

PJQJ-pmtoa; (3th

ABF DECENTRALIZATION - A REPORT ON THE WORKING
GROUP MEETING TO DISCUSS DECENTRALIZATION

INTRODUCTION

A resolution was passed at the 1989 National Conference, that the African Bursary Fund be decentralized.

To set the process of decentralization in motion therefore, a series of meetings have been held to explore the issue of decentralization and to find a way of implementing the resolution. Initial plans were that a consultation -where regional councils, ABF committee members, SACC staff (General Secretariat, ABF staff and other resource staff from the council) would meet to discuss this issue - would be held on the 22nd February 1990.

a. The Elanning committee which consisted of ABF staff, Deputy General Secretary, and some members of staff of the central office, decided at a meeting held on the 12th. February 1990, that the consultation be postponed and proposed rather that a meeting consisting of a core group be held on the 22nd February. The reason for the postponement was the acknowledgement by all concerned that a lot of ground work had to be done before the consultation could take place.

It was decided that the core group would be made up of members of the planning committee, representatives of the regional council clusters, and resource Beogle. Attached hereto are the list of participants at that meeting, and the agenda for the meeting.

FORMAT OF MEETING

DEVOTIONS:

. Devotions were conducted by Mr E. Makue, who also chaired the meeting. He selected a scripture reading from Exodus chapter,3. In his welcoming remarks, Eddie Makue attended to the impending restructuring of the SACC, and that the decentralization of ABF was also part of that exercise, and that the ultimate was to find the best way to serve the people of God and to liberate them from oppression.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ABF: Mrs Rathebe.

Initially the ABF was meant for rural high school Children. The decision to launch the division was taken in 1969. The main reason for this rural focus was the fact that there were limited educational resources available for rural children. The department has had problems defining the term rural because some towns are geographically rural whilst some are politically rural (eg. Mdantsane)

HOW THE DEPARTMENT OPERATES

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High School Programme:

AQEllication Forms are received from all over the country. In order for any application form to be proccessed for selection it needs to be accompanied by a testimonial and June report.

Batches of application forms are also sent to regional councils to be distributed

the major problem is that lack of proper follow up results in some forms not being returned

Selection Committee

The selections are conducted by a committee consisting mainly of church representatives with a few additional people who have been co-opted for their knowledge/involvement in education.

The Committee uses certain guidelines for selection viz:

A for granted

Be provisionally granted (pending end year results)

B.Not granted.

The committee usually discusses and agrees on percentage to be assigned to the symbols . The selections are usually based on June results but confirmed upon receipt of satisfactory end year results.

(c)

The Process After Selection

Notification letters are sent to those who have been awarded bursaries. Letters of regret are sent to those who have not been awarded. A letter of award with details of payment is sent to the school.

A list of grantees that shows denomination and geographical area, is prepared.

Another list showing the number of applications and awards from each region is also prepared. This list is sent to regional councils.

Tertiary Programme

This programme was started after the realization that matric was no longer a guarantee for employment. The main aim of the fund therefore was to enable people to go beyond matric. The fund is not limited to ABF bursars only, and has no rural/urban specifications. The selection process is almost similar to the high school selection process.

Discretionary Fund

Relationship With Regional Councils

There is no formal relationship with regional councils. The practice has been that ABF sends batches of application forms to regions so that they can distribute these. The assumption was that the regions would send back completed application forms.

The regional councils further received R20,000 per annum (R10,000 per half year) for tidying over the regions over things like registration fees - ie it is some kind of discretionary fund for the regions.

PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING OF THE COUNCIL - Deputy General Secretary: '

The SACC is presently engaged in the process of reviewing departments and programmes of the central office, and the exercise is to continue into the regional councils. The review process is the responsibility of the Deputy General Secretary.

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- (ii)
- (iii)

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The SACC (both Head Office and regional councils) has expanded rapidly. At head office there are now eleven departments, Administration and Finance, General Secretariat, Communication and the regional council's desk. There are also the twenty six regional councils. The departments all operate autonomously. There are therefore fifteen departmental committees, in most cases each with its own history.

The review is meant to rationalise the departments into smaller units and make maximum use of resources.

The smaller units would help to:

co-ordinate the work properly

share human power effectively

re-organise visitation to regional councils.

It was noted that no evaluation processes were built into our work of the council. Furthermore, regional councils should in fact initiate new programmes instead of duplicating departments models of the central office.

THE REVIEW PROCESS-

The staff has met to share with each other about the history and the work of their departments

the SACC executive committee then appointed a review committee.

the executive further recommended that regional councils should also be reviewed with the view to restructuring and rationalisation of departments and the use of human resources.

There are therefore two review processes that are taking place.

The meeting of the 22nd was part of the process of reviewing and restructuring with particular focus on decentralization.

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Decentralization of the Bursary Fund

The idea of decentralization is to give most of the responsibility to regional councils namely:-
to publisize bursaries (especially in the rural areas
to do screening based on standardised criteria, taking
into account the situation of special applicants.
to notify grantees as well as new grantees. Regional
Councils should send these letters
to dispel the suspicion that bursars are confined to
some regions and denominatlional regions will need to
know the amount of money available.

The financial administration should remain at head
office to make accounting easier.

It is important to note that the D.G.S.'input was a
proposal that still needed further debate. The debate
would also begin to develop criteria based on human
resource needs for the future.

THE CONCEPT OF DECENTRALIZATION: M. Msoki

(The full text of Mr Msoki's presentation lwas sent to
all regional councils).

The important points to note in decentralization are
the following:-

distribution of authority

there are implications for administration and decision
making in terms of integration

the process of decentralization itself should be
formalised

two forms of decentralization can be distinguished:

in terms of the workload and

administrative decentralization

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there are advantages as well as disadvantages that go with the process of decentralization

when decentralizing there was need to formulate a

structure that has a two way system of accountability

DECENTRALIZATION AS EXPERIENCED BY HDC(Fr. B. Tlhagale)

Rev. Tlhagale outlined the experience of the EOC with

regard to decentralization as follows:-

The EOC was established 10 years ago

about 8 years ago

some of the reasons for setting up this office on the

part of the region were the following:

Natal felt that they were being discriminated

against

they feared that political criteria were covertly

applied against them

(iii) some of the EOC board members have a political

(iv)

(i)

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(i)

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profile and it appeared that EOC was fighting a

political battle with homeland leaders

a spirit of regionalism prevails

On the part of the EOC there was a presumption

that:

Head Office was able to reach out to all corners

of the world - there was therefore no need for

regional offices

there were fears that inconsistency may develop.

In addition the EOC foresaw problems that needed

to be addressed:-

users. There was therefore a need to create

physical accessibility

prove that no political criteria have been applied

by ensuring that regions have their own committees

Process and structure

- there are regional boards in all provinces whose functions include
 - (i) selecting interviewing panels
 - (ii) setting up an office and employing the required staff
 - (iii) advertising in the local newspaper, recruiting and visiting universities.

Links between regions and head office

- structural - the Chairpersons have quarterly meetings and there is a national meeting once a year
- h, regional decisions are regarded as final/not applied unless in cases where policy has been mistakenly applied.

Payments

- Head Office does the fund-raising and drawing up of the overall budget, and regional budgets

Practical Problems

- at times the regions purchase out of budget with the hope that head office will cover the costs. This therefore indicates that there needs to be some form of training on budgeting and accounting.
- report writing is very important for purpose of accounting Head Office therefore has to behave like sponsors eg re-imburse in response to vouchers
- inconsistency in selection criteria: at times some regions tend to be more sympathetic to get more numbers
- head office tends to forget regions eg. they do not meet physically to share in meetings. The EOC has the therefore tried to make available information such as minutes of meetings held by head office staff
- there is still a debate on whether it is necessary to have a regional office in the Transvaal especially in view of the fact that head office is located in Johannesburg.

- (a)
- (b)
- (C)
- (d)

Advantages

accessibility to target groups and ability to reach out to all

there is relief in terms of the workload

there is allowance for regional input and participation

there are no unilateral decisions

there is less fear of prejudice

all administrative information is computerised with a

link-up to the regions by exchanging discs

tracking alumni and job placement is also done

regionally

the EOC is now more likely to achieve its goals and

objectives viz: providing educational opportunities on

a fair basis

DISCUSSION:

WAY FORWARD

In discussing the way forward the meeting agreed on

the following:

in principle decentralization has been accepted dS

necessary by the council both regionally and nationally

the paper on decentralization - (by M. Msoki) should be

circulated to regional councils

the present forum should come with broad issues of

concretizing decentralization

Proposed Possible Structure

There should be four structural levels.

National - on policy, aims and procedures (Finance and liaison).

Regional - regional structure.

Sub-regional - depending on whether regions were

divided further into local areas.

Constituency of bursars (beneficiaries) ie some

structures working through the regional councils.

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National

to receive the submitted list of bursars
liaise with universities: re bursars entering each
university
policy-making structure to include church and/or
community organisations

Regional

receipt of applications
interview prospective bursars
(question for debate: should prospective high school
bursars be interviewed?)
submit a list of approved bursars

Sub-region

Screening at area level in some instances

Bursars

Association of students funded by the council

Functions of the Various Structural Levels:

National Office.

Fund-raising, financial and admin services

transactions at universities.

payment of fees direct to universities.

Receive comprehensive list of names of bursars that
have been approved by the regions.

Keep record of all bursars in the country.

Arrange meetings of policy-making structure (ie
constitutional function).

Liaison and co-ordinate: facilitate review.

Implement procedure determined by policy-making body.

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Region

Implement procedures determined by policy-making body.

Receive applications, publicize, recruit students, interview, screen and select students.

Submit list of names selected.

Organise educational support for bursars in the area.

Provide career guidance.

Advise all applicants about the outcome of their application.

SUB-REGION

Recommend names to the region.

Interviewing.

Verify information in the applicant's form, screen.

Beneficiaries

Funding of activities related to beneficiaries should come from the administrative fund of the ABE.

Important to Note!

accountability lines need to be built in between all created structures

mechanisms for allocation of funds need to be worked out

Important Issues for Consultation

A small group to look at some of the above issues

all relevant documents to be sent to regions and

responses from the churches, bursars, regions to be submitted to the regional councils desk 0

Responses should indicate who was consulted

CLOSURE:

on 28/03/1990/