

GROUP FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING (GEM).

Report to September 1991 and proposal for 1992 - 1994.

1. INTRODUCTION

Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM) is a new environmental project, which was established in collaboration with the Environmental and Development Agency (EDA) in 1991.

GEM is an educational project, seeking to empower people to understand environmental and developmental issues more fully, and to act on credible, relevant information provided by research.

During 1990, GEM raised funds from Christian Aid (U.K.), Community Aid Abroad (Australia), and Inter Church Fund for International Development (Canada). In addition, a small amount of funding was obtained from Pesticides Trust for a pesticide study.

2. WORK IN PROGRESS 1991

The work which has been done to date is outlined below under the following topics:

1. Research Monitors

2. Environmental Film Workshop

3. Networking, locally and regionally

4. Sustainable land-use project

2.1. Research Monitors

The 4 Monitors being undertaken at present are:

2.1.1 Water report - study of water on the southern PWV

The report examined how environmental issues affect people in squatter communities, and how communities affect their environment.

It found that the protection of wetlands is vital for cleansing catchments where there is no sanitation, that industry and mines pollute streams which needs close monitoring by authorities, and that authorities should cooperate to provide communities with adequate potable water supplies.

2.1.2. Workers and the Environment

GEM was requested to produce a booklet on workers and the environment by leaders in COSATU. The study uses case studies to highlight environmental issues, and draws the link between health and safety and environmental issues.

2.1.3 Pesticide study.

Initially, this study was commissioned by the Pesticides Trust, a U.K. based pressure group lobbying FAO and others to implement international agreements on pesticide trade. The study is an overview of pesticide use in agriculture in the country. The study will be completed in December and is being done in collaboration with local

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organisations.

2.1.4 Sustainable development multi-media project.

Sustainable development has become a key international concept for dealing with environmental issues. This monitor aims, through the use of display boards and work sheets, to make the concept accessible to grassroots constituencies in worker and community organisations, so that they can question how the concept is relevant to environment and development in South Africa.

2.2. The Environmental Film Workshop Group

This is a separate group, made up of a coalition of organisations, which initiated a national workshop on the environment in November 1990. This was a highly successful event, supported by the Rowntree Trust. In 1991, EFW has held a number of community workshops. In 1992, its work will be incorporated into GEM. .

2 . 3 . Environmental networking. .

Networking is important in the establishment phase of an organisation. It helps to create a profile of the work we intend to do. It is also important from the perspective of promoting environmental consciousness and providing environmental education. GEM has participated in numerous conferences, workshops and seminars, including local and regional networks. Details are in the longer report.

2.4. Sustainable Land Use and Rural Development project.

David Cooper has been involved in land policy work over a number of years. David has been acting as an agricultural consultant to communities fighting for the return of their land, assessing sustainable land use options and being involved in negotiations with government. He is acting as a consultant to EDA's rural development projects, looking at the implementation of sustainable agriculture. He has also been involved in a number of initiatives in the democratic movement and with NGOs on formulating land policy and advocacy for rural development. .

3. PROPOSED WORK PLANS

3.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of GEM are:

1. To conduct research on specific environmental issues, and to publish and disseminate this research to a wider audience;
 2. to promote environmental awareness through holding seminars and workshops with schools, youth and community groups and trade unions, using film and other media in the process;
 3. To produce an annual "state of the environment in South Africa" report.
 4. to work closely with other organisations within the democratic movement to promote environmental action and to lobby for sound
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environmental policies

5. To train a number of people as community organisers on environmental issues .

6. To raise the necessary funds to carry out this work.

3.2. STAFFING

It is proposed that GEM employ 4 people in 1992 - an administrator/coordinator, a land researcher, an environmental researcher, and a community educator. GEM will undertake the training of 2 community environmental educators under the WUS programme. In addition, GEM will employ researchers on a contract basis for specific projects. GEM will contract out editorial and publications design, rather than developing internal capacity.

3.3 WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1992

3.3.1 SEMINAR SERIES

Each year, GEM will run a series of seminars, based on the research work being done, and papers being written for conferences. The objective of the seminar series will be to involve a larger number of people from different sectors in the research process, to get critical feedback on the research work, to inform people about interactions taking place at conferences and seminars, and to discuss ways of promoting wider environmental awareness. The budget includes costs for bringing selected people from different parts of the country and the region to appropriate seminars.

3.3.2 RESEARCH PROGRAMME AND PUBLICATION OF MONITORS

3.3.2.1. Land and land use issues

It is proposed that GEM develop a major focus around land-use issues. The justification for this is that it is one of the most critical environmental issues in South Africa, and at the same time is largely neglected by progressive organisations in particular. There is great and hunger in the country, and Glamour for land reform, but issues of land use are not seen as central. Research and interaction on these issues can lead to changed perceptions, and perhaps to policies which can make land use more sustainable land use.

a. Monitor topics

A series of monitors on land use in South Africa, has been proposed. These are as follows:

1. What is sustainable land use in South Africa?
2. How is land used in bantustans - a case study.
3. The implications of land reform for sustainable land use - the case of communities returning to the land
4. Nature conservation and community access to land.

Each topic will be written up as a separate research proposal and then produced as a monitor. Details are in the longer document.

b. Consultancies in land use as part of monitoring

On request we will advise a number of communities on their land-use

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patterns, and what choices they can make. We will also participate in democratic initiatives on land and rural development policy work.

4.2 Other research areas

While we have a fairly comprehensive programme on land issues, there is a need to develop similar capacity in other environmental areas. We would divide these into 4 sections for convenience: Urbanisation and the urban environment; sustainable development and environmental policy; industry, mining and the environment; and energy issues. In each of these areas, we would be building up research capacity and undertaking collaborative research. The topics for monitors would also fit into this framework. Through 1993 and 1994, we would be developing research capacity in these areas, and providing research papers to policy makers and progressive organisations active in the country. .

The establishment of a collection of relevant research and resource materials will be undertaken during 1992. The budget provides a half-time post for a person working on collecting and documenting . research materials. The collection of resources will be coordinated with the EDA Resource Centre.

5. COMMUNITY EDUCATION

It is proposed that the Environmental Film Workshop become incorporated in GEM in 1992 and that a full-time programme of community-based education around environmental issues be initiated. The GEM environmental educator will develop a workshopping programme with schools, youth groups, civics and trade unions, especially in sectors where GEM research is being undertaken.

We see a strong link between the community education and research. Each research project is designed with outreach in mind, and workshopping materials are considered part of the pack. We have found video to be a very effective tool for community education, and will continue to use that tool. Hence we have budgeted for equipment. It is also a justification for the vehicle.

GEM is also involved in networking around the NGO input into the 1992 UNCED conference. We are already participating in the southern . African network and the Paris NGO conference, and next year will participate in the Rio conference. This should be invaluable for building long-term links with environmental groups internationally.

6. TRAINING

As a developmental project, we believe GEM should be involved in training community educators and researchers, as well as drawing on current expertise. The training programme will train 2 suitable candidates from the WUS training programme as community educators in 1992, while in 1993 and 1994, we propose to train researchers as well. As well as working within GEM and benefitting from the expertise of GEM employees and Board members, trainees will be sent on appropriate training courses in community education methods, preparation of workshop materials, research methodology, writing, and relevant aspects of environmental issues as needed.

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1. Staff

1 Coordinator8Administrator

1 Full-time Researcher

1 Part-time Researcher

Short-term researchers

1 Fieldworker

1 Librarian (half time)

2 Trainee

2. Travel

Purchase 1 ldv

50000km 0 R1 per km

3. Projects

Seminar programme

Land PrOJect 3 Monitors 0 5000

Other 3 Monitors 0 5000

Resources and publications

Networking and conferences

Community Education

4. Training

Courses for 2 trainees

5. Administration

Rent

Services

Telephone and fax

Purchase equipment Computer

Copier

Furniture

Video equipment

Stationary

Sundries and maintenance

Board Costs

Evaluation

TOTAL SA RAND

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1992

70000

60000

32000

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