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Upgrading of NLP workers

There is a growing realisation within the NLP that devoting energies and resources in providing sound leadership and organisational skills does not depend only on the willingness and devotion to the cause. It needs more than that training and upgrading for its staff in various aspects and needs of the NLP. With this in mind two colleagues the regional organiser and the administrative secretary are doing a year to two year upgrading courses at British institutions under the scholarship programmes of the British Council. Their return in 1988 and 1989 will enhance the much needed skills to run the literacy programmes effectively. These periods of absence obviously create vacuums of service within the organisation but these are necessary and temporary inconveniences we have to- bear.

The monitoring of literacy skills

The year 1987 was marked by evolving a system of measuring the acquired literacy skills of the participants in the various regions. The formula for assessing and testing was based on the following:

- (i) A copying task
- (ii) A reading task
- (iii) Dictated pieces of 3 words, 5-6 word sentences
- (iv) Simple numeracy skills and
- (v) Letter writing etc.

Difficulties so unique to our tense Namibian situation makes it often so problematic to achieve a high rate of literacy skills, however the table below gives an indication of the success rate acquired during 1987.

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Central Total

& West

Number.

of group

Enrol-

ment

Test Par-

ticipants

Satis-

factory

acquired

Pattern of attendance

Although there has been a marked improvement in the pattern of attendance, certain factors still influence the rate of attendance negatively especially in the rural areas (FN & NE) where most of the Literacy participants are involved in subsistence farming.

The most Important economic activities are tilling the soil and tending animals. Absenteeism among male participants is less during the rainy season since grazing becomes abundant for the livestock closer to their homesteads, while the gins are more occupied by tilling the soil during the rainy seasons. Intensified military activity in the high military areas also influence the rate of attendance. Fear for personal safety forces men and women to move to urban from rural areas where many become easy victims because of the war situation.

Migrant labour participants

The migrant labourers who come to seek employment in the so called white economy sector often positively dominate the literacy scene. Many are confronted for the first time by the demands and the realities of the work situation which often makes a great literacy demand on them, hence the desire to learn in order to respond to the requirements of the labour situation.

Churches are responding favourably by encouraging and providing facilities for literacy activities.

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Conducting the field work

Most of the literacy activities are conducted at rural based centres in villages in the Far North (Ovam-boland) and North Eastern region (Kavango) and in the urban centres in the Central and Western regions of Namibia.

The village chiefs, priest of the Roman Catholic. Lutheran and the Anglican churches perform vital functions.

Workbook sales

Marginality and poverty of the participants, result being unemployment especially in the rural war zone areas is so intense that the sale of books goes with a lot of problems. In the face of this the question which dominated our minds was to reduce the price of the workbooks or supply them free of charge. However through persistent encouragement to buy the workbooks with the resulting pride and self reliance, this problem has been largely resolved.

self determination Is
not just a dream

The objective of the Regional Literacy Committee Is
to create a more positive participation in the life of the
literacy groups in the region. Besides these commit-
tees made up of the literacy supervisors in the region
the class committees consisting of 4 play an impor-
tant part in determining the literacy activities of the
learner participants. Many a class committee began
to appreciate and transformed the unmotivated par-
ticipation into an oasis of self determination.

Literacy training courses

In order to extend the assistance to the rural popula-
tion which has not had the privilege of enjoying the
literacy services.

Training courses for new group leaders were or-
ganised with a heavy emphasis on the Far North and
North Eastern region successfully.

The process of coping with the literacy challenge
could be by embarking on an upgrading programme
for the literacy co-ordinators. In view of the above to
gain knowledge in planning.

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"Education is a basic right for all"

In Namibia of today almost 65% of all Black
Namibians are left with a sense of impotence empty
and unfulfill for they are victims of the prevailing
deliberately created educational inadequacies - they
are illiterate. Often these people turn into apathy and
despair. It is for them that compassion and concern
should flow from those who care, by recognising that
their welfare is intricately woven with your welfare.
The Namibia Literacy Programme together with its
friends are locked in a battle in developing the neces-
sary skills of reading and writing for full and effective
participation in the life within Namibia.

To this Bishop Haushiku rightfully pointed out in his
address to members at the 1987 Annual General
Meeting:

"Literacy has been for a long time a very rare com-
modity for the majority of the Namibians. Many are
still being denied this 'luxury'. Where in reality, literacy
and indeed all learning is a right, it is a natural right
of each person coming into this world."

This report is not intended as an academic discus-
sion of our literacy activity, we simply tell the story of
the Namibia Literacy Programme as we see it and to
encourage support for our cause. Our aim is to bring
in all those who come forward to be equipped with
the skills of read writing and numeracy.

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Namibia basic facts

Area: 824000 km

Population: 1,5 Mil 6% White 94% Black

Languages: Official languages Afr. & Engl. w'rth Afr. dominating

Education: Fragmented along ethnic lines.

School not compulsory for Blacks.

Ratio of govt. spending is 1:6 between Black and White being R300:R1800.

Religion: 75-80% are Christians

Status: UN mandated territory

Occupied illegally by SA since 1971???

SA installed 'Transitional govt.'" 1985

Stalemate on independence continues

The Namibia Literacy structure

1. The Annual General Conference
2. The Board of Directors
3. The Managing Director
4. Admin. Staff and Support Staff
5. The Regional Organisers
6. Regional Literacy Committees
7. Supervisors and Instructors
8. Class Committees
9. Participants

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REGIONAL ORGANISER

REGIONAL LITERACY COMMITTEES

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PARTICIPANTSICLASS

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Literacy Day at Nkarapamwe in Rundu was held on the 28th of November, 1987. About 12 (twelve) learners graduated during the occasion. The Regional Organizer, Mr N Nairenge and the group leader Ms Perpetwa Hausiku seen here in a jovial mood obviously happy about the enormous achievement.

About twelve learners received their certificates during the graduation ceremony.

Opening the ceremony, the Headmaster of the local school in Nkarapamwe said that contrary to what he was told about the activities of the NLP, the NLP was not conducting political programmes; but that the organisation caters for a very important aspect - namely education - in the community of Nkarapamwe.

The Headmaster encouraged those responsible for running the classes in Nkarapamwe as well as in the whole of Namibia to continue with their noble task. .

He also encouraged those who were graduating not to regard their graduation as the final phase of /

literacy training, but rather to see the graduation ceremony as the beginning of a protracted learning process.

Altogether 275 learners sat for their yearly test at the end of November last year in the North-Eastern region. That, according to the Regional Organizer: Mr N Nairenge. was an enormous improvement.

Literacy Day at Nkarapamwe (Rundu) was also a cultural day. Four youngsters from the local cultural group in Nkarapamwe entertained the graduates as well as the guests to traditional music.

The North-Eastern region of the NLP held a successful graduation ceremony on the 28th of November, 1987 at Nkarapamwe in Rundu. The literacy group under the leadership of Ms Perpetwa Hausiku entertained the guests with traditional music.

The traditional music was provided by a group of four youngsters who gave an African colour to the whole occasion.

P.O. Box 21128
45 Bahnhof Str.
WINDHOEK/9000
T91: 37IGCX7