Centre for Rural Development

CRD Vision

The Centre for Rural Development will be a centre of excellence that serves as an engine to drive transformation of teaching, research, and community service, enabling WSU as a developmental university to become a major resource for Africa’s development.

CRD Mission and Objectives

- Formulates institutional policy on Rural Development and Urban Renewal.
- Promotes innovative action development research in partnership with communities, government, relevant research institutions and other development agencies.
- Conceptualises, develops and offers accredited short training courses and post graduate programme clusters (from Certificates, Diplomas up to Post Graduate). Innovative training programmes in Integrated Sustainable Rural Development for Community Development Practitioners is a strong focus area.
- Facilitates infusion of Rural Development/Urban Renewal programmes in all faculties and provides relevant capacity building courses for academic staff readiness.
- Provides work-integrated learning opportunities for students within community settings.
- Transfers knowledge and skills from faculties to community development initiatives to promote rural economic development.
- Supports development and application of multi-disciplinary problem-based methodological models appropriate to community development.
- Provides capacity building of local communities, NGO’s and CBO’s through relevant training courses.
- Promotes a public dialogue and creates an intellectual think-tank on Rural Development through an Annual Rural Development Conference in order to influence policy and decision making.
- Promotes well being and health through activities of the Wellness Centre established by CRD in 2007.
- Provides mentoring opportunities for students and interns internally and externally.
- Establishes partnerships with National/International agencies and Higher Education Institutions for exchange purposes.
- Engages in Resource Mobilisation for material support of Rural Development programmes.
CRD Focus Areas

- Formulating institutional policies on Rural Development and Urban Renewal.
- Development Research, e.g.: municipal governance, dimensions of poverty, contributing in a search for models in integrated sustainable development etc.
- Knowledge management and documentation especially on indigenous and women’s knowledge systems.
- Capacity building for Community Development Workers (CDW), rural co-operative enterprises and local government officials.
- Transfer of academic skills and knowledge from faculties to rural industries.
- Transformation of the Academic Programme Mix.
- Establishing partnerships with National/International agencies and Higher Education Institutions for exchange purposes.
- Mentoring of students in development projects.
- Promoting well being and health through activities at the Wellness Centre.
- Facilitation of public dialogue through an Annual Rural Development Conference and Public Lecture Series.
- Supports development and application of multi-disciplinary problem-based models appropriate to community development.

CRD Values

Outcomes-Based:
- Experiential outcomes-based, problem-based and service learning for students including community service.

Integration/Multi-Disciplinary:
- Integrated approach to knowledge production and transfer.
- Collaborative research.
- Partnership with public-private NGO sectors and with communities.

Empowerment/Capacity Building:
- Empowerment of youth and respect for service in rural areas through service learning.
- Empowerment of communities especially women and the unemployed through job creation initiatives.
- Learning from communities through exposure of staff and students to enrich academic programme transformation.

Focus and Purpose:
- Putting every opportunity through a filter, setting standards for benchmarking and exposure to WSU quality assurance policies and measures.

Support:
- Support for Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative Strategy (ASGISA), Provincial Growth and Development Programme (PGDP), Provincial Integrated Rural Development Strategy (IRDS), and support for Local Governments through capacity building programmes.

Collaboration with Partners:
- Establishing partnerships to share tasks and programmes, learn from others and access resources within a short space of time.
- Foregrounding and mainstreaming rural – African experience.
Selected Projects

Pilot Project of Rural Industries: Soap Production in Mhlakulo and Ngangelizwe

- Attempts to fulfill WSU’s mission by transferring academic knowledge to rural/peri urban communities.
- CRD facilitates the project processes.
- Training in soap production is executed in the laboratory of the Department of Chemistry.
- The trained students serve as trainers of soap making cooperative members. Department of Economic Science trains the cooperative members on financial and management skills.

Health and Wellness Centre

- Sponsored by Metropolitan Insurance
- Promotes rural health and wellness (including HIV/AIDS)

Offers services in:
1. facilitation of physical health,
2. training in aerobics and other body fitness exercises,
3. counseling services for students and staff members,
4. relaxation and stress relieving exercises such as breathing therapy and yoga and,
5. health education which is open to the rural/peri urban communities through workshops on nutrition, sexuality, and gender-related issues.

Research and Capacity Building for Local Government, Community Development Workers and Co-operative enterprises

- CRD facilitates the training and engagement of WSU academic staff members in a variety of research and training activities aimed at supporting performance and service delivery of Local Economic Development practitioners. Such activities expose the staff members to action-oriented research.
- Research results in turn inform local government and other community planners.
- Simultaneously, CRD has started training municipal research officials on research techniques pertaining to the design of questionnaires and the analyzing of research data.

Afrobarometer Workshops
- Research-based workshops are offered in partnerships with IDASA and Konrad Adenauer Foundation.
- Aimed at improving the capacity of Provincial/Local Government and Civil Society Organizations by presenting research outcomes of surveys on how ordinary citizens view performance of local governments.

CRD Annual Rural Development Conference (ARDC)

- Conference brings together university departments, private sector, CBO’s, Community Development Professionals, Rural/Education Leadership, Development Agencies, social movements, women and youth.
- Different actors come together to collectively reflect on the challenges and barriers facing processes of rural development and to garner solutions.
- 2005: Rethinking Rural Development.
- 2006: Practical Interventions for Rural Development.
- 2007: Partnerships for poverty eradication (focus on rural women).
- 2008: Appropriate integrated sustainable rural development models for South Africa – Towards a paradigm shift.
Mhlontlo Local Municipality Development Pilot

**History:** Subsequent to 3rd ARDC, Mhlontlo local Municipality challenged WSU CRD to use this municipality as pilot ground for innovative programmes of Integrated Sustainable Rural Development.

**Expected Outcome:** Collective effort by activist organisations should give birth to a “unique” innovative model of a developed rural Municipality and contribute to search for strategies and models appropriate to rural development in South Africa.

**Public Interest:** Tremendous interest demonstrated by institutions and stakeholders of Rural Development in the public, private, NGO sectors and international counterparts.

**Timeframe:** 2008 – 2013.

### MOU with CSIR

WSU-CRD and The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) have committed themselves to mobilize and use their material and human resources to work collaboratively in the following areas of research and human capital development:

- Material Sciences
- Rural Infrastructure Development
- Built Environment
- Biotechnology
- Human Capacity Development
- Public dialogue (lecture series, Annual Rural Development Conference, Rural Development Journal, Web Portal)

### Rural Entrepreneurship and Cooperative Hub Project (IN-REACH)

- Established jointly by WSU’s Sustainable Skills Development (SSD), CRD, and Niagara College Canada
- Provides community solutions through applied research and knowledge transfer
- Aims to build capacity of cooperatives, emerging entrepreneurs and Community Development Workers (CDWs)

### Partnerships

CRD creates partnerships with institutions that see rural development as an integral part of their mission and social responsibility. CRD has been able to obtain desirable results due to the support from its following partners:

- Old Mutual (OM)
- Kellogg/UNISA
- Women’s Development Foundation
- Independent Development Trust (IDT)
- Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)
- Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF)
- German Development Service (DED)
- South African Breweries (SAB)
- Metropolitan
- Amatola Waters
- Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
- Niagara College, Canada
- University of Western Sidney
- Africa University Zimbabwe
- Tamale University of Development Studies, Ghana

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