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TITLE OF PROJECT: Education Projects Unit - University of Natal

(EPU - Natal) - The name will soon be changed

to Education Policx Unit.

CONTACT PERSON/S: Blade Uzimande (director)

Linda Cele (administrator)

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POSTAL ADDRESS:

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Ground Floor,

MTB West,

University of Natal,

King George V Avenue,

Durban.

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:

As above

BANK NAME AND ADDRESS:

First National Bank.

15b Berea Road,

Durban.

TELEPHONE: (031) 21-4821 FAX:

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 800 193 29 34 (EPU code: 02 100 1)

ACCOUNT NAME: EPU Account

NAME AND ADDRESS OF AUDITORS:

University of Natal Internal Auditors

TELEPHONE: (031) 816-9111 FAX: (031) 816-2814

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

TOTAL BUDGET OF THE ORGANISATION - R780 836

HOW MUCH IS THE ORGANISATION ASKING FDR FROM WUS(I) - R100 000

YEAR FOR WHICH THE FUNDS ARE REQUESTED - 1992

WHAT WILL THE AMOUNT REQUESTED FROM NUS BE USED FOR? -TO meet

administration costs of the unit, to help train research trainees
and support the research programme of the unit.

BUDGET INFORMATION:

1. SALARIES AND STAFF BENEFITS

1 Director (Dbn/Pmb) : R 68 887
1 Research CQ-ordinator (Dbn) : 57 583
1 Assistant co-ordinator (Dbp) : 49 830
1 Research fellow (Pmb) : 58 415
1 Researcher (Dbn) : 47 246
1 Researcher (Dbn) : 44 958
1 Resources officer (Dbn) : 30 841
1 Administrator (Dbn) : 83 308
1 Receptionist/typist (Dbn) : 21 307
1 Admin. assistant (Pmb) : 17 929

Staff benefits : 114 898

TOTAL : R 587 936

8. IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

Telecommunications (Dbn & Pmb) : R 18 000

Stationery (Dbn & Pmb) : 7 800

Postage (Dbn & PMB) : 8 400

Insurance : 1 400

TOTAL : R 29 000

3. PROGRAMME COSTS

Rotating fellowship - 1 a year : R 50 000

Commissioned research - 5 a

year 8 R3 000 each : 15 000

Contract work : 30 000

Workshops and seminars : 11 000

Research training 9 R1 600/trainee/

month - 1 Dbn and 1 Pmb : 38 400

Staff development : 5 000

Printing papers and reports : 36 000

Maintenance : 6 100

TOTAL : R 191 500

4. CAPITAL COSTS

Office equipment : R 28 300

Office furniture : 4 100

TOTAL : R 32 400

PROJECT TOTAL BUDGET : R 780 836

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OTHER FUNDING SOURCES:

Interfund

Kagiso Trust

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

EPU Natal aims to enhance the capacity of the democratic movement to participate in the process of policy formulation on education in South Africa.

TARGET GROUP:

Progressive community and trade union organisations in urban and rural areas which need to formulate approaches to education policies.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:

EPU-Natal's research programme is grounded in rigorous analysis of conditions in education in South Africa. Specific questions which arise out of such analysis and which have an important bearing on the mission of the EPU, are translated into medium and long term research projects.

Specific projects, which are often of a short-term nature, are occasionally added to the programme when community organisations ask the unit to research specific issues which have a bearing on their immediate programmes. These have included the impact of political violence on schooling in Natal, factors affecting the performance of black students in matriculation examinations and why black students cannot find places in schools. .

Where possible, a participatory approach is adopted during all stages of the research process, which helps to empower members of community organisations and ensures that research remains democratic and accountable. It also allows for the more effective dissemination and use of research findings.

EPU staff are also often invited to deliver talks on current issues to community organisations.

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Because of the high cost of employing quality researchers, EPU-Natal had adopted an approach of keeping numbers down to a small but effective core of full-time researchers. This is, however, difficult to reconcile with the wide scope of research required of the unit, and five strategies have been employed to enhance the research capacity of the unit:

X Consultation - researchers are expected to consult various people who may have experience and expertise in the area being covered

Commissioning - projects which existing staff cannot undertake because of a lack of time or expertise are commissioned out to researchers who have experience in the relevant field. Such work is conducted under the supervision of full-time staff.

X Contract work - suitably qualified contract workers are employed to augment the core staff when specialised skills are needed for specific tasks, or when the volume of work for a particular project is expended for a specified period.

X Networking - the unit regularly meets staff from other EPUs in the country to discuss research priorities and to rationalise programmes. This avoids duplication and maximises co-operation.

X Collaboration within the unit - all current research is discussed and debated at regular staff meetings.

All projects are designed to incorporate workshops, seminars and discussions with the organisations who are affected by, or interested in, the findings of the study. All findings are published in accessible publications, which are disseminated through the networks of organisations.

PROGRAMME OF ACTION:

The core of EPU-Natal's programme for the next three years will involve both the continuation of past work and the development of new work:

X Conditions of schooling in Natal and KwaZulu - A new project in this area will be an in-depth study of compensatory education programmes for primary and secondary school levels.

X Non-racial schooling in South Africa-A new study will draw on research done in Zimbabwe and draw implications for the integration of schooling in South Africa. A book will be published on this in mid-1998.

X Education and affirmative action - This will go beyond NEPI work and incorporate comparative studies with selective countries.

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X Curriculum and the problems of transforming it - This will assess and draw implications for the role that teachers plays in curriculum development, innovation and implementation. .

x Training researchers - There will be at least two research internships a_year as well as in-house staff development.

Within each research area, changes and adjustments will be made as needed over the three-year period to ensure that constituency needs are met.

STRUCTURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

The unit is headed by an Education Forum. This is a sub-committee of the University senate but its members are equally drawn from the university and community organisations, and also include EPU staff members. The Forum is therefore accountable to both the university authorities and to community organisations.

The Forum meets twice a year. Between these meetings, its work is carried out by an executive elected by the Forum and which meets monthly or, if necessary, more often. The executive consists of two university representatives and two community representatives as well as the director of the unit, the research co-ordinator and one representative of the rest of the staff.

The day-to-day leadership is provided by the director, the research co-ordinator and the assistant co-ordinator.

While the EPU's budget is raised independently, all funds raised are paid into a university account which is administered and audited by the university. .

The EPU's maincentre of operations is on the Durban campus of the University of Natal. An office was opened on the Pietermaritzburg campus in 1991 so that the unit could be in a better position to monitor and analyse educational developments in the Natal Midlands. The director and research fellow are now based in Pietermaritzburg.

EPU-Natal maintains close links with community organisations, the other EPUs and national structures such as the NECC.

It is presently involved in research on affirmative action with a view to correcting past racial and gender imbalances in education.

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IMPACT:

EPU-Natal's research work has been of value to community organisations trying to map out education policies and, in some cases, has received widespread national publicity.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION:

Work in progress is constantly evaluated by staff and community organisations to ensure that it remains responsive and reflective of community needs.

A formal evaluation of the unit was undertaken in November 1991.

PROJECT ACTIVITY FOR THE LAST YEAR:

Political changes in South Africa resulted in the EPUs playing a key role in 1991 in founding and developing the NECC project, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI). This is aimed at mapping out an entire policy framework for the implementation of people's education in South Africa.

EPU-Natal staff are participating in three NEPI research projects - the role of education in affirmative action, teacher-training and the role of education in human resource development. They also serve on the NEPI editorial and executive committees.

Although NEPI is supposed to complete its work by mid-1992, more detailed policy investigations will be needed thereafter.

EPU-Natal staff have also been examining the broad theme of "Conditions of schooling in Natal and KwaZulu and implications for the transformation of education."

The projects already completed in this area are:

X The impact of political violence on schooling in Natal.

X A database on conditions of schooling in KwaZulu, 1989

X Reasons why many black youth cannot find places in schools

I Factors affecting the performance of black students in matric

X The aspirations and political attitudes of coloured teachers in the greater Durban area.

The unit has also monitored developments in the gradual racial' integration of schools in South Africa.

It has completed a study on the sociological profile of social science students in South Africa's black universities for the Association of Sociology in South Africa.

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To promote the development of progressive black researchers, it has started a one-year research internship programme for young and inexperienced black researchers, as well as a staff development programme within EPUeNatal. One black woman researcher was taken on at the beginning of 1991, but it is hoped that there will be at least two internships each year for the next three years. .

The unit faced extreme financial difficulties because of the cancelation of a contract with the European Commission, with a loss of R300 000.

PROJECT FUTURE PLANS:

See PROGRAMME OF ACTION above.

EPU-Natal believes that, together with other progressive organisations, it will have an important role to play in helping to develop and shape policy options for a democratic system of education in a post-apartheid South Africa. But for these organisations to achieve their goals, considerable financial support will be needed, particularly given the fact that income generation is not yet possible or feasible for research organisations of this kind.