UMSAEP Trip Report  
July 12, 2004

Trip Dates: May 31, 2004 – June 18, 2004

Exchange Partners: Miranda Duncan, University of Missouri Extension, and Mediation and Transformation Practices, Kuils River, South Africa.

The exchange with Mediation and Transformation Practices (MTP) encompassed a wide variety of applications and learning experiences. MTP included me as a visiting intern on eight of their projects; staff meetings and client consultations. Highlights are included in this report.

Reconciliation through Vision, Values, Rules and Roles

To assist communities with democratic transformation and for overcoming past disparities, MTP created the Foundation for Citizenship and Governance Training. Recognizing the importance of negotiating a shared community vision and standards, the Foundation designed a 12 week process of dialogue and co-learning among blacks, coloureds and whites within the same community. Specific goals include:

- Listen to each other’s stories to create a more complete history of the town.
- Re-introduce the concept of ubuntu (communal values and morality).
- Empower participants with knowledge and skills in reconciliation, conflict resolution and citizenship so they can become change agents for the community.
- Enable communities to design and implement programs that contribute to nation building.

I was able to observe the first session for the community of Bellville, and attend a meeting of the group in the more rural town of Malmesbury.

Metrorail Radical Transformation Team

Union representatives expressed frustration about the slow pace of change within Metrorail Cape. Although the human resources department recognized the need for upliftment of workers, there was no expressed agreement between workers and management on how the transformation would take place – hence the creation of the “Radical Transformation Team.” Through skillful facilitation by MTP staff, union and management agreed to promote workers who were performing beyond their positions and developed a realistic strategy by which it could be accomplished. MTP also helped build a better working relationship between the union and management representatives on the Radical Transformation Team. Team members will continue sorting out similar issues each time they meet.

Metropolitan Asset Managers Empowerment Strategy

In 2000, MTP helped Metropolitan Asset Managers develop an Empowerment Charter. The company called MTP back four years later to help a group of employees review progress and adjust as needed. Issues raised were:
Retention of skilled African black employees
Opportunities for non African blacks (coloureds, whites, Indians)
Continuing to promote transformation and empowerment so people experience change of heart
Sustaining the effort to empower those who have been disadvantaged
Loss of successful training programs
Direction for Social Corporate Investment
Monitoring and evaluation of transformation progress

Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation, Oudtshoorn
MTP has been working with the Social Services Department in Oudtshoorn to help create an office culture of support and cooperation. In this capacity, MTP helped surface issues; define specific problems; coach interpersonal interaction; enhance communication; and provide positive feedback for work well done. When George McCall and I met with the Department social workers and staff, we exchanged innovative strategies and community building practices and leaned that many of the practices are applied in both U.S. and South Africa.

- Involving neighbors in community betterment projects
- Motivating volunteerism
- Preventing stress and burnout of community workers
- Building on strengths/assets of the community
- Juvenile conferencing and victim-offender mediation
- Integrated services model (“wrap around” services)
- After school care
- Mentoring and role models

Department of Land Affairs
MTP and another consultant, Team Dynamix, were asked to develop a dispute resolution system to settle land disputes. In Western Cape alone, there currently are 12,000 pending land disputes. George McCall and I were asked to participate in the initial brainstorming session to conceptualize that system. Key aspects of the system were identified:

- Quality mediators – experienced and knowledgeable about geography and context
- System must interface with organizations already active in land matters
- Strong educational component (land law and traditions)
- Need to document agreements between farmers and tenants currently in effect
- Case management model with emphasis on quality of case manager
- Intake and processing covers analysis, education and capacity building, and intervention options
- Balance need for neutral facilitator and advocate for disadvantaged tenants
- Language a barrier – need for translators
- Design evaluation before initiating system
- Ethical dilemma of designing a “Rolls Royce” system and delivering a “Volkswagen”
Department of Community Safety
MTP has good working relationships with the Department of Community Safety and may embark upon mediation and conflict resolution training for the Department throughout the Cape Province. The Department won awards for its innovative community-police partnerships for crime prevention, addressing domestic violence, and providing victim services. Crime prevention receives strong support from the private sector. Department spokespersons expressed the need to document and evaluate their programs to show the difference they make. At the risk of a superficial observation, as a visitor three years ago, I noted crime was frequently the topic of conversation. On this trip, concern about crime simply did not come up.

Diversity Roundtable
MTP sponsors monthly roundtable discussions on topics of wide interest. George McCall and I were asked to participate as panelists in “Challenges to Effective Diversity Management.” Guest presenter Jeanne Smuts set the stage with a clear model both for designing the organizational structure to ensure diversity, and for building relationships through negotiation and accommodation.

Visit to University of Western Cape
The full itinerary planned by MTP left little time for other contacts. Three areas of interest – community development, capacity building in local government, and conflict resolution – were explored on the UWC campus.
- Professor Frans Kotze of the Department of Social Work
- Mr. Rudi Dicks, researcher at UWC School of Government (I received information about the Community Peace Programme in the School of Government, but was unsuccessful in contacting its director, John Cartwright.)
- Professor Emeritus Jannie Malan, Biblical Studies

Faculty research and projects offered a variety of interesting learning experiences. Unfortunately there was not adequate time to follow up.

My own work in the U.S. will benefit from the observations, discussions, and exposure to new ideas during the exchange. I will continue to share work experiences and refine organizational and community intervention practices with colleagues at MTP. I have committed to working with MTP on the following:
- Identify and better describe best practices in facilitation and conflict resolution used both by MTP and by practitioners in the U.S.
- Adapt the concept of **ubuntu** – shared values and standards of morality – for use in predominantly African American communities here in the United States.
- Explore the saliency of community building in the U.S. through MTP’s model of *Reconciliation through Vision, Values, Rules and Roles* and using diverse stories to create a community history.

The UMSAEP exchange proved to be an enlightening professional development opportunity prompting learning and educational outcomes beyond my expectations.