

Chapter 6: DATA PRESENTATION OF THE SOCIAL SECTOR'S CONTEXTUAL NEED FOR MBA SERVICE-LEARNING

Problem 2: Evaluate the extent of matching between the business needs of community organisations and the types of support that could be supplied by MBA students.

<u>Sub-problems:</u>		<u>Propositions 2.1 to 2.3</u>
2.1	Define the scope of “community organisations” relevant in the South African context	2.1 The scope of “community organisations” relevant in the South African context extends beyond the non-profit sector
2.2	Identify the business needs of community organisations in terms of skills development and expert support	2.2 The business needs of community organisations include skills development, expert support and basic management functions
2.3	Identify the business benefits of MBA Service-Learning to community organisations	2.3 Community organisations derive business benefits from MBA Service-Learning students

6.1 Proposition 2.1: The scope of “community organisations” relevant to the South African context extends beyond the non-profit sector

Data were gathered from directly questioning Service-Learning practitioners and supplemented by inference from the students’ selection of organisations in which to conduct their interventions. Thus the findings with regard to this proposition, although they come from different sources, should be regarded as supplementary to one another, rather than an attempt at triangulation.

The first sub-section of this chapter profiles the Service-Learning respondents, then moves on to the scoping recommendations made by this group, and finally lists the community organisation types selected by students.

6.1.1 The profile of Service-Learning respondents

The profile of the Service-Learning practitioners who participated in the study may be seen in Table 6.1. Because Service-Learning has only been actively promoted and practiced in South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the last two to three years, the number of experienced practitioners was found to be low; only practitioners with expertise and experience and / or knowledge of the South African context were selected as respondents. Most of the heads of Service-Learning and community engagement departments at the larger South African HEI's were engaged, as were sponsors and experts from the United States and England.

Apart from Wits Business School, none of the South African business schools are currently employing Service-Learning as a learning methodology.

Thus, although the number of respondents in this part of the study is relatively small, it does represent expert opinion. Furthermore, the requirements of the central limit theorem (Albright *et al* 2003) have been met since over 30 usable responses were obtained.

Table 6.1 Profile of the participating Service-Learning practitioners and experts (n = 32)

Number of practitioners per participating university	n
University of the Witwatersrand	7
University of the Free State	6
Rhodes University	2
University of Cape Town	2
University of Pretoria	2
Stellenbosch University	2

Number of practitioners per participating university	n
University of KwaZulu Natal	2
University of Johannesburg	2
University of Bristol, England	2
Sheffield Hallam University, England	1
University of Wolverhampton	1
Stanford University, USA	1
East Michigan University, USA	1
Indiana University-Perdue University Indianapolis, USA	1
TOTAL	32
Service-Learning course levels taught (some respondents taught more than one course)	n
Undergraduate	22
Post-Graduate	11
Graduate	6
Disciplines in which Service-Learning courses were taught	n
Medical: community health, nursing, audiology, psychology, pharmacy, speech therapy	15
Education: teacher education, higher education development, Service-Learning in education	9
Commercial: management, economics, law, information technology	7
Sociology: public engagement, public administration, sociology, community development	5

Table 6.1 shows that most Service-Learning is currently in the fields of medicine and education, and the vast majority of courses are at undergraduate level.

There is almost no directly relevant local experience to draw on for this study, since even the commercially related Service-Learning interventions are mainly offered at undergraduate level.

The only MBA courses in South Africa, and in fact the only post-graduate management courses being taught using Service-Learning, are those at the University of the Witwatersrand, and these are the basis of this study.

6.1.2 *The scope of “community organisations” in the South African context*

Data for this section were drawn from two sources, viz. Service-Learning practitioners’ views on the matter and directly from student selections of community organisations for assignment purposes. The views of the Service-Learning practitioners are elucidated in section 6.1.2.1 followed by a list of the students’ selections in section 6.1.2.2.

6.1.2.1 *Service-Learning practitioners scoping of community organisations*

Service-Learning practitioners were requested to identify organisation types that they felt should be beneficiaries of Service-Learning interventions from MBA students. Because none of them had actually conducted Service-Learning programmes with MBA students, they drew on their experiences within their own areas of expertise to form an opinion. The findings are summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Service-Learning practitioners’ defined scope of “community organisations”

Organisational type	n
Non Governmental Organisations	28
HIV / AIDS organisations	28
Schools	27
Retirement homes	26
Community Based Organisations	26
Non Profit Organisations	25
Volunteer groups	25
Violence prevention groups	25

Organisational type	n
Municipalities	24
Charities	24
Human rights groups	24
Environmental protection agencies	24
Orphanages	24
Development organisations	23
Arts / Culture organisations	23
Sect 21 companies	22
Police stations	22
Trusts / Foundations	22
Religious organisations	21
City councils	21
Survival support groups	21
Animal rights groups	21
Counselling organisations	21
Prisons	20
Hospitals	19
Government departments	18
Pressure groups	18
Black Economic Empowerment Organisations	17
Community co-operatives	17
Educators	17
Entrepreneurs	13
Small, Medium or Micro Enterprises	12

The list in Table 6.2 was subject to several caveats and conditions by the respondents; not all respondents commented, whilst others gave detailed opinion and duplication did occur. The conditions, caveats and comments are summarised in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Caveats and conditions to Table 6.2

Condition or caveat	n
It depends on whether assisting them will benefit the community, stimulate the local economy and / or alleviate poverty and suffering – one needs to be flexible in the South African context	9
All the listed organisations serve communities in some way, and if they need help to be viable, they should be included	5
Depends on the wealth status and need of the organisation - there are some very wealthy non-profits who do not need and should not receive assistance	3
The organisation must serve the community in which it is situated	3
Building social capital should be a key objective	2
The economy is a mixed one and all deserving organisations should be in a position to benefit whilst students learn	2
The organisation must be non profit, whatever its function	2
Organisations should be able to provide opportunities for student learning	1

The respondents indicated that a wide range of organisational types should benefit from Service-Learning, and that these were not limited to NPOs only.

6.1.2.2 *Students' scoping of community organisations*

Over the three year period that Service-Learning has been implemented at Wits Business School, culminating in the two MBA classes investigated in depth for this study, the organisational types listed in Table 6.4 were selected by students as being community organisations requiring business-based interventions.

Table 6.4 Students' defined scope of "Community Organisations"

Organisational type	n
HIV / AIDS support: orphan care, treatment, general care,	10
Community based care organisation (eg food, medical)	9

Organisational type	n
Centre for adult education	3
Faith based organisations caring for the poor	3
Black Economic Empowerment organisations (start-up)	2
Counselling organisations	2
Crisis support centres for children	2
Drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres	2
Organisations caring for children with cancer	2
Orphanage	2
Trusts	2
Air ambulance	1
Crime prevention NPO	1
Department in a city centre hospital	1
Guide dogs training organisation	1
Home for girls	1
Home for quadriplegic adults	1
Home for rehabilitation of criminally charged youth	1
Municipality-based job creation organisation	1
Police station (in an underprivileged area)	1
Skills development and job placement for disadvantaged youths	1
Skills development and job placement for women	1
Volunteer organisation supporting mentally handicapped adults	1
Volunteer organisation to sustain rural primary schools	1

The wide range of organisations selected by the students is not dissimilar to that of the Service-Learning practitioners. It is clear from Tables 6.2 and 6.4 that the scope of “community organisations” should extend beyond the non-profit sector in the South African context. **Thus Proposition 2.1 is accepted.**

6.2 Proposition 2.2: The business needs of community organisations include skills development, expert support and basic management functions

The business needs of community organisations were sought directly from the organisations surveyed and from an analysis of the type of projects that the students actually undertook with the organisations that they worked with.

6.2.1 *The business needs of NPOs*

A summary of the profile of the NPOs participating in the study may be seen in Table 6.5. Of the 34 respondents, 32 gave sufficient information to include in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Profile of the NPOs participating in the study

Organisational type	n
Voluntary organisation	8
Trust	6
Section 21 organisation	7
NPO	11
Organisational size	n
Less than 10 employees	12
Between 11 and 50 employees	14
Between 51 and 100 employees	4
More than 100 employees	2
Sources of funds	Count
Donations, gifts, government subsidy and CSR	28
Fundraising events	13
Income generation through sales of goods and / or services	12
Member fees	10
Interest on investments	6

The NPOs all self-identified with the formal categories named in the NPO Act. Since 94.1% of NPOs are familiar with this Act (Table 6.8), this is to be expected. The organisations' sources of income leaned heavily on donations, government subsidies and CSR, with 48% of all NPOs surveyed receiving some, if not all of their funding from this source. Figure 6.1 illustrates.

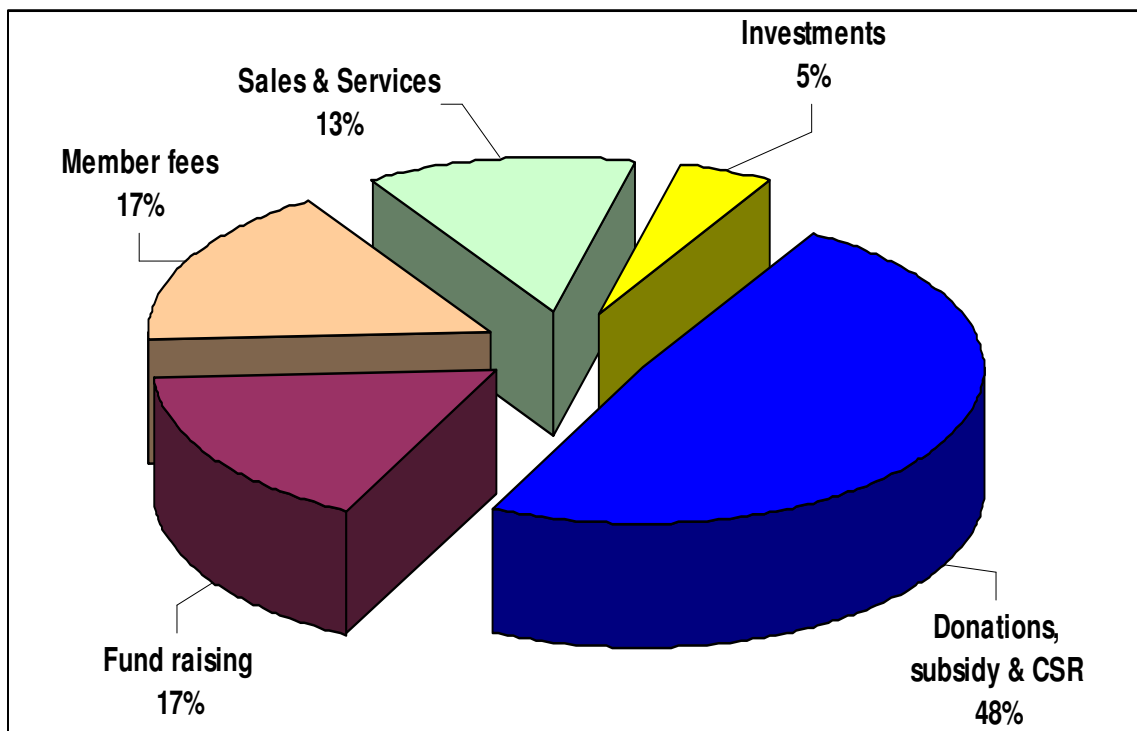


Figure 6.1 The mean sources of funds for NPOs

6.2.1.1 *Self identification of the business needs of NPOs*

Only 19 of the 34 NPO respondents (56%) completed the section enquiring about the skills required to run their organisations effectively and which of these skills were absent or needed development.

The summary data are demonstrated in Table 6.6, sorted by frequency of mention of skills needing development, with the top approximate 80% (based on the Pareto principle (Koch 1998) shaded blue to highlight the areas that future Service-Learning practitioners could most helpfully concentrate on.

Table 6.6 NPO (n=19) perceptions of the skills required to run their organisations and those needing development (sorted by skills needing development; % is that of the 58 total skills needing development)

Primary skills needed to run the organisation	n	n: skills needing development	%	Cum %
HR Management: performance measurement and management, change management, conflict resolution	9	8	13.8	13.8
General management	7	7	12.1	25.9
Accounting and finance / financial planning and management	9	5	8.6	34.5
Marketing	5	5	8.6	43.1
Fund raising	9	4	6.9	50.0
Leadership and governance	4	4	6.9	56.9
Project management	5	4	6.9	63.8
Strategic planning	6	4	6.9	70.7
Administration	6	3	5.2	75.9
Event management	3	3	5.2	81.0
People skills and communication	10	3	5.2	86.2
Creativity	1	2	3.4	89.7
IT skills including web design	2	2	3.4	93.1
Professional skills in specific areas, eg medical, child care, electrical, agriculture, woodwork	3	2	3.4	96.6
Operations management	2	1	1.7	98.3
Writing - technical, creative	2	1	1.7	100.0
Teaching skills	4	0	0.0	100.0
TOTAL		58		

As mentioned, the blue shaded sections define the top (approximate) 80% of skills needing development in NPOs. The NPOs were also asked how they would utilise

consultants should they have free access to those that they needed. Of the 34 respondents, 11 did not complete this section. The summarised findings (n = 23), again with the top approximate 80% highlighted, are in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 NPO (n = 23) requirements for consultant support

NPOs would use consultants for:	n	%	Cum %
Building effective and professional management in the organisation; improving efficiencies, implementation, delivery on tasks, filling operational gaps and helping to motivate staff	13	20.3	20.3
Human Resource functions; performance measurement and management, recruitment, talent retention, staff retention, general HR issues, change management, staff training and development	12	18.8	39.1
Marketing, external communication, writing proposals and building brand awareness	9	14.1	53.1
Strategic planning	6	9.4	62.5
Financial management assistance	5	7.8	70.3
Fundraising	5	7.8	78.1
Assistance with Board issues; how to recruit and retain Board members, measuring Board effectiveness, ensuring good governance	4	6.3	84.4
Technical skills related assistance, eg web design, IT	3	4.7	89.1
Brainstorming alternative ways to source income / funding	2	3.1	92.2
Research: eg impact studies, surveys, project evaluation	2	3.1	95.3
Legal advice relating to business issues	1	1.6	96.9
Setting up an advisory board	1	1.6	98.4
Would not use consultants	1	1.6	100.0

Based on the Pareto or 80/20 Principle, Table 6.7 demonstrates that over 80% of the work (highlighted in blue) that consultants would be asked to conduct are related to

general management issues, with the exception of fundraising, which would clearly be specific to NPOs. Comparing Tables 6.6 and 6.7 reveals that the top two business needs in both lists relate to various general management and to human resources functions.

On being requested to rate their own functionality with respect to the list of organisational requirements in Table 6.8, the respondents rated themselves highly in all respects with the exception of the effectiveness of their policies and procedures. This category obtained an affirmative response in 26.5% of cases, a negative response in 47.1% of cases and 26.5% of respondents indicated that their policies and procedures were only partially effective.

**Table 6.8 NPOs' perceptions of their own operating principles' functionality
(n = 34)**

Operating principle	n	% yes
Awareness of the NPO Act	32	94.1
Compliance with the NPO Act	30	88.2
Have a written business plan	26	76.5
Have a written constitution	31	91.2
Have a written strategic plan	26	76.5
The organisational structure is aligned with the strategy	29	85.3
Have a formal organogram	28	82.4
Have written policies and procedures	21	61.8
The policies and procedures are effective	9	26.5
The organisation has enough staff to meet its current needs	23	67.6

6.2.1.2 Student identification of the business needs of NPOs and community organisations

Over the two year period during which Service-Learning has been implemented at Wits Business School, the interventions undertaken by students in community organisations were of the types demonstrated in Table 6.9. It should be borne in mind that Service-

Learning was implemented in Organisational Design and Development (ODD) courses only, and that in some cases more than one intervention was conducted, so the “%” column total is greater than 100%.

Table 6.9 Intervention types undertaken by students in community organisations during 2005 and 2006 (n = 25)

Intervention type	n	%
Facilitation of strategic or planning workshops / various brainstorming sessions	16	64
Team building exercises	5	20
Project support and assistance	5	20
Volunteer activities	4	16
Skills gap analysis workshops	3	12
Functional activity support, eg website development, assistance with marketing plans	2	8

From the data described above, it seems clear that the business needs of community organisations do include skills development, specialist support and basic management functions, so **Proposition 2.2 can be accepted.**

The differences between the data sources are discussed in Chapter 8.

6.3 Proposition 2.3: Community organisations derive business benefits from MBA Service-Learning students

The data in this section were obtained from two different sources, viz. a) post-intervention, confidential feedback from the community organisations, b) Likert scale student opinion regarding their perceived effectiveness in working with the community organisations of their choice.

6.3.1 *Community organisations' assessment of student interventions*

The community organisations that students worked with were requested to give a confidential, brief letter of feedback directly to the lecturer, after the course. The feedback given by community organisations from both 2005 and 2006 is given (n = 25). One organisation wished to remain anonymous and did not give feedback. A summary of the answers to the direct questions is seen in Table 6.10, and qualitative feedback is given in Table 6.11.

Table 6.10 Community organisations' (n = 25) responses to direct questions on student interventions

Direct query	responses
Did you (the community organisation) benefit from the student Service-Learning intervention?	Yes = 20 Partly = 5 No = 0
Are you able to use the advice / tools that resulted from the intervention?	Yes = 15 Partly = 4 To Board = 6 No = 0
Should Service-Learning take place / continue in business schools?	Yes = 18 Didn't say = 7 No = 0

The responses to the question of whether the organisation would be able to use the advice given and / or the tools created included “yes”, “no”, “partly” and “submitted to the Board for approval to use” responses. This latter response is presented in Table 6.10 as “To Board”.

The qualitative feedback from the community organisations is summarised and presented in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11 Community organisations' (n = 25) qualitative feedback to student interventions – key issues

Issue	Feedback
Time allowed for the project	<p>Thirteen of the organisations felt that the time was too short, and that they would have liked the students to have had more time to spend with them.</p> <p>Six organisations stated that they would like a follow-up activity from the students.</p> <p>Two organisations felt that the students only partly understood their needs and did not feel that more time would be useful</p> <p>Four organisations did not comment</p>
Student professionalism	Fifteen of the organisations volunteered that the student groups behaved in a very professional manner

The overall findings from Tables 6.10 and 6.11 can be summarised to indicate that the interventions were generally successful, and that the organisations would like greater involvement of this nature.

6.3.2 Students' assessment of the value of their own interventions to community organisations and to themselves (CHESP questionnaire, n = 52)

Fifty two students completed the standard CHESP post-course questionnaire, which may be seen in Appendix 7.

6.3.2.1 Profile of the students who completed the CHESP post-course questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed in the last lecture of the two courses under analysis; not all 82 students attended, and some students exercised their right not to participate in the questionnaire, which is the reason for only 52 completed questionnaires being returned. The summarised results may be seen in Table 6.12.

Table 6.12 Demographic profile of the students completing the CHESP questionnaire (n = 50)

Gender breakdown	n	%
Male	34	65.4
Female	18	34.6
Racial breakdown	n	%
Asian / Indian	6	11.5
Black	19	36.5
Coloured	5	9.7
White	22	42.3
Age descriptive statistics (2 students did not reveal their ages)		
Mean	32.08	
Median	31.00	
Mode	29.00	
Range	22.00	
Minimum	25.00	
Maximum	47.00	

To the question of whether the students thought that the organisation had benefited from their intervention (n = 52), the answers were:

- 35 (67%) said Yes
- 16 (32%) said that they Didn't Know
- 1 (2%) said No

However the students' responses to the Likert scale part of the questionnaire revealed a significant ($p = 0.01$) feeling that not only did the community and the community organisation (called service provider in the questionnaire) benefit, but that they, the

students also learnt from the community. The rescaled ratings (Stacey 2005) are shown in Table 6.13.

Table 6.13 The rescaled ratings (Stacey 2005) demonstrating student opinion of the benefits of Service-Learning

Statement	μ	σ	p-value
I learnt from the community in which I worked	0.9501	0.9828	0.0000
The service provider benefited from the work I did	0.3883	0.4940	0.0000
The community benefited from the work I did	0.2499	0.6217	0.0060
The S-L course took more time than other courses	-0.2787	0.9112	0.0319
The S-L course required more work than other courses	-0.5871	0.7880	0.0000
The S-L course cost more money than other courses	-0.7225	0.9445	0.0000

As indicated previously, the rows shaded in yellow demonstrate a significant ($\alpha = 0.01$) positive response and the rows shaded green indicate a significant negative ($\alpha = 0.01$) response.

The results indicate that Proposition 2.3 may be accepted.