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Nova: A Project in Environmental and Poverty Upliftment in Rural South African Communities Internship with NOVA Foundation Pretoria, South Africa

Summary of Paper

My paper discusses the novel and controversial role that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) played out in evaluating the crimes against humanity during Apartheid. I take a critical perspective and relate the Commission's functions and modes of operation, as well as discuss, from a personal and objective point of view, the kinds of issues and cases the TRC deals with. The final aim of the paper was to evaluate some of the controversial findings that the Commission came out with in its final report in October of 1999 and reveal how it was relevant to South Africa's progress towards a more productive and peaceful future. South Africa's experimentation in trying to deal with gross human rights violations through the TRC, by using forgiveness as its main tool, serves as a historic achievement that will hopefully be followed for years to come. Despite the many controversies surrounding the TRC, The Truth and Reconciliation process is undoubtedly a step in the right direction towards the promotion of peace and justice, and thus in the South African context serves as an effective medium of dealing with the past.

Project Goals:

To reduce the pollutants in the township of Embalenhle, in the province of Mpumalanga, in order to provide a better environment for the inhabitants



Personal Goals:

To understand the nature of poverty in South Africa

To explore the relationship between poverty and coexistence efforts in South Africa.

To contribute to the solution of the problems of poverty and environmental pollution.

Activities:

Interviewing and observing participants in the project.

Conducting fieldwork, collecting scientific and research data.

Serving as a regular contact between NOVA and the township



Key Dilemmas:

Is it possible to introduce new solutions from outside of South Africa but apply them in ways that are sensitive to the local cultures and contexts?

What are the most effective interventions that will result in better housing and the reduction of environmental pollution, both in the present and the future?



Important Learnings:

An organization like NOVA must remain grassroots and involve the people if it is to be successful and productive.

Communication between NOVA and the community allowed the project to run smoothly.



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