

Report to Hivos
December 1992
Wural 713m Cente Q

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LJ Abrams

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Run! Advice Centre 4 2000

V SOUTH AFRICA

1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this report is to provide information to HIVOS and the Dutch Government about the work and activities of the Rural Advice Centre over the past year. The staff and Directors of the Centre express their gratitude to their partners without whose support we would not be able to engage in the critical work which needs to be done at this time.

1992 has been a tough year in many respects both for the Centre and for South Africa. Within the Centre we have continued to grow, largely through the establishment of new branches around the country. We are now the largest NGO of our kind in the country and the only one specialising in the sort of work we do. We have a solid reputation both locally and internationally. We have a name not only for our technical work but also increasingly for the way in which we tackle community organisation. Our staff is sought out to attend conferences, to engage in national negotiations, to represent the rural sector and to advise on policy development. For many of the longer serving staff however, the "honeymoon period" is over and people are now asking where their careers are going and where the Centre as a whole is going. As we have grown a number of problems have become clear in the management of the Centre which we are addressing.

Outside the Centre the main issue facing rural people has been the drought. The Centre has responded

through the National Consultative Forum on Drought, seconding key staff to the programme. This has been

an exhausting period for the seconded staff and for Ms Mimie Sesoko particularly who has run the Centre for the past six months in the absence of Len Abrams, the director, who took up a temporary post as Manager of the National Drought Forum. There have also been other issues such as the establishment of NARDSO

(the National Association of Rural Development Service Organisations) and land negotiations with the state.

2 RAC ESTABLISHMENT

The Rural Advice Centre is in a transition stage of its development at present - between establishment and becoming an institution. As we grow to meet the demands placed on us there is a key process of finding the right balance between effective management and becoming a progressive implementation and advocacy organisation.

2.1 MANAGEMENT

Over the past year we have established key management structures which we anticipate will enable us to function effectively in the future. The overall structure of the organisation is represented in

Figure 1. During the year we have provided training for both senior management and project managers through both in-house and external courses.

The Centre has two parallel management sectors - one is the branch structure and the other is the key disciplines or sections which include Community Organisation, Agriculture and rural economics, Community finance, Engineering and the Media and research section.

Implementation

Figure 1 Organisation structure of RAC

2.2 MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

One of the organisational dilemmas which we have had is to work out and agree on basic management principles for the organisation. Are we a collective or a conventionally managed (though

progressive) organisation? It has become clear to us that this needs to be clarified in order for our

staff to be able to function efficiently. The following broad principles have been agreed recently by

the Directors and the Management Committee:-

t There can be no responsibility without authority. If a person is to be held responsible for any

function they must be able to exercise authority in that area. All authority in the RAC is delegated

from the Directors, through the Executive Director and is vested in individual posts as detailed in the

job descriptions. Authority can be delegated but it cannot be abdicated.

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1' There is a distinction between function and status. We are all equal in status - no one is better or of more value as a person than anyone else by virtue of their function in the organisation. We are not all equal in function - there is need for a responsibility structure which distinguishes between job descriptions, qualifications etc.

"There is a distinction between consultative management and "democratic" management. "Democratic" management is management by committee with shared responsibility. Accountability is shared. Consultative management is management through line function where there is clear individual accountability and authority but where, without real consultation with staff, managers will not have the support of their staff and will fail to perform. The Rural Advice Centre will function henceforth in the Consultative Management model. We remain a progressive organisation - that is another question altogether.

' Management must be decisive. It is better to make a decision which is not entirely correct than to make no decision at all.

2.3 STAFF

The Rural Advice Centre has a staff of 61 at present and our sister organisation - the Rural Finance Facility - has a staff of ten. Most of the staff are professionally qualified in disciplines suitable to our work. We have specifically recruited staff very widely from most sectors of South Africa.

In the past

Rural Advice Centre

Race and Gender Balance (Dec. 1992)

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Figure 2 Gender and race staff balances.
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two years we have been particularly interested in the skills of returning exiles and released political prisoners. We have also been particularly concerned with maintaining the balance in race and gender issues in the staff. This is made difficult because of history of our country's education system. It is important that the balance is reflected at all strata of the organisation. We have particularly sought to address the difficulties which parents, particularly mothers, with young children face in the work place.

In order to ensure a proper consultative management process we have encouraged the non-management staff to formally establish a Staff Association which will have formal representation on the Board of Directors.

NATIONAL OFFICE

One of the most significant activities of 1992 has been the establishment of the National Office. This has been necessary because of the growing size of the organisation. The National Office houses the offices of the Director (Mr Len Abrams) and the Deputy Director (Mrs Mimie Sesoko), the National Manager and the central accounting/administration, the Section Heads and the Design Office. (See Appendix 1) The National Office has been built up over the past year to provide a service to the branches and guidance to the disciplines.

The post of National Manager has had a key coordinating role to play. Mr John Fellows held the position for the past year and was instrumental in some key areas, particularly the establishment of branches. We have however needed more specific management skills in the financial and organisational development areas and so Mr Fellows will be leaving the Centre at the end of the year.

This is a key position and we are hoping to fill it early in the new year.

SECTIONS

Responding to the needs of our client communities, we have over the past five years built new sections to cater for the different disciplines and skills required in the village level development environment. Project teams are made up of all the skills required for the particular job at hand, drawn from the different sections in the branch concerned.

Community Organisation (O.O.) Section (Section Head: Ms Mimie Sesoko) RAC field staff operate at grass roots level to assist communities to establish their organisational structures through field training workshops. Workshops include training in committee procedures, roles and responsibilities of office bearers and constitution writing. In this process, communities identify their needs, determine their objectives and are encouraged to follow democratic principles. This section has grown during 1992 and has CO staff in all the branches. Technical (Engineering) Section (Section Head: Mr Trueman Goba) The engineering section works closely with the CO. section to ensure that the design process is consultative at all

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stages of basic planning, detailed design, construction, operation and maintenance. The objective is to provide alternatives so that the community is always deciding for itself how to proceed.

We are now beginning to accumulate sufficient field information to judge our cost effectiveness. It has been our policy to recruit qualified engineers but we are now considering the role of technicians and artisans. During the first part of 1993 we will be

undertaking a critical review of our engineering work and will be investigating the establishment of a non-profit field construction company. This will separate our consulting

, design and quality control responsibilities from construction activities and also improve our productivity.

Financial Advisory Section (Section Head: Mr George Molebatsi) For many communities, projects fail through lack of access to finance or lack of financial control. The RAC therefore

runs workshops on topics such as basic bookkeeping, revolving credit funds, the managing of bank accounts and fund raising (at village level and from outside sources').

During 1992 we have held numerous training workshops in villages and rural venues for communities on a variety of topics related to community finances. We have also designed and produced a set of community accounting books which are used in the training and are then available to the community for day-to-day usage. During 1993 we will be recruiting community finance staff for the branches.

Agricultural & Rural Economics Section (Section Head: Ms Helena Dolny) This section is orientated towards community-based agriculture which assists farmers' associations with the

building of their organisational capacity and with technical agricultural advice.

The Agric section has been concentrating on the most effective way to assist marginal farmers and particularly how to assist women farmers. We are working in a number of locations towards the recruiting and placing of Agricultural support staff who will reside in or

near the client community. The emphasis will be on demonstration and hands-on support.

Research and Media Section (Section Head: Ms Elaine Cosser) There is an identified need in the organisation and in other rural NGOs for support materials for village level organisers.

CO field staff rely on their own creativity with no support material at present when working

through a variety of topics with village committees and mass meetings. One of the major programmes of this section is the production of these materials which includes the need for

second language and graphic skills. The materials produced will be made available for use by other organisations besides the RAC.

This section has also produced the various publications which the Centre produces from time

to time.

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The internal project auditor - Michael Schur - works within this section. His work involves undertaking an in depth critical evaluation of the projects with which the RAC is engaged

. Much of this year was taken up with designing a suitable methodology for project auditing

. Internal reports have been tabled on two of the Centre's main projects which will be critically important in reviewing our work.

BRANCHES

After much consideration during 1991 about whether the Centre should become a national N60 or

not, and in response to requests and pressure from rural communities, Civic Associations and other

NGOs, we decided to take up the challenge. This expansion has been the main theme of 1992 . We

are considering two expansion processes - the first is now complete with omces in the main areas

and the second is a number of offices in remote unserved areas. In order to reduce the costs and

to avoid proliferation, we are also investigating the establishment of satellite offices which will be

accountable to existing branches but will be situated much closer to client communities.

Our present branches are:-

Location Manager Year
established

TRANSVAAL Johannesburg Sheldon Rankin

NATAL Durban Rob Dyer

TRANSKEI Umtata Sam Myendeki

NATIONAL Johannesburg Mimie Sesoko

BORDER REGION East London Lesley Steele

SOUTHERN FREE STATE Zastron Alan Tudor

EASTERN TRANSVAAL Nelspruit Ken Vinson

UNITED STATES Augusta, Ga Lesley McKeen

Summary reports on 1992 branch activities are included in Section 3 below.

ADMINISTRATION AND ACCOUNTING

One of the primary objectives of the establishment of the National Office during 1992 has been the

need to ensure that administrative support for the growing organisation keeps pace with the growth.

We have decided that the process should be structured such that the bookkeeping and accounting

should be performed centrally on the basis of branch budgets. The salary, provident fund, medical

aid, and insurance functions all happen in the National Office in Johannesburg. During 1992 we

upgraded our accounting system onto a new computer based package.

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BRANCH ACTIVITIES FOR 1992

DURBAN

Projects Completed No projects as such have been completed, although several small self standing water schemes have been completed as part of larger projects.

Projects in-Progress

Umzumbe (incorporating Mabheleni) This was started as the Mabheleni project in which James Duncan was seconded to CORD. RAC is co-ordinating a water programme which has consisted mainly of spring protection and construction of tanks up till now, but has include some small scale irrigation. Future irrigation schemes will also include dam construction.

The water programme is part of an integrated programme, with CORD and CLIARD the other service organisations involved.

Matatiele The Matatiele Rural Development Programme is another integrated rural development programme, with EDA and CORD as the other service organisation partners. Work to date has consisted of spring protection and tank construction, and a start has been made on a borehole programme with reticulation into the villages. Also planned are irrigation projects, including dam construction, as well as the rehabilitation of roads.

Hlabisa This is an integrated rural development programme with CLIARD as a partner service organisation. A small irrigation scheme has been completed, and there are plans for further irrigation projects, including dam construction, water supplies and a few small bridges.

Shangase A water supply scheme is planned for the Shangase tribal area, for which funding is expected in July this year. A preliminary design has been completed.

Stoffelton A water Supply scheme is planned for the Stoffelton freehold area where we are working in partnership with AFRA

Ogunjini We are engaged in consultations with the community and Umgeni Water over a planned water scheme for the area.

Kopi A preliminary design for water scheme based on a borehole supply has been completed.

Dungamanzi A preliminary design for a water scheme has been completed.

Nkivane Discussions are continuing with the community over improved water supplies for the area.

Mkhwakhweni The community has started on a water supply to a school with no outside assistance. We have improved the design and completed a report which has been used to seek funding for completing the immediate project, while at the same time done a preliminary design for a larger water scheme.

Projects Planned

Maputaland We have been requested to assist the Maputaland Development Organisation with water supply and irrigation.

Insika The Insika Rural Development Association has also requested assistance with water

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supply and irrigation.

Natal branch details The RAC's presence in Natal began in September 1989 when James Duncan was seconded to CORD to co-ordinate the water programme in Mabheleni. The branch was opened in September 1991 with the establishment of an office in Durban. The current staff complement is:

R. Dyer Branch Manager

P. Mbanjwa 00. Branch Co-ordinator

J. Duncan Project Engineer (based at Umzube project office)

G. Chrystal Project Engineer

R. Husband Project Engineer (based at Zululand RAC satellite office)

8. Busane C.O. Fieldworker

B. Msane Typist/Receptionist

Plans for employment in 1993 depend to a certain extent on the outcome of funding applications for two projects. The figures below assume that the funding will be forthcoming.

Field Technicians

C.O. field workers

00. co-ordinator

Financial Advice co-ordinator

Office Administrator

\$44930)

The above does not include the Matatiele office, which will fall under the Transkei Branch,

but is at present administered by Natal, because of our involvement in the Matatiele Rural

Development Programme. The staff situation for Matatiele is as follows:

Existing staff - Loyiso Mdleleni C.O. Fieldworker

Starting Mid-Feb - David Stonestreet Project Engineer

Future Field Technician

3.2 NELSPRUIT

3.2.1

3.2.2

Projects Completed None - this branch office was only established in August 1992.

Projects In Progress

Nkomazi Drought Relief Project KaNgwane This project has included the siting, drilling, testing and equipping of 30 boreholes in 10 villages which will be complete by the end of January. The development of community organization structures and the training of pump attendants for the longer term sustainability of the boreholes and pumps is in progress.

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Projects Planned

Nkomazi Drought Relief Project - follow on. It is anticipated that longer term development

will follow from the relief work as a series of projects linked to the individual villages. To date

all the boreholes have been equipped with hand pumps but there is scope for the stronger holes to be equipped with motorised pumps and connected to a distribution system.

Nkomazi Bulk Water Supply- Monitoring of Operation. During the drought relief work it has become apparent that the KaNgwane Government bulk water supply scheme is failing badly in this area. Restoring the efficiency of this scheme is seen as essential for the longer term

stability and reliability of water supplies in the region. By monitoring current operation of the

scheme, RAC would be in a position to advise the communities in the region on how to constructively lobby the government for improvements to the bulk water supply.

Mapulaneng Water Supply RAC has been requested by the Farmers Union, representing a number of villages, for assistance in improving the water supply in the region.

Consideration is currently being given to engaging on specific project in this region.

Nelspruit Branch details.

This branch office was established in August 1992 and has offices in Nelspruit. The branch

initially used temporary office space and moved into its own permanent offices at 17 Jones

Street on 93-01-04.

The current staff complement is one community organiser and two engineers. A community organisation field worker is due to join the staff in February and a general office assistant

late in the year.

Currently all the branch capacity is taken up implementing a drought relief project in the

Nkomazi area of KaNgwane. The installation of equipment, the relief pass to the project, will

be completed by the end of January, but it is anticipated that RAC will be invited to continue

assisting these communities with longer term development based on this initial relief work,

Requests for assistance have been received from communities in Mapulaneng district, Lebowa and Southern Nsikazi district, KaNgwane and these will be followed up when the drought relief work is complete.

The Mozambican refugee projects being run by Sally McKibbin and Elsie Twala fall within this

region. However these are long running projects in transient communities. Consideration is

being given to keeping the day to day running of these projects independent of this branch

and limiting involvement to providing support for specific activities.

3.3 BORDER / EASTERN CAPE

3.3.1

Completed projects The branch began in mid year and no projects have been completed as yet. '

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Projects In Progress

Roxeni (Water supply and irrigation) We have been requested to assist the community at Roxeni village (Ciskei) with upgrading their current domestic water supply and planning and

implementing an irrigation scheme to be fed from an existing dam. Preliminary community meetings have been conducted and Philip Ravenscroft from the Transkei Branch has assisted with a technical assessment. We are now waiting for the community to get back to us.

Merino Walk (Water Supply) The branch was approached by the Grahamstown Rural Committee to assist the community with water supply. The people resident on the farm (Merino Walk) were originally Thornhili residents and they are now occupying Merino Walk which is land that they were promised by the SA. Government in 1976. GRC approached us and asked for our assistance. Ricky Murray has assessed the ground water situation on the farm and has presented his findings and recommendations to the community. We have met with GRC and drafted a partnership agreement with them, wherein it has been agreed that RAC will work directly with water the committee and will take responsibility for both

technical advice and capacity building.

Komga (Agriculture and housing) This community has approached RAC for assistance with the meeting of basic needs. The community consists mainly of retrenched farmworkers, who are illiterate, homeless and unemployed. A number of people are presently living in tents and various health problems have arisen. We are presently assisting by training the development committee and referring them to other organisations that can assist with specific

problems et. literacy.

Branch details

The Border Branch of RAC was established on 1st May 1992 with one staff member, Lesley Steele, the branch manager/co-ordinator. A senior community organizer, Ntombentle Zungula joined the branch on 1st July and Vuyokazi Dube joined us on the 1st August as Secretary/Receptionist. Ricky Murray, who is a hydrogeologist, is based with this branch, but

his skills and expertise are available to other branches when and if needed. Pierre Mukheibir

has been employed by the branch as a project engineer and will be joining us on 4th January 1993.

3.4 UMTATA

3.4.1

Projects Completed

Sunduza Bridge - a suspension foot bridge which was constructed over a dangerous river at Hershal.

Qwe-qwa co-op Road - an access road for a National Union of Mineworkers' co-op.

Goqwana - a water project.

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Projects In-Progress

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Upper Mvenyane All these projects are water projects at various stages of completion.

Mvenyane Mission

Diahaho

Fiva

Ngcele and Ngxaza

Gaguva

Rebelskfloof

Nonzame Welfare

Projects Planned

Lindini/Lyndale

Sidwadweni community

Khaule Community

Ntsohla Locality

Manzana Community

Esixholisini Community

Langeni Village

Branch details

Potential water projects.

Transkei branch was opened on 1st May 1990 with Viv Mostert as the branch co-ordinator.

The staff complement at present is as follows:-

Branch Manager -

Project Engineer -

Community Organisation field worker - Lungisa Mangisa

Zukiswa Tube

Receptionist -

Anticipated 1993 Appointments

Project Engineer

Senior Engineer

Sam Myendeki

Philip Ravenscroft

Community Organisation Field Workers.

3.5 TRANSVAAL

3.5.1

Projects Completed

Tooseng The water project was completed in November 1992, except for some technical details.

Mafeke Water reticulation to Ga Mampa, Mashushu, Manthlane and Ditabogong villages.

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3.5.2 Projects in-Progress

Mafefe The project is still in progress, achievements so far:

- (a)
- (b)

Completion of villages mentioned above.

A line has been cleared for the supply main from the spring to the receiving dam at Ga Moia.

A line has been cleared for the supply main from Donkin Water Source to the existing galvanised iron pipe at Mahlajane.

Renovation of community centre is continuing.

Development workshop held to consider the integrated development of the entire Mafefe area.

Funding has been secured for a feeding scheme for the creche at Mahlajane.

Water committee has realised the importance of family contributions to the water project (self-reliance).

The CPC scheme expanded to 10 more members of the water team which makes a total of 22 people who are now paid community workers of various description.

Village projects

- (a)
- (b)

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Ramogoerane Water project.

- Self reliance being realised - the committee is handling most of their affairs.
- They have been able to undertake fundraising in the community and the community is being mobilised.
- Financial management training has been done.
- A proposal has been submitted to iDT.
- Preliminary designs have been done.
- . Ramogoerane Women's group.
- The committee is taking charge of their activities leadership training has also been done.

Sterkfontein Water project.

- _ The community has been assisted to come up with a new structure - an umbrella committee.
- The community initiated an agricultural project and channelled funding request to Operation Hunger.
- Preliminary designs have been made.

Sterkfontein Women's group.

- Women initiated a women's group, sewing project and an early education project (new creche).
- They have undertaken some fundraising events.

Zondernaam water project

- Training is on going the committee established contact with other organisations for networking.
- Fundraising activities have been undertaken.
- Committee realise the importance of family contributions for self reliance.

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Preliminary design have been done by the technical section.

Funding proposal has been made to IDT.

Moutse An integrated development planning exercise has been completed. Negotiations have been held with the Moutse Civic Association and local authorities. Tension between different groups in Moutse has hampered progress. Villages level activities has progressed.

(a) Matlala:

(b) Ntoane:

The community in Matlala is being successfully organised and mobilised.

Planning for water provision has been done with the community.

Literacy programme is being organised.

Community training pertaining to organizational matters including conflict resolution has been done.

The water committee has reviewed their constitution. Preliminary design complete.

Training on fundraising, goal setting and planning have also been done.

The committee has also embarked on networking with other local Community Based Organisations.

The womens' group has gone through a needs assessment and a program for training has been drawn up.

The women's group is exploring establishment of income generating projects.

Nebo Sekhukhuni

(a) Lebesane

Constitution has been redrafted.

Bookkeeping financial management training done.

Project review has been done.

Preliminary designs done by the technical section.

Decision making and problem solving workshops held - capacity building.

(b) Vlakplaas

. Preliminary designs completed.

Further search for ground water undertaken.

Needs assessment done.

Project review completed.

Introduction to the CPC scheme done.

Proposal to IDT made.

(0) Setlaboswane

Committees have been formed i.e., co-ordinating, agricultural and health.

Training has been on-going regarding the organization.

Fundraising has been done with a view to open up a bank account.

The committee is establishing links with other structures (networking and co-ordination).

(d) Ga-Masha

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RAC made its entry in September 1992 training is therefore on-going.

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- Committees have been formed.

(e) Soupiana Two meeting have so far been held for assessment. The project is at the initial stages.

(f) Ga Masemola Capacity building is on-going and designs are still to be done.

Branch Details

January 1992 saw the RAC extending its organisational structure to incorporate a number of

branches. This meant that operational control of projects, as well as financial and administrative matters were decentralised to regional offices.

The current staff complement is 19, with six people in the administration, nine people involved with community organisation and four engineers. The following is a list of all staff in

the branch.

Sheldon Rankin, Branch Manager Adie Vennings, Project Engineer

Anthony Irish, Senior Accountant Michael Webster, Project Engineer

Dorcas Raditsela, Project Manager Supervisor Miriam Molala, Co-Ordinator

Mohambray Naidoo. Office Administrator Rosetta Simelane, Co-Ordinator

Indira Sixishe, Secretary to Section Heads Emily Singini, Co-Ordinator

Sanza Khunou, Office Assistant Nombuso Kamolane, Field Worker

Lorraine Magadula, General Office assistant Philemon Masha, Field Worker

Phil Dawson, Project Monitoring officer Solomon Tjaji, Field Worker

Richard Tainton, Project Engineer Ruth Mabena, Field Worker

Thembi Majola, Project Engineer Norman Aphane, Field Worker

Staff numbers will remain at the same levels and the only major organisational change that

is planned for the Transvaal relates to the removal of the sectional divisions within the branch. To enhance the project teams' status and the responsibilities of project managers

, field workers and other staff will be accountable to their respective project managers. It is

hoped that this will contribute to a vibrant and productive atmosphere within the branch.

3.6 ZASTRON

3.6.1

3.6.2

Projects Completed: None, the branch is 6 months old.

Projects in Progress:

Herschel Project Water Programme. All field work in the district has been delayed

indefinitely due to the outbreak of violence in late November, 1992. Contingency plans have

been made to conduct workshops for committee functionaries in Zastron pending resolution of the violence.

Reticulation System. After considerable delays we have established water committees in villages lying in the service area of the existing reticulation system. We have engaged not

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only the communities but also the Department of Agriculture and Forestry of the Government

of Transkei as well as the local administrative authority for the reticulation system. We are

working on two fronts, organizing the communities, and working as their engineering consultants, lobbying government on their behalf, and performing a technical review of existing and planned work on the system.

In the area unserved by the reticulation system there are over 40 wards, only 13 of which

have any sort of water supply (these are served by windmills pumping from boreholes).

These windmills are currently being rehabilitated by a contractor. In Ward 1 Pelandaba we have completed most of the survey work and the preliminary design and cost estimate.

Further work in other villages in this area depends on curtailment of the violence and requests for technical assistance from the Environmental and Development Agency (EDA).

Projects Planned:

Township of Matlakeng, low cost housing for approximately 8,000 persons. We anticipate contracting with the Civics Association for both community organization and technical assistance for this project.

Herschel District. We anticipate requests for proposals from the EDA for at least the design

and possibly also community organization assistance as well as construction training and supervision assistance with the water supplies for approximately 80,000 persons living in villages with no improved water supplies. The EDA has also discussed requesting RAC assistance to train approximately 200 committee functionaries in the livestock Programme.

Branch details

The branch was started in mid-1992 and has three staff workers - Alan Tudor (engineering)

, Peter Mache'di (community organisation) and Mrs Durrheim as general thce support and backup.

USA BRANCH

During 1992 we established an office in the United States of America. The organisation is at present being registered as a Section 501 (C3) not-for-profit organisation under the name

"South African Rural Development Support Programme". It has one staff person - Ms Lesley Mc Keen. The objectives of the programme are as follows:-

1) To build a United States support base for rural reconstruction and development in South Africa.

2) To provide information on South Africa in general and rural development in particular to US interested parties.

3) To gather information in the US in the interests of rural communities especially

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RURAL ADVICE CENTRE

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around such issues as foreign aid policy and to such US based organisations as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations.

4) To facilitate access to expertise and professional exchanges.

5) To assist Rural Advice Centre staff visiting the US through making itinerary arrangements and appointments.

6) To publish a regular news letter to promote community based development and strategies.

7) To support and facilitate fund raising in the US.

8) To gather information on community based activities amongst the rural poor in the US which may be useful to South African communities and information on other relevant topics such as appropriate technology.

9) To arrange and hold discussions and seminars in the US to create awareness of South African rural development.

10) To gather information on the Non-Government Organisation sector- NGOs - in order to assist the development of the South African NGO sector.

PROJECTS

GENERAL

The activities of the Centre are orientated towards effective project work in the field. With the most

elaborate structure, if there is no effective activity at village level there is limited justification for the

existence of the organisation. It is essential that we maintain our primary objective of serving the

country's rural poor. Projects are at present too numerous to enumerate individually and are covered

briefly in the branch reports above.

Our chief concern is to find the balance between physical "product" (a water supply, sanitation,

irrigation etc.) and the human process (the development of civil society, committees etc.). We are

of the opinion that the physical "product" has lagged behind a little which needs to be addressed as

one of the major issues of 1993. At present the engineering staff of the RAC act both as consultants

and as construction contractors to the communities. Apart from presenting a basic ethical problem

of engineering practice, the situation arises where highly qualified Civil engineers are doing the work

of artisans. During 1993 we plan to employ more people with artisan skills and investigate the

formation of small locally based construction teams to act independently from on their own.

A major issue remains one of scale. We continue to be inundated with requests from villages which

we cannot possibly meet. There was a degree of scale reached through the National Drought Forum

in which we were centrally engaged during 1992, but the drought work of necessity did not include

the key elements of village level capacity building because of its emergency relief nature. It is for this

reason that we are beginning to recognise that one of the most important roles we can play is to

influence the national debates on rural development so that where it is done at scale, it is done effectively.

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Programme

Committees

Figure 3 Partnership - Community is the client.

4.2 PARTNERSHIPS

One of the ways of increasing the scale of activities is to work with other NGOs on projects. Because

of the histories of NGOs and because of their independent nature, the establishment of partnerships

and field level working relationships are often problematic. The RAC is working with the Environmental and Development Agency (EDA) in the Hershal project in the Transkei. At recent

meetings with the EDA we presented our present thinking on these issues. We believe that there are

three different basic relationships that are possible :-

4.2.1 Partnership

The partnership relationship (Figure 3) is an equal arrangement where each organisation is

fully responsible for the work in one or more parts of the programme, such as water. This is complex because it will include the technical as well as the community organisation elements of the programme. Just as the RAC would not presume to tell any other NGO how to undertake their responsibilities, the same would apply in reverse. This is not to say that

there is not a need for co-ordination and certainly there would be overlap at the community

organisation level. The RAC, as an organisation (as apart from any individual RAC

employee), would take full responsibility for all aspects of that part of the programme. Project workers would be responsible within the line functions of RAC management. RAC would also need to be responsible for the project finances.

4.2.2 Consultancy

RAC

Consultants

or

Secondment

Committees

Figure 4 Consultancy or Secondment - EDA is the client.

A consultancy relationship (Figure 4) is where the other NGO, for example the EDA, is the client. They are responsible for all aspects of the project, including community organisation,

but they require skills which they do not have 'in house'. The RAC would be commissioned to undertake a clear and specific task for a fee. The task would be described in a brief from

the client who would need to provide sufficient base information for the task to be undertaken.

Agreement would have to be reached up front on such issues as target dates, costs, capital

budget constraints and reporting. The product could take on a number of different forms such

as a village water supply design, a community organisation training package, or a regional

water resources survey. There would probably have to be some engagement with the community to agree on expectations and to explain the designs. The RAC has responsibility for the quality of the product and staff are accountable to the RAC management.

4.2.3 Secondment

A secondment relationship (Figure 4) is where an NGO has need of the services of someone with particular skills, usually for a short period of time, but does not want to employ them in

a permanent post, or where they do not wish to establish a whole new discipline within their

organisation. A seconded person is entirely responsible to the host management structure.

For a seconding NGO the client is not a community but the hosting NGO.

4.4.4 The process vs physical product debate

PROCESS PRODUCT

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Figure 5 The Process / Product balance

There are not many organisations in South Africa who subscribe to the concept of community

based development. However there is bound to be a difference of approach at grass root

level amongst such NGOs which may lead to conflict. It is very important that such conflict

is analyzed and addressed because there are too few progressive organisations and too

great a need for a strong collective voice to allow organisations to become alienated from

each other. Putting aside the role of personalities and staff performance, one of the major

causes of conflict is the choice by each party of where to find the balance between process

and physical product at implementation level.

There are a number of reasons why NGOs choose the balance that they do. The community

should be the guiding factor in this choice but other issues such as donor expectations, local

politics and the NGO's experiences will play a part. When this choice is made there may

develop conflicts between NGOs - one has various pressures to produce the physical product

while the other may be perceived to over stress the process and have "nothing physical to

show for the time spent." In some projects the RAC has found that the community needs

a physical demonstration to inspire them to embark on their own institution building while

others, to go ahead without lengthy consultations and community organisation ground work

would be suicidal.

It is very important to be aware that this is only a model or illustration of an extremely complex process and it does not represent all of the complexities. The major short coming of Figure 5 is that it implies that the process and the physical product are separate - it is our experience that the two are integral to each other.

4.3 RURAL PEOPLES' CONFERENCE

The Rural Peoples' conference is an annual event organised by a committee (called Kopano Ke Matla) made up of representatives from community committees based in villages where the RAC is working around the country. The Annual Rural Conference 1992 was held at Lenyenye in Tzaneen from the 27th to the 30 November 1992. Kopano Ke Matla organized the conference with the help of Ithuseng Community Association and the support of the RAC field staff. The participants were hosted at the Ithuseng Community Centre which was used as a conference Centre and for accommodation.

The conference was attended by 110 representatives excluding local people. More women than men

were present with a small number of youth. Participating organizations were:

Mafefe Zondernaam

Masemola Marishane NIakplaas

Ramogwerane/Sterkfontein Moutse

Acornhoek women's group Ithuseng Community Association

Township Credit Union (Maseru-Lesotho) Mazenod Credit Union (Maseru-Lesotho)

Emati e Sive (Swaziland)

The suggested conference theme was "Who is the major player in rural development?" Participants

differed in their response with some seeing the NGO, the donor, the government or the community

as the major player. However at the close of the conference there was a broad consensus that for

development to take place, it is the community that should be the major player.

5 THE RURAL DEBATE DURING 1992 & OTHER NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

During 1992 the RAC and our staff have continued to contribute to the national debate on rural issues. This

has taken up considerable time for many of the senior staff but we consider that it is very important at this

stage of the country's history. We continue to see disturbing indications that the rural issues continue to be

marginalised. It is now, when there is such fluidity in national policy processes, that we need to be involved.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT CRISIS PAPER

During the year Len Abrams wrote an internal concept paper entitled "The Rural Development Crisis".

The paper was written to attempt to address some of the present restraints in the rural development environment and to act as a catalyst for thinking in the Centre. When the paper was read by a wider audience it was suggested that we publish it in booklet format for wider distribution. The European Commission encouraged us to proceed and kindly offered to pay for the production. We have re-edited the paper, published and distributed it and received an interested response. We trust that it is a useful contribution to the rural debate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There is a lot of discussion at present on the issue of local government. We view the issue as very important and our staff have attended various workshops and seminars during the year on local government. Our concern is that, while it may be possible to arrive at progressive and supportive legislation for future local government, this only forms the legal framework. Experience of, and the day-to-day practice of, democratic governance is almost entirely absent because of our history. The problem will be giving content to the legal framework. There is very little thought being given to this and yet it is the one issue where failure will bring all other efforts to naught. For three hundred years people have been denied the right to govern themselves at all levels and their institutions have been deliberately corrupted. As with most of the rural issues, the scale of this problem is enormous but we must invest in preparation for local democratic governance if all the other investments are going to be fruitful.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

One of our major concerns at present is the lack of established rural development policy. We are concerned that, in the absence of such policy, while a great deal of formative work has been done by all parties in other arenas such as economic policy, rural issues will be marginalised and continue to be neglected. The Centre has been advocating during the past year for the establishment of a rural development policy process, particularly with the ANC.

LAND NEGOTIATIONS

Land, its availability and its restoration, have obvious major implications for rural development and the prosperity of the rural poor. During 1992 one of the major issues has been the need for a moratorium on the alienation and selling of land held by the government which was acquired for the "consolidation" of the bantustans. Many people were removed from these lands and much of it is contested. Len Abrams was requested to represent the Rural Advice Centre and the rural sector of the National Development Forum in multi-party, Cabinet level negotiations on these issues. This is only one aspect of the land issue and our involvement in the debate will undoubtedly continue.

5.5 NARDSO

For the past eighteen months the RAC, together with other rural NGOs such as the National Land Committee and the EDA, has been the main lobby behind the establishment of NARDSO - the National Associations of Rural Development Service Organisations. Len Abrams was the convener

of the formation committee during 1991 and 1992 and formulated most of the documentation.

It is

anticipated that NARDSO will be formally established during 1993.

5.6 NATIONAL DROUGHT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

During May 1992 the Rural Advice Centre was requested to prepare a proposal for the establishment

of a rapid response task force of engineers and other skills to address the growing crisis of rural water

supply in rural villages. A proposal for the immediate establishment of a Water Supply Task force

was prepared and endorsed by a National Drought Workshop in mid June. The proposal made provision for the establishment of highly mobile field teams including foreign engineers with disaster

relief experience in different parts of the world.

The National Drought Forum was formed out of a wide spectrum of concerned groups from all sectors

of South African society including the Patriotic Front (the ANC, PAC, COSATU etc), the South African

government, the "homelands" and NGOs. In order to ensure that state resources were available for

drought relief it was agreed that government departments would be "twinning" with NGOs on a number

of Task Forces. This resulted in the RAC working with the Department of Water Affairs in the Water

Supply Task Force (WSTF). The was convened and chaired by Len Abrams of the RAC and a senior

Rural Advice Centre engineer was seconded to undertake the function of field logistics engineer.

In July the Steering Committee of the National Consultative forum approached Len Abrams to take

up the position of managing the Forum including heading up the Secretariat and Operations Room

and co-ordinating the work of the five Task Forces. After much consideration within the RAC it was

decided that the drought emergency demanded a positive response and Len Abrams was seconded

to the Drought Forum from August until the end of the year. In all the RAC seconded four senior staff

to the National Forum office which was the largest contribution from a single organisation.

There was a great deal of work done during the last six months of the year which is not possible to

report on fully here. The various branches of the RAC around the country were all involved in drought

relief activities with communities at grass-root level. The RAC, through the activities of the WSTF,

was able to engage the services of some 20 foreign disaster relief personnel and 130 local staff

seconded from the government and from private engineering companies. This produced a direct

water relief impact on some 450 villages throughout the country in the Transvaal, Natal, Transkei and

the Eastern Cape / Border region.

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WORLD BANK

South Africa is increasingly opening up to the rest of the world as we approach a long awaited

political solution. The World Bank is actively investigating what involvement it should have in South

Africa. Several investigative commissions have entered the country to undertake studies on various

aspects of the country's economy. The African National Congress, because of obvious concerns, has

insisted that World Bank staff and consultants be "twinning" with local experts in the studies and in

the preparation of reports. One such study was undertaken on South African agriculture. The ANC

commissioned two senior staff from the RAC to serve on a team of seven national counterparts for

this study.

ANC New York Conference

Note on political alliances

The RAC is not aligned to any political party. We situate ourselves within the broad progressive, democratic front in South Africa and are actively concerned with the promotion

of democracy and the empowerment of the poor, particularly the rural people of the country.

We have accepted commissions from the ANC to undertake specific work and to consult on development policy and similar issues but we do not consider ourselves bound as an organisation to allegiance to any individual party or political ideology.

New York conference

In November 1992 the ANC held a major conference in New York of US and South African organisations which have supported the process of democratisation in South Africa over the

years. The conference addressed a wide range of issues including the economy, health, education, cultural issues and development. Len Abrams was asked to present an input on Rural Development and to sit on a panel of experts to discuss the present rural situation and

future development needs.

WATER AND SANITATION STANDING COMMITTEE

The Water & Sanitation Standing Committee (WSSC) is a national committee bringing together a wide

range of players in the water supply and treatment industry and policy environment. The Standing

Committee grew out of the Water and Sanitation 2000 workshops. The objective of the Committee

is to bring the country's leading water professionals together from all sectors of society and the

political spectrum to prepare policy guidelines for the politicians in the transition process. The WSSC

commissioned a number of sub committees to address a wide range of water policy issues. The

N60 voice was not very strong and there were no direct representatives of communities, either rural

or urban. The RAC therefore played an important role in the process of raising community issues

based on our experience in the field. A number of RAC staff worked on sub committees and Len

Abrams was Vice Chairperson of the Standing Committee.

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FUTURE STRATEGIES

NATIONAL PROFILE OF RAC

The Rural Advice Centre has had a policy of maintaining a low profile from its inception.

We are now

beginning to believe that a more direct voice is required in a number of areas in the country and are

consequently needing to raise the profile of the organisation during 1993.

RURAL POLICY

One of the key areas of activity during 1993 will be the formulation of rural development policy. This

is key because in the absence of sound policy it is very likely that the mistakes of the recent past,

which contributed in large measure to the failure of rural water supplies during the drought, will be

repeated. A great deal has been learnt from the experience of the past five years of RAC work and

more recently from the drought which needs to be considered by the policy makers.

CAPITAL FINANCING

One of the major restraints which face many of the impoverished communities who are our clients

is the lack of accessible capital finance. A number of new funding initiatives have been launched

recently which are promising but the RAC will be seeking to increasingly support our clients in

leveraging finance from all sources including the state.

NGO SECTOR

Developing and strengthening the NGO sector is very important to us. The present government has

not been supportive of the growth of the sector and there is very little of an "NGO culture" in the

country at present. The progressive NGO sector's only experience of working with the Government

of the day has been that of struggle and resistance. We have no experience of a cooperative

relationship with the state and need to seek guidance from other parts of the "developing world" to

ensure a fruitful environment while avoiding co-option once the government of the day is democratically based.

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RURAL ADVICE CENTRE

7.5 SADRA

7.5.1 Underline S.A.D.R.Ao

The RAC has in the past established organisations where a need has existed which we do not believe it is our role to fulfil, for example the Rural Finance Facility which is now a fully

autonomous organisation. The drought has highlighted the absence of a dedicated disaster relief agency in South and southern Africa. Because there were no disaster relief agencies

in Southern Africa able to supply engineers and other skills, help was sought from foreign

sources such as RedR from Britain, the Disaster Relief Centre in Washington and Apso in Ireland. The Water Supply Task Force concept has resulted in effective crisis management in large areas in the country and the "un-locking" of resources which would otherwise not have been accessible, especially from the State. In the light of this experience, the Rural

Advice Centre proposes the establishment of a Southern African Disaster Relief Agency - SADRA. The RAC will take on the task of establishment of the Agency which will become a separate not-for-profit non-Governmental Organisation (NGO).

7.5.2 The mission of SADRA

The mission of the organisation will be as follows:

1. To save lives and relieve suffering through immediate crisis intervention and through preventative disaster preparedness action, political persuasion, creed or race.
2. To address particularly the plight of the poor, the marginalised and the defenceless.
3. To play an advocacy role in exposing the root causes of disasters and to provide disaster prevention input into long-term development planning processes.

7.5.3 The scope of SADRA

The organisation will initially be established in South Africa but will aim to function throughout

the sub-Continent both through the extension of the Volunteer Register and through the deployment of resources to disaster locations anywhere in the region. This will require a degree of diplomacy and interaction with both Governments and NGOs in the region. It will also require working with international organisations such as the United Nations and international aid organisations. The proposal is to establish the initial organisation as soon

as possible and then to work on broadening its scope in the first few years.

HIVOS REPORT

7.5.4

8 FINANCES

8.1 FINANCES

6 DECEMBER 1992

The objectives of SADRA

There are a number of organisations who address relief needs of people in Southern Africa

.
A new organisation should work with and complement existing organisations rather than duplicate them while addressing needs which are not at present being met.

The objectives will be :

To establish a register of active volunteers, both professional and non-professional in the fields of Medical and paramedic support, Rescue, Water Supplies, Public Health and Sanitation, Food and Nutrition, Transport, Public awareness and Media, Emergency Finances

To be able to activate standby volunteers and deploy resources within 24 hours.

To establish a disaster monitoring facility to tie into long-term nutrition and other monitoring schemes and early warning systems which are being established as a result of the present drought. This would be a permanent facility staffed by full-time people which would act as a communications centre and operations room in the event of disasters.

To link with other organisations both locally and internationally for training purposes, inter-change of experience and to co-ordinate disaster relief.

To ensure that relief intervention is practical, relates to the people in the crisis and is well resourced.

To raise a "float" of contingency funds to be able to respond rapidly to disasters and to raise funds during the course of a disaster. In order to achieve this, marketing and media resource people would be included in the register of volunteers.

SADRA will not be a development organisation and will avoid being tied into anything other than rapid response crisis intervention. It will develop links with the relevant organisations to hand over stabilised situations to.

The financial year end of the RAC is 31 December - we do not therefore have the full financial picture

for 1992 available yet. We will have our trial balance for the year available by the end of January

1993 and audited accounts available by the beginning of April 1993. We can extract from our

accounts the details of expenditure of your grant if so required and send them under separate cover.

Our overall situation is healthy with support for the RAC being available from both local (non

government) sources and international sources. The total amount received for the first three quarters

of 1992 was R6 338 258 as opposed to R2 616 795 for the entire previous year.

RURAL ADVICE CENTRE

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9 CONCLUSION

We are cautiously optimistic about the future of South Africa, primarily because of the courage and fortitude of our friends and clients in some of the most appalling conditions of poverty and deprivation

in the country. It is our objective to serve these people so that they are empowered to take up their

role in the social, political and economic life of the nation.

We are both amazed and proud of our achievements at the grass roots and as a growing organisation. All of this would not have been possible without the support, encouragement and vision

of our partners and donors for which we are very grateful.

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