

## Fair Share

[www.fairshare.uwc.ac.za](http://www.fairshare.uwc.ac.za)

Fair Share is a unit of the School of Government, at the University of the Western Cape.

The UWC School of Government's broad vision is to nurture effective governance within a true culture of democracy and a human rights framework. Fair Share contributes to this agenda by reaching out to communities to strengthen the capacity and participation of citizens and civil society organizations in governance at the municipal level, specifically in relation to planning, budgeting and monitoring.

Fair Share has worked with communities across all 9 provinces of South Africa, but maintains a strong focus on North West, Eastern Cape, Kwazulu-Natal and Western Cape provinces.

### **Our Purpose: What does Fair Share exist to do?**

Fair Share exists to empower local communities to participate effectively in democratic governance. As part of the UWC School of Government, the organization strives to contribute to the capacity-development of local community leadership such that potentially marginalized citizens feel capable and confident to hold elected representatives accountable.

Fair Share aims to:

- Build local leadership capacity through access to higher education (*Certificate in Economic Development; Advanced Diploma in Public Administration; Local Government and Economic Development programme*)
- Capacitate community structures through the Budget Advocacy and Monitoring Resources Project to better participate in municipal governance.
- Empower people to analyse, understand, input into resource-allocation in municipal budgets and monitor service-delivery and benefit to the community.
- Partner with organizations and local development agencies at the grassroots level, often working at the community level with direct beneficiaries. (eg. SCAT local development agencies; TAC branch members at municipal level)

### **Core Activities**

Fair Share has undertaken many capacity building interventions for communities, community organisations, ward committees, municipal councillors, municipal officials and broad range of non-governmental organizations. Fair Share works to achieve its vision through a set of core activities:

#### **1. Higher Education Opportunities**

- a. The *Certificate in Economic Development (CED)* is an accredited programme, designed to meet the demand for street economists who are able to assist their organisations and communities to participate in economic development processes of their communities. 9 modules are offered over a one year period, facilitated by lecturers from within Fair Share, and others commissioned from beyond Fair Share. The CED is offered through both an on-site learning programme as well as distance education model utilizing adult education principles. Participants are required to apply their learning in their own communities and organizational contexts. Since 2003, over 280 students have attended the course.
- b. The *Local Government and Economic Development programme (LED)* was designed to strengthen the capacity of various stakeholders in local government and communities in the theory and practice of local economic development. The programme consists of six courses, including Organisational Leadership; Managing Information and Communication; Local Economic Development; Local Government, Municipal Finance and Budgeting and Research Project in Local Economic Development.
- c. The *Advanced Diploma in Public Administration*, delivered by the UWC School of Government.

- 2. Local Government Partnership Programme** The LGPP is focused on developing the capacity of elected representatives, public service officials and civil society to effectively work together, specifically around policy-formation and execution that is relevant, appropriate and responsive to the needs of local communities.

The LGPP operates through:

- a. **Training** In most cases, Fair Share initiates training with a local community organization, extending over a period of 9-12 days. Sessions are usually 3 days each, focusing on (1) general municipal governance and theories of community participation and (2) budget advocacy and monitoring, with an introduction to municipal finances, instruction on budget analysis at policy level and implementation level, and on monitoring. This is intended to build capacity of community members to go beyond token participation, towards serious engagement and advocacy.
  - b. **Mentoring and Support** Accompaniment and coaching is available to 18-20 core partner organizations, either Fair Share initiated, or requested by communities. Fair Share acts as a point of reference for feedback from communities and municipalities if blockages or misunderstandings occur, or to offer support to local agencies to make an official submission into a municipal policy process. Fair Share also identifies – pre and post training – trends and opportunities for community participation in each municipality and communicates those opportunities with citizens.
  - c. **Research** Fair Share is committed to ongoing analysis and review, and adaptation of material and training processes. Data collected is developed into specific research publications, which become important tools for advocacy. Research capacity at Fair Share is strengthening once again, after funding constraints resulted in drastic staff reduction between 2005 and 2010 (going from 19 staff members, with a dedicated research unit, to 4).
- 3. Direct Advocacy** From time to time, Fair Share has become involved in direct advocacy efforts around specific issues affecting particular communities (*eg. water services and roads; working with the Treatment Action Campaign [TAC] on HIV/AIDS issues*).

## Our Approach

Ways of Working	Illustration/Story	Tools/Resources
<b>Respect</b> for beneficiaries of our work. People are at the core of what we do. In our trainings and workshops, in our work with communities, we are entering their space, and so need to be guided by them in their own space.		
The <b>democratic process</b> has to be entrenched in every aspect of programming, and held out as a standard in our work with others. The gains of South Africa's political struggle can only be enjoyed within an effective democratic framework.		
<b>Participation</b> is key: public engagement by the people themselves. This is linked to advocacy work and accountability. Even within the Fair Share organization, the direction of work and the forming of strategy is collaborative and consultative. We work to reach agreement as best as possible – our direction is not determined by “the boss” alone. Staff have a sense of ownership in the creation of this Fair Share vision.		
<b>Partnerships</b> with groups of people or organizations needs to happen by invitation or request, and need to be based in shared values and vision (resonance).		

## What we're most proud of

	Story/Illustration
1 <b>Academic Affiliation</b> Fair Share started as a non-governmental organization outside the university, but gradually moved into the University of the Western Cape, becoming more and more entrenched within an academic setting within the School of Government. Fair Share's education programmes are academically sound, and its community outreach work offers an important opportunity for the academic community to be engaged in the real lived experience of communities.	
2 <b>Catalysts</b> Fair Share stimulates and excites NGOs and individuals to see public participation and accountability of elected officials as a necessity and a responsibility, not an option or luxury.	
3 <b>Grassroots connection</b> Fair Share aims to work with people at the most local level, not at an elitist level. Content and approach are adapted based on learning from the local experience.	
4 <b>Staff Development</b> Fair Share works deliberately to empower its staff, both formally through courses and training, and informally through mentoring relationships. Staff members feel supported by peers, empowered and stimulated even through ordinary conversations. Growth is possible on a personal and professional level.	Oatile's development from a Fair Share course participant to being national coordinator for the Local Government Partnership Programme

## Our results

Result/Outcomes	Indicators	Tools/Resources	Illustration/ Story
Clear contribution to the development of women in leadership.	290 women attended CED course		Training NEHAWU women shop-stewards and gender coordinators
Fair Share has worked directly with more than one-third of the local municipalities across the country.			
Developing and accrediting trainers to transfer training back into the municipal government offices (effective June/July 2010). This takes Fair Share's vision and contribution to the very coalface of service delivery in the country.			
Fair Share's reach and influence is expanding. The organization is being seen as a resource in the continent.	Invitations received from organizations beyond the borders of South Africa		Norwegian Church Aid supports Fair Share training and facilitation in Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique
Increasing numbers of CED graduates are now working in local government, and find themselves placed in municipalities where they can implement principles and practices taught by Fair Share.			

What are we learning? What can we share?		Illustration
1	Fair Share intentionally works with very local communities, building capacity at grassroots level. But the content of training (governance, budgets, etc.) makes assumptions – eg. that all people have literacy and numeracy skills. Course content and delivery needs to be constantly reviewed and adapted to be appropriate for the audience.	
2	Even at the local level, all community members are not the same. In any one workshop, there could be an old man who has never been to school. In the same workshop, there could be a young man, who is a university graduate. Content and delivery have to be flexible enough to be pitched at the level of both participants, without overwhelming one or boring the other.	
3	When course subsidies were reduced owing to funding constraints and the need for Fair Share to develop a sustainable income stream, paying students increased in number. Interestingly, the average age of these students decreased. It followed that paying students were not CBO-practitioners and activists looking to strengthen their local action; instead these were young people enrolling in a course for their own academic interest or professional advancement. (It also follows that CBO-activists were the target beneficiary of the subsidy scheme, since they could not otherwise afford to study).	Ma Jane, daughter of Albert Luthuli, a CED student at 60 years old.
4	Now that students enrolling for CED courses are required to pay, the course is attracting more people already in government roles (eg. municipal counselors, etc.) who are themselves in a position to implement policies and improve practices. Previously, when the course was heavily subsidized for community-activists, individuals from the government sector did not enroll.	
5	The majority of municipalities still give a cold reception to public participation. There seems to be a real challenge with low political will to allow citizens access to the democratic process. Over the years Fair Share has mobilized champions within each municipality to support and lobby for better municipal responses to public participation.	
6	Fair Share courses are lectured by a combination of Fair Share staff and commissioned lecturers, many of the latter drawn from the University of the Western Cape. It seems the most effective lectures are those who can combine academic instruction with “activist-stimulation” to really energise students to apply what they are learning.	

**What are our challenges and emerging issues?**  
**What would we like to learn from others?**

1	How does Fair Share strike a balance between accepting paying students (for the purpose of generating an income), and continuing to make higher education available to community-based activists who could otherwise not afford to study? How does an organization navigate the tension between realism and pragmatism on one hand, and vision and conviction on the other?
2	Fair Share programmes effectively stimulate community members, who then feel empowered to participate and implement the lessons they've learned. Communities are activated towards advocacy for themselves in their local municipality. But, municipalities are cold to receive and respond to public participation, and reluctant to allow the public access to information.