

nd
Land & Agriculture Policy Centre
Rural Development Policy Research

Introduction

Two surprisingly contradictory realities characterise the rural sector in South Africa. First, it is commonly acknowledged that the rural periphery has suffered the greatest ravages of the Apartheid system. Indeed, the overwhelming urban bias within the political dynamic threatens to perpetuate this sector's marginalised status. Secondly, the rural community represent an important political constituency, and is thus actively being courted by the Nationalist government and its allies. Unprecedented resources are being directed to rural communities, and policy articulation is proceeding apace.

Background

These realities clearly have major implications for the future of this sector. The proposed policy research process represents a major priority area within the LAPC's programs.

An initial review of the rural development challenge by the LAPC has led to the conclusion that there is a set of social, economic and poverty policy areas important to the development of rural areas, but which are not wholly agricultural.

In many ways it is believed that rural development policy can make a more significant contribution to improving the well-being of rural people than agricultural policies. The challenge therefore is to find an appropriate combination of

policies that promote sustainable agricultural, commercial and small scale industrial activities with welfare measures

and the proper provision of infrastructure and services. These issues will be the focal point of the Centre's approach

to rural development policy. A preliminary analysis of the topic would at least include the following.

1.

Poverty and Food Security. Devising effective means of reducing rural poverty in a sustainable

manner will be an extremely high priority for any government dependant on winning the support of

rural voters. A successful attack on poverty will call for a carefully designed, sustainable and

well-distributed policy of economic development. It will also require a reorientation of public

expenditure towards the rural poor and the redistribution of at least some assets in their favour. A

particular question that requires analysis is the relationship between cheap food prices and land use.

Food security at both national and household level warrants a particular focus of policy. At the

national level, there is a close link to marketing, pricing and international trade policy; at household

level, a link with employment and incomes, social transfers, and food pricing.

An anti-poverty and food security strategy will require the design of a range of macro-economic and

sectoral policies, the management and reform of public institutions and criteria for public investment

in terms of favouring employment. At present, drought relief programmes are addressing some of

these questions and may lead to long-term strategic approaches to questions of poverty.

Rural Incomes. Closely associated with poverty and food security is the question of rural incomes

from non-farm sources. Devising policies to diversify and increase rural incomes will form part of this

research agenda.

Homelands. The reincorporation of the homelands into the mainstream of national institutional

capacity will obviously affect a wide range of issues; viz, land, agricultural, parastatal and service

delivery issues.

Local government The area of rural development policy overlaps considerably with that of local

government. Policies for rural development need to take account of how such resources are to be

managed by democratic local government.

Community Action and Development. One area of work lies in the means by which the strong tradition of community actions as basis for improving welfare and incomes can be encouraged

Initial Policy Focus

Of this initial list, two sets of rural development issues emerged as central to the Centre's objectives. It is proposed that they serve as the core focus of the Rural Development Policy Task Team's work.

1. Rural incomes and employment. There is widespread agreement on the need for a set of policies to promote incomes and employment in rural areas, from both farm and non-farm sources. In important respects, past policies have reduced employment opportunities within agriculture. Thus, this research focus ought to lead towards an employment-generating strategy for rural areas. It is proposed that the first such study will be of policies at the national level (e.g. 'on taxation, or labour law), which will complement other moves to restructure land and agriculture that will improve job prospects.

2. Poverty and food security at the household level. With roughly half the population in poverty, household food security is an extremely high priority. There are three aspects to this; food pricing and availability; household incomes and real effective demand; and social transfers. This study will build on existing work and will have as a special focus the identification of the most cost-effective means of improving household level food security. The probable first step will be a conceptual review, on the basis of which more focused work will be designed.

3. In baldly stating these foci, a third policy focus suggests itself as being of equal importance to this process, viz. a review of Institutional and Organisational Capacity of grassroots development organisations. Not only does this process need top guard against being top down, but the necessarily integrative nature of the implementation of rural development policy is best captured under this heading.

Proposed Course of Action

The first step in this process will be to convene a small reference group, which will have as its primary task the guiding of this policy research process. Suggested members are Derek Hanekom, Tanya Abrahamse, Sheldon Rankin, Diana Callear, Sibusiso Nkomo, Sue Lund, Dave Cooper and Thembinkosi Ngcobo. If feasible, a preliminary meeting should be held as soon after the end of April to establish the way to move forward.

Soon after this preliminary meeting, a networking process within the ANC and other organisations, in which key and important players will be consulted will be initiated. Furthermore, this networking process will also include the canvassing of the opinion of decision makers as to what they believe the key rural development issues to be. This second phase of this policy research agenda will be a policy research formulating workshop. It will be held towards the end of July. At this workshop, to be attended by about fifteen people, the objectives of the policy research to be undertaken will be refined, and it will also serve as the base for the commissioning of the necessary core rural development policy research. The results of the preliminary consultation will be presented at this workshop.

The next phase will constitute the major part of the work of this research programs. This will largely be comprised of the execution of the identified research by the research team. The three main foci will be household food security, rural incomes and job creation, and local community capacity. This research, largely to be conducted by individuals within their own organisational framework, will be undertaken over the following six months. Simultaneously, it is proposed that two smaller research projects be initiated, The first will focus on the well developed NGO sector, and will seek to uncover their views on what direction rural development should proceed under a democratic government.

The second research topic will focus on the rural development policies of countries in the

e region, to identify issues that could be useful for this policy writing process. Finally, it would be useful to have an interim workshop on rural development, that would be led by an African expert. It is possible to secure the input of Uma Lele in September, and we believe that input from such an internationally respected figure would elevate the policy writing process from rhetoric to reality. At the end of this period, a national report back workshop will be held at which the findings of the research will be presented. Out of the responses to this national workshop, the reference group will draft a rural development policy for the democratic movement.

Budget
Phase One '
Consultation with Key Informants
Travel - Road
Travel - Air
Miscellaneous
Total
Baseline Research
Consultation with Regional Interest Groups
Publication of Report
Miscellaneous
Total
Blainstonning session
Travel - Air
Miscellaneous
Total
Phase One Tom!
Phase T wo
Workshop to Define Research Agenda
Hire of venue
Travel
Miscellaneous 5
Phase 'INvo Total
Phase T hree
Monitoring of Research
Coordinator's travel - Air
Coordinator's travel - road
Total
NGO Sector's views on Policy
Consultation with National and Regional NGOs
Publication of Report
Miscellaneous
Total
Review of Rural Development Policies
Literature Review
Publication of Report
Miscellaneous
Total
Sub Totals
7000
8000
800
15800
15000
3000
800
18800
1600
800
2400
5000
15000
800
7000
6000
13000
15000
3000
800
18800
15000
3000
800
18800
Totals
37000
20800
Percent
12.63%
7.10%
Page 3

Main Research Agenda Costs

Topic 1 - Food Security 42000

Topic 2 - Household Incomes 42000

Topic 3 - Community Capacity 42000

Total 126000

Interim Workshop

Air fare - Uma Lele 5000

Pro deo - Uma Lele 10 days 2500

Accommodation - Uma Lele 10 days 2500

Hire of Venue 2000

Participants travel 3000

Writing up of Workshop Proceedings 5000

Publishing Workshop Proceedings 5000

Miscellaneous 800

Total 25800

Final Policy Conference

Hire of Venue 4000

Travel 10000

Incidentals 2000

Miscellaneous 800

Writing up of papers 6000

Publishing of Conference papers 10000

Total 32800

Total for Phase Three ' _ 235200 80.27%

GRAND TOTAL 4 293000 100.00%

Time frame

An imperative that drives this policy formulation process is that it ought to provide serious input

into the elections process. There is talk of an election early in March 1994. This means that a policy

for public consumption should be unveiled in early February 1994. The ramification of this deadline

is that the final product should be unveiled in January 1994. The final draft will need to be done

in December 1993. To achieve this a workshop will have to be held in November 1993. Which means that commissioned work should be circulated in October 1993. A commissioning conference

should be held in June 1993 so that the main research can begin by not later than August 1993.

detop.doc

Page 4