

Skills drive in Free State

A MAJOR skills training project, designed to bring relief to unemployed young people in the Free State, has begun to take shape.

Known as the ZOPP project, its objectives are to provide skills and to create self-employment and employment opportunities for some of the one million unemployed in the 18-35 age group in the province.

Groundwork for the project has been sponsored by Kagiso Trust, the German Technical Co-operation and the Commission of the European Community. Subsequently representatives of political parties, universities and NGOs have participated in the process. Consultative meetings have also been held with a number of stake holders in the region in

a bid to arrive at agreements on the concept.

Active community participation is one of the main characteristics of the concept, and skills training will be provided to those communities that are (or would liked to be) engaged in community development activities. Communities will be involved at the level of management and recruitment.

Indications are that the funding to a tune of R40 million may be available from overseas should the project get off the ground. A board of trustees, representing training institutions, the business sector, labour, community organisations and the South African National Civic Organisation, is to be established in the near future.



Western Cape office warming: Hilda Mdamane, normally a City Tour hostess, treated guests to some splendid dance routines.

Voter education: distribution a tricky task

MANY problems face the fledgeling Independent Forum for Electoral Education (Ifee): how to distribute large quantities of material in a short period of time over vast geographical distances; what language(s) these materials should be in; how to reach illiterate people and those living in remote rural areas; how to pay for it all ...

A special Ifee workshop at the end of July tackled some of these problems, particularly the question of a distribution strategy. The workshop was attended by Ifee member organisations, representatives of rural organisations, the transport sector and trade unions.

Logistical questions dominated discussion but a number of other problems came up. One was that rural and illiterate people have particularly limited access to educational materials, and need special attention paid to their requirements. Care should be taken to

produce materials that reflect rural realities both visually and in terms of story content.

The question of language is another difficulty. As various organisations and Ifee itself set about producing materials - ranging from training manuals and booklets to comics and videos - the question is whether each item should be translated into nine or ten different languages, or whether a range of materials should be produced in one language only.

Translation costs are high and the translation process is slow and both time and money are limited. However, it is important that no language group is ignored.

The language question also complicates the distribution process, because several different languages are spoken in every region. It is often difficult to determine the exact language needs of the various regions. Production of materials is therefore held up as organisations struggle to

decide firstly on translation requirements and then on production quantities.

Another controversial issue is whether people should pay for voter education materials. It is clear that organisations generally feel very uncomfortable about charging for materials, but it is difficult to distinguish between those who can pay and those who can't. Also it is acknowledged that people often disregard materials that have been distributed free.

It seems that much of the sensitivity around this question springs from the problem of funded organisations being seen to be "making money".

Continued repression and destabilisation in rural areas are additional factors that severely limit the freedom of organisations and individuals to distribute materials for voter education. This problem needs to be addressed at a national level.

The existing Ifee infrastructure needs to be significantly

enhanced to facilitate the communication and co-ordination process that will ensure the efficient distribution of voter education resources. A distribution system is being established under the umbrella of the Ifee Media Commission, but a number of other distribution networks need to be explored.

Constituency-based organisations provide avenues for reaching people who are involved, but ways need to be found to reach other people too. Co-ops, schools, advice centres and hostels are all places where voter education could happen.

There are two other processes that cannot be ignored: conscientisation and mediation. These emphasise the human factor without which any distribution process will fail. Distributors need to be motivated and the end-user must be assisted by voter educators.

Marie-Louise Ström

Team spirit urged for development of E Cape

IF THERE is going to be any development in the Eastern Cape, there will have to be collaboration between the corporate sector, the labour movement and other interested stakeholders. This is the view of Andrew Hendriks of the Border/Kei Development Forum.

Hendriks, who opened an Idasa conference on "Eastern Cape Development Needs Analysis" in Port Elizabeth in July, said this kind of collaboration was one of the reasons why Border/Kei initiatives were enjoying so much success.

This message seemed to have the support of most delegates to the two-day conference, who represented a broad range of sectors, including the labour movement, non-governmental organisations and policy makers.

An interesting contribution on development policy came from Monde Tabata of the Johannesburg-based National Economic Initiative (NEI), while Valence Watson of the Eastern Cape Economic Development Forum (ECEDF) tabled a case study of a development initiative in the Eastern Cape.

ANC regional secretary Gugile Nkwinti said that questions needed to be asked about the nature of "development". He said policy makers should continually be asking what type of development was optimal.

A controversial issue was the question of the regional boundaries of the Eastern Cape and the Border-Kei area. Democratic Party MP Eddie Trent said that incorporating Border-Kei into the Eastern Cape would be killing the tiny goose that was laying a few golden eggs.

He said that two-thirds of the population of the whole area lived in the Border-Kei region but provided only one-third of the gross geographical product. Strong regions were essential if the mistakes of the past were not to be repeated, with millions being wasted by Pretoria which decided on priorities for regions which were far away.

Nkwinti disagreed. Supporting the joining of the Eastern Cape and Border-Kei into one region, he said that the question which had to be asked was: what is the potential for the Eastern Cape and Border-Kei as separate regions,

and what is their potential as a single region?

Cosatu's Thobile Mhlahlo suggested the establishment of a working group to market the Eastern Cape region as a whole. This would assist in overcoming the perception that the Eastern Cape, Ciskei and Transkei were bad places and black spots on the apartheid map.

Cape Provincial Administration (CPA) community services chief engineer Brian Rhodes stressed the importance of all parties in the Eastern Cape working together as a team. Such co-operation would ensure that "as big a slice of the cake as possible" was spent in the region.

He said the CPA was experiencing problems in relation to accountability and legitimacy on the ground in the implementation of their projects. This led to funds not being used and projects coming to a standstill.

Rhodes expressed the hope that future problems of this nature would be dealt with by the East Cape Development Forum. He said political players had to learn to co-operate, or face negative consequences such as contractors pulling out of projects or increasing their charges.

Sandy Wren

A new niche for the church?

A CONFERENCE on the role of the church in the electoral process, organised in July by Idasa's East London office, resolved that the establishment of a structure of eminent persons from the church should be investigated.

The conference drew some 70 delegates and served as a sequel to the May national conference organised in Durban by the Centre for Development Studies (CDS). The possible role of the church in the electoral process was a topic at this conference, which aimed to stimulate debate in all corners of the country.

Important inputs to the conference came from Bob Kandetu of the Namibian Council of Churches, who spoke on the Namibian electoral experience, and Idasa's Paul Graham, who gave a critical overview of initiatives relating to electoral education and election monitoring.

There was agreement that the church did have a role to play, possibly in electoral structures, and certainly in a number of areas having a bearing on the process.

The church could contribute to non-partisan voter education, it was agreed, because of its large and diverse constituency. The church was also well placed to reach remote constituencies.

However, delegates emphasised that the church should work in collaboration with other formations engaged in voter education, and should help to strengthen this network.

Election monitoring was also seen as a legitimate area for church involvement, as well the process of reviewing and authenticating election results.

The conference asked Idasa to convene another forum on the eminent persons structure.

Viwe Gxarisa
Projects Co-ordinator

Dangerous anxiety of the right

IF MEMBERS of the white right wing come to believe that they have no stake in the future, wanton destruction and slaughter will ensue, because they already feel backed up against the wall.

This was the warning delivered to an Idasa seminar held in Durban by Braam Viljoen, professor, theologian and twin to the head of the right-wing Volksfront, former SADF chief Constand Viljoen.

Asked to address the topic "Can the right wing prevent transformation in our country?", Viljoen said that the rising intensity of right-wing violence, coupled with obvious police complicity, definitely did pose a threat.

He said it was important to understand the behaviour of the white right wing as having its roots in the consciousness of their ancestors at

the time of their arrival in South Africa. These people believed that they represented an advanced civilization.

However, upon departure from Europe they lost touch with developments there and therefore never benefited from the subsequent revolutions that took place.

The changes of 1990 caught their descendants completely unprepared. Their philosophy was challenged to its last detail. The results of the 1992 whites-only referendum deepened their crisis, one Viljoen described as "problems of existentialism within the Afrikaner right".

However, Viljoen said he thought it was likely that the right wing would approach the ANC for discussions on how their demand for a boerestaat could be accommodated.

Gandhi home in ruins

1993 MARKS the 100th anniversary of the arrival of Mohandas K Gandhi in South Africa and has been celebrated throughout Natal with particular solemnity in the midst of a tragic need for peace in a province wracked by a low key civil war for eight years.

Gandhi was a man of peace who developed a defiant, yet disciplined philosophy of non-violent resistance. The death, destruction and horror that has taken place on the 100 acre Phoenix Settlement which he purchased in 1903 is in tragic contrast to what he set out to build.

Nowadays, on the site where Gandhi and his Satyagraha (followers of his philosophy of "firmness in truth") lived, a bloody war has been waged

since December 1992. In eight months more than 100 people have been killed.

Once a vibrant squatter village, Bambayi (so named because Gandhi came from Bombay) is littered with burnt cinders, blackened sheets of corrugated iron and bedsteads. Huge gaps lie where homes of every shape and description once gave credit to the creative ability of people to rise above their life's lot despite years of oppression and disadvantage.

The tensions in Bambayi go back to 1985 when the Phoenix Settlement was first looted and pillaged by Africans who took over large tracts of land in Inanda that had been occupied and owned by Indian residents.

Gandhi's house was torn apart. Made from corrugated



Once a printing press established by Gandhi, now a ruin in the Natal violence.

iron it provided perfect building materials for the construction of tin shanties. As more people moved onto the farmland and built informal settlements, the problems of rapid urbanisation followed. A lack of basic resources such as water and land, traditional values pressing against modern

ones, rural immigrants and urban sophisticates.

It is a tragic irony that a place of peace could, within a century, become one of the bloodiest areas of South Africa. It is a reflection of both South Africa's potential and its ability to self-destruct.

Shelley Gielink

Election test run in Inanda

AN ELECTION involving the whole adult community is going to be part of the process of establishing a development forum in the shack settlement of Inanda, north of Durban. This huge local poll will be a voter education exercise. It may also be a vital test run for national elections in April 1994.

Inanda, north of Durban, is one of the largest shack settlements in the country. Estimates of its population vary from 350 000 to 500 000.

Called "Released Area number 33" by Pretoria, Inanda might have been included in KwaZulu but for the fact that some of the land was owned and inhabited by Indians. As a result it became an area for which nobody took responsibility. It also became a haven of a kind: a place where people could settle without fear of banishment to rural areas.

Inanda became an example of every possible kind of land ownership - private, state, homeland, tribal. Legal and

jurisdictional chaos is one of the results. When people first settled there, these distinctions didn't mean a thing. Once the possibility of development appeared, however, they became a huge obstacle, a jurisdictional nightmare.

If ever there was a case for an inclusive development forum able to deal with all the role players, the complex situation of Inanda is it. Thus, at the request of the community, who have a strong civic association made up of 25 area-based civics, Idasa convened a process leading to the formation of a democratic Inanda Development Forum.

There has been substantial progress over the last four months. There is a preparatory committee made up of a wide range of organisations, including the civic association, landowners, the Natal Provincial Authority (NPA), KwaZulu planners and the Durban City Council.

Using a process of agreement

on basic principles, the preparatory committee has set up a number of working committees to look at the following issues: possible structure and procedures; training and capacity building; communication and consultation; and elections.

One of the key principles of the process has been that the whole attempt to democratise the development of Inanda should be as public as possible. This has meant developing creative ways to inform the community and interested parties about the proposed forum.

So far this has included members of the civic appearing on a Capital Radio talk show, and Idasa staff giving the new Minister of Housing and the Minister of the Interior for KwaZulu a guided tour through Inanda. Funders and local business leaders have been briefed and the opportunity to work through a legitimate community forum has been overwhelmingly supported.

Steve Collins
Regional Director

Bid to link learners

A WORKSHOP to help provide adult basic education (ABE) in the Border region, was hosted by Idasa's East London office and the Border-Kei Development Forum (BKDF) in July. Participants were drawn from the NGO sector, business and regional education departments.

ABE provision has had minimal impact in the region, a state of affairs that is probably par for the course across the country. ABE projects work in small pockets with very little co-operation taking place. Thus, each project has to be self-sufficient - designing its own programmes and running classes for its target group.

The workshop came up with a number of proposals to improve this situation which can only be adopted once participants have reported back to their organisations.

The process continues.

Dumile Mzaidume