

## **A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT INITIATIVE BETWEEN A UNIVERSITY AND A NURSING COLLEGE**

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### **Abstract**

The Atlantic Philanthropies approved a grant of R13.8 million to Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University for the purpose of strengthening the institutional capacity of the Lilitha College of Nursing in order to enhance their training and research development. This article describes what the project entailed and what lessons were learnt.

A situation analysis indicated problems in terms of the organizational structure, the learning environment and human resources/capacity. Four sub-projects were planned and implemented dealing with establishing relevant teaching and learning paradigms: information technology training; leadership and management development and lastly governance, organisational restructuring and management. Based on identified needs, Short Learning Programmes on a range of topics were offered to different target groups within these sub-projects. The College was also assisted to plan for the upgrading of their library system and clinical simulation laboratories. The project was managed by a Steering Committee and was branded to communicate the importance of the work.

The staff of both partners learnt valuable lessons with regard to the nursing education system in the country, project management and educational skills.

**Keywords:** HEI; Nursing Colleges; School of Nursing

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### **Introduction**

The Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) is a private foundation created in 1982 by American businessman, Charles F. "Chuck" Feeney. The Atlantic Philanthropies' grant-making supports health and social projects in Australia, Bermuda, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United States and Vietnam. Feeney started the Atlantic Philanthropies at age 53 because he believed in a "giving while living" philosophy (O'Clery, 2007). In 2008, Atlantic Philanthropies provided massive grants to nursing colleges and universities with nursing schools in South Africa to transform nursing education in the country. The initiative intended to elevate nursing education and uplift the quality of healthcare delivery in South Africa.

The Atlantic Philanthropies approved a grant of R13.8 million to Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) for the purpose of strengthening the institutional capacity of the Lilitha College of

Nursing (LCoN) in order to enhance their training and research development. The Department of Nursing Science at NMMU was responsible for administering the grant.

The NMMU is a new generation university, created by merging a Technicon and two established universities in 2005 and distinguished by the wide range of study options and access routes open to students. It also has a firm commitment to harnessing the university's knowledge resources to contribute to local, regional and African development. As an engaged university, NMMU aims to develop programmes, conduct research, and offer services that respond to the community's needs, and to encourage reciprocal relationships with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) locally, nationally and internationally. The NMMU is a valued partner and facilitator of socio-economic development in the Eastern Cape Province that enables entrepreneurs, nurtures innovators, empowers communities and develops leaders (NMMU in context, nd: 2).

The grant was spent over a three-year period beginning on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 and had to be solely used for the expected outcomes as set out in the agreement. The LCoN is a multi-campus nursing college established through the Education and Training of Nurses and Midwives Act, No. 4 of 2003 of the Eastern Cape Province, and is in an association with a consortium of three institutions which complies with the SA Nursing Council regulations, namely: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan, Fort Hare, and Walter Sisulu Universities in the Eastern Cape Province. LCoN has five main campuses situated in Lusikisiki, Mthatha, Queenstown, East London, and Port Elizabeth, each with their own satellite campuses which total 13. The Lilitha College of Nursing has a total of 3 636 students, a lecturing staff comprising 365 nurse educators, 36 heads of departments, five deputy campus heads, five campus heads and 13 satellite campus heads. The executive management comprises the principal, two deputy principals and six programme managers.

According to Fox and van der Waldt (2007: 9), many models have been developed to describe the life cycle of projects. One such model is that the project life cycle comprises five phases:

- Initiation
- Planning
- Implementation
- Control
- Termination

Each of the abovementioned phases includes different tasks, behaviours and skills that are necessary for projects to be successful. These phases are not detached entities because there are definite overlaps between them. This chapter will describe the NMMU/LCoN collaborative project according to this model.

### **Initiation phase**

The Initiation Phase signifies the selection of a project worth doing, followed by developing a vision and establishing the goals and objectives for the project. Lilitha College of Nursing initiated the grant and was assisted by the staff from the Department of Nursing Science at NMMU in writing the grant proposal.

According to Fox and van der Waldt (2007: 9), some of the key individuals should be drawn together to form a core project team during the initiation phase to begin planning. A project steering committee (Sokhula Sonke Steering Committee) was established in July 2008 to monitor progress and provide strategic support and leadership. The steering committee comprised ten members representing NMMU, the Eastern Cape Department of Health (ECDOH) and the LCoN. The steering committee met at least once per term provided that there were no unforeseen circumstances preventing a meeting from taking place. Terms of reference and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) were developed for the steering committee and stakeholders which highlighted their roles and responsibilities. In this phase a project manager was appointed for the project.

Steps were taken to brand the project for marketing purposes. The process for branding involved inviting the steering committee members to submit suitable names for the project that would be synonymous with the word 'philanthropic'. A Xhosa language expert was also consulted with regard to a suitable name for the project. Thus, the name Sokhula Sonke (SS), which means 'we will build and grow together', was decided upon. A graphic designer developed the logo for the project, which illustrated a broken bridge, a cross, and the sun. The broken bridge is representative of Lilitha College's need for assistance to prepare them to function effectively in the Higher Education landscape; the cross symbolizes nursing and caring; and the sun indicates success.

The South African Nursing Council (SANC) Circular (March 2009) stated that all future qualifications – from the National Diploma: Nursing, to the postgraduate qualifications – must be offered at Higher Education Institutions. Therefore, all nursing colleges are currently striving towards obtaining higher education status from the Higher Education Qualifications Committee (HEQC) prior to offering the new curriculum programmes. Consequently, the short to medium term outcomes of this particular project were:

- Improved management and leadership skills of all Lilitha College of Nursing staff in management positions at the central office and on all campuses;
- Improved quality and relevance of the nurse training programmes, in compliance with the Nursing Act, No. 33 of 2005;
- Enhanced professional image of the college through academic support, adequate resourcing of college campuses and visionary leadership;
- Strengthened strategic planning, management, and advocacy skills;
- Improved learning environment for students;
- A developed strategic plan for academic excellence, staff recruitment and retention, student selection, and uniform education standards for all campuses;
- Optimal clinical supervision of students;
- Improved morale of college staff and students.

Since the initial short to medium term project outcomes were broadly stated, a situational analysis was conducted in order to identify the specific needs of staff and students relating to the above project. The situational analysis was conducted on all the campuses to establish the capacity needs of the staff, the teaching and learning needs of the students, and the existing governance and management structures

that provided the leadership. The following research objectives for the situation analysis were included to explore and describe the:

- management and leadership skills/capabilities of all lecturers, subject heads, campus heads, satellite campus heads, programme managers, deputy college head, college head, administrative registrar, and the administrative staff;
- quality and relevance of the nurse training programme, in compliance with the Nursing Act, No. 33 of 2005;
- extent of academic support and adequate resourcing;
- type of learning environment available at Lilitha Nursing College;
- available academic excellence and shortcomings;
- staff recruitment and retention strategies;
- student selection process(es);
- uniformity of educational standards on all campuses;
- clinical supervision strategies;
- morale of LCoN staff and students.

The research approach used for the situational analysis was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. An exploratory and descriptive design was developed. The research population comprised all students, lecturers, subject heads, satellite campus heads, deputy campus heads, campus heads, programme managers, deputy college head, college head, academic registrar, as well as all administrative staff. A convenience sample was drawn from all respondents for the quantitative research, and purposive sampling was used for the qualitative research.

Four structured self-administered questionnaires were developed for students, lecturers, subject heads, and campus heads in order to collect the necessary data for identifying the actual needs of students and staff. The questionnaires were circulated among academics at NMMU, the acting college head, and the academic registrar for review prior to data collection. A survey, seven focus group interviews, and two in-depth individual interviews were conducted with the administrative assistants across the campuses. In addition, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with the management of the LCoN.

Ethical clearance to conduct the situational analysis was approved by the steering committee overseeing the total project. Participation by students and staff of LCoN was voluntary and permission was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

The findings of the situational analysis highlighted three major areas of focus:

#### ***The organizational structure***

The staff indicated that it was logistically difficult to manage the multi-campus college system because of the wide span of control. It was therefore recommended that the management structure be reviewed to facilitate the management and control of all campuses adequately, effectively and efficiently. The following priorities were identified in this regard:

- Reviewing of organisational and governance structures, management structures and the autonomy and status of LCoN;
- Addressing the shortcomings of the learning environment;

- Improving the professional image of LCoN;
- Developing marketing strategies;
- Implementing a wellness programme for staff and students;
- Reviewing all policies and procedures of LCoN.

### ***The learning environment***

To create an environment conducive to learning the following needed attention:

- Additional classrooms to reduce overcrowding;
- Existing classrooms needed to be repaired and painted;
- Ventilation and lighting in classrooms had to be conducive to teaching and learning;
- Classrooms should be equipped with adequate seating for all students;
- A variety of media equipment was necessary to facilitate teaching and learning in the classrooms;
- Libraries developed and stocked with the latest books to facilitate research, teaching, and learning;
- Clinical simulation laboratories developed and equipped with the necessary equipment and stock;
- Computer laboratories established on all campuses.

### ***Human Resources Capacity of LCoN***

The following needs were identified for capacity development:

- *Management and leadership with special emphasis on the following:*
  - Financial management
  - Visionary leadership
  - Strategic management
  - Change management
  - Effective communication strategies
- *Teaching and learning with special emphasis on the following:*
  - Assessor's and moderator's programmes
  - Developing study guides and innovative teaching strategies
  - Research capacity development
  - Evidence-based and evidence-informed practice
  - Devising a system whereby libraries are more accessible to students and stocked with the latest books
  - Upgrading clinical simulation laboratories
  - Capacity development of the academic and administrative registrars
  - Information technology short learning programmes (SLPs)

### **Planning phase**

According to Fox and van der Waldt (2007), "Planning involves defining the work necessary to complete the project, identifying the resources required to complete the project, developing a schedule and devising a budget for the project". They go on to add that "Planning also involves identifying goals and objectives for the stakeholders and team members who will be involved in the project, as well as providing the means to achieve the goals and objectives" (Fox & van der Waldt, 2007: 9).

The situational analysis identified the needs of the participants and priorities were highlighted for immediate attention, as the funding received from AP was insufficient to address these needs. Hence, the Sokhula Sonke project comprised four sub-projects to deal with specific aspects. The university's rigorous tendering process was used to identify and appoint the providers for the various sub-projects for which capacity did not exist within the university. A scope of work was developed for each of the sub-projects to fully inform the providers of the projects' requirements.

***Sub-project One: Establishing relevant teaching and learning paradigms***

An accredited service provider was appointed to provide four short learning programmes in teaching and learning in order to prepare the nurse educators at the LCoN to:

- plan, develop and evaluate study guides for any instructional offering which is part of an accredited HE programme and to provide evidence of the ability to plan, develop and evaluate a learning opportunity in Higher Education and Training;
- be aware of and implement all the latest teaching strategies available to enhance their lectures and captivate the attention of learners;
- design, develop and implement assessment for any instructional offering which is part of an accredited higher education (HE) programme and to provide evidence of the ability to design, develop and implement assessment of learning in Higher Education and Training and;
- plan procedures, design moderation criteria, implement moderation of assessment of learning for any instructional offering which is part of an accredited HE programme, evaluate the moderation process and provide evidence of the ability to design moderation criteria and procedures and implement moderation of assessment of learning in Higher Education and Training.

The content of the four teaching and learning short learning programmes (SLPs) is depicted in Table 7.1 below.

**Table 7.1: Teaching and learning SLPs**

<b>STUDY GUIDE DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>
Purpose of a study guide	Function of a study guide Purpose of a study guide Difference between a study guide and a course (programme) outline
Information provided in a course (programme) outline	Typical information included in a course (programme) outline Reason for inclusion of each aspect in a course (programme) outline Information a course (programme) outline should include
Information provided in a study guide	Typical information included in a study guide Reason for inclusion of each aspect in a study guide Information a study guide should include
Practical class exercises	Discipline-specific groups required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• draw up frameworks regarding typical course outlines</li> <li>• draft study guides for specific disciplines, including formulation of specific outcomes, assessment criteria, and learning outcomes</li> </ul>
Additional information provided	Example of a Study Guide Policy / Guidelines for developing a Study Guide Typical content of the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator guide (teaching guide) and checklist</li> <li>• portfolio of evidence and checklist</li> <li>• workbook (practical guide) and checklist</li> </ul>

<b>INNOVATIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES</b>	
<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>CONTENT COVERED</b>
Learning defined	Discussion: cognitive, emotional, and environmental influences and experiences in order to change knowledge, skills, values and world view. The learning pyramid
Learning styles	Differentiation between visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learners, as well as their specific needs in terms of teaching strategies (i.e. ways to cater for all learning styles in the classroom) Assessment of individual participants' own learning styles
Experiential learning	Defined and discussed as it applies to nursing education
Active learning	Defined and discussed as it applies to nursing education How to incorporate active learning in the classroom
Facilitation and facilitative learning	Defined and discussed as it applies to nursing education Facilitator skills / competencies relevant (characteristics of facilitative "teachers" / characteristics developed in learners who engage in facilitative learning) Principles of facilitative instruction Benefits and challenges of facilitative learning
Teaching Generation Y	Description of Generation Y and how it differs from previous generations
Adult learning	Expectations of adult learners
Teaching / facilitation strategies and techniques	Differentiation between teaching strategies, methods, techniques, and tools Class simulations of a number of teaching / facilitation techniques
The learning environment	Discussion of a conducive learning environment
Facilitating the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes	Discussion of how the three learning domains can / should be integrated during learning facilitation
Teaching and learning in groups	Discussion of the differentiation between mass instruction, individualized instruction and group learning, including the role of the teacher / instructor / facilitator in each
Group dynamics	Clarification of group dynamics and the relevance of knowledge thereof to teaching and learning Relationship between group size, tasks, and function Group development stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what happens during each stage</li> <li>• interventions the facilitator can use to speed up the initial stages to reach performing stage quicker</li> </ul> Managing the group
Evaluation of learning facilitation	Purpose of evaluation of learning facilitation Kirkpatrick's model for training evaluation



Additional information	<p>An A5 size booklet with a variety of instructional strategies provided in addition to what is mentioned in the manual and in class</p> <p>Video A: Zander – The Art of Possibility (leading students to reach potential)</p> <p>Video B: Blanchard: Managing Change (application relevant to managing students in groups or any new experience)</p>
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<b>ASSESSMENT TRAINING</b>	
<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>CONTENT COVERED</b>
Quality management	<p>Description of QM</p> <p>Purpose of QM</p> <p>Scope of QM</p> <p>QM levels</p> <p>Quality cycle of QM</p> <p>(The aim of this section is to create awareness of the importance of QM in assessment practices)</p> <p>Discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion criteria for an assessment</li> </ul>
Assessment and outcomes	<p>Discussions and group exercises on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advantages and disadvantages of OBET</li> <li>• Critical Cross-- Field Outcomes</li> <li>• Assessment criteria (knowledge, skill, values/attitudes and applied competence)</li> <li>• Evidence and principles applying to quality assessment</li> <li>• Formative and summative assessment: meaning and purpose</li> <li>• Assessment process</li> <li>• Assessment methods</li> <li>• Assessment principles</li> </ul>
Designing and developing your assessment	<p>Discussion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment strategy</li> <li>• Assessment context</li> <li>• Design of assessment activities and tools (template of evidence collection grid provided in Portfolio of Evidence)</li> <li>• Assessment instructions</li> <li>• Evaluation of assessment design</li> <li>• Feedback after assessment</li> <li>• Assessment review</li> <li>• Moderation of assessment</li> </ul>

Practical exercise	Designing assessment strategy
Additional information	An A5 size booklet included for easy reference with a variety of assessment methods, advantages and disadvantages. A CD with additional documentation of interest on topics discussed in class: National Qualifications Framework level descriptors, appeal policy and procedure, assessment management, moderation Recognition of Prior Learning policies and procedures, assessment guide template, learner grievance procedure, etc.
<b>MODERATION TRAINING</b>	
<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>CONTENT COVERED</b>
The moderation context	Reviewing of assessment: process and principles The moderation context Quality assurance: moderation as a quality assurance function The moderation system, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderator skills / competencies</li> <li>• Assessor versus moderator</li> <li>• Components of moderation system</li> </ul>
Planning and preparing for moderation	Discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When / what to moderate?</li> <li>• Pre-moderation meeting: purpose and content</li> <li>• Planning for moderation: what / why?</li> <li>• Moderation methods</li> </ul>
Conducting moderation	Discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is moderated?</li> <li>• How is moderation conducted?</li> <li>• Principles of assessment revised</li> </ul>
Advising and supporting assessors	The advising and supporting role of the moderator
Reporting, recording and administering moderation	Giving feedback: to whom, why, how? Recording / administering of moderation findings Reporting on moderation findings
Reviewing moderation systems and processes	Reviewing of moderation systems and processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of moderation system strengths</li> <li>• Review of moderation system weaknesses</li> <li>• Opportunities for improvement</li> </ul>
Practical exercise	Simulation of a post-assessment moderation
Additional information	Broad overview of NQF and South Africa (SA) training and development landscape. A variety of documentation of interest provided on CD e.g. Disciplinary policy / procedure, Code of Conduct (offences and penalties for learners and staff), template for moderation report, example of moderation checklist for knowledge assessment, etc.

**Sub-project Two: Information technology training**

The provider appointed to conduct the SLPs for information technology first conducted a pre-assessment of the competency levels of staff members prior to commencing any information technology training to establish the individual levels of computer literacy. Establishing these was important in order to determine which staff members required basic introductory information technology programmes. Basic and intermediate SLPs were provided to all staff members with regard to:

- Microsoft Word
- Power Point presentations
- Excel spreadsheets
- Electronic mail communication
- Searching the Internet for credible academic information – literature search strategies
- Skype or web-based communication systems

**Sub-project Three: Leadership and management development**

The purpose of this sub-project was to equip all levels of nurse educators and administrative managers at the LCoN to demonstrate the fundamentals of:

- personal leadership and self-efficacy
- essentials of business leadership
- analytical problem-solving and decision-making ability
- conflict management and change management
- emotional intelligence
- chairing an enquiry and grievance meeting
- organisational goal-setting and planning
- time management
- strategic planning

**Sub-Project Four: Governance, organisational restructuring, and management**

The purpose of this sub-project was for the provider to assist the management at LCoN in reviewing their core management policies, governance and organisational and management structures in order to adapt these or make recommendations in preparation for LCoN becoming an autonomous HEI. In addition, the sub-project aimed to assist LCoN in developing a strategy to become semi-autonomous, albeit still accountable to the Eastern Cape Department of Health (ECDoH), as LCoN will continue to be subsidized by the ECDoH.

The scope of work relating to **organisational and management structure** that was undertaken by the provider included:

- Performing an audit of the current organisational and management structure;
- Auditing to facilitate the achievement of efficient and effective self-governance and management in order for LCoN to fulfill its mission;
- Setting up responsibilities, targets and phases on how the recommended organisational and management structure will be implemented;
- Defining and drafting the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of the core executive team
- Compiling a delegation of authority document in order to facilitate decision-making in terms of the relevant legislative prescripts and amended core management policies;
- Reviewing and developing a process for new policies and procedures facilitating the smooth functioning of the College.

The scope of work relating to **governance** that was undertaken by the provider included:

- Constructing a Committee Framework in order to facilitate effective and efficient governance of LCoN, including clear terms of reference, decision-making powers, rules, charters, composition and frequency of meetings, taking into account principles of the King 3 report (Muwandi, 2010);
- Developing an institutional statute of LCoN in order to facilitate the process of reaching a semi-autonomous state of governance;
- Reviewing the current legislation and recommending amendments to the legislation in order to make provision for self-governance, self-sufficiency, and semi-autonomy of Lilitha College;
- Designing a step-by-step process on how autonomy can be achieved over a few years;
- Drawing up an advocacy strategy for soliciting political and financial support from the ECDoH;
- Drawing up a Memorandum of Agreement between LCoN and the Department of Health to facilitate the process of gaining semi-autonomy and the signing of the agreement.

Seven workshops were conducted with regard to corporate values and ethics. The content covered in these workshops included introductory questions, such as:

- What are ethics and applied ethics?
- What are values and how do they shape conduct?
- What is the relation between the law and ethics?
- How does cultural relativity impact on ethics?
- What are the core traits of African ethics?

Ethics on a personal, organisational and global level were also addressed. The workshops concluded with a self-assessment application.

### **Implementation phase**

The project manager was responsible for co-ordinating and guiding the team project members to complete the implementation phase based on the work as outlined in the approved project plan.

Providers were contacted regularly to establish progress. Open lines of communication were established between all stakeholders to ensure smooth functioning of all sub-projects.

The timelines for the four projects varied but ran simultaneously at times. For example, the teaching and learning SLPs were spread over two years, the information technology SLPs were planned over an 18-month period, while the management and leadership training and the Governance project each extended over 12 months. The providers of the various projects were encouraged to collaborate with each other with regard to training dates so as to avoid overlaps. Thus, one joint plan was submitted at the end of each year to the project manager indicating the dates for all SLPs. The period for the information technology project had to be extended by an additional six months due to cancellations at the last minute and participants not arriving for training.

Each provider had built in their own monitoring and evaluation of their sub-projects by conducting pre- and post-assessments and reported quarterly on their progress. The quarterly reports were tabled at the steering committee meetings for discussion and interrogation. As soon as problems emerged, immediate corrective action was taken to avoid delays and additional costs. The project manager, together with the steering committee, conducted on-going monitoring of the project by keeping the channels of communication open and also establishing from the participants how they experienced the training and whether they found the information valuable and useful.

The finances were managed by the Head of the Department of Nursing Science together with the university's finance department. Detailed annual financial audits were submitted to the funders with each annual report as requested. The steering committee played a significant role when deciding on the pricing of the various projects. The Department of Nursing Science employed a financial officer to assist the Head of Department with the financial management.

### **Challenges Experienced**

The biggest challenge experienced was in obtaining dates for conducting the situational analysis and, thereafter, in planning the way forward. The initial plan was to conduct the situational analysis in 2008 and plan the way forward by February 2009 but, unfortunately, due to examinations being written between October and November 2008, the situational analysis could only be conducted between January and February 2009. Once the situational analysis was conducted and the preliminary findings known in March, the project manager was unable to secure a suitable date for a meeting with all the stakeholders to plan the way forward. Several meetings were postponed prior to the meeting that eventually took place in May 2009 to plan the way forward. This meeting was essential for getting all the stakeholders around the table to ensure that everyone agreed on how to address the short- to medium term objectives. The Department of Nursing Science's staff assisted when their expertise was needed.

The major challenge experienced during the implementation phase was the failure of the college to communicate timeously when they were unable to attend the SLPs. This resulted in many SLPs being re-scheduled, resulting in additional financial costs. The providers also experienced a challenge with regard to the participants completing their portfolios of evidence with regard to the teaching and learning SLPs.

The activities of the Sokhula Sonke project over the three years were:

### **1. Teaching and learning SLPs**

The purpose of the teaching and learning SLPs, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, was to prepare the nurse educators at the LCoN with regard to adequate assessment and moderation practices, study guide development and the implementation of all the latest teaching strategies available to enhance their lectures and captivate the attention of the learners. Attendance of these SLPs was voluntary and the SLPs were developed for all nurse educators at the LCoN. Generally, the training offered during these SLPs was considered to be good, and the staff benefitted from the information provided on improving their teaching and learning. A total of 123 (34%) staff members completed the study guide development course, 156 (43%) staff members the teaching strategies course, 79 (22%) staff members the assessors' course, and 81 (22%) of staff members the moderators' course.

### **2. Information technology SLPs**

The purpose of the information technology SLPs was to educate nurse educators and administrative staff at the LCoN throughout the Eastern Cape Province in the use of Skype, word processing, spreadsheet presentation, e-mail and browser software at introductory, basic and intermediate levels. A total of 238 (65%) staff members completed the information technology SLPs and benefited greatly from the interactive approach that was followed by the provider. In order to deliver training at the place of work (across the Eastern Cape Province), the provider created mobile computer laboratories.

### **3. Corporate ethics and values workshops**

The purpose of the corporate ethics and values workshops was to create an awareness of ethics, applied ethics and values and how these shape conduct; the relationship between the law and ethics; the impact of cultural relativity on ethics and the core traits of an African ethic. Seven corporate ethics and values workshops were conducted; that is, one on each of the five campuses and two at the LCoN head office in Bisho, and all staff members were allowed to attend. Class activities completed by the staff members who attended the workshops included:

- A group discussion on 'Why ethics is so high on the public agenda? Why is ethics important for the College?'
- Constructing a personal value statement
- Resolving ethical case studies as provided in class
- Evaluating Lilitha Nursing College in terms of organizational ethics, and discussing practical cases regarding codes of conduct
- A discussion on 'How the College could practically contribute to a sustainable education that is ethical?'
- Developing a personal and group assessment process with regard to ethics and values.

### **4. Management and leadership**

The purpose of the management and leadership SLPs was to enable nurse educators and administrative staff in management positions at the Lilitha College of Nursing throughout the Eastern Cape Province to demonstrate in the workplace the fundamentals of:

- personal leadership
- essentials of business leadership
- analytical problem-solving and decision-making ability
- conflict management
- change management
- emotional intelligence
- chairing an enquiry and grievance meeting
- organisational goal-setting and planning
- management of time, and
- planning strategically.

A total of 51 days were spent on training the executive, middle and operational managers at the LCoN.

Three modules were developed for the executive management comprising strategic thinking and a strategy for executive management; leading and management with intent and financial management and accountability for senior management in the public sector. Each of the three modules extended over a period of three days and was supported by pre-course preparation to support customisation of the modules and post-course support processes. All participants participated in formative assessments and the building of a portfolio of learning.

Seven modules were developed for middle and operational managers which comprised modules on:

- Personal leadership and communication
- The emotionally intelligent leader
- Conflict management and change
- Making sense of strategy, organisational goal-setting and planning
- Problem-solving and decision-making
- Fundamentals of finance and budgeting for middle and operational managers in the public sector
- Managing employee relations.

The above modules were aimed at equipping the operational and middle managers of the Lilitha College of Nursing with practical skills and knowledge needed to develop their leadership skills in order to become confident and competent individuals who would turn their business units into successful and innovative teams. Each of the seven modules extended over a period of two days and was duplicated three times in order to ensure smaller training groups of 15 participants per group.

##### **5. Governance, organisational structure and management project**

The purpose of this project was to assist the management at the Lilitha College of Nursing, Eastern Cape Province, in reviewing their core management policies, governance, organisational and management structures and also to adapt them or make recommendations in preparation for the College becoming an autonomous higher education institution.

Using a phased approach, the provider for this project conducted a situational analysis prior to proposing the way forward for LCoN. The necessary policies, regulations and terms of reference needed

for the daily functioning of Lilitha College (and in preparation of the college becoming a HEI) were developed.

## **6. Library project**

A business plan was drawn up to formalise and use as a working document to guide the set-up of a library on one of the campuses that would be used as a benchmark for the establishment of fully functional libraries on all other main campuses of LCoN. A librarian was appointed for executing the business plan. The vision and mission of the libraries were to enhance capacity in course work and research through the provision of quality, cost-effective library and information services and products that were innovative and sufficiently flexible.

Achievements with regard to the library project included:

- Purchasing the necessary furniture and equipment needed for adequate functioning of the library (for example, tables, chairs, computers, a photocopier-fax-scanner, and newspaper stand);
- Library systems were put in place to enable access to and the smooth functioning of the library;
- The ProLib software package was purchased for cataloguing and creating a control system with regard to the issuing and return of books;
- The librarian catalogued existing books, and new books were purchased to the value of R400 000 and distributed across all campuses;
- The tattle tape system entrance door, which serves to control the loss of books, was repaired.

## **7. Clinical simulation laboratory project**

The results of the situational analysis revealed a need for the LCoN to be assisted in developing a clinical simulation laboratory on each campus since no such facilities existed. The current funding received was insufficient to meet this need and there was only enough money available to assist with the purchasing of low fidelity equipment for the clinical simulation laboratory. Further attempts at seeking additional funding were undertaken by the LCoN for assistance in designing and managing clinical simulation laboratories. This project is still on-going and progress has been made in this regard.

## **Control phase**

According to Fox and van der Waldt (2001: 9), the process of controlling is about keeping a watchful eye over the project and measuring progress towards achieving the goals and objectives, as well as taking action to ensure that deviations from plan do not affect the desired end results.

Providers were instructed to provide quarterly progress reports in order to keep the project manager informed of their progress. Regular meetings were scheduled with the project steering committee and LCoN management to monitor progress. The quality of the short learning programmes was monitored by requesting participants to evaluate the SLPs by completing questionnaires. The information was then analysed and reports were written by the providers describing how the participants experienced the SLPs. The project manager also held informal discussions with the participants when she visited the various campuses with regard to the quality of the training received. The reports always reflected a high



standard of training and showed that the participants were satisfied with the content and choice of providers.

The Steering Committee initiated other collaborative activities during this period which were not strictly part of the project. NMMU's Examination Department assisted Lilitha College in October 2009 and January 2010 with the typing, duplicating and dispatching of all their examinations, reassessment papers and memorandums. A total of 78 examination papers and memorandums and 78 reassessment papers and memorandums were dispatched via courier to all campuses in the Eastern Cape Province. Lilitha College has now adopted the examination system of NMMU, thus eliminating all the problems that were experienced prior to the Sokhula Sonke Project.

Ten staff members were also sponsored from the fund to attend a four-day Best Practice Guidelines Workshop presented by the Registered Nurses of Ontario Association.

### **Termination phase**

Fox and van der Waldt (2007: 9) state that the termination phase is the final phase of a project and involves time for celebration as well as reflection, and bringing the project to an orderly conclusion. A return on investment (ROI) review was conducted as part of the termination phase. The ROI study attempted to provide a quantifiable result on the capacity development initiative, as well as identifiable intangible benefits as a result of the training provided through the Sokhula Sonke Project.

A project close-out function was arranged to celebrate the achievements and lessons learned.

### **Conclusion**

The appointment of a project manager who was familiar with the context of the LCoN underpinned the success of the project. The project manager was seconded from the Department of Nursing Science to manage the Sokhula Sonke Project while replacement assistance was found to fulfill her duties.

All partners learnt much about project management and collaboration during this project. Excellent financial and project management skills are necessary to successfully execute an academic capacity development project of this nature, to ensure that the project objectives are achieved and that the projects runs within the specified time frame and available budget.

The situational analysis conducted at the outset of the project proved to be invaluable as it gave everyone an opportunity to become involved with the project and also facilitated ownership and mutual trust. The situation analysis conducted during this project not only informed the Steering Committee's decision about the project, but also brought students and staff into the process in a collaborative manner and provided the basis for future evaluation of the impact of the scheme.

A project name and logo was needed to brand the project in order to create an image of the project in the mind of the stakeholders. The name and logo were used for the duration of the project for marketing purposes, placing tender invitations in the media, identifying agreements with stakeholders and in all correspondence.

Clear terms of reference for the SSP Steering Committee served as a written road map for the committee because they described the purpose, scope and authority of the committee. The memorandum of understanding between partners, on the other hand, was necessary in order to describe the agreement between the three participants (NMMU, LCoN and the DoH). It expressed a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action. Contracts were developed for all providers who provided SLPs.

The Sokhula Sonke project had many hidden costs with regard to logistical arrangements for staff attending workshops and training sessions. Effective and timeous communication is of the utmost importance in delivering a project effectively and avoiding unnecessary expenditure.

All partners should be equally committed and adhere to deadlines in order to avoid frustration and wasting time. Perseverance, creativity, excellent problem-solving skills and a definite focus on the outcomes is essential for achieving success. Therefore, avoid being sidetracked by less important issues and missing the bigger picture.

The Department of Health and the staff of LCoN acknowledged the value of the Sokhula Sonke project and this resulted in the ECDOH making additional funding available to assist with sustaining the further development of LCoN (with the assistance of NMMU). This is probably the best evidence of the success of the project, since it indicates trust between the partners and a belief that the work made a difference.

## References

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