the Town and Regional Planning Department at the University of Pretoria has over the past two decades been engaged in a continuous process of revisiting and amending its curricula. It was also indicated that the AAPS curriculum redevelopment process rejuvenated the process, and led to the idea to use the learning from three projects in/with which the Department has been involved over the past twelve years to probe and improve its curricula. Making use of these three projects, areas and issues of importance for curricula redevelopment were raised and discussed. This was followed by a set of proposals on a more generic level with regards to improving planning education. While these proposals are in some instances not that new, nor that novel, they do suggest routes that may not have been actively pursued in planning programmes in the past. In some, they have been voiced previously. As such, they raise two questions, namely whether they are useful and if so, why have they not been implemented before, and if they are useful, how can they be implemented? The Department has been, and is actively exploring these questions through action, i.e. continuously changing, tweaking and testing its curricula.

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