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THE SOUTH AFRICAN RETURN PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

1. Introduction

This report covers the period since last February to the present. During this period the South African Return Programme (SARP) has acquired shape and definition to a position where it can be said that in a matter of a few weeks from now the programme should be in operation.

Guidelines relating to the functioning of SARP have now been worked out. At the moment we are making these known to all the regional structures of the National Co-ordinating Committee for Repatriation (NCCR).

As SARP also involves ex-political prisoners we have also briefed the Association of Ex-political Prisoners of South Africa (AEPP) about the programme.

2. SARP guidelines and procedure

To facilitate implementation of the programme we have developed two forms and attached to them a briefing document on SARP. We refer to these three documents as SARP 1, SARP 2 and SARP 3. respectively.

2.1 SARP 1

SARP 1 is an APPLICATION form to be filled in by a returning exile or ex-political prisoner when applying for either an employment grant or a training grant.

Information required covers personal particulars, educational qualifications (if any), formal and informal skills training, work experience, past salary and job or training preference. For purposes of ascertaining the validity of the information furnished an applicant will be expected to fill in the names and telephone numbers of two contactable referees.

After filling the form the applicant will send it to her/his nearest NCCR office for processing. Where no such office exists the form will be sent to the WUS office in Cape Town.

2.2 SARP 2

SARP 2 Is an AGREEMENT form to be filled In by organisations or Institutions able to offer either employment or training to a returnee or ex-politcal prisoner.

In this form the organisation or instituitlon will provide us with its profile and possible salary contribution where a returnee Is to be employed or paid an allowance where she/he is to undergo training.

Overleaf the SARP 2 form are two separate forms reserved for NCCR and WUS use. Since NCCR is a SARP implementing partner we think their recommendations will Influence our selection criteria, to that end a space has been reserved for an NCCR recommendation for an applying candidate. The WUS part of this form Is for recording financial transfers to organisations or instituitlons employing or training returning exiles or ex-political prisoners; recording confirmation of returnee's assumption or termination of employment or training; recording receipt of progress report and final evaluation thereof and, lastly the recorder's comments.

2.3 SARP 3

SARP 3 Is a WUS briefing document on SARP. The document sets out the broad objectives of the programme, eligibility criteria for SARP grants, types of grants and the application process for a SARP grant. A list of NCCR national and regional addresses is attached an that of WUS national committees in Africa presently implementing the SAN scholarship programme. A brief historical outline of WUS activities is also enclosed.

3. Meeting the criteria

In terms of SARP 3 SARP is targeted specifically at those

- a) Showing greatest need for assistance.
- b) Who are likely targets of prejudice for gender or political reasons.
- 0) Unskilled and semI-skllled or those skilled but without work experience. With 70% of the awards going to the former.

In our communication with regional NCCR structures and NGO's the above criteria have been explained and discussed. Where a highly skilled person sends us his/her CV for possible job placement we take into account his/her possibility to find employment on their own. We liaise with NCCR for possible placements in the Private Sector. In the Western Cape to create some job opportunities for the returnees. Responses have been relatively positive.

Both HEKS and SIDA the SARP donors also allow for few grants to benefit inmates who are directly linked to repatriation work or where there is a special need.

In so far as our criteria is concerned we would propose that whilst some flexibility should be exercised, should the need arise. we should not do it to the point of marginalising our specific target group. A great number of those coming back home from outside and in jail lack the necessary academic qualifications to compete effectively in the open job market.

4. Processing SARP applications and grants

SARP 3 states that SARP will be implemented in consultation with the Employment and Education and Training task forces of the NCCR. Contact between SARP and NCCR in general and the said task forces in particular has already been established. In terms of the guidelines we have worked out. the regional task forces will receive the SARP application documents from the WUS Cape Town office; have them filled in by the applying candidates, process them in terms of the criteria set out above and then make recommendations for grants to WUS.

When we receive the forms back, and where a candidate's application is unsuccessful. contact will be made between SARP and an organisation or institution employing or training a candidate. Thereafter the first financial transfer covering a six months' period will be made the second and final transfer will follow after a progress report has been received from the organisation or institution employing or training a returnee. We also recommended that AEPP embark on needs assessment for Ex-political prisoners in Western Cape prior - their applying to us of a grant for an income generating project. Already they held a workshop to that effect. The report will be shared with advisory board.

The Transkei NCCR requested SARP to provide salary and expenses grant for a researcher they hope to employ. The researcher will undertake a feasibility study into the viability of establishing income generating co-operatives in the Transkei.

One of the SARP applicants happened to be a researcher from that area. We have facilitated a coming together of the researcher and the Interested parties In the Transkei. Both parties are keen to co-operate. Support for that could come from the feasibility study grant.

5. Role of WUS Advisory Board

,The lack of a network of WUS country-wide structures makes It Incumbent upon our AB members In their respective regions to play an active role In the SARP selection process In the regions. We are suggesting that they should liaise with NCCR regional structures on the Implementlon of SARP. It rests on this meeting to recommend a specific role for the AB members.

6. NGO lob glacement and training offers

To date SARP has received over forty offers from NGO's throughout the country. We have to emphasise that this figure refers only to those offers we have been made in writing.

7. Information on target groug

We have set up a data base of all the CV's we receive from our target group. This _has made It easier for us to link a particular returnee to a specflfc Job or training offer receivedl from an NGO.

8. Projection of target groug needs

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Whilst we do not at present have an exhaustlve list of applicants from exiles and political prisoners we doubt that the limited resources presently available to SARP will meet the needs of our target group. Financial constraints have made it necessary for us to Indicate to prospective applicants that the limited nature of SARP financial resources makes It impossible to offer grants to all deserving cases. So far donors are only committed for 1 years.

Clearly and the demand for grants will far outstrip our means to offer more grants than presently budgeted for. Unless more funding comes our way we will only not be able to give out 250 grants and maybe another 10-15 minlmun.

9. Overall SARP goals

We want to think of SARP not as some welfare structure but as an Important contribution to the democratisation process In our country. By placing exiles and ex-political prisoners in Job or training positions within mass based and democratic NGO's we are making it possible for these organisations to utilise the experience and commitment of the returnees to further strengthen the emergent democratic culture in our country.

Another possibility that SARP has to explore as Indicated in the proposal is to pioneer the idea of conducting feasibility studies aimed at promoting the establishment of income generating projects. Since we aim for durable solutions to the plight of the returnees we should encourage the latter to engage in some form of co-operative movement along the lines of the Zimbabwe ex-combatants. We would recommend that a research worker be employed for this purpose.

The Western Cape and Transkei have indicated interest in the area.

10. State of the regions

NCCR regional structures still have to be rooted firmly on the ground. Whilst In other regions, like the Western Cape, visible progress has been made, some regions have no conception of what repatriation work entail. A common problem expressed by the regions is lack of communication and co-ordination. The NCCR Head Office, in particular, is often blamed for not keeping the regions informed.

Recently the Western Cape NCCR structure hosted a "Cape cluster repatriation workshop" (14-16 MARCH 1991) for purposes of Information and experience exchange. Represented were the T'kei, Eastern Cape and Western Cape regions. NCCR Head Office sent down one representative. The significance of the workshop lies in the fact those gathered there were able to discuss at length about problems related to repatriation.

The workshop also highlighted the necessity for contact and inter-action between the regions. To demonstrate the lack of contact between NCCR Head Office and the regions it emerged In the workshop that the Eastern Cape region did not know a thing about SARP let alone what the Initials stand for! Given these glaring weaknesses one can only imagine how negatively they will impact on the SARP selection procedure. Again our AB members have to play their role by seeing to it that SARP does not run into problems which can cast the whole programme into disrepute. It cannot be overemphasised that the effective implementation of the objectives of our programme will largely be the function of the existence of strong NCCR structures throughout the country.

We recommend the following:

- a) At the regional level our AB members make strong interventions on behalf of WUS, thus seeing to it that the regional structures their best of the NCCR.
- b) Advisory Board assist with Identifying and soliciting offers that is crucial.
- c) Liaise with Regional NCCR structures bearing in mind the weakness of NCCR.

11. Co-operation with the national liberation movements
Contact has already been made with the liberation movements. PAC, AZAPO and ANCeAttempt\$ to meet with the PAC have not been successful. We assume that these organisations' stance vis-avis the repatriation process is known and maybe hence there reluctance to be positive to our overtures for their involvement In SARP.

The ANC has already made offers which regions still need to process. Contact has been made with their Repatriation Department as well as the Department of Manpower Development. Through these departments we have been able to get CV's from the exiles, some whilst they are still out there in exile.

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12. Funding

New avenues, both local and external, should be explored with a view to securing more funding for the repatriation work.

Currently SARP is funded by DDA and SIDA. There is a follow up of British funding by WUS-UK. WUS Germany wanted to try EEC but we were discouraged by the fact that that they would have given competition to the NCCR proposal. We suspect both DDA (Swiss Government) and Sida would be persuaded for a 2nd year grant if the programme takes off well.

In May we will need to write a progress report for Donors and another in August.

13. Conclusion

This report does not represent the last word on the status of SARP. What we have tried to do here is to give you a general overview of the work we have covered thus far.

APPENDIX ONE: NGO OFFERS TO SARP
OFFER

NAME OF NGO

1. Health Care Trust
 2. Community Education Computer Society 1
 3. Legal Education Action Project
 4. Labour & Economic Research Project
 5. Education Projects Unit
 6. Learn and Teach Publications
 7. Grassroots Educare Trust
 8. Khanya College
 9. Environmental and Development Agency
 10. Labour Research Service
 11. National Education Health and Allied Workers Union
 12. Aurora Development Projects
 13. ANC (Western Cape)
 14. Sokoyisa Project
 15. Lawyers for Human rights
- Health fieldworker
Computer training
Para-Legal training
Researchers
Policy Research
Publishing
Financial assistance
Adult Training
Advice and Support
Teaching
Rural Developer
Economic Researcher
Organiser
Management and
Research
Administration
Administration
Organiser