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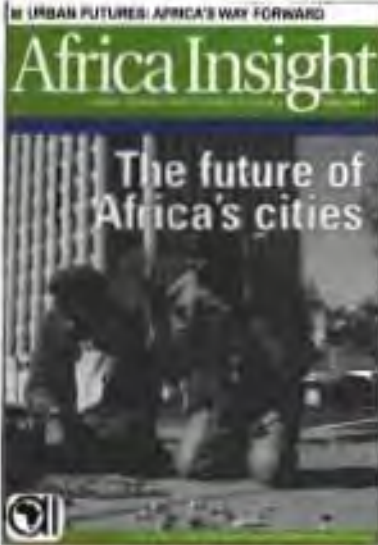
GIVING INSIGHT INTO CHANGE IN AFRICA MAR 2002

Driving
sustainable
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in Africa

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Rio +10

and the politics of sustainable development

By Elizabeth le Roux

The World Summit on Sustainable Development will be held in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September this year. The Summit, which will focus on the theme of "poverty eradication through sustainable development" will take place ten years after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, where countries adopted Agenda 21, the blueprint for sustainable development, and a significant shift in environmental and development policies was instituted. Although there have been efforts to implement Agenda 21, particularly at the local level, there are concerns over a loss of momentum – and hence the need for the follow-up.

Yet the Summit is shaping up to be about as successful as the World Conference on Racism, held last year, which saw in-fighting, interest group clashes and superpower isolationism threaten to derail the conference all together. Although there is more cause for optimism for the Summit's success, views on the way forward in sustainable development are heavily coloured by the interests and ideological culture of nations and groups of nations. The principal differences, as may be expected, are between the rich North and the poor South – but these blocs are far from monolithic.

Attempts are being made from several sides to attempt to bridge the gaps and create an atmosphere conducive to fruitful negotiations, even before the Summit takes place. Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, for instance, argues that, "Far from being a burden, sustainable develop-

ment is an exceptional opportunity – economically, to build markets and create jobs; socially, to bring people in from the margins; and politically, to give every man and woman a voice, and a choice, in deciding their own future". Significantly, this view of sustainable development is not simply linked to environmental concerns, but encompasses a far broader conceptualisation of development, and of its importance.

South Africa, with a foot in both northern and southern camps, hopes to use the Summit to press for greater support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development. NEPAD emphasises the mobilisation of private capital for development and envisages a trade-off involving increased "northern" development assistance and improved trade access in exchange for "southern" government reform.

In the run up to Rio+10, a conference focusing on the role of adult education in sustainable development was held in Johannesburg in November 2001, and the bulk of the papers included in this issue were first presented there. Noting the

world-wide shift regarding adult education which links it to a broader human resource development strategy, the organisers, Project Literacy, realised that the time was right for questions to be asked about the traditional role of adult education, and the links between

adult learning, skills development and poverty alleviation. Partners in the conference included Tirisano, USAid, AED and the Royal Netherlands Embassy.

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Old truths, New realities

Indigenous knowledge systems are the missing link in literacy, poverty alleviation and development strategies in Africa

By Catherine Odora Hoppers

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In the four development decades that the African continent has gone through, numerous lessons have been learnt from literacy, adult education, as well as development efforts. Yet for all that, achieving well-being for all has not only remained elusive, but poverty has intensified, leaving millions of once proud rural communities throughout Africa hapless. Development paradigms have not been questioned sufficiently to permit any fundamentally innovative approaches to be proposed. Being rural is automatically equated with being poor; being illiterate in terms of the western alphabet is automatically equated with being ignorant. How can poverty be alleviated when literacy and development strategies express such an inability to recognise the tremendous "prior knowledge" that people all over Africa already have, and which we now know empirically, was set upon, marginalised and denigrated at will by the process of colonialism and scientific disciplines combined? How are we to return to a path of humility, that can enable us to restore humanity to those we have dehumanised, to recognise people, heritages, knowledges and wisdoms, where we have declared their lands "vacant" and "un-peopled"? These questions demarcate new frontiers for the adult educator of the 21st century and need to be explored with clear intent to reconstruct the basis of our relationship with those we have unwittingly labelled as cognitively impaired.

Old Truths, New Realities: Literacy, Adult Education, and Globalisation

Over the past four development decades, much has been learnt in the field of adult education and literacy. From Tanzania, for instance, Carr-Hill notes that it is difficult to persuade people to participate in any kind of community activity under current economic conditions, or to convince them of the importance of learning about nutrition and health when they cannot afford a balanced diet. Moreover, in some rural areas, very few people are positive towards literacy, having seen how their local leaders reached their position without the advantage of literacy.

Another lesson learnt is that, contrary to declared policy, there is not always an obvious relation between the content of the primer used, and the predominant activity in the locations, and participants thus see little connection between literacy and their development problems. There thus has to be an emphasis on popular education, where local people confront their development and seek out their own solutions.¹

Not surprisingly, and in spite of efforts throughout the continent, illiteracy rates are not going down. The gender gap is not diminishing, neither is the rate of out-of-school children. At the same time, poverty rates and levels are getting ever worse, and it is beginning to be recognised that poverty is no longer to be eliminated, but alleviated – the emphasis being on finding modalities for managing it rather than addressing its root or systemic causes.

The role of adult education in enhancing socio-economic development is emphasised time after time. Within this, literacy is the initial step in a permanent adult education process, today widened to become “lifelong learning” – a concept that tunes in to more than just adults who are illiterate, but to expanding life chances throughout life.

But, for all that, literacy is no longer ambitiously promoted as “the most important means of promoting national unity”.² It is no longer seen as a mobilising force for political cohesion. Governments no longer promise their citizenry with any confidence or convincing commitment that illiteracy is intolerable. Literacy classes are no longer exciting sites for community self-realisation, and volunteers are no longer as eager to provide their service free of charge, for the ‘national good’ as it were. Political leaders no longer emphasise illiteracy as the main obstacle to development.

What are the reasons for this shift in focus? One of the causes can be attributed to globalisation. Globalisation, the descriptor for the current historical era, has created superhighways on which cars of different makes can now cruise. However, it is also the same highway in which ox-drawn carts are supposed to trek alongside those who travel on mules and on foot. Yet, with globalisation, life is faster, smarter ... technology is sharp, and intelligent. The Internet promises new virtual worlds not imaginable just one decade ago. For a country like South Africa, globalisation appears to bring with it a breath of fresh air, an opportunity to go out there, and fight it out among equals.

But globalisation has cast doubt on the role of nation states, emphasising the new concept of the market place for production, distribution and consumption, and is transforming in very uneven ways, finance, currency, trade, employment, social systems, modes

of living, the formation of societies, and training policies. It has removed competence from the national context, while the global flow of capital weakens the possibility of a nation state carrying out an economic policy based on national premises.³ It has also redrawn the world economic map, permanently marginalising those already poor, with the attendant fragmentation and marginalisation a partial result of the systematic cutting back on social policy delivery.⁴

From the education and training perspective, all nations, rich or poor, are faced with the realisation that knowledge seems to be the decisive factor in industrial production and global competition. Skills acquisition throughout life appears to be the key to keeping up in the global economy. Education and training have found their way back to the top of the political agenda as a decisive factor for income and employment throughout life, and as a key variable for the competitiveness of enterprises on the global market.

However, education (formal and non-formal) is unfortunately no longer linked with the development of a critical citizenry, or community empowerment. Like colonialism before it, which forced anthropologists, scientists and policy makers to work only within its framework and espouse its inevitability, in the context of globalisation, the true nature of power is not revealed, its changing contours are rarely explored, its goals and targets rarely identified. Only its inevitability is emphasised.

In this way, it has created the phenomenon of “the silence of the democrats” and “choice-less democracies” in which the democratic revolt of the citizens is what is deemed undemocratic or even unconstitutional. Away from the billboards are the humanistic visions of Lifelong Learning, as espoused by UNESCO in the late 1960s, in which education has deep social roots, and is connected with democracy and self-development.

In the 1960s, it was strongly felt that more even distribution of investment in education and training would equalise individual earnings. This assumption was of course important because it linked the economic justification for education reform with social demands for equality of opportunities. It was democratisation through education.

Since the 1980s, however, one has seen the gradual erosion of the commitment to equality and the total dominance of the economic imperative. During that period, the position of UNESCO was considerably weakened and the developed countries, through the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), obtained an increasing influence on education policies, especially in the Western countries.

Not surprisingly, the new “life-long learning” to emerge from this period was based on the neo-liberal conception regarding education as an investment in “human capital” and hence with a focus on “human resource development”. The reasons given for promoting adult education, for example, were now given only in economic terms, and nothing was said regarding issues of social justice. The humanistic and democratic tradition was more or less replaced by a version framed within a new political economic imperative.

Determining the parameters of the preferred futures
It is true that the world stands at a crossroads in search of new

Literacy classes are no longer exciting sites for community self-realisation ... political leaders no longer emphasise illiteracy as the main obstacle to development

human-centred visions for development. All agencies and players at all levels of policy are seeking to promote paradigms of sustainable human development and innovation that build on knowledge resources and insights existing in communities.

At the same time, we live in a world in which relations of subjection, suffering and dispossession, and the contempt for human dignity and the sanctity of life are at the centre of human existence. These are becoming routinised as a matter of course. Conflicts abound on the African continent as well as a great part of the world, and it is clear that our understandings of innovations should extend to the re-discovery of traditional or indigenous resources for peace-building and human security.

Looking at the issue of poverty, both in terms of alleviation and eradication, it is clear that there is a gross asymmetry in the rights and responsibilities between those who produce knowledge, particular in the "informal" sector, and those who go about valorising it in the formal sector. We also know that assumptions embedded in the definitions of poverty bypass critical terrains by always equating frugal subsistence with poverty, and assuming that rural (i.e. the least 'western' looking) is always equal to impoverishment.

Today, a closer scrutiny reveals realistic, and more appropriate conceptions such as "knowledge rich and resource poor".

In the meantime, we are faced with globalisation, which is doing several things to different people at the same time: among other things, it is threatening the appropriation of the collective knowledge of non-'western' systems into the proprietary knowledge of a few, and bringing to wider attention issues around value addition and benefit sharing, especially with regard to indigenous knowledges. Knowledge and ideas, of course, being the accepted currencies in today's world order.

As globalisation cannot function in a moral vacuum, and without a certain ethos being simultaneously implanted in civil society, the goals of education for co-operation and sustainable human development need to be brought out. New social contracts that can bind together democratic citizenship, social justice, and capitalism need to be developed or strengthened. Communitarian traditions that seek to empower the community and fuse social action and public responsibility should not be left to the sidelines. World order priorities should also extend to affirming human solidarity that maintains that as a matter of right, there exists a duty to provide for basic needs of all persons.⁵

The interface between governance and human development lies in the manner in which governments design their policies towards the weak and the vulnerable. We therefore need to commit to a new ethics of thought and practice. We need to work to stimulate people in creative collective achievements, a process in which people can find both emotional and spiritual fulfilment while economic progress is also being made.

Communities need to be stimulated in a manner that builds on what they have – including their knowledge, skills, and competencies that they have acquired through indigenous methods of knowledge acquisition.

In revisiting the issues of self reliance and empowerment, we need to recall that self-reliance has been defined as a state of mind that regards one's own mental and material resources as the primary stock to draw on in the pursuit of one's objectives, and finds

emotional fulfilment not only in achieving the objectives as such, but also in the very fact of having achieved them by using one's own resources.

It is within this frame of reference that non-literate people should be engaged with by initiatives that adult educators, as facilitators of life-long learning, bring to the picture.

The preservation of inherent dignity in indigenous communities, enhancing their sense of self respect, and in turn respecting their autonomy of choice and action which may include a rejection of particular modalities being introduced by educators need to be borne in mind.⁶

Some Reflections on Post-Development

It is now well established that the appalling destitution of the Third World was not simply the result of centuries of exploitation and colonial plunder followed up by further appropriation of surplus value through a market dynamic of unequal exchange between Centre and Periphery (as the Marxist-Leninist view has it). Rather, prior to, and alongside material exploitation, there is a cultural domination.⁷

Each society furnishes its own construction of the world, indeed creates its own world in the sense that it invests 'what is', with its distinctive signification. Each establishes a mode of existence, a distinct way of understanding itself, its activity, its history and the world it inhabits, specific to, and all-embracing in its compass.

As the vitality of a culture resides in the capacity of culture to give (both symbolically and materially), receipt of a gift (whether this be willing, inadvertent, or forced), is *prima facie* evidence of its valorisation by the recipient. The gift, and the capacity to give, and to have the gift received, signify the existence and potency of the donor as an active agent in the world.

As it stands at present, the West's primary domination of the world lies in its monopolisation of the very terms by which value is conceived, and its domination of the basic institutions that codify social life.

The deculturation of the dominated societies is shown by the fact that increasingly, they exclusively voice their predicaments and aspirations in terms of the categories sanctioned by the invading culture. Western culture has imposed the obligation of acceptance on the invaded cultures.

This entails, at the limit, the asphyxiation of the recipient culture, and the loss of vitality and coherence of the indigenous cultural forms. Third World societies are, under these conditions, made to feel that there is little, or nothing they have ever given to others.

What about Indigenous Knowledge Systems?

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples provides a useful definition of indigenous peoples:

Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from populations which inhabited the country, or geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.⁸

Communities need to be stimulated in a manner that builds on what they have – including knowledge, skills and competencies which they acquired through indigenous methods

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The ILO Convention definition includes four vital factors: time, geographical space, resilience, and territorial occupation by outside populations. It emphasises that these factors should be considered in any discussion on indigenous peoples and knowledge.

Analysts have taken this definition and used it to clarify the concepts of indigenous and traditional peoples, and to state that traditional peoples are those who hold an unwritten corpus of long-standing customs, beliefs, rituals and practices that have been handed down from previous generations. They do not necessarily have to have a claim to prior territorial occupancy to the current habitat as they may be recent immigrants, victims of forced removals, victims of forced labour, or of slavery.

Indeed, the violence and violations of colonialism and apartheid and its ravages on the African continent and its people have led to displacements from places of origin and severed the natal links with geographical identities. Thus traditional peoples are not necessarily indigenous (*viz.* precise geographical space), but indigenous peoples are traditional.⁹

Drawing from this, indigenous knowledge therefore is defined as:

...that knowledge that is held and used by a people who identify themselves as indigenous of a place based on a combination of cultural distinctiveness and prior territorial occupancy relative to a more recently arrived population with its own distinct and subsequently dominant culture.¹⁰

Traditional knowledge is thus the totality of all knowledges and practices, whether explicit or implicit, used in the management of socio-economic, spiritual, and ecological facets of life. It can be contrasted with "cosmopolitan knowledge" that is culturally anchored in Western cosmology, western scientific discoveries, economic preferences, and philosophies.

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) have their own particular socio-ecological, economic, philosophical and scientific content, but at the same time, should be recognised as part of a larger whole pool of universal knowledge. Categories of these knowledges relate to agriculture, meteorology, ecology, governance, social welfare, medicine and pharmaceuticals, law and jurisprudence, music, architecture, sculpture, textile manufacture, metallurgy, and food technology. In terms of practice, they include songs, dances, fashion and garment designs, medicinal and agricultural practices, plant varieties, as well as the holistic nature of "traditional lifestyles".

Throughout Africa, language, sophisticated techniques in cloth weaving, cloth dyeing, farming and agriculture, obstetrics, hunting, food preservation and conservation, food processing and fermentation, nutrition and dietary systems, metallurgy, astronomy, divine worship, and spiritual aspects of healing are part and parcel of IKS. A large proportion of these were specifically designated, owned, managed and controlled by women. This is a point very



Photo: Willem de Lange

much lost in our search to reduce poverty and strengthen our communities in the name of sustainable livelihoods.

As a knowledge system, IKS consists of people, the domains of knowledge, and the techniques and technologies that drive the knowledges. These three tenets are undergirded by a cosmology, a world-view. In the African context, the relationship with, and to nature, human agency, and human solidarity underpins the knowledge system and the human existence around it. Relationships between people hold pride of place – best explained by the concept of Ubuntu. It does not seek to conquer or debilitate nature as a first impulse.

Implications of IKS for adult educators

Practitioners in the field of adult education have long condoned behaviour and attitudes that have been extremely unkind to people who are not literate. They have done little to improve the low self-perception among learners. In the Soviet Union, for instance, a war-siege mentality arranged for the literacy campaign to be launched by decree, and the national literacy committee was given the name CHEKA, which was also the acronym of the then secret police. The institutional points for the literacy campaigns consisted of "liquidation points", while the illiterate population was identified as the enemy, needing to be "purged" of illiteracy. Literacy workers were cultural soldiers and the villages in which the campaigns were directed were called "occupied territory".

In turn, Cuba's literacy instructors were called *brigadistas*, and literacy territories were declared free of illiteracy. Literacy follow-ups which awarded Grade Six certificates were designated the "battle of the sixth grade". In Nicaragua, the literacy campaign was called a *crusade*, and the literacy primer was referred to in the

hymn of the literacy campaign as a machete eradicating illiteracy "in one blow".

In Tanzania, the post-independence government equated illiteracy with ignorance, and a "frontal attack" was undertaken to move millions of peasants into the UJAMAA villages. Its neighbour, Mozambique, clearly saw illiteracy as being coupled with obscurantism, while the Kenyan government called it the "enemy" and even declared it illegal. The Arab countries equated illiteracy with the absence of cultural standards, an absence of self-confidence, and of Arab nationalism.¹¹

UNESCO's own altruism smacked heavily of the modernisation paradigm, equating illiteracy, naturally, to ignorance, and the majority of the adult population in the Third World were seen and posited as being besieged by this condition. UNESCO's task was that of lightening the 'dark' zones of the world. Later on illiteracy graduated from being a condition afflicting people to an obstacle to economic growth.

A previous Director General of UNESCO spoke of illiteracy as the "most monstrous... most scandalous of the many instances of wasted human resources" Illiteracy remained a scourge, and people were still affected by it.

We cannot forget how many still equate illiteracy with absolute ignorance, dismissing what is not written down as thoughtless, and at its limit, as primitivism. Strategic disempowerment has thus been the first line of action even when the intention has been to empower.

Yet, education can be understood in the anthropological sense as analogous to basic personality; and from a desire not to be shut in either in the linguistic register of the written word, or in the institutional world of schools or labour force training. It does not hurt, or bite, except to egos of course, to acknowledge that people or groups have a heritage of knowledge which is the basis of their interpretation of the world, in specific situations and in accordance with procedures which they recognise.

Education and training of various types begin here, or should begin here, in people's lives, among their peers, with their own style, their customs, decisions and utopian ideals.

Any educational enterprise must begin by discovering and recognising this content. Where links have been destroyed, education should at least aim at reconstructing these linkages, rather than aggravating the alienation.

As a mediator of knowledge, the adult educator should not focus on the transfer of Knowledge (with a capital K), but rather, the fostering of an epistemological relationship between knowledges (plural) and subjects in the knowing process. It is in fostering this essential link that grassroots and indigenous groups can

locate themselves and their knowledge in the broader template of knowledge and power relations. In other words, we need to bring back the concept of empowerment to our agenda.

The term "empowerment" is used to denote people's demands to be recognised, consulted and valued. In a narrow sense, it is used to describe a wide range of efforts to enhance the power of individuals, groups, and organisations in society. Fundamentally, empowerment is the process of changing the balance of power in favour of those who were kept out of the mainstream of economic, social, cultural activity as a consequence of colonialism and apartheid.¹²

Empowerment is the process of enhancing feelings of self efficacy in communities through identification and removal of the conditions that reinforce powerlessness. On the other hand, development must no longer be pre-occupied with what people do not have.¹³ It must move beyond the negative dependency orientation and motivate society to become constructively engaged in moving forward.

Human development as an approach recognises value in endogenous and locally owned innovations and initiatives. Here, people are the subject. They are not trapped in the cold condescending gaze of the rich upon the poor, because endogenous development begins at the point when people start to pride themselves as worthy human beings inferior to none; and where such pride is lost, development begins at the point at which this pride is restored, and history recovered.¹⁴

This entails legitimation of the local or indigenous knowledge that exists in communities, and working with them to systematise this knowledge and develop value chains from which their economic empowerment could emanate.

Conclusion

Indigenous knowledge raises fundamental issues of cognitive justice and epistemological disenfranchisement. IKS therefore reminds us that it is a fitting time to reaffirm the commitments made 50 years ago to strive for even more effective, rigorous, and balanced implementation of human rights for all.

Within this context, the relationship between intellectual property and human rights lies in the confluence between traditional knowledge, the right to health, the obligations of democracy and transparency demanded of science in its links with society, in cultural heritage, and in the principle of non-discrimination.

These issues lie at the heart of the notion of sustainable human development, justice, and equity. They also contain crucial codes in the search for the eradication of poverty and empowerment of local communities across the African continent. ☺

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This article follows from a long-term engagement – as a researcher and adviser – with policies and practices for ‘youth development’ across Eastern and Southern Africa. My interest at this point is not so much to elaborate on the specifics of youth programmes as they unfold, but rather to place current policy debates within a wider context of changing social and economic circumstances that impinge on the lives of young people, and to relate these to evolving discourses regarding exclusion and inclusion that influence thinking on social policy.

By Wim Hoppers

In the post-colonial period in the region, the concept of ‘youth’ has been highly problematic, as it has come to denote a residual category incorporating those young people who were excluded from the key institutions of modernisation, i.e. schooling and wage-employment. Over time, especially during the 1980s and 1990s, this exclusion of large numbers of young people appears to have become more structural as a result of the consequences of globalisation and increased social stratification of opportunities. At the same time, as socialist policies were replaced by neo-liberal ones, egalitarian perspectives of social inclusion through expanded access to classic formal education have come to be replaced by a deficit perspective of social integration emphasising minimal skills and work participation while sanctioning major differentiations of opportunities and rewards.

Hence, youth policy and practice that aims to assist youth towards social inclusion needs to be articulated and pursued more strategically by relevant interest groups so as to contribute effectively towards overcoming structural marginalisation and ensuring more equitable opportunities in life.

The early years

In the early post-independence period of African countries ‘youth’ tended to have a positive connotation as the concept referred to those persons who had contributed disproportionately to the struggle for freedom, often having intentionally foregone participation in school and further education. Young people who could not be immediately absorbed into an expanding school system were offered the promise of alternative routes of training and work, often through social mobilisation drives to absorb large numbers into national services schemes. Separate from state efforts, churches, NGOs and local government organised compen-

satory skills development and work creation schemes for out-of-school youth. However, the dominant public assumption was that all young people would become absorbed into the education and training system as the economy would expand. Thus, any non-formal or informal route could still be legitimised as a temporary yet equitable alternative to the rewards of modernisation.

During the 1960s and 1970s ‘youth development’ was also characterised by a significant amount of personal and community self-reliance. Research evidence has shown that weak bureaucratic control and flexible management practices in schools allowed for considerable exploitation of what were rather poor quality school systems. Young people could navigate their way backwards and forwards through grade repetition and various forms of continued education in such a way that they significantly improved their chances of moving into restricted formal secondary education and thus on to eventual social and economic rewards.¹ From the community point of view the system’s ‘inefficiencies’ could work very effectively to assist their children out of poverty.

Moreover, the higher rates of social mobility in the early post-independence period created greater social differentiation within extended families and village communities, allowing forms of ‘social capital’ for youngsters that enhanced access to opportunities for skills acquisition, wage-employment and entrepreneurship. Such social capital included credit facilities, work-experience, labour market information and appropriate ‘contacts’. Personal and family networks have long been recognised as important vehicles for social advancement.²

Closing of opportunities

The restructuring of the world economy and concomitant patterns of production and accumulation, from the 1980s, has had serious consequences for the structure of opportunities and the value of education in the region. The overall impact has been one of increasing economic differentiation and stratification, the emergence of a crippling debt crisis and the consequent reorganisation

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of national economies along lines of economic austerity.³ Areas that were not industrialised became increasingly marginalised and the disparities between the elites employed in the small 'modern' sector of their economies and the vast majority of the rural and urban poor started growing. New technologies and their corresponding higher-level skills requirements, spread through globalisation, shifted production away from traditional manufacturing with their preponderance of semi-skilled labour. In the wake of the privatisation of public services and the diminishing protection of the manufacturing industries many jobs disappeared, while those that remained became increasingly unstable.

Gallart's comments on the consequences for employment in the small and micro-enterprise sector in Latin America are also applicable to the changing situation in East and Southern Africa. She notes that while employment in the small enterprise sector continued to be high, the nature of work became more short-term and casual, and the units came under pressure to deliver because of the need for quick responses in the context of subcontracting.⁴ In general, access to jobs became much more selective, particularly as regards those positions that allowed for significant learning on the job. Even in the informal sector young aspirant workers came to face stiff competition from adults, and those with less education met increased pressure for entry from those with more education. Increasingly the informal sector keeps young workers in very low-level jobs, particularly those that do not allow for upward mobility and gaining of higher qualifications.

The growing differentiation within the informal sector is an important phenomenon in a part of the economy that has for a long time been considered a source of employment for the disadvantaged. While during the 1980s the urban informal sector has been growing rapidly as a result of restructuring in the formal sector of the economy it has in the process also become more heterogeneous in terms of scope, sizes and capitalisation of production units.⁵

Across the region the sector began to attract larger numbers of persons with higher levels of education so as to ensure a source of income or a supplement to formal sector salaries. These entrants became disproportionately associated with the larger and more profitable units in the informal sector. On these grounds, in the African context, King has identified a growing distinction between policy interventions as 'poverty' programmes, focusing on basic needs and usually undertaken by NGOs, and 'small enterprise development' programmes, which are more development-oriented and more often supported by government.⁶

In Latin America, Gallart observes that it was the youth from underprivileged backgrounds that were mostly likely to have low levels of education. They were also the ones who had greater difficulties in finding jobs, as they tended to lack the basic cognitive and technical skills needed to perform in a more difficult labour market.⁷ Thus these youngsters became the victims of an education system characterised by very poor quality and high rates of repetition and attrition.

There is some evidence that the correlation between poverty and participation in education has been less strong in Africa – as measured by comparing average years of schooling in the 16-19 age group among the richest 20% with those among the poorest 20%.⁸ Nevertheless there is a growing relationship between poverty, low participation and low achievement in education, and consequently greater barriers of access to occupations that offer chances for upward mobility.

Increased socio-economic differentiation has also become more apparent in rural economies, leading to declines in educational participation. With an increased emphasis on export promotion involving large-scale commercial farming, peasant smallholders as a policy category have gradually dropped out of the development equation. They tend to have been relegated to the ranks of the poor where their plight could be taken up through 'poverty alleviation' measures.⁹ There is evidence that the abandonment of state-supported marketing mechanisms and price liberalisation have reduced the value of smallholder agricultural production. Gainful employment opportunities for young people in trading and off-farm activities have been seriously reduced.

Youth who do not move to urban areas become part of the scramble for income-generating activities,

which, according to recent research on de-agrarianisation, have become vital to economic survival in many households.¹⁰ Such activities



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include alcohol production, which is not only a ready form of cash earning but also helps to dispose of crop surpluses that otherwise are not profitably marketed. As result, in several countries a heavy drinking culture has become entrenched.¹¹

Survival work also involves many children, whose participation in education is already affected by the spread of user-fees for social services. Thus, not only has the coping capacity of traditional extended family support systems in rural areas been severely undermined, there is now a growing risk that poverty will be reproduced into the next generations.

The changing construction of youth programmes

Within the context of and in response to changing political and macro-economic changes in the sub-region, initiatives in support of 'youth development' have gone through many convulsions. The general trends can be characterised as being from ad hoc and temporary to institutionalised provisions; from a focus on skills as the missing link to a more holistic view of learning outcomes; from isolation of education or training arrangements (separate from work) to a more integrative approach; from preparation for employment to preparation for work; from a focus on equal opportunities to a focus on survival; and from a focus on development to a focus on livelihood.

In the 1960s and 1970s youth training and development initiatives tended to be regarded by providers as well as beneficiaries as temporary provisions to assist youth who could not yet fully benefit from inclusion in the rapidly expanding primary and secondary education systems. While the state concentrated its attention on the development of the formal system so as to respond to a major political promise of quality education for all, churches, local government, and community organisations were asked to look after those who could not make it yet.

Given the generally expanding state of the economy, support from external (often volunteer) organisations helped to ensure that many schemes – particularly those in

urban and rural centres – were successful in placing graduates into positions of employment.¹² Large numbers of other youth were either absorbed into the rural economy through family training or onto a small but growing urban informal sector.¹³

The growing attention to the 'school leaver crisis' during the 1970s and beyond reflects a public awareness of the increasing 'mismatch' between education, training and employment. Given the then strong involvement of governments in the economy and in development planning, this led not only to a more systemic involvement of different ministries in youth development programmes of a 'non-formal' nature, but above all to a major interest in 'diversifying' the formal school curricula, both at primary and at secondary level.

The hope was that both a greater awareness of alternative opportunities and a foundation of pre-vocational skills would encourage young people to pursue non-academic and non-administrative vocations in life. In some countries, such as Zimbabwe and Kenya, a complex array of skills development provisions gained recognition varying from formal vocational training to informal sector apprenticeships.

It was significant that the state continued to accept a public responsibility to ensure that young people would achieve equality

of opportunity towards relevant education and an enhanced standard of living. Moreover, there was a continued acknowledgement that issues of quality and relevance of education and training were intrinsically related to the structure of the economy and the fundamental imbalances in the labour market. The need for including education within a broader socio-economic strategy involving judicious state intervention to promote labour intensive industrialisation and increased productivity in the traditional and informal sectors as a contribution to youth development was still accepted by Southern African ministers as late as 1989.¹⁴

The 1980s were characterised by struggles in the sub-region with regard to appropriate economic and education strategies. While IMF-led structural adjustment programmes were already beginning to have their impact on the funding of social services, in education national reform agendas related to the inclusion of pre-vocational skills and practices of "education with production" and the promotion of diversification were heavily disputed by the World Bank and were abandoned in several countries under the weight of fiscal constraints and lack of external support.¹⁵

Hence the emergence of a *de facto* dual approach whereby vocational/technical skills development for young school leavers was left to parallel 'non-formal' sub-systems – such as the Youth Polytechnics in Kenya, the Youth Skills Development Centres in Zambia and the Brigades in Botswana. Also, youth service schemes associated with the ruling party became prominent in several countries – though successful only in a few, such as Kenya.

Much public and private attention was given to the further development of the quality and relevance of youth programmes, particularly in terms of increasing their interface with the needs of the labour market and a stronger orientation towards self-employment and entrepreneurship. This led to broader, though uneven, attempts to widen the curriculum to include social and communication skills, and aspects of business management, as well as more direct emphasis on work-placements and settlement.¹⁶ In particular

various NGO-initiated youth programmes became successful not only in catering for disadvantaged youth, especially young women, but also in ensuring effective interaction with the local socio-cultural and economic environment.¹⁷

Nevertheless, in the African context such programmes tend not to have become embedded within community governance and management structures so as to ensure sustainability and encourage wider replication.

While approaches to integrate youth development within national social and economic development strategies were promoted, these tended to oscillate between two not necessarily congruent strategies.¹⁸ One was to integrate youth work as much as possible into employment creation or rural development programmes. The other was a move towards systemic integration into a broader and more pluriform education and training system. The former turned out to be rather problematic as on the whole governments failed to establish regulatory frameworks for the informal sectors, offering protection as well as business services to the many young 'pre-entrepreneurs'.¹⁹

As regards integration into the wider education and training system, there have been efforts to create ladders and bridges with the formal system (like in Kenya through the 8-4-4 system). More

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often the drive towards 'formalisation' came from the youth schemes themselves in order to demonstrate their value as substantive educational alternatives. However, in the absence of fundamental reform in the mainstream, the 'formalisation' of youth training tends to have undermined the very features that made many of the programmes successful. Thus it contributed to their decreasing value in the labour market.

The concurrence of a growing institutional differentiation of educational opportunities and the increased stratification and disparities in the urban and rural economies means that opportunities for advancement beyond subsistence levels of production and income are likely to have become much restricted.

This trend, whose emergence in the early 1980s had already been observed in one part of the sub-region (Zambia), may well have intensified over time.²⁰

There is a strong likelihood that these conditions have promoted structural divisions within the youth population that threaten to perpetuate poverty and marginality into the next generation. Because of the absence of consistent empirical data the degree of structural overlap is unclear. There is also insufficient information as to the extent to which incentives and specific interventions can overcome existing barriers to social advancement.

The 1990s have seen some new policy initiatives which have focused on youth development and have produced a more complex picture of constraints and possibilities. These have been spurred on by the growing magnitude of the 'youth problem' in the wake of high levels of youth unemployment, stagnating participation in education and training, and political instability. On the one hand there have been further developments in the diversification of the education and training systems and in increased efficiencies, while on the other hand there have been attempts to make adult education more attractive to out-of-school and out-of-employment youth.

Diversification is associated with the growth of private education benefiting better-situated young people on one end of the social spectrum, and forms of community education catering for the poor and the marginalised at the other end, leading to starkly differentiated systems – socio-economically as well as regionally.²¹ Streamlining of access and progression has improved efficiency, but has also blocked off educational survival strategies. This has actually reduced participation by young people in difficult circumstances, effectively passing them on to compensatory arrangements outside the formal system.

Training reforms produced greater recognition of forms of training in the workplace (both informal and formal sector). They also led to some efforts to regulate the rapidly expanding backstreet training colleges, and – at least in the newly liberated South Africa – fresh resources for work-specific training provided by the business sector. Such moves have also brought other ministries into the domains of education and training, such as Labour, Community Development and Women's Affairs. The perceived need for more effective training for entrepreneurship and self-employment development also drove renewed efforts in some countries to put vocationalisation of education on the agenda or to move towards an internal restructuring of the TVET sector.²² In some countries, particularly Kenya, these efforts were combined with new strategies for small enterprise development.

The 'lifelong learning' vision of the CONFINTEA V Conference on adult education of 1997 gave further impetus to initiatives for Adult Basic Education (ABE) in various countries, particularly for out-of-school youth. Here interpretations have differed. Some initiatives, as in Namibia, have become attempts to combine literacy education with life or vocational skills in fast-track options that would lead to equivalency at different levels of basic education, thus giving opportunities for transfer in and out of the 'mainstream'. Other efforts have focused exclusively on life or vocational skills, using distance and multimedia modalities – such as UNESCO's Learning without Frontiers programme, proposed but not yet implemented in Mozambique.

In World Bank-supported programmes on ABE in Africa, such as Uganda, equivalency has not been regarded as an issue, out of fear for the restrictive influences of moves towards formalisation. Instead the emphasis has been on functional literacy as an essential contribution to 'improved livelihood' for younger and older adults who missed school.²³ In this context literacy is seen as the main gateway to poverty alleviation, and as a means to promote gender equity and to empower the poor and their communities. Thus programmes tend to identify 'poverty targets' such as young women in poor rural areas, or youth in the peri-urban informal sector. Training provided is short-term and practical, emphasis being on relevant skills around a core of literacy and numeracy. The skills include those related to health, civic participation, child-care, and artistic or religious expression.

ABE programmes for youth have gained in attraction during the 1990s as they seemed to move away from the traditional treatment of youth as a problem category of its own. They were based on a realisation that not only did many youth remain without any support at all, but also that conventional programmes specifically focusing on youth did not appear to deliv-

er. In this context a wider view of lifelong learning could enable out-of-school and out-of-work youth to be 'decompartmentalised' and treated as young adults needing specific forms of assistance towards the kind of life they value. Moreover, such an approach could take the focus away from cumbersome negotiations to slot youth into existing education and training systems, and thus from the intractable dilemmas of equivalency and formalisation.

Analysis of policy discourse

The increasing differentiation of education and training opportunities for youth at the post-basic level, and the diverging approaches to youth development particularly during the last 15 years, makes it worthwhile to consider the changes in policy visions that have informed such approaches.

Clearly in the early years after independence the dominant view, within the context of a socialist-oriented policy framework, was that all young people had to have access to the same opportunities. This meant access to at least full primary and to the extent possible full secondary education, which would enable everyone to have a chance for entering the modern sector of the economy. Alternative provisions for post-primary youth development were widely regarded as compensatory, even when they still proved successful in securing an alternative route into the labour market. Government recognition only came grudgingly, but with the reservation that the provisions were kept outside the formal education

In this context literacy is seen as the main gateway to poverty alleviation, and as a means to promote gender equity and to empower the poor and their communities



Photo: Andrew de Groot

The pressures from the Bretton Woods institutions for economic reform of a different type and for an austerity regime made such agendas difficult to achieve. Such pressures were associated with the changing world economy and worsening terms of trade for African states, which seriously undermined egalitarian social development programmes. However, it has also been contended that the vulnerability to external influences had been worsened because of high donor dependency to get such programmes off the ground ²³ In the process of structural adjustment the state itself was disempowered and much less in a position to control system-wide educational reform, economic growth and job creation.

Under the new economic order the discourse on youth development changed considerably. With the new emphasis on neo-liberal principles, greater market orientation, private sector and community financing, and increased efficiency and functionality in education and training, differentiation in provision and focus of youth programmes in relation to existing 'opportunities' for work has become socially and politically acceptable. While access to quality basic education as a need – if not a right – for all children has become internationally agreed upon since the 1990 Jomtien conference, no such consensus exists as regards continued post-basic education and training. Thus a plethora of unconnected programmes for youth have been maintained, varying from full-time academic secondary education; through forms of formal vocational training, to ad hoc skills development, work-based training and entrepreneurship programmes of different types. Their quality and relevance varies enormously and the age group coverage remains limited in most countries. With the notable exceptions of South Africa and Namibia, there is also little official interest in equivalency of outcomes and benefits as a policy goal. Thus, their effectiveness in economic and social respects is likely to vary considerably. In particular it is questionable to what extent youth programmes are able to compensate for the deficiencies in basic personal competencies among youth of a poor background.

Although there is little research evidence the changing economic and production context may have seriously affected aspirations, expectations, patterns of transition and livelihoods for young people. In conditions of poverty, instability, lack of prospects, and perceptions about diminishing returns to education, young people are likely to increase their mobility and move backwards and forwards between a variety of education and training opportunities, as well as casual work experiences. However, within current socio-economic conditions, there is a greater likelihood that such movements will be increasingly restricted in the wake of efficiency measures and lack of opportunities in general. The reduced value of social capital, such as family networks, in the midst of structural

and training system and were subsidised from other ministry and private or donor sources.

As the basic entitlement of all young people to education and to employment was a foundation for national policies, rising unemployment had to be combated through a combination of educational reform and adjustments in economic and employment policies. In the words of Bernard Chidzero, Zimbabwe's senior Minister for Finance, Economic Planning and Development:

Thus both the type or system of education and the pattern of government expenditure combine with other factors and policies to create or increase unemployment. The obvious conclusion to be drawn is that education, planning and manpower development must be integral parts of national economic planning and development policies and the fiscal and expenditure regimes have to be geared accordingly to stimulate growth and development. It is a matter of planned and balanced development, with defined objectives and clear priorities, not only in theory but also and more importantly in practice and over sustainable periods, long enough to produce the desired results.²⁴

It was this notion of integrated development planning that underscored reforms such as vocationalisation, diversification, education and training with production, and the like.

While access to quality basic education for all children has become internationally agreed upon, no such consensus exists as regards continued post-basic education and training.

poverty will further undermine young people's chances to secure societal rewards.

This context has serious implications for the effectiveness of conventional non-formal youth development programmes. For example, it is highly questionable to what extent ABE programmes can make a substantive difference for young adults. In part, such programmes may shift the attention within adult education firmly – but perhaps unjustly – to the needs of the bulk of the disadvantaged adult population, i.e. the 15-30 age group. In addition, however, they risk endorsing the removal of very large numbers of the one group whose fate is most decisive for the future of society out of the development equation. The risk of exclusion is greater in the case of ABE, as in the latter the principle of equivalency of potential outcomes has been abandoned and thus the promise of becoming part of the modern world is no longer there. As has been argued in discussions around the UNESCO International Literacy Survey, ignoring the growing relationship in many countries between social background and (rapidly disappearing) opportunities for productive work will hamper the success of such vocationally-oriented literacy programmes.²⁶

In the changing agendas for youth development, references to 'rights', 'equality of opportunity' and 'development' have gone. The present terminology includes references to 'improving quality of life', 'self-sustenance', and 'poverty alleviation', terms that signify survival and continued marginality. What in the past was accepted as the fate of only a small group of youth that had given up hope now appears to be accepted as the future for the majority. The focus of policy action has been reduced from overcoming structural constraints at the macro-economic and social levels to making the individuals responsible for their own life improvement, receiving only the most 'cost-effective' forms of assistance. In the process the learning experience becomes reduced from personal development and 'understanding the world and engaging with it' to skills and competencies necessary for elementary productivity and survival. Preparation for life becomes preparation for work activities; and work itself becomes reduced to subsistence – or a minimalist interpretation of 'livelihood'.²⁷

Towards social inclusion of youth

At this point reference should be made to the meaning of the notions of 'exclusion' and 'inclusion'. If current youth programmes aim at overcoming exclusion, what exclusion do they have in mind, and into what do they wish youth to become included? It is noticeable that in many countries in the north and in the south issues of social exclusion and inclusion have become central in a wider debate on new models for political and social development. This interest follows the collapse of socialism and the inability of unreg-



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The focus of policy action has been reduced from overcoming structural constraints at the macro-economic and social levels to making the individuals responsible for their own life improvement, receiving only the most 'cost-effective' forms of assistance.

ulated markets to deliver social cohesion and social justice.

According to Askonas and Stewart in the European context, where these issues have received much attention, there have largely been two kinds of responses to exclusion: one that focuses on social marginalisation per se, leading to propositions

under the rubric of 'welfare to work'; the other focusing on explicit and systematic analysis of the causes which generate social destabilisation and exclusion. In the former the reference point is the acceptance of realities as they are, leading to policies and practices aimed at amelioration of the consequences of economically-driven modes of action and organisation. In the latter the reference point is the possibility of new forms of social organisation geared at maximising the meaningful involvement of all citizens.²⁸

Such responses have been related to different discourses of exclusion, which centre on the extent to which social inequality has been accepted as central to understanding and pursuing possibilities for inclusion. Those who do not consider inequality to be of relevance, tend to adhere to a 'moral underclass discourse', which identifies exclusion with the moral and cultural characteristics of the excluded (unemployed youth, foreigners, AIDS victims). They may also adhere to a 'social integrationist' discourse, which emphasises economic efficiency and social cohesion, and on both accounts considers labour market participation as a key to social inclusion, regardless of massive inequalities of gender and class in terms of rewards and conditions of work. On the other hand, those who accept the relevance of social inequality adhere more to

a 'redistributionist' discourse, which emphasises the relationship between social exclusion and diverse, societally-generated inequalities of power and resources. Such discourse feeds into a more comprehensive social development agenda, aimed at promoting social justice by reducing structural inequalities in the economy and labour market, while recognising differences in terms of gender, class and nationalisms (race and ethnicity).²⁹

The above demonstrates that the debates on the relevance of social inequalities in policies and practices related to social development are internationally still very much alive. These debates also find reverberations in policy discussions in some of the countries in the sub-region, notably South Africa, focusing on issues of equality of opportunity, the removal of social and economic disparities, and the role of the state versus market forces.

A social development agenda driven by recognition of fundamental social inequalities will ascribe a stronger responsibility to the state to use its authority as a lever for implementing redistributionist policies. This would imply the adoption of a holistic view of equitable youth development strategies and the pursuing of an interventionist agenda towards economic restructuring and employment creation, particularly in the small and micro-enterprise sector.

Moreover, while a social integrationist approach would be satisfied with a basic focus on effective preparation of young people for work – any kind of productive work – an approach that takes a wider view of social inclusion would set different parameters for relevance and effectiveness of youth development programmes. The latter approach would regard youth less as a problem of marginalisation that needs to be contained, than as an extensive challenge for widening citizenship with its full implications for social, cultural, economic and political participation at levels that are equal across the present divides of privilege and advantage.

This implies a more systemic and inclusive view of youth development, regarding it as a set of attention areas and outcomes that are pertinent across the entire range of education, training, work and other support provisions available to young people at the post basic education level. Such attention areas would take their cues

from different development dimensions and thus include providing young people with advanced orientation to the social, cultural, economic, scientific and technological world, environmental and health education, life skills and orientation, technical and vocational orientation and competencies, skills for personal and collective efficacy, civic participation, cultural and artistic expression, etc. Where young people would have insufficient background in these areas, education and training systems would require adaptation. In some areas youth programmes – as supplementary provisions – would compensate for the limitations of standard provisions.

In many core areas of youth development, dedicated programmes, whether state or NGO-initiated, need to provide alternative pathways that incorporate essential aspects of the above dimensions, so as to provide equity in opportunities to participate fully in adult life.

They are likely to require incorporation of general education components, skills development components, work-experience, and life orientation, in a manner that enables all young people to reach minimum essential levels of attainment. The systemic policy framework that should embrace all such programmes would need to have stipulations for equivalencies across provisions, for transfers between pathways, as well as for subsidisation, professional support services, and quality assurance. In effect South Africa, with its commitment by the state to a redress and equity agenda, has gone furthest in trying to develop such framework.

Nevertheless, in light of current macro-economic and political thinking, in which at best a social integrationist frame for approaching youth development tends to be acceptable, the odds against an egalitarian reform agenda are severe.

The pitfalls to ensuring effective follow-up where political promises have been made, are well-documented in the case of some international agendas – such as the one on environment and development.³⁰ But for as long as the tension between 'growth' and 'redistribution' remains part of the policy debates, there is space for strategic action involving a wide variety of stakeholder groups that can help to push for more radical forms of social inclusion of youth. ☉

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Adult Educators

A Learning and Knowledge Profession?

Can adult educators give the World Bank the knowledge from which it can learn to support adult basic education?

By John Oxenham

The main reason for my discussing this issue in this article is very likely the fact that during the past two years or so, I have taken part in producing four studies in adult basic education for the World Bank. One is a review of the documented outcomes of adult basic education with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, along with considerations of efficiency and costs.¹ The second is the preliminary stage of the BELOISYA project.² Third is a large evaluation of adult literacy programmes in Uganda, while the fourth, managed by the IIZ/DVV, examines the interactions of livelihoods with literacy instruction.³ However, I need to emphasise that I am not a spokesperson for the World Bank. I retired from its service more than two years ago and therefore cannot speak from the horse's mouth – although I hope that what I say does not come from the other end of the animal.

Let me stay with the World Bank view for a moment, for that institution's behaviour is said to influence decisions about funding adult education and I believe is indeed influenced by an issue that is both global and local. 'Global', because it affects adult basic education around the world; 'local' because its roots are in every learning group that is trying to combine literacy with some form of education.

Some people believe that the World Bank is either hostile or just indifferent to adult basic education, especially literacy programmes. They can give actual examples where its staff have opposed literacy projects. They can also quote its 1995 education strategy paper, which acknowledged that illiteracy was a major problem, but also said that, as the record of literacy programmes



Photo: Willem de Lange

getting things done and too little concerned with recording processes and outcomes. The UNESCO/UNDP evaluation was constrained to offer only hypotheses rather than conclusions.⁶ Whatever the reasons for this misfortune, adult basic education did not emerge clearly as a sound field for the investment of resources, particularly when there was strong competition for those same resources from other sectors of development.

UNESCO's experience should have challenged the adult education profession to be more careful about recording, organising and presenting the facts of subsequent experiences. Lamentably, it did not. UNESCO, SIDA, IIZ/DVV and other agencies have supported various researchers and practitioners in publishing carefully thought-out strategies and methods for observing and evaluating the processes and outcomes of adult basic education and literacy programmes, both qualitatively and quantitatively.⁷ However, too few practitioners have proved able to act on them.

Throughout the last 25 years, then, there have been repeated complaints about the difficulty of obtaining sound information on the effectiveness, effects and costs of literacy programmes. Programmes supported by the World Bank itself in Indonesia, Ghana and Senegal, all had components built in for monitoring and evaluation, yet have all produced much less than had been expected. Only a few months ago, in the hope of obtaining good original reports on combining livelihood and literacy instruction, I visited 15 agencies – bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental – in Europe and North

was not encouraging, the World Bank could not include adult literacy as part of its strategy.⁴ On the other hand, the World Bank has been lending governments money for literacy programmes since the mid-1970s, when UNESCO's World Experimental Literacy Programme came to an end. Currently, it is supporting literacy work in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal and Uganda.⁵ It has also been supporting ActionAid in expanding REFLECT. And, of course, it has organised the four studies I mentioned above. Yet, if both these observations are true, do they mean that the World Bank does not know its own mind?

The explanation for this apparent ambivalence in my view lies with adult educators, both researchers and practitioners.

As a profession, adult educators have failed to make adult basic education credible. The first big failure happened 25 years ago with the evaluation of UNESCO's World Experimental Literacy Programme. What was intended to be a scientific, carefully implemented and carefully observed set of experiments turned out to be another set of exercises where the experimenters were too busy

America, while colleagues in Germany, Guinea, Kenya, Senegal and Uganda did the same in their countries. In virtually all of them, poor record-keeping, evaluation and measurement were found.⁸ In South Africa, the monitoring reports of the Ikwelo project, published in late 2000 and early 2001, note how difficult it is to get even basic facts about Public Adult Learning Centres and their learners.⁹ At the same time, the mining companies in South Africa have for years run literacy classes for their miners. Yet I was not able to locate any studies that might be useful for education policy makers.

As a profession, adult educators have proven strong in ideology, eloquent in rhetoric and declarations and weak on facts and analysis – and therefore deficient in credibility. Despite continued complaints about being under-funded and neglected, the profession also continues not to provide an incontestable basis on which decisions can be roundly justified to allocate more and better resources to adult education and literacy programmes. This seems to be an issue that is global, arising from roots that are local.

If we could show governments the kinds of evidence that have

been marshalled in support of primary schooling, we might stand a better chance of better funding. What evidence do I have in mind? Let me sketch some examples. Studies of literacy have shown that schooling rather than literacy improves the organisation and clarity of people's thinking. Rate-of-return studies have shown that primary schooling is a profitable investment for both individuals and societies. Modernisation studies have shown that every year of primary schooling develops more 'modern' attitudes. Schooling studies have found that mothers with more schooling tend to support their own children's schooling more consistently and that schooled parents tend to see that their children are schooled even better. Health studies have found that schooled mothers tend to have fewer children and to maintain healthier families.

For each of these examples there are indeed corresponding studies in adult education.¹⁰ The problem is that they are few, tend to be relatively small and to suffer from methodological difficulties that undermine their credibility. They do not equip adult educators to advocate powerfully and convincingly for more and larger programmes of adult basic education. They do not equip UNESCO or the World Bank to press governments to give the same priority to adult basic education as they do to primary, secondary and tertiary schooling.

So here is an issue: is it possible to locally collect and amass the information that will equip adult educators and others to demonstrate globally that adult basic education is indeed an ingredient for developing sustainably and for accelerating the improvement of livelihoods, the reduction of poverty and the enhancement of the quality of people's lives?

I had better add that the outlook is not wholly bleak: before the end of this year, we are expecting two major studies from base-line studies on longer term outcomes, both from Nepal. One is from World Education on the "Women's Economic Empowerment and Literacy" (WEEL) programme, the other from PACT on the "Women's Empowerment Program/Nepal" (WEP/N).¹¹ They should expand our understanding of how to combine training in savings, credit and business management with literacy and numeracy, together with the vital access to credit.

Let us suppose that we do collect all that information, qualitative and quantitative. What might we expect it to illuminate?

Quite apart from substantiating the benefits of good adult basic education in expanded detail and letting us know what its various forms cost more precisely, I would expect it to clarify just what makes for effective adult basic education and to settle a number of



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issues. Let me list just three and begin with our central focus, the very poor adult learners, who are mostly women.

What combinations of motivation under what conditions tend to be most effective in attracting these very poor learners, keeping them in regular attendance, keeping them learning to their own satisfaction, ensuring that they complete and succeed at what they have undertaken, inspiring them to work at their own, their families' and communities' development? We know that some learners are happy just to learn how to read and write. Some want to be able to read the signs on buses and streets. Others want to read religious texts. Some want to be able to understand

and supervise the school work that their children bring home. Many want to improve their productivity and incomes. Some want to avoid being cheated in the markets. Despite all this knowledge, we have not quite mastered the art of combining its strands into curricula that really grip our learners.

The South African Ikwele project provides up to date examples: its monitoring reports for the year 2000 cite the closure and near closure of Public Adult Learning Centres because too few learners enrol and stay, while the average attendance at classes appears to be only 30%.¹² Why are learners not attracted to enrol? Once enrolled, why do they not attend regularly? Why do so many leave, that centres have to be closed?

Contrasting with the reported Ikwele experience, the recent IIZ/DVV-World Bank study suggested that training in livelihoods and real prospects of increasing incomes were strong attractors and motivators. In Kenya, for instance, classes in the same national programme, but in different areas, report widely differing attendance rates: only 20% where the instructors do not include income generating projects, around 80% where they do. Farmers' Field Schools, closely linking literacy instruction with actual production and management, also seem to retain their learners.¹³

Another contrast comes from Namibia. The statistics suggest that, even though instruction was not tied to livelihood training, enrolments, retention and attainments were much better than the World Bank's gloomy appraisal of adult basic education generally.¹⁴

Why then does Ikwele, with its emphasis on agriculture and enterprise, not enrol and hold its learners more consistently? If adult educators had been more successful in collecting and analysing the potential information from a myriad other projects around the world, we might not now have these apparent contrasts to explain. Possibly, the two projects in Nepal, WEEL and WEP/N, will offer some help.

Further, do we need to accept that, whatever the combination of motivations and however powerful, there will always be some irregular attendance and some rate of dropout? If so, what would be acceptable boundaries in arguing for public or private support? Would an average attendance of 75% of original enrolment be realistic to aim for and acceptable to the financiers? Would a predicted completion rate of 65% be similarly realistic and acceptable? Do we know enough about such rates to take realistic account of them in our planning and forecasting?

Of course, these quantitative indicators are not enough. We need more illumination on the long term effects of adult basic education programmes. Do learners – whether ‘successful’ or not in passing tests at the end of their courses – use and apply what they have learned and, if they do, how have they improved their lives or their incomes? Can we offer much better and more positive information than the IIEP studies in Kenya and Tanzania ten years ago and more, or the recent Uganda study?¹⁵ Again, perhaps the two programmes in Nepal will be adding to our understanding in a month or two.

The second issue concerns instructors and facilitators. Perhaps the most powerful factor in motivating learners to attend regularly and complete their courses is the person who helps them learn. A project in Turkey, as far back as 1973, showed that an effective instructor could overcome a dull curriculum, while a less effective instructor could lose learners, even with a really interesting curriculum.¹⁶ Are effective instructors born, or can they be trained? Does the secret of effectiveness lie in a combination of talent, training, support and reward?

If so, have we shown what that combination is? The 1999 Uganda study suggested that training, support and even monetary reward seemed to make little difference to outcomes. The instructors in the government’s programme had little training, almost no refresher training, very little support from their supervisors and no pay or honorarium at all. Yet their successful graduates did as well on all counts as the successful graduates of other programmes, where the instructors had good training, good support, regular refresher training, plus substantial monthly honoraria.¹⁷ Should we not know by now why this is so?

Furthermore, if we are interested in livelihoods and income generation, should we not be more certain about the different kinds of instructors we need to have? Is it realistic to think that we can enable a generalist literacy facilitator to help learners improve their livelihoods and generate higher incomes? Or should we rely on occupational and business specialists to look after those aspects of

adult basic education? The IIZ/DVV-World Bank study, “Strengthening Livelihoods with Literacy”, suggests that indeed two cadres of instructors are needed, one to improve livelihood skills and business management, the other to help people learn how to read, write and calculate and how to put those skills to good use.¹⁸

The third issue concerns teaching/learning methods. We still have not rigorously evaluated which methods are most effective, not just for helping people to learn how to read, write and calculate accurately, but for empowering them to take more control of their own development.

Back in 1955, William Gray was able to describe a number of teaching methods for reading and writing, but was not able to recommend one rather than another.¹⁹ Today, we seem not to have moved much further. As far as I have been able to discover, adult educators have not yet capitalised extensively on research which profiles the cognitive skills and tasks at which illiterates tend to manage less effectively than literates, so that the competition between methods remains a matter of claim and counter-claim and unresolved.

If that is true for the more restricted operations of reading, writing and calculating, it is even more the case for our more ambitious objectives, like empowerment and stimulating endogenous development. Is it perhaps the case that the question of methods is really secondary and not so important, simply because human beings can and will learn through almost any method, provided that they attach real importance to what has to be learned? Why have adult educators allowed this question to remain a question?

There are of course many other issues we could discuss. But the four main issues that have emerged require in-depth study and attention as a priority:

- Adult educators’ lack of credibility through the failure to produce facts, figures and adequate qualitative studies;
- The combinations of motivations that attract and keep poor adults learning;
- The kinds of instructors needed to ensure improved and usable skills in both livelihoods and literacy;
- The kinds of methods that support effective adult learning.

Let me end by dragging the World Bank back in again. It aspires to be a ‘learning and knowledge bank’, but can adult educators give it the knowledge from which it can learn to support adult basic education, not gingerly, but wholeheartedly, and even passionately? ☺

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Developmental issues

Environmental policy

Environmental management
must be made an
integral part of business
strategy in South Africa

By IW Ferreira and HR Lloyd

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One of the most heavily debated areas of environmental policy is the relationship between economic growth and environmental quality. South Africa is no exception in this regard. With its typical Third World problems of poverty, high unemployment, and a low skills base, the emphasis must be placed on the need for economic development. Moreover, being a capital-scarce country, South Africa needs to generate a higher return on investments by focusing on the industrial sector as a source of growth, with the possible trickling down of benefits to other strata in society. Such an outlook will have a greater influence on the both the quality and quantity of natural resources in the country.¹

It goes almost without saying nowadays that every developmental endeavour should be based on sustainable development. Business should gear itself towards attaining the national goal of long-term sustainable development. This should be based on the efficient and productive usage of all natural resources, treating the environment as a scarce resource and as an asset.

In the White Paper on Environmental Management Policy, the South African government defines the word 'environment' as referring to the conditions and influences in terms of which any individual or thing exists, lives and develops.² These conditions and influences include:

- The natural environment including renewable and non-renewable natural resources such as air, water, land and all forms of life;
- The social, political, cultural, economic, working and other factors that determine people's place in and influence on the environment;
- Natural and constructed spatial surroundings, including urban and rural landscapes and places of cultural significance, ecosystems and the qualities that contribute to their value.

Culture, economic considerations, social systems, politics and value systems determine the interaction between people and the environment, the use of natural resources, and the values and meanings that people attach to life forms, ecological systems, physical and cultural landscapes and places. People are part of the environment and are at the centre of concerns for its sustainability.

The purpose of the South African government's environmental policy is twofold:

- To inform the public of government's objectives and of how it intends to achieve its objectives;
- To inform government agencies and state organs about their environmental objectives and what they must do to achieve those objectives.³

In light of the above, this paper entertains a broader view on the relationship between development, growth and the environment. The aim is to show that development, growth and environmental quality need not be seen as mutually exclusive, but rather as complementing each other in the search for sustainable development.

Furthermore, this paper will examine the development and protection of the environment in South Africa in terms of existing legislation, as well as the economic impact of environmental

influences. The paper is structured in terms of the relationship between growth, development and the environment, issues pertaining to sustainable development, the state of natural resource economics and policy in South Africa, the environment as an asset and the design of environmental policy as well as environmental management as an integral part of business strategy in South Africa.

The relationship between growth, development and the environment

Chapman sees the following two questions as part of the great debate as to whether growth and development on the one hand and environmental quality on the other should be seen as mutually exclusive:

- Is world income increasing?
- Is environmental quality advanced or reduced by economic growth?⁴

In considering a growth-oriented approach to development, the maximising of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross National Product (GNP) should be seen as the ultimate objective. Based on this, Tietenberg asks whether economic growth has historically served as a vehicle for development. Moreover, has growth really made the average person better off? The conventional measures of growth could not be realistically used as indicators for development or welfare, although GNP is a useful indicator. However, a more accurate but not perfect indicator should be real consumption per capita. According to Tietenberg the conventional national accounts allow for natural resources to be depleted and shown as an income activity and not a decline in natural capital.⁵

To overcome this difficulty and account for such limitations, alternative measures of national accounting are presented. These include:

- Attempting to account for the amount by which welfare is reduced due to pollution;
- Eliminating durable goods purchases from the overall indicators and instead estimating the services they provide on an annual basis;
- Excluding consumer expenditure on items that do not raise welfare directly such as commuter costs;
- Including items not accounted for in the conventional accounts such as the value of leisure time, and household production;
- Including government services consumed as part of personal consumption expenditure.

On the basis of these adaptations, a new measure has been developed, namely economic welfare.⁶ Critics of this measure have argued that it works on averages and does not allow for the accurate measurement of spiritual and material well-being. Keeping this in mind, the United Nations' Human Development Index established that the link between per capita national income and human development is not automatic. It was subsequently realised that what is important is how the income is spent.⁷

According to Chapman, there is a link between growth (as measured by per capita income) and environmental degrada-

It goes almost without saying nowadays that every developmental endeavour should be based on sustainable development

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tion.⁸ According to the Rutton theory, environmental degradation declines as incomes increase, while according to the Environmental Kuznets curve environmental degradation may increase as income increases up to a certain point, where after it will decline sharply as income increases. It does, however, seem that as globalisation becomes more prevalent, neither of these two aforementioned theories hold ground. Chapman pertinently asks whether the Environmental Kuznets curve depends on the assumption that economic growth leads to environmental protection, or whether it exists because high environmental quality encourages economic growth.⁹

Sustainable Development

In the 1980s, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's 'World Conservation Strategy' made the first attempt to reconcile ecological and economic concerns and approaches. This Strategy introduced the concept 'sustainable development'. The concept was later refined in the World Commission on Environment and Development's report entitled *Our Common Future* (also commonly known as the Brundtland Report), which was submitted to the United Nations in 1987. It adopted the following definition: "Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".¹⁰

This definition contains two key concepts:

- the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given;
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

In South Africa's macro-economic policy, the term 'sustainable development' is used in relation to the growth potential of the economy. In a business context, the term may refer to the survival and growth of an enterprise. In addition, the term has a different nuance in the context of developed and developing nations. This policy emphasises that integrated and sustainable management of the environment, now and in the future, is the essential basis of sustainable development in all areas of human activity. Development policies, plans, programmes and activities in all sectors that do not address environmental concerns cannot claim to be sustainable.

In South Africa, environmental management policy is intended to ensure that the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) and the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) bring lasting benefits to all South Africans. It aims to achieve this by ensuring that environmental sustainability, health and safety are not compromised, and that natural and cultural resources are not endangered.

The policy focuses on win-win solutions to promote economic and environmental gains, particularly for previously disadvantaged communities. It seeks to integrate and address environmental concerns and environmental sustainability in decision-making processes, in the development of policies and programmes, in spatial development planning and in the management of resources and activities. It also aims to promote growth that does not degrade

the environment and to promote environmentally sustainable development.

The state of natural resource economics and policy in South Africa

Linkages with macro-economic policy

Lesser *et al* state that promoting macro-economic stability will provide a basis for environmental improvements. They argue that "policies that promote free trade can improve productivity, introduce new technologies, and increase economic efficiency by promoting comparative advantage".¹¹ In drafting the legislation to address environmental problems linked to macro-economic objectives such as price stability, employment creation and economic growth, it is realised that in spite of the fact that striving towards the attainment of these objectives may cause environmental damage, it may also be the answer to cure several other environmental ills.

This demonstrates the importance of linking environmental policy issues with macro-economic policy. Blignaut and de Wit emphasise the importance of incorporating natural resource and environmental economics in a macro-economic policy framework.¹² In South Africa, the macro-economic policy is outlined in the government's GEAR policy, which flows out of the

RDP. The key issues addressed in these macro-economic documents include:

- growing a competitive economy with sufficient job creation;
- the redistribution of income and opportunities in favour of the poor;
- the provision of sufficient and equitable essential social services;
- a safe and healthy environment.¹³

The White Paper on environmental management is also in line with the RDP and GEAR documents as macro-economic policy documents which state that South Africa will follow an integrated economic development strategy to meet the challenges of satisfying basic human needs. However, this cannot be done through the exploitation of crude natural resources.¹⁴

Integrated pollution and waste management

The much-needed economic growth for the upliftment and enhancement of the South African population, and in particular for the generation of jobs, can be achieved through more appropriate and efficient use of natural resources, within a framework of integrated pollution and waste management to protect both the people of South Africa and the environment without a continuous degradation of natural resources.

Pollution is the introduction into the environment of any substance or property (including radiation, heat, noise and light) that has or results in direct harmful effects to humanity or the environment, or that makes the environment less fit for its intended use.

Environment is defined as the biosphere in which people and other organisms live. It consists of renewable and non-renewable natural resources such as air, water (fresh and marine¹⁵), land and all forms of life, natural ecosystems and habitats, and ecosystems, habitats and spatial surroundings modified or constructed by people, including urbanised areas, agricultural and rural landscapes,

Much-needed economic growth for the upliftment of the South African population can be achieved through more appropriate and efficient use of natural resources

places of cultural significance and the qualities that contribute to their value.

Integrated pollution and waste management is a holistic and integrated system and process of management aimed at pollution prevention and minimisation at source, managing the impact of pollution and waste on the receiving environment and remediating damaged environments.

The need for an integrated pollution and waste management policy can be seen in the fact that South Africa is emerging from a period of unsustainable and inequitable development that not only threatened the livelihoods and degraded the quality of life of a large proportion of the population, but which was also responsible for environmental degradation. In order to move towards development that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, all sectors of society will have to undergo a number of important transitions.

Some of the most important transitions will include:

- A move to equitable sharing of development opportunities and benefits and an equitable provision of services. This priority transition must be aimed at significantly improving the situation of the impoverished majority.
- A move towards the efficient use of energy with the emphasis on the development of renewable and affordable resources.
- A shift towards accelerated industrial development using cleaner technologies and production methodologies.
- An institutional transition towards new structures at national, provincial and local government levels with a priority measure of integrating economic, equity and environmental imperatives in planning and decision-making within and between different ministries and between provinces.
- A governance transition towards greater public accountability and participation with the focus on initiating and maintaining sustainable development partnerships between government and civil society.
- A capacity-building transition towards greater national and regional self-reliance with the aim of accelerating development and promoting the use of local knowledge, technology and expertise.
- A move from reliance on foreign aid to economic self-sufficiency.

To effect the transformation to development that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, the government is seeking to meet the challenge of redefining the way in which pollution and waste will be managed in South Africa.

The vision of the government is to develop, implement and maintain an integrated pollution and waste management system which contributes to sustainable development and a measurable improvement in the quality of life through harnessing the energy and commitment of all South Africans for the effective prevention, minimisation and control of pollution and waste. The government policy on Integrated Pollution and Waste Management for South Africa thus represents a paradigm shift towards pollution prevention and waste minimisation, cross-media integration, the horizontal and vertical integration of departments and spheres of govern-

ment, and involvement of all sectors of society in pollution and waste management.¹⁶

Environmental management policy

Environmental management policy must be drawn up in terms of the constitutional setting, powers of the national and provincial spheres of government, national legislative powers, provincial legislative and executive powers, local government, accountability and participation, Bill of Rights, information and reporting, participation and appeals, monitoring and review, powers of the lead agent, integration and co-ordination, and international relations.

The governance of environmental management policy in South Africa is manifested in legislation, which is based on Schedules 4 and 5 to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.¹⁷ On the basis of the Constitution, an effective institutional and legislative framework for the management of environmental policy in South Africa has evolved. This has facilitated the creation of an effective, adequately resourced and harmonised institutional framework and an integrated legislative system, including the building of institutional capacity.

Some of the basic goals with the creation of an integrated legislative system include the need to conduct an audit and review of existing skills, capacities, functions and the deployment of resources in the national Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, and to realign them to optimise the implementation of national environmental policy and the National Environmental Strategy and Action Plans. It will also be necessary to investigate institutional options, including the establishment of new institutions where no appropriate structure exists, and to investigate ways of integrating and co-

ordinating all government functions affecting environmental management, and establish appropriate mechanisms and structures. The government will need to develop a co-ordinated approach to the integration of environmental concerns in the policy processes of all national departments, and to integrate and co-ordinate the development of subsidiary policies by the national Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism within the framework of the national policy on environmental management. This will also help to settle inter-governmental disputes.

Some other tasks which need to be done to meet the needs of an integrated legislative framework include:

- Providing a route for appeals against decisions in all spheres of government.
- Carrying out a legal audit and review to establish whether existing environmental legislation complies with the Constitution; how existing environmental legislation can be consolidated and streamlined; key legislative needs requiring immediate attention; and to use the results of this audit to develop relevant and effective environmental legislation, norms and standards.
- Conducting regular reviews of the relevance and appropriateness of all government policies, strategies, plans, programmes, legislation, norms and standards with an impact on the environment with a view to updating them in line with progress in environmental management.
- Effecting planned and measurable shifts in budgetary and resource allocations in all departments and spheres of gov-

South Africa is emerging from a period of inequitable development that degraded both the quality of life of much of the population and the environment

ernment. This must be directed to meet the need for people-driven, sustainable resource management and the redress of past injustices and inequalities.

- Allocating adequate government resources in all departments and other organs of state in all spheres to build capacity for effective implementation of government's national policy on environmental management.
- Identifying priorities, setting an agenda, and facilitating the relevant research and development.
- Expanding government capability to study environmental problems, evaluate trends and identify and analyse existing and emerging environmental issues by providing adequate financial and human resources.

Environmental policy design

The natural environment must be treated as an asset in order to recognise and protect its importance in economic production. Treating the environment as an asset will also allow economic transactors to see the productivity of the natural environment as the ability to support and enrich human life.¹⁸ Therefore the natural environment becomes an essential production factor or input into the production process. This being the case, its usage will have certain costs and benefits attached to it. The extent of usage should then be guided by the relationship that exists between the costs and benefits of using the environment as an input or asset. This in turn can act as a guide for the design of an effective environmental policy.

Environmental policy is usually last on the list of priorities, especially in developing countries, where macro-economic questions such as inflation, external stability, unemployment, and so on are deemed to be more important. But Field cautions that "it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that any programmes or policies that flow out of the rough and tumble of the environmental political process is likely to be of some help, or that they certainly will be better than nothing".¹⁹ Such a philosophy in the development of environmental policy could create more harm than good. The end result of an environmental policy should be to obtain the maximum improvement in environmental quality for the amount of resources spent on such an endeavour. Therefore the cost effectiveness of environmental policies is paramount where the costs and benefits of environmental improvement are properly balanced.

In South Africa, environmental policy is designed around seven strategic goals. These include:

1. effective institutional framework and legislation;
2. sustainable resource use and impact management;

3. holistic and integrated planning;
4. participation and partnership in environmental governance;
5. empowerment and environmental education;
6. information management;
7. international co-operation.²⁰

Environmental management as an integral part of business strategy

As the effects of globalisation are increasingly felt, the counter-movement of environmentalism is also becoming stronger. What is needed is to incorporate business needs with environmental requirements. The environmental management strategy has grown beyond the point of mere waste management, resulting in constraints on management and their ways of making decisions.

With the age of environmentalism, there is also a new business strategy which focuses on environmental effects and implications from the strategic level and the creation of new opportunities, right through to the development and production of new lines.²¹ Such environmentally conscious management could lead to the development of environmental leadership, a redefinition of the role of strategic management; the establishment of pro-active environmental audit programmes; the development of an environmental management performance index; encouraging environmentally driven innovation; and the establishment of environmental management and information systems (EMIS).

Conclusion

South African society and economy are characterised by a highly inequitable distribution of wealth and resources. A very small minority enjoy high living standards, with sophisticated infrastructure and services, while the basic needs of the majority are not adequately met. The gap between these First and Third World lifestyles and circumstances creates particular problems for the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development. Businesses range from large corporations with vast resources to micro-enterprises and sustenance workers, surviving from day to day. In this situation, environmental policy must address both the basic needs and survival strategies of the poor and the impacts of the industrial consumer economy.

This paper has examined the development and protection of the environment in South Africa in terms of existing legislation, as well as the economic impact of environmental influences. It is concluded that environmental management must become an integral part of the business strategy in South Africa, and indeed in all developing countries. ☉

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Participation and power

Villagers in rural Lesotho are developing learning skills by helping themselves.

By Gillian Attwood

The notion of participation is central to many progressive and radical approaches to research and development. According to Stringer, "Active participation is the key to feelings of ownership that motivate people to invest their time and energy to help shape the nature and quality of their community lives".¹

Participation is also central to REFLECT, an approach to adult literacy and development which fuses the theory of Paulo Freire and the practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). Learners are referred to as *participants*, and *Participatory Rural Appraisal* is a key tenet of the approach. PRA is seen as a means to enable participation, especially of the illiterate, poor and marginalised.

PRA practitioners... start from the lives of communities themselves... from the recognition that poor communities have a wealth of local technical and social knowledge. ...What is needed are techniques to enable non-literate people to articulate their knowledge – as building on this knowledge and the reality of the poor must be the starting point of any effective development programme.²

Participatory approaches do offer possibilities for real ownership of development processes. And increasingly, such approaches are being integrated into learning pedagogies, where learning and the active construction of knowledge by the learners is made explicit.³

McTaggart however problematises the notion of participation, drawing attention to the confusion that often exists between 'participation' and 'involvement'. He defines 'involvement' as implication, and argues that participation is much more. He argues that if people are merely involved in the research, they do not really own

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the research theory and practice, and for this reason, they do not take responsibility for the pro-

duction of knowledge. To him, participation "means ownership, that is, responsible agency in the production of knowledge and improvement of practice".⁴

While this is theoretically appealing, the question of how this translates into practice remains. How easy is it for people to 'participate in the production of knowledge', especially in rural areas where people have been marginalised from resources and situated outside of dominant hegemonic discourses? Which kinds of knowledge are constructed through what kinds of participation? To what extent do these 'count'? What kinds of assumptions and demands underlie the notion of 'active participation'? And how can an approach like REFLECT facilitate participation and the production of knowledge?

This paper attempts to speak to these questions, drawing on experiences from a REFLECT project in a rural area of Lesotho.

Power and participation: A theoretical framework

The starting point for constructing a theoretical framework that will provide some insight into the concepts concerned, is that participation cannot be separated out from power. Power is a fundamental dynamic. It is implicit in all social relations, including participatory social relations. Wherever people are, power is.

[P]ower always unfolds in relation to local sites and subjects, and ...participants in local sites are complicit and necessary for the playing out of power/knowledge relations.⁵

Since power and participation are so interrelated, it is important to attend to our assumptions about and understandings of power. Street has identified two views of power that are useful in this context.⁶

The first view suggests that power may be seen as a quantity, something that can be acquired or possessed, given to or taken away from a person. Slogans such as 'Knowledge is power', and

REFLECT can be used to promote learning and development according to local needs. Circles meet twice weekly to engage in this process.

These two contexts are however integrally linked. Twenty members of the co-operative have been trained as REFLECT facilitators who, as well as working in the co-op, also facilitate village learning circles in the wider community. The REFLECT approach frames what happens within both these contexts. It provides participants with a structured participatory process for taking up issues and difficulties they experience.

The co-operative context provides a space for members to practise, experiment with and develop the REFLECT approach in a meaningful way that builds learning skills and helps them to manage their business. This context simultaneously acts as a 'hot-house' for growing facilitators who have a working understanding and meaningful experience of not only how REFLECT works, but also how it can be applied. This experience is shared with the wider community when facilitators meet the participants in the village learning circles twice weekly.

Three examples have been selected from the contexts described above to illustrate how the REFLECT process works in practice and how it has assisted participants to create opportunities for participation in a critical reflective process.

The first example is taken from the village learning circle context, and serves primarily to provide the reader with a description and practical illustration of how the REFLECT process unfolds. Examples two and three are taken from the context of the co-operative, and show how participants have started to find alternative ways to express power.

Example one: Fixing the water pipe

Photos one to four show participants in a village learning circle using the REFLECT process to help them solve a water-related problem in the community.

The REFLECT process usually moves through a cycle whereby participants start by identifying a problem and then moving into discussion and analysis of that problem using one or more of the PRA tools (in this case a map). Participants then progress towards action to resolve the problem. Literacy and numeracy are built into the process at any stage where these skills are needed.

Photo one shows participants gathered around the map that they have constructed to assist them to discuss and think through



Photo one: PRA map drawn by members of the Makhetheng village learning circle

Photo two: Digging up the pipe at a point where it might be blocked

Photo three: Digging up the pipe to find that this was not where it was blocked.

Photo four: Participants discover the problem point – the tank at the primary school.

water issues in the village. This village has been without water for eighteen months, a situation which has severely hampered development in the village as considerable time and effort has been spent collecting water for households and gardens, rather than undertaking other work.

The map (a literacy event in itself) traces the water pipe system through the villages in the area, and participants have marked out where the taps work and don't work. During discussion, members of the circle considered possible reasons for this, and decided that there must be a blockage in the main pipe as villages that were higher up did have water. After further deliberation, potential blockage points were identified and marked on the map.

Photos two and three show members of the circle taking action to address the water problem. They decided to dig up the pipe at the marked points to find the blockage. After several attempts to find the problem point, the blockage was finally traced to the tank at the primary school.

Photo four shows participants cleaning the tank and clearing the pipes at the primary school.

The result of the work of the members of the learning circle was that the problem appeared to be resolved. Water once again flowed from the tap in the village and the tap at the school as well as taps in the villages lower down. As it turned out, however, this solution was only temporary. The water dried up again not long after the tank and pipes had been cleaned out, suggesting that the problem was more complex than a blockage.

The group then planned to write to Rural Water Supply, the government department concerned with water, to request help. Since not all of the circle participants were able to read and write, the task of writing a letter provided an opportunity for participants to develop and exercise literacy skills relevant to resolving the situation.

While this example serves more to illustrate how the REFLECT process works, it also shows how characteristic power relations may be shifted when people engage with issues affecting their lives. Prior to the learning circle undertaking this project, the village had been passively waiting (for 18

months!) for Rural Water Supply to come and fix the problem. Even though the actions of the group did not lead to a permanent solution, members nevertheless took on the problem and in so doing found a way to participate in exercising power over that problem. The act of writing to the Rural Water Supply was a further effort to engage in action that moved a problem towards solu-

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tion. It also provided an opportunity for building literacy skills amongst members of the village, and improving practice.

REFLECT helps to create a space for different forms of participation as problems are identified, discussed, analysed and acted upon in some way. It provides people with a structured process to think through issues, and in so doing creates a more critical climate. The examples below are taken from the context of the income-generation co-operative. They focus less explicitly on the REFLECT process, and more closely on how power relations have been challenged in a space where a 'critical climate' has been growing over the course of the last year.

Example two: The man in the cat hat embroidering a horse

The man in the photograph below is a facilitator of a village learning circle such as the one described above. He is also a member of the income generation co-operative. He joined the embroidery section of the craft income generation project, essentially a women's project, because he hoped that his participation in the embroidery project would lead to better income generation opportunities, and because he wanted to learn to embroider.

This image shows him learning to embroider a cushion cover during a skills training workshop.

Lebitla's decision to join this embroidery project, rather than the (men's) carpentry project, broke several boundaries and posed a challenge to accepted social and cultural practices in this rural con-

text. By taking on embroidery, he began a process of shifting the power relations that underscore gender divisions in the community, negotiating a new entry point for himself as a man. Through his actions, Lebitla was able to experience himself as the locus of power, and he was able to enter into dialogue about alternative possibilities for himself as a man. In this way, he has shown that power is in our immediate personal and social relations – not only in institutional formations.

I believe that the REFLECT process of identifying, discussing and analysing problems has contributed towards developing a space where alternatives can be explored as people reflect critically on their actions. Indeed, there was a great deal of reflection and debate about whether men should join the women's (embroidery) project, and whether women should join the men's (carpentry) project.

Not long after Lebitla joined the embroidery project, another man crossed over from the carpentry project to join the sewing project which produces dolls to sell to tourists. He is still working in the doll project. One of the women also crossed the gender line to help the men construct an outhouse, although this was a more temporary arrangement. Nevertheless, in all of these examples, assumptions were challenged, power was negotiated and new possibilities for participation were created.

Example three: In search of a hat weaver and a coffin maker

At the beginning of this paper, I raised the question of how people can become active participants in the construction of knowledge, especially in areas which are geographically and politically marginalised. I would like to share two instances of how this has started to happen in Malealea.

When we first established this project, I played a key role in networking with the world outside of the Malealea community to find people who would be able to assist the community with education and skills training that they felt were appropriate. A ten day training in REFLECT formed part of that initial training. I also invited people to run skills training workshops such as the embroidery workshop and a carpentry skills training workshop. People were then supported to get on with making the products and building the co-operative.

A year later, the project has developed in a number of ways. A particularly significant development has been the decision by participants to seek out people in their own community who can assist them to make new products. The craft project decided they wanted to do more than embroider cushion covers and make dolls. They wanted to make traditional Basotho hats.

However, they did not have the skills needed. Rather than appealing to me, one of the participants was charged with the responsibility of finding the right person to train them based on the kind of hats that the craft makers wanted to produce. A woman in a village higher up in the mountains where such skills are still practised, was asked to come and train the members of the handicraft team. The craft project are now making hats and selling them to the tourists and the wider community.

A similar development happened in the carpentry project where members were experiencing difficulties selling the products they had been producing. People were just not buying what they were making. In the process of discussing and analysing why this was the case, the carpen-



Ntate Lebitla learning to embroider.



ters identified a gap in the market – there was no-one in the area making coffins. Based on this, one of the men from the carpentry project walked a full day to secure the help of a man in the next valley who is well known for his coffin-making skills. Participants organised the training themselves and are now making coffins.

I believe that these two examples provide evidence of participants becoming active in the construction of knowledge. They decided what they would like to learn and how best to acquire that knowledge. Also interesting is that local knowledge and skills were valued enough to be sought from within the wider community. Participants did not have the perception that skills had to come from 'the town', or elsewhere outside the country. Knowledge was seen as within reach, rather than out of reach.

I suggest that this marks a significant turning point in people becoming knowledge constructors, able to build knowledge, as opposed to more passive knowledge consumers, who perceive knowledge as something out there, that needs to be gone out and got.

Knowledge, like power, has many forms and can be perceived as something to be negotiated and transformed locally, rather than something out there to be seized by those with the might.

What has been the role of REFLECT within the development of the project and its members? REFLECT provided participants with a tool to open up the debates about product and skills development, to get people asking questions, and moving towards action that could address the needs identified. In this case, the action

Members of the village's carpentry project making coffins.

taken was to go out into the community and secure the assistance required in the form of local knowledge. I believe these examples show how people are using the REFLECT process to make learning happen, on their own terms and in their own ways. Despite being situated outside of so-called dominant hegemonic discourses, people have taken responsibility for constructing knowledge using their reality as a starting point.

In going beyond their own immediate community, they have also extended their network of contacts, and in so doing have taken steps to become fuller participants in what Wenger refers to as a 'community of practice'.¹¹ Possibilities for participation are opening up at the level at which people live and work.

They have taken control of their own learning process, and begun to exercise power at a level which immediately affects their lives. As the community of practice grows, so opportunities for the participation of others are extended, and possibilities for transforming social and personal practices open up.

Conclusion

If we are committed to sustainable development, then we need to seriously consider how people themselves participate in the development process, what participation looks like, and how we as adult educators can best foster that participation. I have argued that to do this, we need to change the way we view power. We need to see it as a process which people can enter into from any number of positions – from a very grassroots level position as well as a policy level position.

I believe that REFLECT offers important possibilities for equipping people at a grassroots level with a means to participate as they engage in a structured participatory learning process.

Our experience of REFLECT in Lesotho seems to hold out hope that through engaging in this process, people can begin to grow a critical climate and create a democratic space in which they can identify their learning needs, and take an active part in the construction of knowledge. In this way, possibilities for participation begin to open up and people can insert themselves into the dialogue of power ☉

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Financing rural development in **Lesotho**

Can micro-finance be effective in alleviating poverty? We look at the case of the Lesotho Fund for Community Development

By Vusi Mashinini

In February 2001, the government of Lesotho officially launched the Lesotho Fund for Community Development (LFCD) as the formal social fund, and eventually to become a micro-credit institution, entrusted with the task of community rural development finance in Lesotho. This paper takes stock of the activities of the LFCD nation-wide, and interrogates the performance of the institution to date.

Financing rural development: A conceptual overview

Contemporary debates on financing rural development for poverty alleviation in the Third World hinge around the (in)efficiency of the use of either corporate finance, social funds, micro-finance or credit, and informal money lending.¹

This paper has a particular interest in the use of micro-finance or credit for poverty alleviation among the rural poor, and that of modified government finance through social funds.

Micro-credit institutions are defined as financial institutions that operate as intermediaries between formal commercial banks, development banks and money-lenders to provide small loans to the poor.² Micro-credit institutions receive financial support and subsidies from other sources, and channel these finances on to the intended beneficiaries, including target groups such as poor farmers, women, and special community projects.

Micro-credit institutions make finances available to the poor or marginalised groups in the rural areas who would otherwise fail to qualify for credit from formal agricultural banks due to their lack of sufficient collateral. Micro-credit institutions are characterised by small-scale enterprise programmes or projects, target-group lending, lower interest rates, poverty alleviation as the prime objective, and full or partial support from government and/or non-governmental organisations. Sometimes they operate in association with community-based organisations (CBOs).

Micro-credit institutions can be recommended for financing rural development in the Third World on many grounds. Firstly, their preference for financing small to medium-scale projects and programmes ensures that small-scale farmers and rural enterprises are assured of access to credit. Secondly, their focus on target groups such as the poor and women fosters the inclusion of these groups in the development process.

Thirdly, their focus on group lending improves access by these marginalised groups to credit through group or social collateral. Fourthly, the system of social collateral promotes good monitoring of the use and repayment of the group loans, and therefore reduces the probability of lenders defaulting on their payments. Fifthly, their lower interest rate charges make them the "people's credit institutions", by rescuing them from the cut-throat interest rates charged by money lenders. Lastly, their emphasis on community development projects promotes employment, income and poverty alleviation within communities.³



From Willem de Lange

In addition to this, the heavy reliance of micro-credit institutions on credit accessed from outside sources raises the issue of the sustainability of their socio-economic impact in the absence of an external financial primer. This is even more the case in the present context of austerity measures linked to Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and the pressures of globalisation.⁵ All of these problematic issues need to be taken into consideration in the promotion and assessment of the impact of micro-credit institutions and rural development finance in the Third World, especially in Africa today.⁶

Closely related to, but operationally different from, the micro-credit institutions are social fund institutions. Social fund institutions are specially established autonomous bodies which receive funds from government and/or donors, and disburse these funds to communities to finance community development projects. It is the community as a whole which is funded in such a case, and not an organised group as with the micro-credit institutions. Moreover, social fund institutions do not charge interest on funds lent out to communities. Instead, the communities are assisted through direct payment for participation in community development work, or they are expected to derive this payment from the proceeds or income-generating projects financed by the social fund. The overall objective is to promote poverty alleviation within the communities.

Social fund institutions might also be recommended on many grounds. Firstly, they focus finance on the communities,

and thus promote equitable access to the financial resources by all community members. Secondly, by promoting community as against group development, social fund institutions ensure social equity in terms of access to and utilisation of the products of community development, such as infrastructure. Thirdly, owing to their special autonomous nature, social fund institutions minimise the financial management inefficiencies incurred in direct government finance, either through line ministries or development banks.

Despite these advantages, social fund institutions also face some problems. Firstly, their dependence on external funding raises doubts as to their local financial sustainability when donor funding stops. Secondly, the use of government-supplied capital primers makes social fund institutions more susceptible to government influence, which serves to render their otherwise declared autonomy dysfunctional. Thirdly, funding the community as a whole does raise some difficulties, such as conflict within communities instead of consensus, due to the heterogeneity of community members. Factors such as age, ethnicity, religion, gender and politics promote the unequal distribution of funds and the exclusion or marginalisation of some groups within the funded communities. Fourthly, in the long-term, the reliance of social fund institutions on interest-free, externally sourced finance also raises

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questions about their sustainability when the external sources of funding stop, due to their lack of internal financial viability.

Financing rural development in Lesotho

Since independence in 1966, the Kingdom of Lesotho has sought to promote rural economic growth, equity and social justice, by financing the deployment of many poverty alleviation strategies.

In the case of crop production, finance was provided to farmers through foreign-sponsored agricultural area-based projects. However, the impact of these projects and their financing was limited to those areas and communities directly affected by the projects, while the rest of the communities were expected to benefit from trickle-down and demonstration effects.⁷ Since those expected trickle-down effects never took place, the communities without projects effectively experience exclusion from the project finance.⁸

The second source of finance for agricultural production came from the Lesotho Agriculture Development Bank (LADB), which was started by the government in 1976 to provide formal credit to farmers.⁹ The LADB required collateral for lending, and for this reason it became inaccessible to small and poor farmers.¹⁰ Rather, the LADB was monopolised by the rich farmers, despite the fact that the bulk of the finance was sourced from compulsory deferred pay exacted from migrant mine workers in South Africa by the government. These very mine workers constituted a large part of the small farmers who failed to secure credit from the LADB and thus were forced to use their own personal sources of finance in their farming.¹¹ The LADB eventually collapsed in 1998 due to financial mismanagement and corruption.¹² Some credit for farmers was still available from the Lesotho Corporative Credit Union (LCCU). However, politicisation of its operations made the union ineffective.

Farmers who failed to access project finance from the LADB or elsewhere mostly relied on their own personal savings, remittances from migrant workers in South Africa, or informal credit from friends, relatives or money-lenders.¹³

With regard to non-farm income-generating activities for poverty alleviation, finance came from community development projects and donors, non-government organisations and government-sponsored projects within the communities, using self-help and work-for-cash programmes in land reclamation and road construction programmes, as well as rural small-scale enterprises such as cottage industries.¹⁴

By and large, the politicisation of access to agriculture and non-agriculture projects and programmes sponsored under the aegis of the government, promoted the marginalisation and exclusion of people who belonged to opposition parties.¹⁵ Another source of finance for non-farm income-generation projects and employment for poverty alleviation came (and still does) from voluntary group lending schemes and income-generating groups such as stokvels and income-sharing, especially by women's groups.¹⁶

Since the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) was launched in the late 1980s until the year 2000, most rural development finance for non-farm income-generation and poverty alleviation came from the Lesotho Highlands Water Revenue Fund (LHWRF), established in 1992 to manage the Lesotho royalties from South Africa since the construction phase of the LHWP. The

secrecy and lack of transparency surrounding the data pertaining to actual amounts paid out by the LHWRF in Lesotho makes it difficult to state the exact annual amounts involved, except to generalise that these are between R654 000 and R215 000.¹⁷

The LHWRF emphasised community participation in poverty alleviation programmes and promoted road rehabilitation, land reclamation and other physical community development projects. Community members within constituencies rotated in engagement in employment on a monthly basis in the LHWRF-funded projects, which paid an average of R300 per month per person.¹⁸ The LHWRF encountered numerous problems which resulted in the exclusion of some communities and community members from the benefits accorded by its finance for poverty alleviation. The LHWRF funds were also given to Members of Parliament by the ruling party for their constituencies. At constituency level, the MPs preferred to use their party constituency committees to administer the recruitments and payments, instead of the normal channel of Village Development Councils, which otherwise administer all development activities at village level. This hindered community participation in decision-making and opened a wide avenue for politicisation of access to LHWRF funding, and corruption became rife in the recruitment and payment procedures.¹⁹ Some monies even disappeared in the hands of some MPs.²⁰

Moreover, the communities failed to shoulder the responsibility and accountability for managing the activities initiated through the LHWRF. Thus, the activities deteriorated in quality as soon as the funding passed on to other communities. In the end, the ultimate objective of poverty alleviation through participatory sustainable

community development was not met. Moeti concluded that:

From the quality of these projects, work and reports related to financial mismanagement in their running, "fato-fato" (LHWRF poverty alleviation projects) are a clear indication of the lack of proper mechanisms to distribute the inflow of money generated by the LHWRF.²¹

The LHWRF and its community-based poverty alleviation projects were officially suspended in 1997 due to mismanagement, and the World Bank was invited to assess the LHWRF and suggest a more workable model of funding rural development for sustainable poverty alleviation in Lesotho through the royalties from the LHWP. The result of this exercise led to the birth of the Lesotho Fund for Community Development.²²

Lesotho Fund for Community Development

The Lesotho Fund for Community Development (LFCD) was gazetted through the Lesotho Fund for Community Development Regulations of 1999 and came into operation through the Lesotho Government Gazette Extraordinary of 10 March 1999. The LFCD is a social fund which is eventually intended to become a micro-credit institution as well.

The main objective of the LFCD is to promote people-centred and participatory community development through the effective management of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project royalties, for the promotion of poverty alleviation and human development in Lesotho. The specific objectives are:

The (bank) was monopolised by the rich farmers, despite the fact that the bulk of the finance was sourced from compulsory deferred pay exacted from migrant mine workers in South Africa by the government



- Poverty reduction in Lesotho, with specific emphasis on poverty-stricken areas and communities;
- The provision of support to local initiatives for sustainable employment creation and income generation;
- The improvement and protection of the environment and natural resources base of the country;
- The promotion of community empowerment through the improvement of basic services, managed and sustained by the communities.⁴⁷

To facilitate its operations, the LFCD provides funding to community-based projects and group-based projects. The former type of projects are proposed by the community at large and expected to benefit all community members participating. These projects are predominantly those which involve labour-intensive community infrastructure development, such as the building of roads, schools, water supply and clinics, as well as conservation. Depending on the level of technical complexity, community development projects may be either implemented by the communities themselves through their project implementation committees, or by the non-governmental organisations in the area, by field operators (if government ministries or local government structures. These projects

receive 10-15% of the LFCD district annual budget and are financed to a ceiling of R300 000 per project.

Group-based development projects are envisaged for financing under the hoped-for micro-credit component, which would provide funding for income generation within agriculture and small-scale enterprises such as dairy farming, brick-making, poultry farming, stone-cutting and chipping, metal-work and so on. Owing to a lack of competence in the LFCD in micro-credit business management, financing group-based income-generation projects has been held back until an independent institution with this competence can be identified and entrusted with the micro-credit management responsibility on behalf of the LFCD.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, in July 2001, some top management officials of the LFCD spent more than two weeks on a study tour of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh to familiarise themselves with the operations of a successful micro-credit institution.

The following criteria are used to screen projects submitted by communities for qualification for funding. The projects must:

- Meet the basic needs of the communities;
- Be aimed at poverty alleviation;
- Target the poor members of the communities and areas within the districts;

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- Comply with sector, district and national policies and the technical standards set by the Ministry concerned;
- Promote community participation and empowerment;
- Prove to be sustainable both environmentally and financially;
- Demonstrate community commitment through the up-front payment of 10% of the project costs by the community.

The administrative and functional structure of the LFCD is four-tiered.²⁶ The top-most tier is composed of the governing Board, which initially consisted of four ministers, but has been amended to comprise six ministers from the Ministries of Development Planning, Public Works and Transport, Local Government, Natural Resources, Agriculture Co-operatives and Land Reclamation, Environment, Gender and Youth Affairs.²⁷ It also includes two representatives of local communities, and three members from NGOs, the private sector and parastatal organisations. Therefore, the Government Board has eleven members. The functions of the Governing Board are to:

- Establish policies and strategies necessary for the efficient management and functioning of the LFCD to achieve its prime objectives;
- Approve projects to be funded by the LFCD;
- Appoint top and middle-level personnel of the LFCD;
- Scrutinise and approve personnel management policies and contracts.

The members of the Governing Board, other than ministers, have a renewable three-year term of office. The Governing Board is responsible to the Prime Minister on behalf of the nation.²⁸

The second tier consists of the Management Unit composed of the Executive Director and senior staff of the LFCD headquarters at central level in Maseru. The main functions of the Management Unit are the effective day to day management of the LFCD, including preparing effective policies and strategies for approval by the LFCD Board, screening, recommending, monitoring and evaluating LFCD funded projects nation-wide, and co-ordinating the activities of the LFCD and other stakeholders.²⁹

The third tier is composed of the LFCD District Management Offices. This tier comprises LFCD district officers who assist the communities and oversee the planning, implementation and evaluation of LFCD-funded projects at district level. Butha-Butha, Leribe and Berea are served by one regional office based at Hlotse in Leribe, while Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek share a regional office in Mohale's Hoek. The rest of the districts have their own offices – a total of five district offices and two regional offices, at present. These offices are meant to facilitate decentralised LFCD service delivery to the communities nation-wide. The LFCD district and regional officers work in partnership with the District Development Councils, District Secretaries and District Management Teams, composed of heads of line ministries, to



Basotho Cannery is an asparagus canning company which used to export to the European Union. Since being privatised, it regularly closes down and lays off workers.

assist the communities to identify, prioritise and appraise their own projects for LFCD funding.³⁰

The fourth tier consists of the local community level, where the communities identify and prioritise their projects for submission to the LFCD for funding. The communities are assisted in this task by chiefs Village Development Councils and Area Teams. The Area Teams consist of extension agents of line ministries in the field and are crucial in the provision of technical assistance to the communities in needs assessment, project formulation and selection. The communities elect their own community projects sub-committee to oversee the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of community projects to be submitted to, and funded by, the LFCD.³¹

The planning process and methodology embraced by the LFCD is meant to be bottom-up and participatory. It starts with awareness creation among the communities by the LFCD district or regional officers, in partnership with the Area Teams, Village Development Councils and chiefs at community level. This is followed by community needs assessment, project formulation, selection and submission to the LFCD District Office.

The LFCD District Office appraises and selects community projects suitable for LFCD funding and recommends them to the LFCD Management Unit, which in turn appraises, prioritises and recommends the projects to the LFCD Governing Board for final approval for funding. The disbursement of funds for approved community projects is given out in four tranches of 40%, 20%, 25% and 20% to the account of the Community Project Sub-Committee.³²

The LFCD funds are, at present, sourced from the government of Lesotho in the form of revenue from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, and from the World Bank. The capital budget of the LFCD for the financial year 2001-2002 stood at R32 million, and of this, R30 million was sourced from the government, and R2 million from the World Bank.³³

The LFCD promotes community participation and poverty alleviation through the encouragement of communities to practise rotational shifts among community members to ensure equitable access to the payment of R500 per month per participant, which is the minimum wage established by the LFCD.³⁴

In the case of capacity building and community empowerment, the LFCD provides training and information dissemination to the Management Unit, the District-level Offices and the local communities. The funded communities are given training on needs assessment, project identification, formulation, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation by the Area Teams, District Management Teams and LFCD District Officers.³⁵

LFCD Performance and Assessment

Discussions with some key personnel in the Management Unit and interviews with District Officers of the LFCD revealed that there were five road projects undertaken by the Department of Rural Roads because they were technically complex, and 21 land reclamation projects implemented by communities nationwide. Each of the districts had at least one project.

However, a number of issues need to be taken into consideration to facilitate the success of the LFCD in future. First, in the area of LFCD institutional structure, key posts in the Management Unit have been filled and the LFCD is on track. However, the Technical Service Department initially earmarked to carry out the technical implementation of projects by the LFCD has not been staffed as part of an effort to create a "lean, but mean" LFCD structure. The absence of the Technical Service Department has resulted in the

total reliance of the LFCD on government ministries for technical support in monitoring the implementation of technically complex community projects. This has resulted in the effective re-introduction of ministerial and bureaucratic delays, red tape and inefficiency in the implementation of projects, which the formation of the LFCD was meant to solve in the first place. This has hampered participatory community development as well. It is essential that the LFCD be enabled to staff the Technical Service Department in order to achieve the autonomy necessary for the effective monitoring of the implementation of its funded projects.

Secondly, most of the positions of membership on the Governing Board have been filled and the Board is functional. However, the Lesotho Fund for Community Development (Amendment) Regulations introduced two additional ministers to the Board in 2000, resulting in a total of six ministers as opposed to five civil representatives, instead of the initial ratio of four to five. It is doubtful whether the intention of this amendment by government was not to tip the balance of the ratio in its favour, with an eye to voting on key policy issues, thereby guaranteeing a monopoly of power and control of the LFCD.

Moreover, this ratio effectively nullifies the declaration of the LFCD as an autonomous body corporate. Instead, it portrays the LFCD as a government project, and more so because the LFCD is directly responsible to the Prime Minister. In addition, the Governing Board uses the constituencies, which are political spatial units, as the basis of prioritisation of the projects to be funded.

Thirdly, decentralisation of the LFCD to the districts has been achieved through the creation of two regional offices and five-dis-

trict offices. These offices have promoted better access to LFCD services by the communities and improved the management of LFCD-funded projects by the LFCD Management Unit and the communities. However, concern continues to be expressed about the negative impact created by the conflict between chiefs and Village Development Councils over authority and power to control community development projects.

The same concern has been expressed with regard to the lack of consensus within the Area Teams and District Management Teams regarding prioritisation of projects to be recommended for funding. Line Ministries invariably prefer projects which would fall under their jurisdiction at implementation to be given priority. Thus, inter-ministerial conflicts also arise at local and district levels. The implantation of horizontal integration within the Area Teams and District Management Teams is necessary for effective partnerships in the LFCD decentralisation effort.

Sometimes government ministries conflict with non-governmental organisations over the priorities set by communities because the NGOs are also earmarked for use by the LFCD in the implementation of some of the technically complex LFCD-funded community projects. These conflicts hinder effective community participation in the needs assessment, project identification, planning and selection, and needs to be curbed.

Fourthly, the LFCD regards the communities as collective entities with similar needs and aspirations on human development. The Kingdom of Lesotho defines the community as "a group of households with a common basic need that will be able to identify a need and express it as a project".³⁶ The survey on which this paper

is based revealed that while many projects had been identified and submitted by the communities, there was often a lack of consensus within the communities on the priorities due to the heterogeneity of their members.

This lack of consensus at times hindered the effective implementation of the technically simple projects by the communities themselves. In future, heterogeneity and conflict within the communities has to be recognised by the LFCD Management Unit, and conflict resolution strategies

should be made part and parcel of the community training and empowerment package. Moreover, moves to activate the micro-credit component necessary to implement interest group based projects need to be speeded up.

In addition, efforts by the LFCD to promote community participation and empowerment are being frustrated by the absence of legal recognition of the existing Village Development Councils, because the re-election of new office bearers was officially suspended after the 1998 national political conflict, and are only due after the indefinitely postponed national elections. Therefore, effectively, the communities are currently without de jure Village Development Councils. This problem is compounded by the delay in the implementation of the Local Government Act of 1997, which is awaiting the national re-elections as well.

The LFCD has fostered institutional networking and partnerships with other stakeholders, especially non-governmental organisations, through the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (LCN) for the implementation of some of the technically complex projects in the communities funded by the LFCD. This endeavour is, however, frustrated by conflicts among the

Sometimes government conflicts with non-governmental organisations over the priorities set by communities ... these conflicts hinder effective community participation

NGOs themselves, in competition for who of them will implement which LFCD-funded projects. Efforts by the LFCD to engage the LCN and ask for intervention and regulation of the NGOs' participation have proved fruitless. The LFCD has to engage the NGOs in constructive conflict resolution dialogue, in order for the partnership to be effective. Moreover, the LFCD needs to explore the alternatives, and engage community-based organisations and perhaps the private sector as well, in the implementation of projects.

Another problem relates to the LFCD using a financial inducement of R500 per month per person to foster participation and create a financial base for poverty alleviation by participant households. The survey revealed that, so far, community participation has been good.

However, in terms of sustainability, the question remains whether it is induced or voluntary participation that is more likely to promote poverty alleviation on a sustainable basis. Experience from the predecessor of the LFCD, the LHWRP, shows that participation declined with a decline in payment, and that community development projects meant for long-term poverty alleviation collapsed for want of maintenance by the communities.

While the LFCD attempts to ensure preliminary community commitment to the project by demanding a 10% upfront payment, it must seek ways to ensure that this initial commitment is maintained throughout and after project implementation.

Lastly, the heavy reliance on government-controlled funding by the LFCD poses the likelihood of dependence on and control by the government. It is said that "those who pay the piper call the tune", and this has continued to raise fears of possible politicisation of the LFCD and access to its funding by the government of the day.

Dependence on World Bank funding also raises the issue of the LFCD being donor-driven. For instance, the reluctance to finance and man the Technical Service Department as a way of creating a lean and mean structure is reminiscent of structural adjustment policies imposed by the World Bank, in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund, upon Lesotho in 1988. Therefore,

how well can the LFCD stand clear of the influences of the SAPs when it relies on World Bank financial priming?

Eventually, in order to achieve sustainability, the LFCD will have to moderate its orientation as a social fund and seek sustainable financial self-reliance for community poverty alleviation programmes in Lesotho.

The LHWP royalties are scheduled to end within the construction phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, and World Bank funding will surely not continue indefinitely. The LFCD thus needs to explore some means of internal financial viability for sustainable rural poverty alleviation in Lesotho.

Conclusion

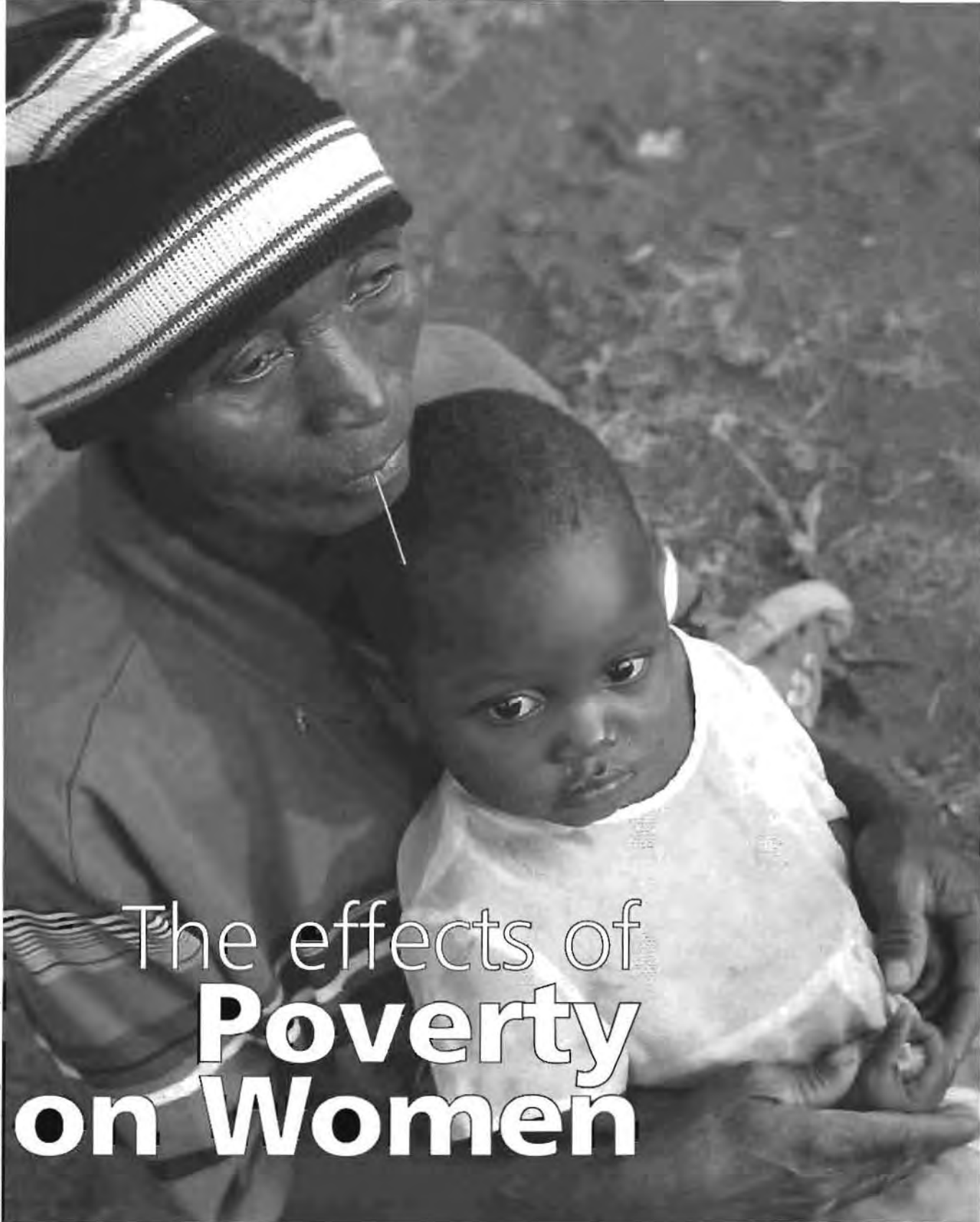
This paper has argued that, since independence, financing rural development has always been problematic in Lesotho. It has been characterised by unequal access, marginalisation and exclusion of the poor in the rural communities, accentuated by differences in gender, economic class, locational and political bias.

The paper has gone on to commend the recently launched Lesotho Fund for Community Development as an innovative attempt at financing rural development in Lesotho in the 21st century. However, it is argued that some issues are mandatory for sustainable financing of rural development for poverty alleviation in Lesotho.

These include the implementation of the Technical Service Department in the LFCD Management Unit, the depoliticisation of the Governing Board, the granting of more de facto autonomy to the LFCD, conflict resolution between the Village Development Councils and the chiefs and also between non-governmental organisations, the promotion of horizontal integration and consensus within the communities, as well as within the Area Teams and District Management Teams, the speeding up of the long overdue national elections; the reduction of induced or paid-up community participation; and moves towards financial sustainability of the LFCD through the transition to eventually becoming a micro-credit institution. ☉

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The effects of **Poverty** on Women

Poverty is invariably a burden borne more heavily by women

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Poverty surpasses meagre material means and includes a myriad other qualities such as dignity, autonomy, the right to participate, and the ability to be a part of the decision-making process. Whilst worldwide poverty is a problem of grave proportions, the question arises of how poverty impacts differently for women and men. The usual approach to disentangle the gender-poverty paradigm has been through the dis-aggregation of household and social indicators as a means of exposing female impoverishment. To grasp a thorough understanding of poverty, our analysis needs to be broadened to include other indicators besides income.

Over the past three decades the gulf between developed and developing countries in terms of income, consumption and other basic social indicators has become sweeping. In developing countries about 30 million children under five die every year from causes that are not critical in developed countries. Furthermore, about 110 million children receive no primary education.¹

Poverty has a regional dimension in that it exists in both rural and urban areas. Rural poverty has often been overlooked since researchers are largely removed from its immediate environs. Both income poverty and the state of social indicators such as malnutrition, lack of education, low life expectancy and substandard housing, are more dire in rural areas.

The urban poor are not any better off as they dwell in slums or squatter settlements that are dangerous and illegal. They have to contend with overcrowding, bad sanitation, contaminated water, high levels of crime and pollution.

Crucial to our efforts to assist the poor with policy initiatives, is a fundamental understanding of the poor. To this end, we need to know who the poor are, how they respond to policies and their environment, where they live, the size and composition of their households, what they do for a living, what they own and buy, what risks they face and how they fit into the society around them.² However, gathering such information is costly and not easy.

Characteristics of the poor

Poor households experience a dearth that others cannot identify with. They are most vulnerable to external contingencies such as the weather or death of the breadwinner. Hunger, malnutrition and related illnesses render the poor unable to utilise their labour effectively, even though labour is the main asset they own. For the poor, the difference between a tolerable quality of life and mere survival depends on their capacity and opportunities to work. They have to endure a lack of education, landlessness and acute vulnerability.

The poor suffer from many inequalities. They have fewer social services (education and health), and less access to publicly provided goods and infrastructure (irrigation, information and technical assistance, transport and market centres) than other groups. There are vast differences between the very wealthy and the poorest of the poor in terms of primary school enrolment rates, morbidity and mortality rates. The poor also encounter cultural and educational obstacles. Aside from access to services, the poor may not utilise services because they may be intimidated by officials or simply lack information about programmes. The design of the services may also be a problem. Agricultural extension programmes, for example, are usually geared towards men even though most women are cultivators.³

Poor families may keep children away from school because of the opportunity cost incurred. In poor households, children are an important source of work and income. So despite the subsidisation of primary education, schooling is costly for poor children.⁴

The poor occupy areas that are highly populated, marginal and impoverished, of poor quality, where agricultural output is low,



In poor households women undertake more work than men. Those who work outside the home do so in addition to their work at home, which consists of cooking, cleaning, feeding the children, collecting and fetching water.

droughts, floods, and environmental degradation rife. Job opportunities are meagre and the demand for labour is seasonal. The plight of the poor is jeopardised by the fact that the problems of poverty, population and the environment are interrelated. Thus it is no coincidence that we find the poor

located in areas that are environmentally degenerate.

Moreover, the poor tend to lack assets, income and land. Since land is the most important means of production in rural societies, lack of access to land compromises living standards. Those that do own land find that the quality of the land is inferior and its size insufficient to secure survival needs. Improving the land is difficult



Photo: Willem de Lange

without income and credit. On the other hand, many have access to land, but no ownership rights and have to cope with the insecurity of tenancy.

The unavailability of credit worsens the chances to acquire assets. The scant ownership of assets locks the poor into desperation as the lack of assets and income are mutually reinforcing. The absence of land forces the poor to sell their labour. However, meagre human capital compels them to undertake unskilled work that is low-paying and insecure. Thus poverty and illiteracy go hand in hand.

For these reasons, the poor have pitiful levels of income, if any income at all. Almost 70% of the expenditure of poor households goes on food. As a coping mechanism, households deliberately diversify their sources of income to protect themselves against adverse conditions. They work as cultivators, hunters, gatherers, small artisans, petty traders and wage labourers at various times of the year.

Job opportunities for the poor exist largely in the non-farm sector or informal sector. Rural non-farm employment includes cottage industries, services and industries, which are traditional in nature, simple, low skilled, and labour-intensive. Examples are beadwork, pottery, grass rugs and broom production. Goods are produced mainly for home consumption or for the local market. Demand for these products is influenced by the primary farm sector and can be volatile. Non-farm employment is a source of work in slack seasons for landless workers and women.

Although the informal sector is a crucial source of employment and income, it breeds the most poverty in urban areas. It is hybrid in income structure and activities. It comprises

one-person firms and small-scale entrepreneurs that employ a few workers. Many sell services and engage in trade or work on a casual basis in construction, manufacturing and transport. Others are garbage sifters or sell recycled products such as glass bottles, plastics, papers and cardboards. Incomes in this sector are low, volatile and insecure.⁵

Supplying cheap credit to participants in the informal sector is not always a wise solution as these firms may adopt capital-intensive techniques, which defeats the process of job creation.

Development and gender relations

Women and gender relations have largely been discounted within the theory and practice of development. Women's role as workers, owners and entrepreneurs is invisible. Women are excluded from

peasant organisations, from technical and managerial positions within development agencies such as USAID, FAO and the UN, from large-scale development projects, from statistics used by planners, from many income-generating projects and from command over resources such as land and labour, which are essential for economic upliftment.⁶

Women are confronted with a number of inequalities. "Poor women in poor countries are always working", yet they are regarded as unemployed.⁷ Women's agricultural labour is normally omitted from GNP calculations because it is unpaid. Women have been subjected to a 'ghettoisation of projects', being confined to those which are small, short term and welfare-oriented (such as handicrafts and home-economics) in nature. Above all these projects view women as housewives, rather than agents of production, and as secondary to national development efforts. They also fail to take cognisance of the heterogeneity of women's needs.⁸

Ignoring the gender implications of policies may aggravate the plight of women who are disadvantaged in terms of income, assets, education and political clout. 'Gender-neutral' policies may further marginalise women and compromise their socio-economic well-being. With gender-neutral policies, only men gain. There is a dire need to break this mould by designing policies that encourage women's participation at all stages of the development process.

Development agencies are also guilty of under-spending on women's projects. For example, during the UN decade for women (1975-1985) only 3.5% of the projects of various UN development agencies, amounting to 0.2% of their budget, was allocated to women's projects. By the late 1980s the budget of UNIFEM (UN Development Fund for Women) was a mere \$5 million out of the UN's \$700 million budget.⁹

Women and poverty

Women constitute a bereft group even among the poor in that they earn lower wages than men, have lower literacy rates, have limited access to social services and encounter more difficulties in obtaining employment. The predicament of poor women is a worrying factor since the health and education of mothers has a direct influence on the welfare and future of their children.

A pertinent question is whether women are poorer than men? Considering income alone does not yield a decisive answer. However, statistics on health, nutrition, education and labour force participation show that women are severely impoverished. Women encounter numerous cultural, social, legal and economic obstacles than even poor men escape.¹⁰

Poverty and population growth reinforce each other in a number of ways. By-products of poverty such as low wages (especially for women), inadequate education and high infant mortality, contribute to high fertility rates and thus to rapid population growth. Nationally, higher fertility negatively affects educational funding and labour market absorption rates. At a household level, high fertility poses a danger to the health of both mother and child. Closely spaced pregnancies harm mothers, and subsequently affect the child's health at birth and in the critical early years.¹¹

In rural Africa, nearly half of the households are headed by women. Although these women engage in subsistence farming, they rarely have much cash income. These women have to assume full responsibility for familial reproduction.¹²

Moreover, in terms of educational status, literacy rates for women are systematically lower than men. In 1980, the literacy rate for women was only 61% of that of men in Africa. Women's disadvantage starts at an early age. Among children, girls bear a

disproportionate share of poverty. Poor households are more inclined to support education for boys rather than for girls. Girls' primary school enrolment rates are less than 50% in many African countries.¹³

In poor households women undertake more work than men. Much of the additional work is done by women (e.g. cottage industries). Women work longer hours than men and are remunerated less than men. A study in Nepal found that on average, poor women worked eleven hours a day and men only seven and a half hours.¹⁴

In rural areas, collecting fuel-wood, fodder and fetching water are the responsibility of women and children. Added to the household chores, the work load of women in terms of time is often one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half times that of men. The work load of women becomes more severe due to the depletion of resources. Environmental degradation, deprivation and hardship are all closely meshed together. The dry season spells extra work for women who may have to walk miles to find water and firewood. Studies indicate that approximately 10 to 25% of daytime energy is utilised for water collection each day. Collecting fuel-wood can also require more than five hours each day. Bouts of diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea, together with bouts of hunger and seasonal peaks in agriculture combine to effectively constrain women in their ability to acquire food.

Those who work outside the home, whether farming, sewing, knitting, selling or earning wages, do so in addition to their work at home, which consists of cooking, cleaning, feeding the children. It is easy to see why poor women in poor households are susceptible to undernourishment. Women in some parts of East Africa work 14 hours a day, producing 60 to 80% of food.¹⁵

Women's health

Women's health is jeopardised in many ways. Poor women bear too many children, spaced too closely together. Undernourishment and infection diminishes a person's health and ability to perform. These two occurrences pose a considerable danger to expectant mothers as they limit foetal development, and may also affect the lactation of nursing mothers. Nutritional anaemia, which is rampant among expectant mothers in poor countries, causes fatigue and weakens the immune system. In Africa, about two-thirds of pregnant women and over half of all adult women fall prey to this disease. Life expectancy among the malnourished is also very low. Malnourished mothers cannot provide sufficient fats in their milk and in extreme cases, the quantity of milk they are able to produce is low.¹⁶

In many developing countries, pregnancy and childbirth are responsible for more than a quarter of all deaths of women of childbearing age. In developing countries about half a million women die in childbirth each year. Of 100 000 women who give birth in Africa, between 200 to 1500 may die, compared with fewer than 10 in most developed countries. Because women in many developing countries and especially in the poorer areas tend to have many pregnancies, the cumulative lifetime risk of dying in pregnancy may reach one in 20. The tragedy is that most of these maternal deaths could be prevented by relatively cheap and simple measures.¹⁷

A woman's health and nutritional status determine her ability to overcome difficulties during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period, to produce a strong, healthy baby and to nurse and care for her baby. Most pregnant women in developing countries are anaemic and many teenage mothers are not yet fully grown. The problem could be partly addressed by providing women with information about nutrition and health. Improving women's income, health and nutrition could greatly reduce maternal mortality and morbidity.

Household Allocation

Fertility decisions, allocations of food, health care and work are among the most important determinants of what happens within poor households. Yet the household is a "disguise for male power and female subordination".¹⁸

Allocations within households are unequal in many respects.

There are inequalities in food and health care, in education and work between men and women, between the young and old, and between male and female children.

The distribution of consumption within the household is not equal. In practice males and income-earning adults are favoured over women. Studies in Kenya, Malawi, and other countries indicate that a larger proportion of women's than men's income tends to be spent on household nutrition and basic welfare. Of the studies conducted in India, it was found that 80% to 100% of women's wage income was devoted to family maintenance, whereas

men committed between 40 to 90% of their earnings. The lesson that is brought to the fore is that raising women's incomes directly is a good way to reach children as well as to strengthen women's status and bargaining power within the household.¹⁹

Women have little control over cash income even when they do earn it. The sphere over which they have control is food and health care allocation. But the choices women have to make are hard. When food and general resources are low, women have to enforce draconian allocation rules, for example giving priority to adult males, and favouring sons over daughters.

Most studies have ignored inter and intra-household allocation patterns. An inescapable fact is that data that precludes these dynamics of the household cannot expose such anomalies.²⁰

Definitions of poverty

According to Dasgupta, the ability to identify 'well-being' requires a thorough understanding of destitution or a state of ill-being. To comprehend destitution, we need to know what a person is deprived of. Living embodies a circularity in that we need food and care in order to reproduce food and care.²¹

To tackle the problem of poverty, we need to know what 'poverty' really means. There is a difference between poverty and inequality. Whereas poverty refers to the absolute standard of living of a section of society, inequality is a much broader concept that analyses the relative living standards of the entire society. The World Bank defines poverty as "the inability to attain a minimal standard of living". This definition hinges on three aspects: a measurement of the standard of living; a clear conception of a minimal standard of living; and encapsulating the severity of poverty in a single index.²²

Those (women) who work outside the home, whether farming, sewing, knitting, selling or earning wages, do so in addition to their work at home, which consists of cooking, cleaning, feeding the children

According to Dasgupta, the constituents of a 'basic minimal standard of living' include access to primary health, legal aid, potable water, sanitation facilities, shelter, primary and secondary education and income sufficient for essential food and clothing.²³

Measuring poverty

Poverty and low income are often taken to be synonymous. The most common practice of measuring poverty is to choose a cut-off level of income below which a person or household is deemed to be poor, and to estimate the percentage of population whose income is below it. A person's income indicates the command they have over marketed goods and services, for example food, shelter, clothing, transportation and general amenities. It is a crude measure as income does not tell us what goods are on offer, how much of each good is on offer and what each person gets.²⁴

Household income and expenditure per capita are adequate norms for determining the standard of living, provided they include own production, an aspect that is vital for the poor. Consumption (including consumption from own production) highlights the household's ability to safeguard their standard of living through saving and borrowing, when income seesaws. As a result of this ability, consumption is a better measure of well-being than income.

There are a number of problems with income estimates, for example, the income or expenditure approach ignores the fact that different households face different prices. In developing countries, prices vary between rural and agricultural areas which yield different rates. Secondly, household size and composition are important variables constraining the ability to spend. Moreover, such analysis assumes the distribution of consumption within the household is equal, a fallacy that cannot be overlooked when analysing the denuded status of women.

In poor countries, household income is difficult to measure because a number of activities, products and services remain unrecorded. And, in addition, rural transactions are not always conducted in cash and a portion of rural household consumption is obtained from 'common property resources'. This implies that measures of household income are typically wrong and biased downwards.²⁵

Income estimates need to be supplemented by other types of information incorporating the consumption of goods and services. A low income complements other forms of deprivations, for example a low life expectancy, low primary school enrolment rates and low educational attainment. Neither consumption nor income incorporate parameters of welfare such as health, life expectation, literacy, or access to public goods, all of which impact on the standard of living.

The reality is that households with access to free public services are better off than those without, even though their income and expenditure may be the same. Because of these shortcomings, a consumption-based poverty measure has to be supplemented with one that includes other dimensions of well-being such as life expectancy, under five mortality and school enrolment rates.

Choosing a norm or standard is integral to a consumption-based measure of poverty. In general, as countries become more affluent, their perception of the minimum level of consumption changes. A consumption based-poverty line is comprised essentially of two elements. The first is the expenditure required for a minimum standard of nutrition and other basic necessities. This simple exercise can be imputed from the prices of foods that form the diets of the poor. The second element refers to a monetary value

that embraces the cost of participating in everyday life of society. As this amount differs between countries, it is more subjective in that what may be viewed as a necessity in one country may be termed a luxury in another.

Based on a benchmark upper poverty line of \$370 in 1985, one-third of the population of the developing world were classified as extremely poor.²⁶

An alternative measure of poverty is to express the number of poor as a proportion of the population. This is called the headcount index and is the percentage of the population below the poverty line. Although the headcount index is useful for comparative purposes, it has been criticised because it overlooks the extent to which the poor fall below the poverty line.

The income shortfall that occurs with the headcount index is bypassed with the poverty gap. The poverty gap measures the transfer of income necessary to pull every poor person exactly up to the poverty line and eliminate poverty. The advantage of this approach is that it tells us about the magnitude of poverty in society.²⁷

Measuring the feminisation of poverty

There is some controversy about what actually constitutes the feminisation of poverty. Nilufer Cagatay links the feminisation of poverty to a number of ideas: firstly, income poverty occurs more frequently among women than men; women experience income poverty that is more intense than men's income poverty; and over time, the growth of income poverty among women has surpassed the rate among men.²⁸

Other authors stress that fact that women are powerless to act in society and in the family and have little access to support mechanisms. Women's deprivation is manifold and ranges across the economic, social and political arenas. Politically there are very few women in either local and national governments. Socially women are seen as care-givers and are powerless in families. They have no control over how income is spent, the number of children to have, access to fertility and even the share of food they receive.

Another crucial dimension of deprivation is what Sen terms "physical condition neglect" and occurs when women perform activities to the detriment of their health. Economically women not only undertake more work than men, but may carry out heavy physical work and work extremely long hours with no breaks. Besides work, they are also responsible for food production.²⁹

The feminisation of poverty can be gauged by measuring human poverty on a gender basis. The question arises whether it is possible to develop a gendered human poverty index. Whilst the first two dimensions of the HPI, namely deaths and illiteracy rates, can be split along gender lines, the third – access to health services and safe water – cannot be determined on a gender basis.

Moreover, the standard assumption when analysing poverty from a gender perspective is that female-headed households tend to be more prone to poverty.³⁰ The income level of female-headed households is taken as a sign of poverty. This reasoning is used to substantiate the view that poverty has been feminised. But focusing on households alone disguises the extent of poverty among women.³¹

Researchers have repudiated the association of dire poverty with female-headed households. Splitting households into male and female units to expose poverty is problematic since household categories are not homogenous. In other words, household categories are diversified into single units, households of single wage earners with young dependents and households where women

receive income from absent males. In other words, female-headed households cannot be clumped together into uniform units as their peculiar circumstances warrant unique policy applications.³² Comparing female and male-headed households is a mediocre means of measuring the extent to which poverty is feminised.

Social indicators

The most basic needs that are essential for sheer survival are nutrition, shelter, sanitation and health care. Since there is no universally accepted indicator of welfare, it is necessary to look at several different measures. Social indicators do not merely reflect aggregate welfare, but measure the extent to which certain vital interests of a person are being accommodated. Social indicators include the following:

- life expectancy
- under five mortality
- school enrolment rates
- morbidity
- adult mortality
- access to social and health services.³³

One class of social indicators can be termed crude measures of commodity availability. They comprise the following: proportion of people consuming less than an adequate diet; ownership of blankets; possessing more than one piece of clothing; the percentage of the population with access to drinking water; the number of hospitals, doctors, nurses and lawyers per 100 000 individuals; the number of schoolteachers per 1 000 children; the percentage of births attended by health staff; and primary school enrolment rates for girls and boys.

These indicators are crude because they do not impart any information on the accessibility of these goods, the availability of goods and their distribution.

Policy Needs

Lifting people out of destitution depends on providing access to income-earning opportunities, and providing the means to respond. According to the World Bank, people must on the one hand be granted opportunities to use their labour and

simultaneously armed with skills, education and health to optimise living standards. Policies such as land redistribution, improved tenancy procedures, well-defined land rights and enhanced common property resources, not only reduce poverty but create prospects for the poor to uplift themselves.³⁴

Successful poverty initiatives are not confined to the realm of anti-poverty projects only. The eradication of poverty is a fundamental priority and responsibility of economic policy and economic development. Approaches to help the poor must follow certain guidelines. They must be cost-effective, well-targeted and appropriately designed to meet the specific needs of the poor. This means coming up with technologies that are compliant with the risky environment that confronts small farmers, setting up credit schemes to serve small borrowers, assisting vulnerable groups with a combination of feeding programmes and providing education on health and nutrition.

When extending social services to the poor, policy makers must be sensitive to and understand the dilemma confronting the poor. For example, the poor may resist primary schooling or any other

help scheme because they may be unaware of the benefits offered, and because of the private cost that they incur in terms of working time forgone in visiting a health centre or loss of income when the child is at school. The benefits of policies need to be explained to ensure that they support such endeavours.³⁵

Growth and institutional support

According to the World Bank, tackling the poverty problem requires a two-pronged approach. The first aspect induces a pattern of growth that sanctions use of the poor's most abundant asset, namely labour. This growth rests on the nurturing of market incentives and providing social and political institutions, infrastructure and technology. Implementation of this strategy rests on an increase in certain categories of public spending that specifically benefit the poor.³⁶

The second element of the approach rests on the extension of basic social services, that is, primary education, health care, nutrition and family planning. The first element provides the opportunities and the second increases the capacity of the poor to utilise the opportunities. Both strategies, however, need to be supplemented by a system of well-targeted transfers and safety nets. A labour-intensive pattern of development, and investment in human capital not only accelerates the pace of growth but contributes to it.

The two approaches have to be used together and either one on its own does not suffice. Progress has been greatest in countries that have implemented both parts of the strategy. Encouraging labour utilisation and encouraging investment in health and education empowers the poor to participate in new endeavours.

The type of growth that is fostered must also increase the efficient use of the assets owned by the poor. Countries that have

been able to reduce poverty have applied broad based rural development programmes that boosted small farm output and returns to wages. An important pillar of rural development is the avoidance of excessive taxation on output, developing rural infrastructure, adopting diversified agricultural growth and making technical support available to small farmers.³⁷

Expanding agriculture, for instance, is the crux of rural development and the

essence of poverty alleviation attempts. Firstly, the poor gain directly in their capacity as producers. Secondly, it stimulates demand for farm labour and goods produced by the non-farm sector. Especially in low income countries there is a positive correlation between increased agricultural purchasing power and the growth of rural wages. Agriculture is the growth spurt to non-farm activities.

In addition, better infrastructure increases the productivity of the poor, improving living standards and promotes employment. Studies have detailed the benefits flowing from infrastructure promotion. In rural areas an increase in irrigation and paved roads contributes to increased output. Investments in infrastructure also help to improve and maintain natural resources, precipitate technical change and strengthen market linkages. Roads, water, sanitation, electric power and other services for low income areas help small businesses as well as many informal businesses that are usually based in the home.

But it is investment in human capital that is the quintessential component of a long-term poverty alleviation scheme. Although spending on education brings no immediate benefits in the short

Lifting people out of destitution depends on providing access to income-earning opportunities, and providing the means to respond

run, it accelerates development in the long run. Training people is not sufficient, one has to provide the environment to facilitate the application of newly acquired skills. Better education, health and nutrition can help dissipate the core of poverty. Studies show that human capital investment, especially provision of education, can help minimise the primal causes of poverty.³⁸ Improvements in health, education and nutrition reinforce each other. We need to consider the instrumental value of education in general and of numeracy and of literacy in particular.

In education, governments have tended to more readily finance higher-level training at the expense of services that would benefit the poor. Evidence indicates that tertiary education yields the lowest social rate of return but many countries spend a disproportionate share of their education funds at that level. The problem in education is not strictly confined to enrolment rates because, in practice, low enrolment rates exist in conjunction with high failure and dropout rates.

Education and productivity

The most important asset that the poor own is labour. Education improves labour productivity, that is, it increases knowledge and improves skill levels. Although education depreciates over time if unused, it grows if continuously used. Schooling amounting to less than two years is thus of no productive use. Beyond that, each additional year of education has productive value. Primary education has a considerable effect on industrial labour productivity. People with primary education are better able to use labour and make better choices of production inputs.³⁹

Although education results in higher income to the individual, it promotes economic growth. Although the majority of people in the developing world are either unemployed, self-employed in agriculture or work in small family enterprises, this is not a deterrent against investing in education. Although there are very few studies documenting the beneficial effects of education in raising productivity in the informal sector, there are gains to be made. Education expands the pool of self-employment options, and propels people into more profitable and secure alternatives (for example, modern trade rather than traditional handicrafts).⁴⁰

Education generates a host of other benefits. The link between parents' educational attainment and children's well-being is multi-faceted. Evidence shows that mothers' education has an effect on the well-being of their children. Studies have analysed the effect of mother's education on household consumption of nutrients, the use of contraceptives, effect on children's health in general, infant and child survival rates.⁴¹

Maternal education influences birth-spacing which is intrinsic to the survival chances of the newborn child. Secondary school education has a significant effect on women's reproductive behaviour and may be responsible for fertility reduction. Literacy and numeracy are not productive if they don't have anything to act upon. At a more general level, studies document that education assists mothers to process information more effectively and enables them to take advantage of social and community services. Education also instils a degree of self-confidence enabling people to utilise new facilities. This is very pertinent for rural populations trying to come to terms with changes.⁴²

One year of education by mothers has been associated with a 9% decrease in under five mortality. The children of better educated mothers, other things being equal, tend to be healthier. Education may be one of the variables responsible for fertility reduction.⁴³

Female education is the most powerful of basic needs. Its instrumental value is high. The question that arises is whether female education is cost effective in poor countries. Studies show that it is an excellent form of social investment. For example, educating an additional 1 000 girls in Pakistan would have cost \$40 000 in 1990. However, the benefits and cost-effectiveness of this investment are phenomenal.

Firstly, each year of schooling in Pakistan has been estimated to reduce the under five mortality rates, by 10%. This translates into a saving of 60 deaths of children under five and \$48 000 saving on health care. Secondly, it reduces female fertility by 10%. Applying family planning procedures to achieve the same result would have cost \$43 000. Thirdly, it increases female education, reduces maternal mortality, and prevents at least four women dying during childbirth. Achieving the same reduction through medical services would cost about \$10 000.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Poverty is a multi-dimensional concept that transcends material well-being and is borne disproportionately by females. In poor households, women undertake more work than men, are less educated than men and have less access to income-earning activities. Gender relations systematically deny rural women access to land and tenancy rights, institutional support in terms of training programs and extension services, rural credit, farming inputs and other commodities that are vital to socio-economic well-being.⁴⁵ Tackling poverty depends on the application of sound development strategies. The provision of social services constitutes the essence of any long term strategy for reducing poverty. ☉

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The role of adult education in **Sustainable development**

Education creates the
enabling environment
necessary for
development

**By Forough Olinga
and Margaret Nakato Lubyayi**

Uganda is a country of plateaux and hills, marshes and lakes, stretching between the two arms of the Great Rift Valley, at the heart of the Great Lakes region of East and Central Africa. Once described as the “the pearl of Africa”, the name “Uganda” was derived from the ancient kingdom of Buganda, which occupied most of the central part of the country. After gaining independence from Britain in 1962, Uganda prospered briefly, then entered two decades of political turmoil, state-sponsored violence, economic decline and civil war.

The National Resistance Movement (NRM), led by the current President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, came to power on 26 January 1986, after a five year conflict. The NRM government has restored security in most parts of the country, re-established the rule of law, promoted freedom of expression, revived the economy and enabled widespread democratic participation in community and economic affairs.

Since 1993 Uganda's economy has grown at around 7% per annum. Yet Uganda remains one of the world's poorest countries, ranked 158 out of 174 countries on UNDP's Human Development index for 1997.¹ GNP per capita is estimated at US\$330. Some 44% of the population live below the absolute poverty line of US\$34 per capita per month, and only half the population has access to safe drinking water. Poverty is largely a rural phenomenon, and it is in the rural areas that nearly 86% of the Ugandan population lives.

Uganda has a total population of 21 million, of whom 51% are women and 49% men. Agriculture is the backbone of the Ugandan economy, accounting for over 80% of the labour force. Most agricultural production comes from smallholders, the great majority of whom cultivate less than 2 hectares of land, using traditional methods of farming and family labour. The greater part of their cash income comes from traditional cash crops such as coffee, cotton, tea and tobacco, but income from the sale of food crops such as maize and beans is becoming increasingly important.²

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Most people in rural areas derive their food and income from the crops they plant, the livestock they rear, and the fish they catch. Women carry out 70-80% of all agricultural work (digging, planting, weeding, harvesting, storage and processing) although they have little control over the land itself or the sale of cash crops (see table 1). Traditionally, land belongs to men, who also control the sale of cash crops and large sales of food crops, although in some areas these traditions have changed in recent years.

In many parts of pre-colonial sub-Saharan Africa, land was considered sacred, and often regarded as female. Both men and women peasants had more or less equal rights to land in some parts of Uganda. Both men and women decided on the activities to be carried out on the land, and what to do with the proceeds from the land. This state of affairs changed as land gained a monetary value, primarily under the advent of colonialism. The first victims were women because rewards in the form of land mainly went to the educated males. Access to land by women became

largely determined by kinship rights, and as part of marriage. The emergence of a cash economy forced many men into direct competition with women for land access and the control of women's productive labour. The loss of control over land was, of course, an abrogation of the human right of women to economic independence. Women had thence to be dependent on the very men who had destroyed their rights.

This paper gives an overview of adult education in Uganda, paying particular attention to rural development. The paper explores the importance of adult education in sustainable development and highlights some of the challenges faced in the bid to provide education for the adult population in Uganda. The paper focuses mainly on agriculture, which is the backbone of the Ugandan economy and on which most other sectors depend.

Education and gender inequality in Uganda

The importance of adult education in development cannot be

overstated. Adult education is one of the pillars for sustainable development. This is because education should be an ongoing process in one's life. The issue of adult education becomes more important now, especially with the reality of gender awareness. Various authors point to the importance of female education in achieving sustainable development.³ However, the statistics relating to literacy in Uganda show that women lag behind men: only 57% of women are literate as compared to 74% for men. The significant proportion of the illiterate population in certain areas of the country, however, is over 50%, with women forming the greatest number.⁴ Poor farmers, in a participatory poverty assessment carried out in 1999 in rural areas, ranked lack of education and skills (after lack of access to markets) as the second greatest cause of their poverty.

In most Ugandan families, moreover, boys are considered a treasure. A woman who has not given birth to a boy in a family is considered worthless, as she is not able to produce an heir to carry on the family name and inherit the assets. The first schools that were established in Uganda for women were intended to train women who would become the wives of chiefs in mainly social graces and home economics. Obviously, this education was only suited to a very small number of women while many others continued to toil in the fields. Even later when schools were opened to more women, they were discouraged from taking subjects other than social sciences, which women are supposedly good at.

Limited efforts have been made to provide functional adult literacy to women and men who, through tilling the land, support the economy which depends on agriculture. The World Bank has argued that education can help alleviate poverty and advance economic and social development.⁵ Numeracy and literacy are valuable skills for workers, even those outside the modern labour market such as rural farmers. For example, farmers with these basic skills can allocate inputs correctly and use products of technological change such as pesticides and medicines, thereby increasing productivity.⁶ Many fertilizers when wrongly used can cause damage both to the environment and their users. Unfortunately, women make up most of the illiterate population despite their significant contribution in agriculture.

Furthermore, educating women is noted to reduce fertility and lead to improved child health, among a host of benefits.⁷ Children of educated mothers have been found to live healthier and longer lives since women with education are more likely to seek professional health-care. It is thus the contention of the authors that education must be promoted at all levels if sustainable development is to be achieved. Given the country's dependence on agriculture and women's strategic position in the sector, women's functional literacy, especially in agricultural activities, must be strongly promoted.

The poverty eradication process in Uganda since 1986

Since the coming into power of the National Resistance Movement in 1986, various processes have been put in place to boost the per-

formance of the economy and eradicate poverty. During the second half of the 1990s the Government of Uganda launched a succession of important constitutional, legislative and policy initiatives, which embody principles, ideals and specific elements drawn from several UN conventions, conferences and other international treaties. These include:

- the Ugandan Constitution (1995)
- the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (1997/2000)
- the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (2000)
- the Local Government Act (1997)
- the Universal Primary Education programme (1997)
- the National Gender Policy (1997)
- the Vision 2025 Strategic Framework for National Development 1998)
- the Land Act (1998)
- the National Health Policy and Strategic Plan (1998).

We shall examine some of these important initiatives that have been undertaken in Uganda in a bid to achieve sustainable development.

The Ugandan Constitution of 1995

The Ugandan Constitution was promulgated in 1995 and was widely welcomed by most Ugandans for its rights-based and gender sensitive outlook. The Constitution clearly enshrines the equal rights of both men and women in Uganda. The Ugandan Constitution also paved the way for a decentralised system of government, which brings services closer to the people. Due to high illiteracy rates, however, many Ugandans are still unable to read or indeed understand their own Constitution.

The 1995 Uganda Constitution stresses the principles of gender equality. In agriculture, like in other sectors of our economy, gender is crucial since men and women play different roles. These complementary activities change over time and create new opportunities for both female and male farmers in technology generation, adoption and transfer. Therefore, gender dynamics are fundamental to planning and policy interventions.

The law is an important tool in enhancing agricultural activity. Some of the existing laws, however, are archaic and discriminate against women. Marriage laws, succession laws, divorce laws and many others still hold sway over the rural woman. Such laws often fail to protect women's rights within and outside the home and call for immediate intervention and reform. The consequence of poor laws is eventually revealed in the poor performance of various sectors of the economy, including agriculture.

The Poverty Eradication Action Plan, 2000

The government of Uganda, in consultation with various stakeholders, came up with a Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) in 2000. The PEAP is Uganda's equivalent of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) required of developing nations by the World Bank. The government has set poverty eradication as its top prior-

TABLE 1: THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA

Indicator or parameter	Percentage of Total	
	Female	Male
Population	51%	49%
Agriculture labour force		
• Food production	80%	20%
• Planting	60%	40%
• Weeding	70%	30%
• Harvesting	60%	40%
• Processing/preparation	90%	10%
Access to and ownership of land and related means of production	8%	92%

Source: Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Welfare, Kampala, Uganda, 2000

ity and as such the PEAP may be seen as the overriding policy to which other policies are expected to conform (e.g. gender policy, land policy and others).

The PEAP acknowledges that land ownership is a tool for poverty eradication and for achieving national development. The strategy also notes that ownership of land is one of the most fundamental human rights in Uganda's Constitution. However, the government of Uganda recently contradicted itself by rejecting the inclusion of a clause on co-ownership of land by spouses that was advanced by various women activists. The argument that has been advanced by those against the clause was that co-ownership would make land less marketable.⁸ Denied ownership of land and other property, women lack the security needed to acquire bank loans, which severely restricts their capacity to undertake productive activities, increase their incomes and ensure food security in their families.

The Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture, 2000

The PMA is a significant part of the government's broad poverty eradication strategy contained in the PEAP. The mission of the PMA is to "eradicate poverty by transforming subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture".⁹

The PMA contends that through the improvement of the welfare of poor subsistence farmers, there will be a re-orientation of production towards the market as more produce will be marketed to enable farmers to earn higher incomes. The following are the priority areas that were identified by poor farmers in Uganda and which will be the focus of the PMA:

1. Access to credit and financial services;
2. Control of crop and livestock pests and diseases;

3. Improved market access;
4. Improved access to affordable inputs;
5. Access to arable land – soil fertility, maximal land;
6. Extension services that reach the people and offer advice, information and more productive methods, marketing and alternative income generation activities;
7. Improved access to storage and processing facilities.

The PMA notes the lack of education in the list of priorities, but attributes its omission to the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE). A critical review of this list underlies the need and inevitability of some form of adult education as is already being seen in the implementation of the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS).

The NAADS has been created largely in response to area number six above. Currently, the NAADS secretariat is co-ordinating training and sensitisation in pilot districts and the issue of illiteracy has already started being raised by the district officials who observe that much of the training will be irrelevant to many of the poor farmers who cannot read or write. In a Tororo Workshop on Integrating Gender into the NAADS programme, one of the respondents noted that women were bound to lose out since many village women could not even count money and depended on the goodwill of buyers not to cheat them.¹⁰ Various district officials all over Uganda have also stated the need for imparting management skills to farmers if the NAADS objective of cultivating a culture where farmers carry out "farming as a business" and not simply a means of subsistence is to be achieved.

Since Uganda is primarily an agricultural country, most economic activities of women are in agriculture and the PMA aims to mainstream gender in all agricultural activities and thereby effectively represent and involve men and women as equal partners at all levels in agricultural development. The mainstreaming of gender is perceived as important because women constitute the majority of small-scale farmers. It is also acknowledged that women and men have distinct roles and responsibilities that demand specific actions and incentives. The women of Uganda are anxiously hoping that the good intentions of this plan are not derailed at implementation stage.

Decentralisation

The process of decentralisation, begun in the early 1990s, aims to improve administrative performance, enhance transparency, and strengthen the accountability of government to the people. Decentralised structures have been designed to make government more sensitive to the needs of the people and have already brought radical changes to the functions of central government ministries.

However, the effectiveness of these structures is undermined by the lack of capacity within many local governments. For example, some positions such as the Sub-County Chief require various duties which call for further training above the required qualifications set by government. Another solution to this critical dilemma would be the arrangement of specialised (functional) literacy courses to ensure that the officials who are elected by the people remain in office and still discharge their duties efficiently and effectively. The main limitation would be financial since these officials face the risk of

CASE STUDY

Impact of adult literacy on sustainable development

Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association is an association of rural women in Katosi who got together to improve their general socio-economic standards of living. Through initiating and promoting women's income-generating activities through the provision of credit, some success has been achieved, but this is limited by the high illiteracy levels among the women.

For many of the women, the Association gave them their first opportunity to handle money or to run a business. Many of the initial businesses failed and the rate of default was high; this nearly brought about the collapse of the revolving loan fund. Members did not keep records and were not even aware of whether they were making profits or losses. The women of the Association, noting a need, sought help and received training in business management and book-keeping, as well as how to conduct feasibility studies.

A two-day training course was organised for the women, which helped them to better understand their businesses and how to run them. Some members even started new businesses after which general success was recorded in most of the businesses run by women in the Association. They were excited by their progress and have been requesting further training.

not being re-elected, meaning that others would have to be trained after every election.

Gender, Adult Education and Development

Although education plays an undeniable role in development, it cannot on its own create the desired changes in society due to the damaging effect of certain issues such as societal traditions and cultures on women's advancement. Below are some of the areas where adult education can make a significant impact and consequently contribute to sustainable development.

Adult education should, first of all, be community oriented. The content of such education should involve life in its entirety, and try to impart to individuals and to the community all the skills needed to manage one's life. The success of some development programmes depends on how educated the target group is.

One such example is the area of rural micro-finance. Most of the micro-finance clients in Uganda are women, who are mainly semi-literate and illiterate. The reason for this state of affairs is that they have less wealth and productive assets than most of their male counterparts.

The case study of the Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association (see previous page) shows that functional adult literacy, focused towards daily livelihood activities, can be interesting and beneficial and instil confidence in those who receive it. This is because functional adult literacy is usually premised on the fact that the learners have basic knowledge and simply need to acquire skills to help them do what they do more efficiently, as was the case for the Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association.

Adult education should be considered a process of learning throughout life, and not limited to specific periods. The system should be very flexible and the place of education should be where the need arises. Sometimes adult literacy must be gender-focused, as in the above case, since women are mostly involved in agricultural activities and yet have a need for functional literacy.

The biggest number of Ugandans who will need adult education in the near future will be women because of the hardships faced by girls in the formal education structure. Even with Universal Primary Education (UPE), which provides free government education for all children, girls' education is suffering. The Ugandan government has emphasised the fact, and it is clearly articulated in the Constitution, that all children should be treated equally in the access to resources. However, when mothers need somebody to care for younger children in the home while they are away in the gardens, girl children are often the first consideration, leading to distraction from studies and eventual drop out.

There are other reasons that may be advanced for focusing on women in development and some of them are as follows:

- Women tend to contribute a higher proportion of their income (94%) to family subsistence, holding back less for personal consumption;
- It is mothers' rather than fathers' incomes or food production that are more closely related to children's nutrition;
- Women are more responsible than men for the full range of reproductive activities;
- Women often give primacy to income-generating activities;

- With respect to labour, time budget studies invariably find that women work longer hours (due largely to the "double day" phenomenon, of performing first productive and then reproductive tasks);
- Various studies world-wide have shown women to be more responsive to loan repayment.

In addition to the above issues, and despite efforts to improve women's lives worldwide, recent statistics confirm the existence of growing numbers of female heads of household. Households headed by women are more likely to be poor than male-headed ones. This is due to the fact that they tend to have little by way of productive resources, such as land, coupled with a large number of dependents. There has been a notable increase in women-headed households in sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, rural women are becoming more responsible for household food security and children's welfare. Women head an estimated 45% of rural households in Kenya, 35% in Malawi, 30-40% in Zambia and 15% in Nigeria.

Politics

The societal pressures of a patriarchal system keep women from political positions and sometimes from engaging in gainful employment. Women who toe the line, keeping within the traditional and cultural confines, are rewarded while those who break out of the mould are punished in various ways. Some of the rewards and punishments are overt while others are subtle. For example, it is not uncommon for men to abandon their wives if they venture into politics.

On another level, the media is relatively intolerant of any mistakes made by women politicians and will waste no time in ridiculing them. The same media will

rarely find time to report on issues where women make significant political contributions and would much rather focus on their personal lives.

Women's role in politics recently received a boost from women activists who started organising leadership training events for women before different levels of elections. This may be responsible for the slight increase in the number of women in the Seventh Parliament of Uganda.

Micro-finance

Micro-finance has been cited to be necessary in development in both rural and urban areas. The biggest clients of micro-finance institutions are women who rarely have business skills to make significant investments, as do their male counterparts who may be quickly overtaking the women in terms of clientele.

Formal employment sector

Even within the formal sector, women lag behind men and often earn less money for similar work. This still persists even though the government of Uganda has put up a half-hearted campaign to stop such practices. Many women fear that reporting such cases would lead to the loss of their jobs which would make their lives even harder. There is a need for the development of strategic guidelines for gender balance in staff recruitment, training, and promotion for both women and men employees.

In most Ugandan families, a woman who has not given birth to a boy is considered worthless, as she is not able to produce an heir to carry on the family name

Women need to be targeted in areas of training and capacity building to help them improve their marketability in the job market. The challenge, however, is much bigger and the success that training and capacity building can achieve is limited given the reality of the "glass ceiling". Often women receive promotions up to a certain level, but this tends to stop at lower or middle management and stays there – having reached the unspoken limit for female employees in a majority of companies. The problem with the "glass ceiling" phenomenon is that it is hard to prove as most employers argue that promotion is given on merit.

Adult education and empowerment

Education is a very powerful tool of liberation. Educated people can analyse situations, define strategies, draw up programmes of action, and opt for a better deal on any socio-economic and indeed political matter. There have been some arguments which assert that the leading elite stands to lose by educating the ignorant masses who would then be more critical of and possibly overthrow self-gratifying regimes. This argument was highlighted during the most recent presidential elections where the rural masses, who are largely illiterate, voted for the incumbent president. The people in urban areas overwhelmingly voted for the opposition leader.

The experiences of most East Asian countries indicate that one of the important aspects that have boosted their high economic growth rates, has been the implementation of policies that focus on more equitable human resource development.

Based on such assumptions, then, and the obvious need, it is recommended that African governments in the region, as a matter of critical concern, mainstream gender in rural development and agricultural planning systems. Further research should be undertaken into the root causes of inequality, which should then be tackled in order to ensure sustainable development. African governments should then adopt and imple-

ment strategic guidelines for gender balance in staff recruitment, training and promotion in the agricultural sector.

It can be demonstrated that gender disaggregated socio-economic data in all countries in the region informs the planning process in agricultural projects. In this regard, it would be helpful to establish a gender disaggregated socio-economic data base system that can produce adequate, relevant and accurate information to address gender issues in development planning.

It is critical that gender imbalances that may affect productivity are highlighted and addressed. Moreover, governments in the region should boost rural finance programmes by training their members to ensure that maximal use of credit is made. Studies show that women use credit as effectively as men when it is available. Moreover, their repayment rates are generally much higher.

At the same time, disadvantaged communities should be involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the programmes aimed at combating poverty in their lives.

Conclusion

Although the challenge is huge, there are positive indicators of political will among African leaders. Africa is experiencing an increase in leaders with a vision towards sustainable development, with a focus on rural communities. The real objective of development should be to create an enabling environment for all people to use the available resources productively and in a sustainable manner for their well-being.

To think that education is the cure for all the development problems faced by Africa would be utopian but we must acknowledge the empowerment and enlightenment that can be gained from relevant and people-focused education. Education gives people choices and thus power – and educated people will tend to reject detrimental policies and make informed choices of leaders and development patterns. ☐

Circumventing gender bias through superior intellect?

An amusing, but telling, example of gender inequality and a form of empowerment in Uganda relates to the taboo prohibiting women from riding a two-wheeled bicycle. The reason for the taboo has to do with the belief that a woman who straddles a bicycle seat is somehow "compromised" and no longer a respectable woman. Rather than focus their energies exclusively on changing this perception, a group of women smallholder farmers designed a three-wheel bicycle that uses a bench seat rather than a conventional bicycle seat. As a result, women are able to benefit from the convenience and efficiency of a bicycle – or tricycle – and still avoid transgressing a local taboo.

In addition to acknowledging this as an innovative solution to a cultural problem, it should be noted that other creative features were also added to the bicycle's design, such as an umbrella to provide shade for the women and their children, and a large storage area for food and supplies.

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Empowering women through Education

We investigate the role of adult education in women's empowerment, using an assessment of the Better Life for Rural Women programme in Nigeria

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The Better Life for Rural Women (BLRW) programme is an innovative new dimension to efforts at injecting appropriate instruments for empowering women in Nigeria. The programme, founded by then First Lady Maryam Babangida in 1987, was designed to empower Nigerian women and enhance their social, economic and political status. The idea was borne out of the abysmal neglect and disregard of the role and status of women in society. Women and their female children were the drawers of water and hewers of wood. They were the custodians of non-income generating economic and social activities such as cooking and child-bearing.¹ It is anachronistic that males dominate the cultivation of cash crops meant for international markets and confine women to the growing of only food crops that receive little or no returns.² Their constituency was then in the kitchen and the "baby-making factory". The World Bank, in recent development intervention programmes worldwide, deviates from this stance and focuses on gender sensitive projects that enhance gender access to production resources and income yielding activities.³

Parents considered educating their female children a wanton waste of resources that could be better spent educating male children or investing it in money-yielding commercial enterprises. As a result, adult illiteracy was higher among adult women than men. Yet women engage in all sorts of social and economic activities such as food processing, farming, marketing of agricultural produce and retail trade. Women make up between 60 and 80% of the agricultural labour force and produce 67% of the food crops in Nigeria.⁴ These services were considered inconsequential and of no effect in the economic upliftment of the family and the society at large. To buttress this demeaning attitude, women had no access to credit to boost their businesses and achieve financial independence and self-sufficiency. They also had no access to land, which is a key input in agricultural production in the rural areas. This discrimination emanates from the prevalent social system, which is patriarchal with land ownership and inheritance being patrilineal.

Babangida decried this demeaning discrimination against women in her acceptance speech for the Africa Prize for 1991 when she said:

None of us can walk fast or far on one leg. Yet in our race for progress, in our clamour for speed, in our breathless yearning to make the glorious headway towards our destination, our species has relied, too much of the time, solely on just one leg, and that is on the men folk.⁵

The BLRW programme sought to change these notions and attitudes towards women in the rural communities of the country. The programme aspired to give voice and strength to women in acquiring productive resources especially capital and land for investment. It aimed at transforming the status of women from being treated as outcasts to being partners in development. The strategy for achieving this new order was to pro-

vide them with the production resources directly and indirectly accord them social acceptability and political respectability.

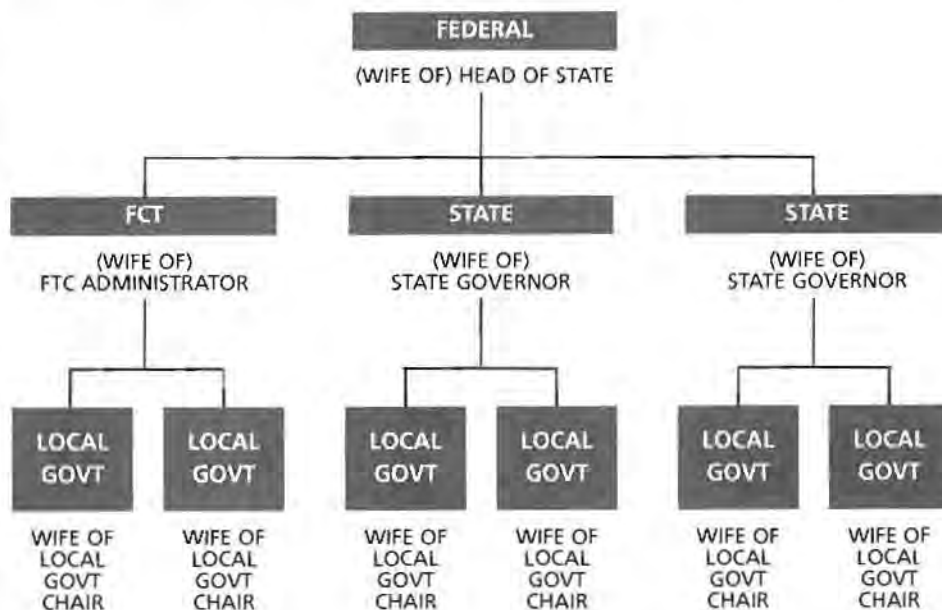
This paper reviews the philosophy and role of the BLRW programme in women empowerment and rural development in Nigeria. The strong points that favour and the constraints that militate against the programme are discussed. The contributions of the programme to the rural development objective of the country and in fostering women-driven strategies in sustainable development are analysed. The paper further explores the potential of the programme in bridging political, social and economic barriers against women in Nigeria and beyond.

The structure of the programme

The strength of the BLRW programme lay in its structure. It had its seat in all three tiers of government: federal, state and local government. In the past, the role of the First Lady was merely ceremonial public appearances with the Head of State on special occasions such as National Day celebrations. With the BLRW programme, Maryam Babangida created an office of her own in the State House from where she ran the affairs of the BLRW. In the same vein, using her newly acquired powers, she caused the State Governors to create equivalent offices for their wives in all states of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) at Abuja. From the states, the wives of local government chairpersons, most of whom are men, were made leaders at the grassroots level of the BLRW programme in the rural areas. This organisational structure facilitated taking the programme down to the rural women who are the ultimate target of the programme.

This structure is illustrated in Figure 1. The chain of command begins with the first lady at the federal level. Next are the wives of the state governors – assuming that these are all men – including the wife of the administrator of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The wives of governors as state chairpersons in turn give directives to wives of local government chairpersons. At this level, the wives of local government chairpersons use influential community members, who include ward councillors, traditional rulers and opinion leaders, or their wives. This structure facilitates the easy flow of communication and instructions from top down to the rural grass-

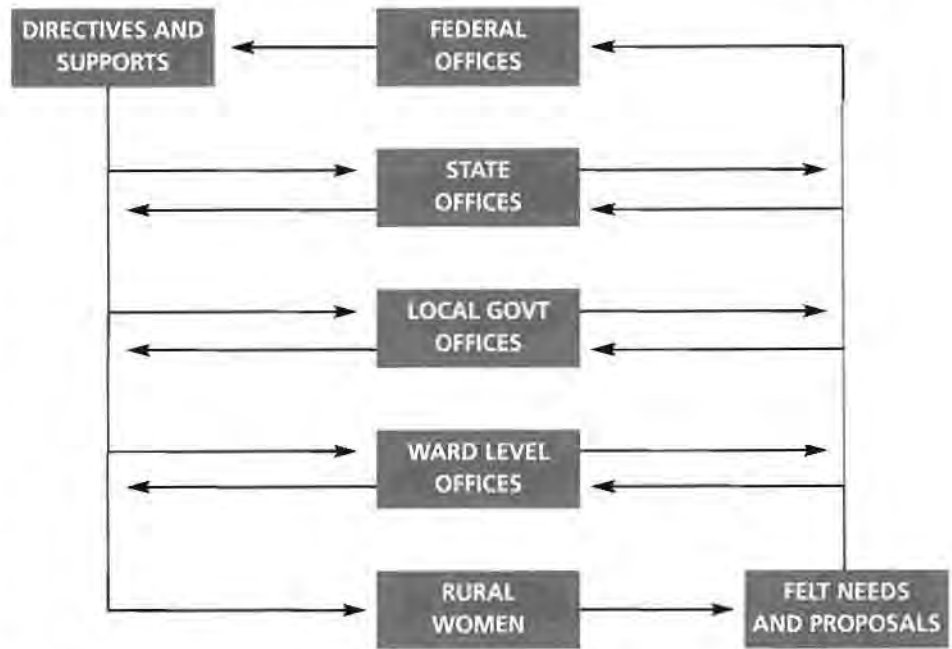
FIGURE 1: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE BLRW PROGRAMME



roots. At the same time, it engenders the flow of communication in reverse order in a bottom-up manner. It is through this reverse order that needs and projects are communicated to the top echelons of the programme.

Figure 2 shows how information flows to and from the rural women. Directives, financial and political as well as other supports come from the top. They start from the office of the First Lady at the federal to the offices of First Ladies at the state level. From the states, instructions flow down to local government and ward level offices and finally to the rural women. On the other hand, information on the felt needs, identified projects and supports, flows from the rural women at grassroots through the wards, local government offices up to the state offices and then to the federal office.

FIGURE 2: INFORMATION FLOWS TO AND FROM RURAL WOMEN



Institutional Support

As the brainchild of the wives of heads of government, the programme was supported financially by the government of the day from the federal down to the local government level. The programme received government budget allocations and subventions through such government agencies as National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Peoples Bank and Community Banks.⁶ Government communication infrastructure such as the print and electronic media, television and radio broadcasting services also promoted the BLRW programme and its activities nationwide. Relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Information and broadcasting and Transport and Aviation placed their equipment and other facilities at the disposal of the programme.

The programme also received the overarching moral support of government in soliciting outside funding. According to Babangida, international organisations including UNICEF, UNIDO and UNFPA also provided financial assistance to the programme.⁷

Powered by the overwhelming support and financial might of the government, the programme was able to penetrate the body fabric of the Nigerian society and the rural communities in particular. Before the launching of the programme, the effect and impact of government had not been fully felt in the remote rural areas notwithstanding the adoption of the three-tier system of government. The sensitivity which the BLRW programme brought into governance to the benefit of the rural dwellers in general and women in particular assumed far-reaching dimensions.

Political Support

Through the BLRW programme, government services and influence were brought closer to the people. Even without the Head of State or the governor visiting the rural people, the visit and influence of their wives in the villages made significant political and psychological impacts. The visits of the first ladies at federal and state levels afforded the local people many opportunities to contribute to governance by voicing their views directly to the government. Common among the felt needs and social amenities of the rural communities which are tied to the BLRW programme

include schools for formal and informal education; water supplies for domestic and industrial use; hospitals for health care; roads, especially for transportation of agricultural produce; and rural electrification for accelerated rural industrialisation.

Women-led non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also contributed to the empowerment programme. Their support came in diverse forms such as:

- Project identification;
- Procurement of funds for project financing;
- Education of women in project and financial management;
- Social transformation and support for women's liberation efforts and gender equality in land tenure, land inheritance and investment opportunities.

Activities and achievements of the programme

Education

Adult education was adopted as the strategy for improving the living conditions of rural women in particular and rural people in general. The underlying assumption is that to embark on any economic activity to transform the welfare of the rural women, a minimum level of education is required. Adult education programmes were then launched in strategic communities at the grassroots Local Government levels. Community level institutions such as civic centres, village and town halls were used as training centres for adult education and vocational training for women. Women became the target domain because previous efforts by government to introduce adult education at rural levels targeted only men. However, the programme flopped because it was difficult to orientate the men away from their customary and liberal economic and social activities into the captive school system.

The BLRW adult education programme targeted mostly housewives and unmarried adult women. In Nigeria, women generally have a lower literacy level than men. The reasons for this selective treatment vary depending on the region and culture. In the predominantly Muslim north, early marriage and Islamic doctrine preventing women from making public appearances are contributing factors. In the south, female education is considered secondary to that of males. Here parents, especially the less educated ones, con-

sider the education of girls a waste of resources and an undesirable transfer of wealth to outsiders. This is based on the premise that the girls will eventually be married to men outside the family who will ultimately reap the benefits of the girls' education. Under the BLRW programme, these women, who could not be educated as spinsters, strove to improve their education away from their matrimonial homes.

Women who had acquired basic primary education capitalised on the programme to procure some vocational and professional training in teaching, nursing and home science. The programme provided funds that supported as many women as were willing to undertake vocational training. At the inception of the programme, there was a great demand for teachers in rural areas occasioned by high primary enrolment because of the Universal Free Primary Education Programme. At the time of launching the BLRW programme, both the teaching profession and living in the rural areas were very unattractive. The motivation of rural women to train as teachers lay in the prospects that after the training, they would obtain automatic employment in the locality where they lived. This was a major attraction for the women and a good strategy adopted by the BLRW programme.

Through its adult education interventions, the programme improved the political consciousness and awareness of rural women. This achievement was best demonstrated by the increased interest and participation of women during the transition to civil rule and in their massive turnout during the subsequent local government, state, federal and presidential elections between 1989 and 1993.

Agriculture

Rural women are a force to be reckoned with in rural small-scale agriculture as they contribute about 80% of the food in Africa.⁸ They dominate the production, processing and marketing initiatives and activities in this sector of the rural economy. The BLRW programme took advantage of the deep involvement of women in rural agriculture to empower them. In many parts of Nigeria, women do not have much access to land and credit for agricultural production. Land ownership and inheritance are patrilineal, allowing only males to own and inherit land.⁹

Women are only granted usufruct rights which limits their powers and ability to grow permanent crops and make land improvements. To break these shackles inhibiting freedom of use and ownership of vital production resources, the programme introduced women's agricultural co-operatives. Under the umbrella of the co-operatives, women's groups were able to acquire and use land for agricultural production. As a group, they could approach the village chief to ask that land be allocated to them for specific agricultural projects. With the programme, the number of women's co-operatives rose from 413 at its inception in 1987 to 9 422 in 1991.¹⁰ The co-operatives act as collateral for credit and other agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, improved seeds and seedlings, and high-breed livestock.

The farming activities provided gainful employment and better income opportunities for the rural women,¹¹ It also provided them with sufficient food to feed their families and enabled them to participate in the Country Women Association of Nigeria (COWAN).

By 1991, as many as 135 livestock and fish farms and 1 784 new farms and gardens were established by the programme in the rural areas of the country.¹²

Among the agricultural activities embarked upon by women's co-operatives include crop production, especially cassava, millet, sorghum and maize; horticulture, especially fruit and vegetable production; and poultry keeping. The co-operatives assisted with procurement and sale of inputs to the women farmers and assisted them with processing and marketing of their products.

Through the formation and use of co-operatives, the women were able to obtain inputs at lower costs, add value to their products and sell their outputs at attractive prices. As a result, they earned better incomes and created more job opportunities for themselves and their dependants.

The BLRW programme also identified value adding and form improvement as a niche for better employment creation, improved income earning, and guaranteed food security for their households and their communities at large. Food processing industries were then set up at the source of primary agricultural production. Cassava processing into gari (farina) became a lucrative industry among rural women in Nigeria. Gari is a staple food in Nigeria and its processing is a lucrative cottage industry among the south-western and south-eastern Nigerian women. Another industry for which the rural areas are famous is palm oil processing. This industry became an attractive investment window for rural women. Palm oil and palm kernel oil extractions now attract nearly 100% women's participation. The liberalisation of credit and the use of co-operatives to stand surety for loans contributed to making credit accessible to single female investors. Oil palm processing is very popular among the women of Abia, Imo, Cross River, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States of Nigeria. In the Western states and parts of Ebonyi, Anambra and Enugu States, oil palm processing remains an attractive investment for rural women.

Related to food processing is food storage for future use in the lean months and for prevention of post harvest losses to pests and diseases. Women play significant roles in this aspect of food handling and improvement on the longevity and shelf life. In so doing, they guarantee food security for their households.

Agricultural product marketing is also booming industry to which the BLRW programme made a contribution. Individual women and women groups were empowered through financial support from programme to invest in the sale of p

agricultural products such as tubers, fruits and nuts, egg chicken. They also invested in the sale of semi-processed food items like vegetable oils, maize and wheat

Women seem to have a special competency in fish r and hence the project focused on this activity. Individual women groups were organised into fishmongers. Some in fresh fish sales where they operated at seashores, wharf landing takes place. Among the fishmongers, some fish and sold them fresh without performing any fishing function. Others processed the fish to add value drying or smoking. Other groups specialised in the fish from offshore fishing trolleys. The marketing rather complex. Some women groups were whole purchase and break bulk for retailers.¹³

Women guarantee food security for their households by playing a significant role in the storage of food for future use and prevention of post-harvest losses to pests and diseases



Industry

Through the BLRW programme, women-initiated and managed cottage industries have sprung up in many parts of rural Nigeria. Some of the industries might have been in existence but were strengthened through better organisation, management and financing by the programme.

Famous among these industries are the Akwete weaving industry in the Rivers area of south-eastern Nigeria, the Asho Oke weaving industry in south-western Nigeria, and the Tie-and-Dye clothing industry in the Egba area of Ogun State. The textile industries favoured women entrepreneurs in manufacturing and according to the African Centre for Women, this comparative advantage of women in entrepreneurship should be strength-facilitating women's access to education, training, information finance.¹⁴

After the establishment of the BLRW programme, female post-secondary school leavers used to roam the streets with their handbags frequently migrated to urban centres to search for work, which are often in short supply. Others with limited courage migrate to urban centres to engage in social malpractices such as prostitution, drug peddling. Through the establishment of rural adult training centres by the BLRW programme, many of these women learnt clothing and fashion design as well as other skills. Graduates of the BLRW training projects set up busi-

nesses in the rural areas. Today, such enterprises create jobs for the rural people, enhance rural income, and build capacity for investment and self-employment among the rural people.

The high performance of adult women in these private investments has helped to change the attitude of parents from considering female children a drain on the family resources. The contributions of the unmarried females to family income from their investments after their training are changing the attitudes of many uneducated parents nowadays.

Hairstyling is another enterprise which rural women including adult females have found lucrative and has been promoted by the BLRW programme. The enterprise encompassed many aspects of the beauty industry such as manicures, pedicures and the sale of cosmetics. The services transcended gender boundaries to include unisex and male hair care and massage. This diversification increased the number of clients and widened the markets for both the services and the products used.

Through the hair-care services, many cottage pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries received an increased demand and patronage for their products. The hairstyling enterprise requires only a small capital investment, which does not put severe financial stress on potential investors. It is mainly for this reason that the business mushroomed very profusely in the rural areas of the country.

The multiplier effect of the rural industries is felt in the rapid growth of the complementary rural housing and real estate invest-

ments. With the rapid growth in the dressmaking and hairdressing industries, there has been a boom in rural housing construction to accommodate the demand for business premises and residential houses for the entrepreneurs. Rapid rural development is visible from the increase in rural housing projects and the demand for commercial business places in the rural areas of Nigeria. This is a departure from the status quo ante when rural housing constructions were built to accommodate family members only.

Trade and Commerce

The previously held notion that the place of the woman is in the kitchen is a major misconception which the BLRW programme sought to address. It tried to prove that women are equal partners in development rather than pawns or instruments to be used and dumped by men as they seek self esteem and self-actualisation. Through the programme, women strove to be financially independent of their husbands and their parents (in the case of unmarried adult females). They engaged in commercial enterprises like retail trade in virtually every tradable good.

Women were empowered financially and socially to form partnerships with their husbands or fellow women in wholesale and retail trades. The commodities traded were diverse, and included fruits, vegetables, fishes, cassava and yam tubers, as well as poultry products such as eggs and live chickens. A total of 495 new shops and markets owe their existence to the programme.¹⁵

Women's co-operatives engaged in wholesale trade in primary agricultural products and inputs, manufactured household items like kitchen and cooking equipment, and cosmetics and healthcare products. The organisation facilitated the bulk acquisition of manufactured products for women's retail groups. Thus, what used to be the prerogative of men has become liberalised to accommodate women. The success of women in penetrating what was previously the exclusive domain of men is attributable to better education and awareness creation for women, made possible by the BLRW programme. Today, rural women like their male counterparts are breadwinners, job creators, business executives and household heads in many rural areas of Nigeria.

Social Services

The success of the BLRW programme lay in the determination and resolve of the women to improve their lot in the society. They knew that they would bear the brunt of the burden of the consequences of failure. For instance, the lack of health clinics and health-care centres impacts more on women, who require the ante-natal and post-natal services associated with pregnancy and child-bearing. They also fall victim to the opportunistic disorders that accompany pregnancy such as nausea, vomiting and fatigue. The burden of taking children to the hospital and taking care of them while hospitalised also falls on women rather than the men.

Through the BLRW programme, health centres were set up at strategic locations in the rural areas to cater for the ante-natal and post-natal services of women and the general health-care of the community. Village-built and village-managed hospitals, health centres and clinics organised by rural women now dot the rural areas to complement the services of state sponsored health centres. Within six years of the inception of the programme, 163 social welfare programmes and 1 094 multi-purpose women centres were established in the rural areas of Nigeria.¹⁶ More such centres continue to spring up and take their cue from the existing ones.

At the same time, training was arranged for women who wanted to become nurses. Women constitute over 90% of the nursing

personnel as well as the major users of their services in Nigeria. The BLRW programme capitalised on this skewness in favour of women to educate women in this very important vocation. The expanded healthcare delivery programme of government in the 1980s resulted in the proliferation of health clinics, health centres and hospitals in the country.

These development efforts exerted an upward pressure on the demand for nurses and health assistants in the newly established health-care centres and hospitals. Through the BLRW programme, auxiliary nurses – who are mainly women – were trained to work in the hospitals, health centres and health posts in rural areas.

As part of the manpower and community development strategies of the programme, training centres were also located in communities to train rural women in various trades considered relevant to their economic and social empowerment. Areas of focus include entrepreneurship, food processing, dressmaking, poultry keeping, and handicraft. The location for an enterprise is based on a combination of the comparative advantage of the area and the felt need of the people.

Much effort is spent on educating rural people about the importance of improving adult literacy for women through formal and informal education. Certain discriminatory social practices directed against women such as female genital mutilation, sexual abuse, and early childhood marriages are discussed and strategies for redress adopted in women-education forums created by the BLRW programme.

As in nursing, auxiliary teachers were trained to teach in adult education centres as well as in formal education, to bridge the gap created by yet another ambitious government development programme, the Universal Primary Education Programme. The trainees in this programme were mainly married women who had some basic primary or secondary education, but who were full-time and non-income earning housewives.

The BLRW programme supported the training programme using its political influence at the federal, state and local government levels. By such a strategy, many otherwise unemployed and non-income earning rural women received vocational training, and later secured teaching appointments. Today, they earn a better income and contribute to improved welfare in their respective families and communities.

The auxiliary training created an avenue for some women who showed exceptional academic skills to enrol in higher diploma and degree programmes as full-time or part-time students. The programme has thus contributed to improved adult literacy among rural women in particular and rural dwellers in general.

Potential for International Replication

The BLRW programme, by virtue of its structure, has great potential for duplication and adaptation under different social, economic and political environments. The following factors favour the transferability and ease of duplication of the programme by other governments and countries.

Political structure of the programme

By taking its roots from the seat of government, the programme can easily be adopted by any willing government. Since it is organised and chaired by the wife of the head of state or the First Lady, it can easily be copied by another country. Indeed, the organisational simplicity of the programme is one of its major attributes.

Maryam Babangida had this to say about the duplication of the programme in other African states:

I am glad to acknowledge in this connection the efforts of a number of other African First Ladies to improve the conditions of underprivileged women and children in their countries. It will really be a healthy development and I anxiously look forward to the time when First Ladies of African countries will pool their immense potential for public good in order to better the lot of our women and children.¹⁷

However, it should be borne in mind that Nigeria's peculiar political circumstances at the time, and under a military dictatorship, may well have influenced the success of the programme, and will not be so easy – or desirable – to replicate.

Institutional support

As the “baby” of the wife of the Head of State, the BLRW programme naturally attracts the sympathy and support of the Head of State and his government. The Nigerian case was the first time in the political history of the country that the wife of the Head of State had an office of her own within the State House. This new status and responsibility is a complete departure from the traditional role of the First Lady of accompanying the Head of State on special occasions. Prior to the activities of Maryam Babangida and the BLRW programme, all past first ladies only made ceremonial appearances. They never owned offices of their own and only made public appearances in the company of their husbands on ceremonial occasions like the National Day celebrations and state visits. In the case of the BLRW programme, the weight and influence of government was placed at the disposal of the programme, thereby giving it credibility and political respectability. The same recognition and support was given to the state and local branches of the programme, all the way to the grassroots.

Again, this may only be possible in a situation in which the Head of State is in a position to take unilateral decisions, and to promote his wife at the expense of other office-bearers.

Financial support

The BLRW programme in Nigeria received government budgetary allocations the same way the Office of the President receives budget and other resource allocations. With such solid recognition and financial backing by the government, the programme was able to run its activities successfully like any ministry in the country. At the state level and below, projects under the programme such as the adult education, rural training centres, the health care projects, and women cooperatives received financial boosts from the government at all levels. For example, the Adult Education Programme (LIT-LIT) in Jalingo, Taraba State financed the purchase of bicycles for 15 literacy programme supervisors. This was done to ensure that as many classes as possible are held in the rural areas of the state.¹⁸

In addition to direct funding from government, the programme received funding from international donors who had bilateral agreements with the government. In the case of grants, government acted as surety by guaranteeing their loans. However, in general, funding of the programme was more from donations than grants and loans. In this regard, the financial viability of the programme was guaranteed by both the direct and indirect financial

support of the government at all levels.

Since the programme promoted rural development and part of the philosophy in rural development in Nigeria is to encourage self-help, many individuals through donations in cash and kind also supported the programme. The women themselves made their own contributions through volunteer labour and organised fundraising activities. This similarity is presumed to be in existence in many countries in the developing world. Therefore, the same strategy can be adopted to support a programme of this nature to empower rural women through education and training to accelerate rural development.

Prospects for Sustainability

The prospects for sustainable operation of the BLRW programme are good, and not altogether far-fetched. As long as there is a government in place and as long as the moral and ethical standards of requiring a (male) Head of State to be married remain the watchword of the electorate, there will be a measure of sustainability for the programme. Furthermore, with so much sentiment expressed

globally on economic, social and political empowerment of women through better education and access to production resources, the BLRW programme and other programmes with similar aims and objectives will continue to receive political support by well-meaning governments. The global focus on sustainable development through support for disadvantaged people, who include women, children and traditional people, further buttresses this sentiment. The current emphasis world wide on Women in Development, Gender Equality and Gender Sensitivity are some

of the ways that women's liberation and empowerment are being translated from mere slogans to actual practices. The BLRW programme is an avenue that has been used by women in Nigeria to complement these recent global initiatives in favour of women in general and rural women in particular.

However, one of the major threats to the programme is the political instability that is common in Africa and many developing countries. This is a problem because of the attitude of new leaders who condemn the policies and programmes of their predecessors. More often than not, the condemnation is borne out of an attempt to discredit rather than a genuine and objective assessment of the performance of the previous leader. The practice of indiscriminate abolition of all policies or instruments of leadership used by past leaders poses the danger of making nonsense of any good programme simply because it was initiated by a deposed or retired leader. The BLRW programme, in spite of its achievements, has in fact suffered the same fate in Nigeria.

Moreover, with the leadership of the BLRW programme embedded in the office of the Head of State, it owes allegiance to the government of the day and therefore to the party in power. It is therefore not independent of government and has limited freedom to operate independently. The government wields a great deal of influence on the activities of the programme. With this lack of autonomy, the sustainability of the programme cannot be guaranteed if another party comes into power. There is a general tendency for an opposition party to disapprove of the policies of a ruling party, no matter how lofty the ideas of the ruling party might be. When an opposing party seizes power, particularly in a coup, their

The private sector, too, has a role to play in the empowerment of rural women in Africa ... by investing in projects that support or serve as integral parts of the BLRW programme

immediate reaction is to dismantle all programmes and policies initiated by the previous government. Worse still is the disdainful African culture and attitude, which tends to marginalise women politically, socially and economically. With such an obnoxious attitude towards them, women-initiated ideas become the first casualties with any change in political leadership. This poses a threat to women-initiated and women-managed programmes, of which the BLRW is no exception.

Strategies for Success and Sustainability

A programme like the BLRW should be non-partisan, non-racial, non-religious and non-tribal in its structure and conduct and should be independent of the government of the day. With such a structure, it can survive political and constitutional changes and remain sustainable. Ideally, the programme should be run as an autonomous NGO to which interested donors and participants can contribute money and technical expertise.

The organisation will then be open and will attract membership and expertise from professionals such as doctors, lawyers, politicians, educationists, engineers, traditional leaders, and clergymen. With such a heterogeneous composition, the tendency for the programme to lean on the government for political and financial support will be reduced. At the same time, the possible demise of the programme because of a change in political leadership will be eliminated.

The inclusion of a diversified group of professionals is crucial since rural development involves many fields of expertise and diverse activities including health care, infrastructural development, education, social and cultural promotion, and religious and moral ethics. If diverse interests and stakes are well represented in the planning of the programme, they will go a long way in enhancing programme efficiency and sustainability.

The role of churches and schools in adult education and training and in moral education for the programme cannot be overstressed. The church acts as a rallying point for people in the rural communities and can be a strong and viable instrument in the pursuit of social transformation. Issues that disfavour women such as female genital mutilation, sexual abuse, child marriage and disregard for female education can be addressed by the church. Informal adult education on childcare, marriage counselling, prostitution, gender inequality and HIV/AIDS are all social problems in which the church can make effective contribution.

The private sector, too, has a role to play in the empowerment of rural women in Africa. The private sector is noted for its prudence and pragmatism in resource and portfolio management. The private sector can therefore invest in projects that support or serve

as integral parts of the BLRW programme. For instance, private investments in real estate and property development can boost the supply of business premises and residential houses in rural areas. Doctors can open clinics that will assist with family planning and early parenthood and post and ante-natal services. They can also employ the auxiliary nurses trained by the programme and thereby complement the improved healthcare objective of the programme. Engineers can invest in solar energy alternatives in power supply while businessmen can invest in capital equipment in agriculture, fisheries and manufacturing.

Conclusion

The BLRW programme proved a cost-effective, multi-disciplinary and multi-faceted approach to promoting adult education and adult literacy with a view to empowering rural women. The programme provided adult women in the rural areas with the basic education needed to foster self-employment, job creation, enhanced income, food security and poverty alleviation in the localities. Adult education does not only empower women economically, it also enhances their social and political status by improving their level of awareness. The organisational structure of the BLRW programme facilitated political and economic advantages for the rural women as it was closely linked to government and therefore received strong institutional, political and financial support.

The multiplier effect of the programme in manpower development, job creation and investments was very high. As participating women enrolled their daughters and female relations in the programme, there was great potential to produce several generations of trained manpower in the rural areas of the country. The multi-disciplinary nature of the activities and projects undertaken in the programme creates immense opportunity for investment in commerce, industry, education and agriculture with prospects for rapid rural employment and capital accumulation.

The programme, however, was threatened by the constant political instability common in many countries of Africa, and Nigeria in particular. The programme was very dependent on the government of the day and the ruling party for its operation and sustainability. However, if it was planned and executed as a non-partisan organisation, the problem could be allayed. Managing the programme as an independent NGO might hold promise for better longevity and help dispel fears about discontinuity. Optimism is expressed that the programme can effectively be duplicated in other countries to aggressively pursue the global objective of women empowerment through education for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. ☺

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Southern Africa's new security agenda

Reflections on the evolution of human security and its applicability to Southern Africa

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The beginning of the 21st century ushered in fresh hopes for peace and stability in Southern Africa. Indeed, things have changed but there still remain a number of challenges for the region. In the area of security, traditional threats to security have receded, while newer non-traditional threats, such as small arms proliferation, mass migration, environmental degradation and narco-trafficking have surfaced. This article seeks to achieve two things. Firstly, to offer a theoretical examination of the historical evolution of the new security agenda and analyse its impact on policy. Secondly, to explore the applicability and the relevance of this new security agenda in Southern Africa.

The evolution of new security thinking

Traditionally, security was almost exclusively focused on states and military concerns.¹ In this way, the concept came to refer to 'national security' and was synonymous with 'defence'. This Clausewitzian conceptualisation of security is clearly evident in the following definition by Ian Bellamy: "Security itself is a relative freedom from war, coupled with a relatively high expectation that defeat will not be a consequence of any war that should occur".² This rather narrow view is echoed by Giacomo Luciani who commented that "[n]ational security may be defined as the ability to withstand aggression from abroad".³ As such, the study of security in the post-1945 period was dominated by concepts such as 'containment', 'deterrence', 'flexible response', 'massive retaliation', 'balance of power', mutually assured destruction (MAD) and an overarching concern with nuclear strategy.

This is not to say that there were no alternative voices to be heard that challenged this predominantly military-centred paradigm. As early as 1705, the German philosopher Leibniz expressed the need for a state to provide common security (*la sécurité commune*) to its citizens, and the French philosopher, Montesquieu, noted that true political freedom could only occur when people are secure. Both philosophers put the security of individuals ahead of the security of states. These notions resurfaced in the 1950s, when thinkers such as Harold Lasswell called for a broader conceptualisation of security. But perhaps the most fundamental rethinking, which also had direct relevance to security in southern Africa, came in the 1980s and early 1990s. As the world witnessed a number of fundamental changes, the re-ordering of states and the emergence of new issues on the international arena, questions started to be asked of the notion of security.



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At the forefront of the onslaught against the military definition of security were thinkers such as Barry Buzan and Ken Booth who began to ask questions such as: what is security, whose security, and security from which threats? In determining whose security needs to be addressed, Booth noted that the problem with traditional security perspectives was that they equated security exclusively with state security.⁴ This perspective, as Buzan rightly argued, did not take into account how state security was often purchased at the expense of human security, specifically in the dictatorships of the developing world. In practice, a rethinking of security meant making people the primary referent as opposed to the state. Thus, new security thinking increasingly paid attention to what has been termed 'human security' as opposed to state-centric approaches.

According to the Bonn Declaration of 1991, human security is "the absence of threat to human life, lifestyle and culture through the fulfillment of basic needs".⁵ This definition has also been informed by feminist contributions to new security thinking that strongly argue that there is a need for 'care' to be incorporated into any security discourse. This seeks to place the security concerns of the ordinary man and woman at the very core of any strategy.

One of the practical consequences of talking about human security as opposed to state security, or making people the primary referent of security, is that it becomes possible to identify threats to human security at subnational, national and transnational levels.⁶ A focus on human security reinforces the broadening of the security agenda to include non-military threats.

According to Buzan, the security of human collectivities can be affected by threats emanating from five sectors: military, political, economic, social and environmental. These insights have resulted in a radical revision of traditional definitions of security. It is worth noting that the expansion of the concept of security does not necessarily mean that military threats no longer exist or that they are jettisoned. Rather, as Buzan demonstrates, they exist alongside other threats, which also need to be taken into cognisance. Today, most definitions tend to complement the definition of human security given above. For instance, Richard Ullman's definition of security is conceptually more suitable to contemporary reality than most traditional ones:

...a threat to national security is an action or sequence of events that (1) threatens drastically and over a brief time span to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state, or (2) threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to the government of a state or to private nongovernmental entities (persons, groups, corporations).⁷

Nowhere is this new thinking on security more relevant than in southern Africa, where various factors combine to undermine the idea of the state itself, but also threaten people's well-being. Using Buzan's five threat factors, the next section assesses the risks to human security in the context of a changing southern Africa. It should be noted that the separate presentation of these five factors is only a matter of exposition in order to enable a clear and concise argument.

In practical terms, however, these factors overlap and cut across each other, such that it would be difficult to identify only one as the single threat to security at any particular time.

Military Sources of Insecurity

The military threats to security are often the most apparent, to the extent that they may be considered by some as the only threats to a country's security. This article does not attempt to substitute or undermine the existence of such threats by disregarding them in favour of others; rather by including others, the intention is to allow them to complement each other.⁸

Military threats are regarded as traditional threats to security because they were and to some extent still are regarded as the most important threats to security. These threats are associated with the risk of a full-scale war between two or more adversaries. The definition of military threats contains within it certain assumptions, such as, for instance, the assumption that threats are interstate in character.⁹ In other words, conflict or war which calls for a direct resort to arms of mass destruction has traditionally only been perceived as two or more state being at war. Without necessarily challenging this definition outright – indeed, as shown below, it still has relevance – when one considers certain real-life examples

such as the current situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), it does appear to have its limits. That is, if we were to adopt it completely in the context of southern Africa, we would find it difficult to explain the Angolan civil war, for instance, where the full machinery of military war is employed within one state.

Therefore, in order to be able to explain such conflicts within the prism of a military threat, the definition would have to be extended to refer to intra-state conflicts as well. A situation like that of Angola, a

The situation in the Angolan war has made the relevance of military threats in southern Africa something that cannot be wished away

country which has been at war with itself for over four decades, poses a military threat not only within the country, among its people and the combatants themselves, but can also escalate into neighbouring states, further compounding an already volatile situation. This has happened with spill-over effects into Namibia, for example. The situation in the Angolan war has made the relevance of military threats in southern Africa something that cannot be wished away.

Furthermore, the spill-over effect of conflict has great effects on their own security and stability issues. In the case of Namibia, following the resumption of the war in Angola in 1999, the government allowed Angola to launch attacks on UNITA from Namibian soil. This also meant that the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) could pursue UNITA rebels even inside the territory of Namibia. This resulted, in the short term, in increased insecurity along the Namibian border area, and in particular in numerous attacks on civilians.

This example brings to the fore two issues. Firstly, Namibia was forced to keep its own army on alert, in case there should be a need to defend the country's territorial integrity. In fact, this occurred. In mid-2000, Namibian forces attacked a group of UNITA rebels who were accused of attacking civilians along the Namibian border; they drove the intruders back into Angolan territory. Following this, Zambia, in turn, has established a joint border military committee to look into the security of the countries' common border.

On a broader level, the conflict in Angola is a reflection of the fact that the military dimensions of a threat to security still hold sway in southern Africa. Most states would be inclined to keeping their armies on alert and part of doing this might involve the pur-

chasing of arms. The conflict in Angola already show signs of intensification following the recent killing of UNITA leader, Jonas Savimbi, by government troops. Some commentators have suggested that the Luanda government may well seek to capitalise on Savimbi's death with a fresh new offensive against UNITA, thereby seeking a military end to the civil war that has plagued the country for two generations.¹⁰

Political Sources of Insecurity

Political sources of insecurity include various wide-ranging issues which, when put together, make up a collective threat to a state's and its people's security. According to Nef, the post-Cold War security order has led to a profound alteration of the state as a mechanism for conflict management and for the authoritative allocation of resources.¹¹ He goes on to argue that this phenomenon has resulted in the emergence of different but related issues that simultaneously threaten the survival of the state and the security of its own people. These issues include the spread of sub-national or low intensity conflicts, as well as the decline in the rule of law, which results in high crime rates and a strained relationship between civil society and the state. The decline in the rule of law exposes the state and its people to all sorts of criminal activity, of which drug trafficking is a key problem. Furthermore, the situation is worsened when a state becomes the direct source of a threat to its own citizens. This has been a common phenomenon in most African countries where state-sponsored conflict leads to a total disregard of the principles enshrined in human security. For instance, the situation in Zimbabwe prior to the 2002 election has seen violent acts, which were carried out by various formations such as the war veterans, with little, if any, attempts from the state to curb such acts.

In the case of low intensity conflicts, one of the striking phenomena in the recent history of southern Africa is that they are not always contained within one country's borders. This has led, among other things, to the wide availability and proliferation of small arms, at a relatively affordable cheap price. These small arms

can easily be used to exacerbate conflicts. The proliferation of small arms has serious consequences for social and political stability, while at the same time they are capable of stirring up regional conflicts and fuelling internal wars.¹²

In 1998, it was estimated that about 8 million small arms were in the hands of the security agencies, the highest figure being in Angola (1.1 million), around 700 000 in Mozambique and about 600 000 in Zimbabwe.¹³ What is cause for concern is that these figures do not include those arms that are in illegal hands. The availability of these arms in southern Africa has a great deal to do with the legacy of a violent region during the Cold War era, and the post-Cold War period's relative peace gains are threatened by such proliferation. It has been argued that in countries where there is internal strife, most of the weapons employed are small arms like AK-47s and this goes a long way towards explaining their proliferation.¹⁴ Many countries are now faced with high violent crime rates which can undermine the ability of the state to govern and provide protection to its own citizens. Because of the inherent regional connections that accompany this availability of arms, one would argue that it is a problem best dealt with at a regional rather than state level.

The availability of illicit drugs and drug smuggling is another factor, which contributes to political insecurity. That is, drug smuggling is often accompanied by the existence of criminal syndicates who are looking for alternative means, which often undermine the accepted rules of governance, to conducting their business. The sale of illicit drugs in southern Africa poses a direct challenge to political security in the region. Numerous studies have shown that South Africa has become a target for international narcotics dealers both as a market and as a trans-shipment station to other countries. According to Solomon, 90% of global marijuana production is sold in South Africa while 25% seized internationally is confiscated in the country.¹⁵ This has huge political implications for the country's own stability especially when one considers that it is an emerging democracy. In states which are already weak or which are faced with political instability for instance Angola and the DRC, criminal activity normally increases as a result of a lack of proper rule of law.

Environmental Sources of Insecurity

The identification and analysis of environmental issues as a source of insecurity has been met with suspicion from those who would like to see security coupled only with military issues. However, when it is agreed that there is a need to broaden the definition, these sources of insecurity, as compared to others, are relatively easy to identify. What is fundamental, though, is that the contemporary environmental crisis is overwhelmingly a 'human-made' problem.¹⁶

Among the most identifiable sources, are such things as global warming, deforestation, which leads to land degradation and decreased food production, and scarce water resources. Consider in this regard that since 1950, an estimated 500 million hectares of land in sub-Saharan Africa has been adversely affected by soil degradation and this includes 65% of agricultural land.¹⁷ The decrease in food production levels leads to what has come to be known as food insecurity in most African states. The issue of food insecurity

manifests itself in things like malnutrition, food scarcity and hunger. Another pressing environmental issue in southern Africa, which relates to security, is that of water usage and scarcity.

According to Nef, water-related problems vary from region to region but where there is water scarcity a number of problems arise.¹⁸ Such problems arise as a result of the fact that control over water resources is a vital and strategic human security issue, as it relates directly to health, energy and food security. What complicates the situation when it comes to water issues in southern Africa is the fact that most rivers are transnational and this can lead to water disputes and even confrontations in the future. Here, the case of two arid countries – Namibia and Botswana – and their conflict over access to and use of the waters of the Okavanga Delta serves as an example that the emergence of common problems or security threats does not necessarily lead to regional co-operation. This case was finally settled at The Hague by the International Court of Justice.

Furthermore, the issue of water resources and water scarcity is related to the continued loss of valuable arable land, which will also eventually impact on the capacity of the states in Southern Africa to feed their populations.

State-sponsored conflict leads to a total disregard of the principles enshrined in human security ... for instance, the situation in Zimbabwe prior to the 2002 election ...

Societal Sources of Insecurity

In most cases, the social sources of insecurity cut across national borders and as such they cannot always be effectively dealt with by nation-states on a unilateral basis. According to Nef, the social sources of insecurity can be regarded as those that affect the quality of social life within a nation or between nations.¹⁹ Often, the social sources are a result of a combination of factors existing in that society, which leads to mutual vulnerability between states, populations and neighbouring countries. These sources include population growth, migration, refugees and internally displaced persons.

Looking at population growth, it has to be borne in mind that this phenomenon can never be a source of insecurity on its own. Instead a number of factors would have to come into play before labelling it a threat to security. Population growth in various societies or nations has a role to play in environmental degradation and in some cases it also taps into very limited available resources.²⁰ For instance the United Nations Population Summit held in Rio in 1992 brought this point to the fore when it discussed the ecological limits to growth and the dangers posed by large and growing populations which are often driven by poverty and other factors, to 'damage' the environment. Also, there is a parallel between population growth and economic development. Population growth in a society where there is a relative lack of economic development or where there is an unfair or unbalanced distribution of resources could result in a lot of problems. In other words, a situation where there is an increase in the population but a decline in the quality of life could mean disaster.

It is in this context that population growth should be seen as a source of insecurity in Southern Africa because such a phenomenon occurs against the background of shared resources.²¹ Southern Africa has been experiencing a population increase of between 2.7% and 3.5% a year, and the total population is estimated to be around 300 million by 2015. At the same time, whilst there is a growth in population, there is also an alarming increase

in the number of people residing in urban areas and this leads to some areas becoming densely populated compared to others.²² Population growth figures however, have to be measured against other problems such as the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

Another problem, which also relates to the above, is that of huge population movements in the form of refugees and migration.²³ The movement of people has always been part of human history but it is made more worrying today because of the speed with which it occurs and effects that it has.²⁴ In discussing the problem of migration, there is a need to differentiate between two sets of migration. To begin with, there is the movement of skilled persons from one country to another in search of better opportunities elsewhere. If anything this only results in a loss of human capital for the country of origin (the so-called "brain drain") and relative gains for the receiving country.

On the other hand there is the uncontrollable movement of less skilled people, in huge numbers, to another country for a variety of reasons which include war, persecution and famine. It is the latter type of population movement that we are concerned with because of the problems that it creates, which is often as a result of things like political unrest, social upheaval, economic dislocation and ecological disaster.²⁵ Although this is indeed a regional problem, the two most affected countries have been South Africa – which is affected by the influx of a large number of illegal immigrants, mostly economic refugees – and Zambia, which is faced with a large number of people fleeing from conflict.²⁶

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Zambia has faced a continuous problem of refugees over the past decade. Towards the end of 2000, for instance, an estimated 12 000 Angolans entered the country between September and November alone.²⁷ At the same time, Zambia is also playing host to a large number of refugees from the DRC, where it was reported in December 2000 that at least 60 000 people entered the country in that month alone. The influx of these refugees is having a distinct impact on the internal stability of Zambia, and contributes to the increased insecurity of the country's border areas with Angola and the DRC. What is needed in this situation is greater co-ordination between governments and responsible international agencies like the UNHCR in order to ensure that the movement of refugees does not end up creating another problem for the host country.

South Africa has seen a fair share of the problem of migration, where the number of people illegally entering the country is on the increase daily. According to Solomon, South Africa had an estimated eight million illegal immigrants from the Southern African region in 1996.²⁸ The movement of people in such large numbers has its own social and economic implications. In the case of South Africa, it was estimated that in 1994, five million illegal immigrants cost the country nearly R2 billion. Concomitantly, there has been an increase in violent crime rates in the country, involving prostitution, drug trafficking and armed robbery, and this has been associated with the rising number of illegal immigrants in South Africa. Such an influx also makes it difficult for Southern Africa to deal with and curb the spread of diseases such as malaria, cholera and HIV/AIDS.²⁹

Population growth should also be seen as a source of insecurity, with an alarming increase in the number of people in urban areas.

The government strategy thus far has been one of dealing with the effects instead of the causes of this huge population movement. For example, the South African Police Service arrests thousands of illegal



street traders daily and passes them on to immigration officials, while the South African National Defence Force is deployed on the country's borders to try to minimise the numbers of people entering the country.³⁰

This would not however assist in resolving the problem as a whole, which is indeed a regional phenomenon. It is in this context that a broader security definition and approach is necessary, that would make sure that issues like respect for human rights are taken into cognisance when security is being discussed.

Furthermore, as a result of on-going wars and poorly developed infrastructure, Southern Africa has become home to a number of lethal diseases, which include cholera, malaria and HIV/AIDS. Among these, HIV/AIDS has not until recently been regarded as posing a security threat to the stability of most countries in Southern Africa and therefore the region as a whole.³¹

Yet currently, Sub-Saharan Africa harbours 23.2 million HIV positive people, which accounts for 70% of the total number of cases worldwide.³² This is of great importance considering that, according to a World Bank Report on HIV/AIDS in Africa, the epidemic may cut the life expectancy rate by 20 years.³³ The UNAIDS report quoted above also notes that in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are about 7.8 million AIDS orphans, which translates to about 95% of all AIDS orphans in the world.

The effect of the disease is felt differently by various countries in Southern Africa but the affected age group is largely between the ages of 15 and 49, with one in every 13 people in this age group expected to die of the scourge.³⁴

Considering that this is the group that is regarded as being economically active, the spread of this disease will have a huge negative impact on the countries' economic development. For example, in South Africa it is estimated that about a quarter of the police force is HIV-positive or has AIDS, while in Zimbabwe some businesses have been forced to close down as a result of AIDS deaths.³⁵

Furthermore, the effects of the disease on stability and security in the region can be clearly seen when one considers that the armed forces of the region are among the most affected groups in society. According to 1998 estimates, the Angolan and Congolese armed forces had infection rates of 50%; Malawi 66% and Zimbabwe 77%. Several reasons, which go beyond that fact that wars are a bloody business, account for these huge percentages. According to Heineken:

Most are young, male and sexually active, are deployed for lengthy periods away from home, subject to peer pressure, prone to risk taking and often exposed to opportunities for casual sex and sex workers. Bachelor conditions, alcohol abuse and high pay are seen as contributing factors, propagating the infection among the armed forces, especially in poverty stricken regions.³⁶

This has huge implications for the future stability of the region, and indeed of the continent when one considers that in war-torn Africa, peacekeeping missions may become the order of the day. Here, armed forces from various countries face the daily possibility of being called upon to deploy in various conflict spots on the continent. This is the case because armed forces are traditionally regarded as the country's first and last line of defence, and in cases

where they are debilitated by HIV/AIDS, this does indeed raise important questions for national and international security.³⁷

Moreover, the number of people contracting the disease in the region is on the increase. In Zimbabwe, for example, the adult infection rate is estimated at 26%, and there were 130 000 AIDS deaths in 1997 and nearly half a million AIDS orphans.³⁸ What makes one argue that the pandemic is a security threat and not just a disease is the fact that research has shown that, among other things, the spread of the disease in Southern Africa is related to issues of poverty. This view is based on recent research:

Poverty is ubiquitous in Southern Africa. In many countries of the region large numbers of people regularly do not get enough food to eat. In addition to malnutrition, tuberculosis, bilharzia, malaria and measles are all common. All these diseases weaken the immune system and leave the individual more vulnerable to subsequent infection. It is plausible that if two people are exposed to HIV infection, the person with a compromised immune system will be more vulnerable than the person who is well fed and healthy... It follows that many more people will contract the virus in Africa... than the better fed and healthy North Americans and Europeans.³⁹

This observation serves as evidence that Southern Africa needs to have a well co-ordinated response to the pandemic and one that recognises the fact that the disease is cutting the very lifeblood of the region as the economically active sector of the population is increasingly affected.

If two people are exposed to HIV infection, the person with a compromised immune system will be more vulnerable than the person who is well fed and healthy

Economic Sources of Insecurity

Any discussion of economic aspects as one of the sources of insecurity needs to consider the contemporary international political economy that the countries in the southern African region find themselves in. That is, when dealing with or trying to identify economic insecurities, the phenomenon of globalisation that holds sway

in the current international order has to be considered. In an uneven global economic system Africa finds itself marginalised and its contribution to world trade seems to be decreasing.⁴⁰

In order to gain an insight into the economic problems and prospects for the region and understand the challenges that it faces, let us consider the following statistical information. In 1998, Southern Africa's population numbered more than 190 million people and its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) amounted to US \$176 billion. This represents a decline in real GDP growth from 2.2% in 1997 to 1.7% in 1998, whilst per capita income fell by 1.3% in 1998.

Southern Africa is characterised by weak and small states, which do not possess the capacity to diversify their economies and develop their human resources. The effect of such a phenomenon on people is more worrying.

The UNDP's Human Development Index 1997, ranked eleven Southern African states as having 'medium' or 'low human development' with the exception of Seychelles and Mauritius which had high human development. In terms of formal economies, the World Bank's Development Report of 1997 concluded that Southern Africa is divided between low-income and middle income economies.⁴¹

The economy of almost all Southern African states is still a reflection of the manner in which the whole of Africa was integrated into the world market, post independence.⁴²

That is, Southern African states still reflect the old international political economy, which forced them to rely on the export of primary products.⁴³ Thus Angola exports mainly oil, Botswana trades in diamonds, and there is trade in water in Lesotho, tobacco in Malawi, fish in Mozambique, minerals in Namibia and South Africa, sugar in Swaziland, coffee in Tanzania, copper in the DRC and Zambia, and tobacco and minerals in Zimbabwe.⁴⁴

This situation impacts negatively on any move towards regional integration as most of the primary products are sold to western countries and this inhibits intra-Southern African trade.⁴⁵

Coupled with the above, has been the fact that for a long time, Southern Africa's human and natural resources have been operating away from each other with little organised interaction.

In this context, arguments have been brought to the fore that the region would be better served if it moved towards economic integration.

Furthermore, the issue of debt repayment has been another source of problems in Southern Africa. Post independence sub-Saharan Africa relies heavily on foreign aid, to the extent that debt servicing amounts to 25% of the region's export earnings.⁴⁶ In the Southern African region, the debt situation is also threatening since some of the countries are faced with a debt commitment that is more than their gross national product (GNP). This puts a strain on their already limited available resources and affects the capacity of various states in the region to provide for their population; instead, the money is used to repay or service debts and this continues the cycle of dependence.⁴⁷

Conclusion

The article began with a discussion of the evolution of new security thinking captured in the phrase "human security". This human security, it was argued, was more expansive than traditional approaches to security, which prioritised the military above all else. Whilst acknowledging the continued saliency of military sources of insecurity, human security also privileges other sources of insecurity: economic, politic, socio-cultural variables and the environment.

This kind of reasoning holds special resonance in the southern African context, where citizens are under greater threat from the scourge of AIDS than from a military offensive from a neighbouring country. The implication of this reasoning for national policy-makers is self-evident: they need to approach security in a more holistic and integrated fashion. Consider here the drought-inducting effects of the El Niño weather phenomenon for southern Africa. Socially, it serves to exacerbate food security, economically it serves to create a trade deficit when the state is forced to import wheat and maize, and politically it undermines the legitimacy of government as it is popularly viewed as ineffective in meeting the basic needs of its citizens. This would suggest that government departments – be it Agriculture, Trade and Industry, or Finance – need to work more closely together. However, given the transnational nature of such threats to security, it is imperative that policy-makers across southern Africa co-operate closely with their regional counterparts. After all, transnational threats require transnational solutions. This, in turn, implies a stronger Southern African Development Community with a larger secretariat in Gaborone working closely with SADC national contact points throughout the region. It is only in this way that national governments can truly provide real security for their citizens. ☉

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- 22 This is a result of unbalanced development whereby most of the country's resources would be concentrated in the urban areas with little developmental initiatives in the rural areas. Also, there is a need to differentiate between migration of skilled persons from one country to another which results in huge loss of human capital for the country or area of origin but relative gain for the receiving country. This is not the same with huge, uncontrollable movements of less skilled due to various factors.
- 23 This refers to movements of people within one country, for instance from rural to urban centres. But it also refers to population movements across national borders which has greater implications.
- 24 Nef 1995, p 3.
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- 26 Southern African countries have been greatly affected by the migration of people in large numbers from one country to another and the effects of such movements are not the same for all the countries as they struggle to cope with the incoming numbers of people.
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New York terror:

The implications for Africa

The implications of the 11 September 2001 incidents in the USA are not uni-directional, and neither are these incidents the first of their kind to have certain implications for Africa.

By Mike Hough

The United States (US) Code, Title 22, contains the following definition relating to terrorism and international terrorism:

The term "terrorism" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. The term "international terrorism" means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country. The term "terrorist group" means any group practising, or that has significant subgroups that practice, international terrorism.¹

A distinction between domestic and international terrorism is important for conceptual clarity, but has become increasingly difficult to draw. Many acts of domestic terrorism have international consequences, and in many cases domestic

groups targeting national targets only, receive some form of international support, or attempt to achieve international publicity.

An attempt to classify various forms of international terrorism also assists in distinguishing it from domestic terrorism. The following categorisation is suggested:

- International terrorism conducted by autonomous non-state actors;
- State-sponsored international terrorism conducted by people controlled by a sovereign state;
- International state terrorism conducted by a state using its own agents for this purpose.

Jenkins arrives at the conclusion that international terrorism comprises those terrorist incidents that have clear international consequences, namely incidents in which terrorists go

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abroad to strike their targets; stay at home but select victims because of their connections to a foreign state (for example, diplomats or the executives of foreign corporations); or attack international lines of communication (for example airlines).²

International Terror Incidents in Africa

Although incidents of domestic terror in Africa have been far more prevalent than incidents of international terror, it is the latter that tends to be of a more spectacular nature; has wider international implications than domestic terror; has led to retaliatory measures against governments in Africa supporting international terrorism; and has evoked resolutions from the Organisation for African Unity (OAU).

The immediate post-Cold War period saw only three incidents of international terrorism in Africa in 1991, while 53 were recorded in 1990, 50 in 1989 and 53 in 1988. The settlement reached in Angola at the time, as well as the overthrow of the government in Ethiopia, were seen as factors in this regard, as insurgencies had in these cases produced high levels of terrorism, including incidents of international terror.³

Although international terror incidents had therefore occurred in Africa prior to 1995, a steady increase can be noted since the mid-1990s. Africa nevertheless remains among the regions with the smallest annual number of incidents of international terrorism (see Table 1).

The bombing incidents at the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania contributed to more than 700 people dying and almost 6 000 wounded in international terrorist attacks in 1998.⁴

Observers note that "most attacks stemmed from internal civil unrest and spillover from regional wars as African rebel movements and opposition groups employed terrorism to further their political, social or economic objectives".⁵ In addition to committing certain acts which could be described as international terror, insurgent and protest groups are often also involved in domestic terror. Nevertheless, "international terrorist organisations, including al-Qaida, Lebanese Hizballah, and Egyptian terrorist groups, continued to operate in Africa during 2000..."⁶

In Africa, the US Department of State continues to list Libya and Sudan as state sponsors of international terrorism. In the

case of Libya, despite Gadaffi's publicly stated anti-terrorism stance, the US position is that "it remains unclear whether his claims of distancing Libya from its terrorist past, signify a true change of policy". In this regard, it is contended that Libya continues to have contact with, for instance, the Palestine Islamic Jihad. As far as Sudan is concerned, it had by the end of 2000 signed 12 international conventions for combating terrorism. However, Sudan is still alleged to act as a safe haven for groups such as the Palestine Islamic Jihad and Hamas.⁷

As far as indigenous groups are concerned, only three in Africa – People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), based in South Africa; the Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALIR); and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone – were listed by the US State Department under "other terrorist groups" involved in international terrorism during 2000. Qibla is mentioned as an Islamic ally of PAGAD, but not listed separately. The other category, namely "designated foreign terrorist organisations", included only one indigenous movement in Africa in 2000, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria.⁸

"Designated" foreign terrorist organisations are defined as groups currently listed by the US Secretary of State that threaten US security. This listing carries some legal consequences such as prohibitions on funding or other material support to these organisations. "Other terrorist groups" are those that were active in 2000, but which are not on the designated list. It

should also be noted that groups whose activities were limited in the year under discussion are not included in the list of "other terrorist groups" (for example, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army or the Lord's Liberation Army in Uganda), although certain incidents involving attacks on foreign nationals during 2000 were linked to them. Although UNITA in Angola is also suspected of being linked to a number of incidents involving foreign nationals, it is also not included in this list.⁹ In the case of Nigeria, incidents are attributed to "armed militants" and not to any particular organisation.

Incidents during 2000

During 2000, international terror incidents designated as "significant", were recorded in Namibia, Sudan, Angola, Uganda, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Burundi. One incident was also recorded in South Africa, namely damage to a McDonald's restaurant in Cape Town, while incidents also occurred in Guinea, Niger and Somalia, although these were not designated "significant".¹⁰

In the case of all the countries referred to above, the incidents are linked to civil war, rebel activity or the activities of militant movements. The spill-over of the Angolan war as a result of Namibia's support to the Angolan government in countering UNITA, has resulted in a number of terror incidents in Namibia. In the case of Nigeria, incidents have been directed by armed militants against international oil companies.

The incidents recorded in Africa in 2000 involved foreign property as well as foreign nationals, with kidnapping and

International terrorism comprises incidents ... in which terrorists go abroad to strike their targets; select victims because of their connections to a foreign state; or attack international lines of communication (like airlines)

TABLE 1: INCIDENTS OF TERRORISM IN AFRICA

YEAR	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS
1995	10
1996	11
1997	11
1998	21
1999	52
2000	55

Source: Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1995-2000, Washington DC: Department of State, 2001.

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armed attack the main methods. In Sierra Leone, United Nations (UN) peacekeepers were specifically targeted. In the case of Nigeria, Nigerian nationals as well as foreigners employed on oil drilling rigs were taken hostage.¹¹

In none of the incidents was any responsibility claimed by the perpetrators, although in the case of incidents in Sierra Leone, for instance, the RUF was thought to be responsible, and as far as incidents in Angola and Namibia are concerned, UNITA is normally linked. UNITA, however, denied involvement in an incident in Namibia where three French children were killed and their parents wounded.¹²

One of the obvious problems in a civil war environment is the tendency to blame armed opponents for incidents of terror, whether proof exists or not. In the case of the Angolan army, accusations have been made that they have committed acts of terror against civilians in Namibia, and subsequently blamed UNITA to cast the latter in a bad light.

The RUF has been involved in incidents of domestic terror in Sierra Leone, and UNITA has also been accused of incidents of domestic terror in Angola. None of the dissident movements involved in incidents of international terror in the period under discussion seem to have concentrated on international terror alone or even predominantly, with the exception of militants targeting foreign-owned oil companies in Nigeria. Only one of the organisations, the GIA, has been linked to incidents outside of Africa – a series of bombings in France, as well as the hijacking of an Air France flight in 1994.¹³

Developments in 2001

At the end of 2001, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) opposing the government of Uganda, as well as the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, and al-Itihaad al-Islamiya in Somalia, were included in the "Terrorist Exclusion List" issued by the US Secretary of State. A total of 39 organisations appear on the list. Under section 212 of the US Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended by the so-called Patriot Act, supporters of these groups can be denied entry into the USA or be deported. The list also includes the other groups in Africa on the other US lists previously referred to.¹⁴

Calls have been made for further extensions of these lists which in some cases also include names of individuals. The Namibian Foreign Minister, Theo-Ben Gurirab, has stated that Caprivi separatist, Mishake Muyongo, and UNITA leader, Jonas Savimbi, should be placed in the same category as those who carried out the recent terror attacks in the USA. This proposal was repeated with regard to UNITA at the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ for Politics, Defence and Security ministerial meeting in Angola during December 2001. It was argued that UNITA was not a liberation movement, but was involved in waging a terror campaign in Angola specifically. Sanctions against UNITA were seen as still not being effective, hence the attempt to further isolate UNITA. The Angolan government reportedly did, however, reiterate its pledge of amnesty to Savimbi.¹⁵

Factors contributing to an increase in international terrorism in Africa

In addition to the factors already referred to, such as international terrorist incidents linked to civil war or domestic armed conflict in Africa, various other aspects can also potentially contribute to an increase in international terrorism in Africa.

Firstly, the relatively easy movement of people across boundaries in Africa in the form of refugee flows and illegal border crossings, linked to the availability of small arms in Africa, facilitates the execution of acts of international terrorism. This is aggravated by a lack of proper control measures at many African ports of entry. Following the bomb blasts at the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, for instance, Khalfan Mohammed, one of the main suspects, entered South Africa with a false passport.¹⁶

Secondly, certain major events are increasingly being held in African countries and especially in South Africa, such as the recent World Conference Against Racism and the Earth Summit to be held in 2002.¹⁷ Obviously, major events which could generate large-scale publicity for terror incidents offer opportunities in this regard.

Moreover, foreign property (including embassies) is often not as well protected as those in regions where international terror attacks are more frequent. Following the bomb blasts in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, security was improved at all US embassies in African countries.¹⁸

Fourthly, religious conflict in Africa (and specifically where it is linked to radical Islam and tends to align with the Palestinian cause and adopting an anti-US stance), provides additional justification for acts of international terror. Countries such as Algeria, and more

recently Nigeria, are examples of conflict situations with a religious component.

Muslims in Cape Town also, for instance, protested against British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, during his visit to Cape Town in 1999, over British policy towards Iraq.¹⁹

The abduction and kidnapping of foreigners seems to occur with relative ease in countries such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Namibia. As in the case of Latin America, vast expanses of jungle, a low standard of law enforcement and armed rebellion are factors that play a role in this regard.²⁰

At the same time, the relative lack of opportunities for movements in Africa to publicise their cause, means that a major incident of international terrorism could be one way of obtaining the required publicity, or even money, if hostage-taking is involved.

Lastly, the occurrence of so-called "criminal insurgencies" in Africa, for example in Sierra Leone, as referred to previously, which tend to be characterised by the lack of a clear political goal or ideology; a lack of military order and discipline; and atrocities against civilians who tend to become the main targets, also play a role.

Obviously, this type of situation also creates increased possibilities for international terror, as has in fact been the case in Sierra Leone.²¹

The relatively easy movement of people across boundaries in Africa, linked to the availability of small arms in Africa, facilitates the execution of acts of international terrorism

Some consequences of the US terror incidents for Africa

Prior to discussing some of the above implications, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the status of Africa in the post-Cold War period. During the 1990s, the decreasing importance of Africa in world politics was increasingly evident. In this regard, it was even stated that "during the Cold War, for better and often for worse, African countries had at least some geopolitical and strategic relevance. This is no longer the case. In strategic literature they are not discussed even as a potential threat."²² A similar process of marginalisation of Africa in the world economy has also been noted.

Although this may be an exaggeration, it is clear that world attention was even further diverted from Africa following the 11 September 2001 terror incidents. However, and for obvious reasons, Africa's role in combating international terror and the identification of international terror support structures in Africa has now become more important.

Security concerns

Sudan and Libya, as mentioned, have been on the US list of state sponsors of international terror for some time. It is now also increasingly being speculated that Somalia is the next target of US attacks on terror bases in Africa, as about 1 000 members of Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaida network have reportedly been traced to Somalia. US and British reconnaissance flights over Somalia have increased, and it is alleged that members of al-Qaida have transferred weapons from Afghanistan to

the north and south of Somalia. An Islamic rebel group – al-Itihaad al-Islamiya in Somalia – is said to have close ties with al-Qaida. There are, however, few military targets in Somalia, which is currently being governed by competing clans. This could imply that the assistance of Ethiopia, Kenya, and well-disposed clans in Somalia, could be enlisted to disrupt al-Qaida.²³ This would to some extent be similar to the strategy followed in Afghanistan, namely soliciting the support of Pakistan and the Northern Alliance, which in turn received US support.

Lists of individuals suspected of having links with Bin Laden were also handed to a number of African countries, including for instance South Africa and Swaziland, by the USA.

Political implications

Prior to the 11 September incidents, the OAU adopted the Convention on the Pre-vention and Combating of Terrorism (July 1999), which condemns all forms of terrorism and provides for states that are parties to the Convention to review their national laws and establish criminal offences for terrorist attacks. In terms of the Convention, political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other motives are not considered a justifiable defence against a terrorist act. However, Article 3(1) of the Convention states that:

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 1, the struggle waged by peoples in accordance with the principles of international law for their liberation or self-determina-

tion, including armed struggle against colonialism, occupation, aggression and domination by foreign forces shall not be considered as terrorist acts.²⁴

The OAU Convention was of course not only aimed at combating international terrorism, but at preventing neighbouring countries from assisting nationals of other countries from committing acts of domestic terror in their countries of origin.

Following the US incidents, a number of developments with political/security implications occurred in African countries, or affected African countries. As already referred to, the USA inter alia added rebel groups in Uganda to the terror listing of the State Department. This was followed by calls among certain African leaders to have UNITA and Caprivi separatist leaders similarly labelled, as it is argued that this would, especially in the case of UNITA, further serve to isolate the movement and its leader. The previous branding of the UNITA leader as a "war criminal" did little to further peace in Angola, and it could in fact be argued that this largely served to harden some UNITA attitudes. Various sanctions already apply against UNITA and it

is not currently on the US list of terror organisations, although often linked to incidents involving foreign nationals in Angola. UNITA in turn, has accused FAPLA soldiers of sowing terror in Namibia disguised as UNITA members, and similarly, Zambia has accused Angola of targeting Zambian civilians during operations against UNITA.

Another political consideration is linked to the fact that protest erupted in a number of countries against the US campaign in Afghanistan, notably in

Kenya and South Africa.²⁵ In South Africa, appeals were even made to volunteers to assist the Taliban government in resisting foreign forces operating in Afghanistan. And, although African countries generally announced their support for the US-led campaign in Africa, certain reservations were expressed. Former South African President, Nelson Mandela, for instance, qualified statements that he had initially made in support of the US campaign.²⁶

The OAU, however, reacted to the 11 September incidents by adopting a Declaration Against Terrorism at a summit held in Dakar in October 2001. An African Treaty on Terrorism was also proposed. In November 2001, the OAU Central Organ issued the following Communiqué on Terrorism:

[The OAU...]

3. Stresses that terrorism is a universal phenomenon that is not associated with any particular religion, culture or race, constitutes a serious violation of human rights, in particular, the rights to physical integrity, life, freedom and security; poses a threat to the stability and security of States; and impedes their socio-economic development.
4. Further stresses that terrorism cannot be justified under any circumstances and, consequently, should be combatted in all its forms and manifestations, including those in which States are involved directly or indirectly, without regard to its origin, causes and objectives.

Terrorism ... is not associated with any particular religion, culture or race; constitutes a serious violation of human rights; and impedes socio-economic development

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5. Stresses the relevance of the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, which constitutes an adequate framework for collective African reaction against terrorism, as part of the efforts by the international community. In this respect, the Central Organ urges OAU Member States which have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Convention so as to ensure its early entry into force.
6. Welcomes the adoption of Resolution 1373 (2001) by the UN Security Council on 28 September 2001, as well as its previous resolutions related to terrorism and requests Member States to ensure their effective follow-up and implementation.
7. Urges Member States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify, without any further delay, the international Conventions and Protocols relating to terrorism, including the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism of 9 December 1999, and calls upon all States Parties to these instruments to fully and effectively implement their provisions.
8. Welcomes the Declaration Against Terrorism adopted by the African Summit held in Dakar on 17 October 2001 including the proposal to prepare a Draft Additional Protocol to the OAU Convention on Terrorism in conformity with the provisions of Article 21 of the said Convention.²⁷

The US National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, stated in October 2001:

One of the most important and tangible contributions that Africa can make right now is to make clear to the world that this war is one in which we are all united. ...We need African nations, particularly those with large Muslim populations, to speak out at every opportunity to make clear... that this is not a war of civilisations. ...Africa's history and geography give it a pivotal role in the war... Africa is uniquely positioned to contribute, especially diplomatically through your nations' memberships in African and Arab and international organisations and fora, to the sense that this is not a war of civilisations. This is a war of civilisations against those who would be uncivilised in their approach toward us... Do not let the world forget that there were many African and many Muslim victims of al-Qaeda not only in Kenya and Tanzania but in the World Trade Centre.²⁸

It was added that Africa should not be used as a hide-out for killers.

In addition, a number of countries such as Malawi and Zimbabwe adopted, or planned to adopt, stringent legislation to combat terrorism. In the case of Zimbabwe specifically, concern was, however, expressed that these measures would be used to suppress normal political opposition in a situation where the Zimbabwean government was itself being accused of condoning acts of violence and terror.²⁹

One of the most important and tangible contributions that Africa can make right now is to make clear to the world that this war is one in which we are all united

The maintenance of basic democratic values could therefore easily be jettisoned if measures to combat terror do not strike a balance between freedom and security, or if these measures are used to suppress legitimate criticism and opposition.

South Africa, in turn, had already signed the UN Convention on the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, and indicated at the end of 2001 that the UN Convention on the Financing of Terrorism would also be signed. A draft anti-Terrorism Bill was also published in 2000, but due to reservations about the constitutionality of certain provisions, it has not yet proceeded further. The South African Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs recently emphasised the importance of fast-tracking specific legislation designed to combat terror so that South Africa could comply with measures demanded by UN resolutions.³⁰

Although initially it was argued that the 11 September incidents had (excepting for seeking Africa's support for the anti-terror war) shifted Western interest even further away from Africa (for example, inaction on the Zimbabwe issue), the US Congress, for instance, subsequently passed legislation providing for sanctions against Zimbabwe if certain conditions were not met.³¹

Economic implications

The strategic significance of Africa had diminished at the end of the Cold War. Should the 11 September incidents result in reduced foreign aid and investment in Africa, it would be the continuation of a trend which has its roots in the post-Cold War period. In addition, other factors have been influencing aid to African countries, most notably corruption (as in the case of Malawi), or state-condoned violations of the rule of law (such as in Zimbabwe). It should also be borne in mind that the global economic downturn had already commenced prior to

the 11 September incidents. The latter (at least in the shorter-term) merely tended to accelerate this trend.

During January 2002, the US stated that the fight against terrorism would not hinder US assistance to African countries, especially Malawi. Donor countries had previously announced a suspension of aid to Malawi as a result of on-going corruption.³²

It was also announced that the US government had approved the designation of 35 sub-Saharan African countries as eligible for tariff preferences under the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

This will be done on the basis of an annual determination taking into account progress towards a market-based economy; the rule of law; free trade; policies for poverty relief; and protection of workers' rights.³³

However, it has been calculated that Afghanistan would need US\$10-15 billion in international aid over the next five to ten years to rebuild the country. The US would probably contribute US\$1-3 billion of this. The Afghan government had earlier requested US\$45 billion. It is therefore clear, that if added to the cost of the war in Afghanistan to the US, priorities may be shifting.³⁴

Moreover, in view of a global slump in the demand for certain commodities such as oil and paper, following the 11 September incidents, oil-producing countries in Africa as well as companies involved in the manufacturing of paper felt the consequences of a reduced global demand. Certain other sectors, such as tourism, however, in some cases reported an increase in business, as "safer" tourist destinations such as Cape Town came into demand.³⁵

The cost of insurance is also predicted to increase sharply, again with marked effects in developing countries. Many of these countries also do not have the resources to upgrade security measures at airports or other ports of entry, which will now increasingly be expected after the 11 September incidents.³⁶

It is of course not only Africa that will bear at least some of the consequences of the 11 September terror incidents, but developing as well as developed countries which had already been affected by the global economic slow-down. The UN Secretary-General expressed his concern that the war against terrorism would overshadow programmes to combat poverty and disease, and pointed out that the number of people living on less than US \$1 per day has not decreased since the 11 September attacks.³⁷

Conclusion

The 11 September terror incidents in the USA obviously have more far-reaching direct consequences for Asia and the Middle East than for Africa. Yet, the number of international terror incidents in Africa has been increasing since the mid-1990s; out of seven countries listed globally by the US as sponsors of interna-

tional terrorism, two are in Africa; and some of the major international terror incidents have occurred in Africa. Moreover, there are certain indicators of how future trends may be affected: for instance, certain rebel groups in Uganda have recently been added to the US State Department terror lists; there are indications that there is concern over al-Qaida networks in Africa, especially in Somalia; and Western interests and nationals continue to be among the targets of international terror in Africa.

Ongoing armed conflict in Africa also continues to promote domestic as well as international terror. A number of these conflicts also represent religious conflict and more radical Islam, although intertwined with other factors.

There are, however, also a number of other causes of concern. Firstly, while the focus is currently on international terror, domestic terror is far more prevalent, including in some cases what may be described as repressive (state) terror or state-condoned terror. Some have equated the current situation in

Zimbabwe to this. Ironically, the Zimbabwean government recently adopted legislation which is intended to combat terrorism and subversion, but with the risk that this could be used to suppress normal political competition.

Secondly, labelling rebel groups "terrorists", although it may be justifiable in view of certain acts committed by them, does not automatically solve the underlying problems which contribute to terrorism. If these issues are not also addressed, the 11 September incidents may serve the purpose of providing opportunities for some African leaders (and others) to distract attention from issues that underlie specific conflict situations. ☉

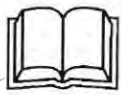
While the focus is currently on international terror, domestic terror is far more prevalent, including in some cases what may be described as repressive (state) terror or state-condoned terror

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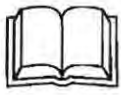
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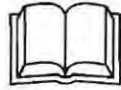
Vigdis Broch-Due and Richard A Schroeder (eds), *Producing Nature and Poverty in Africa*, Nordic Africa Institute, 2000.

Development donors have supported thousands of environmental initiatives in Africa over the past quarter century. The contributors to this provocative new collection of essays assess these projects and conclude that environmental programmes constitute one of the major forms of foreign and state intervention in contemporary African affairs. Drawing on case studies from eight countries, the authors demonstrate that environmental programmes themselves often have direct and far-reaching consequences for the distribution of wealth and poverty on the continent.



Alistair Sutherland, Adrienne Martin and David Rider Smith, *Dimensions of Participation: Experiences, lessons and tips from agricultural research practitioners in sub-Saharan Africa*, Natural Resources Institute, 2001.

This helpful volume explores dimensions of practical experiences with participation in agricultural research – farmer participation, teamwork and engaging with other stakeholders. Sixteen chapters include practitioners' candid accounts of their experiences on agricultural research and extension projects in Africa, sharing the difficulties they faced along with the progress they made. These case studies cover many practical aspects of design and implementation that are not covered in currently available books and manuals addressing participatory agricultural research.

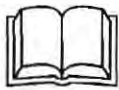


Francis Wilson, Nazneen Kanji and Einar Braathen (eds), *Poverty reduction: What role for the state in today's globalized economy?*, Comparative Research Programme on Poverty, 2001

Poverty and social exclusion have moved up the international policy agenda, in step with the ever more obvious failure of development to reduce mass immiseration and the growing gulf of inequality which latter-day capitalism has created.

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Isobel Birch and Halima AO Shuria, *Perspectives on Pastoral Development: A casebook from Kenya*, Oxfam, 2001.

This book provides an objective account of a major Oxfam initiative: the Wajir Pastoral Development Project in north-east Kenya, with its distinctive emphasis on community participation.

The authors explain how marginalised groups are developing their own pastoral associations to represent their interests, and Oxfam's role in facilitating that process.

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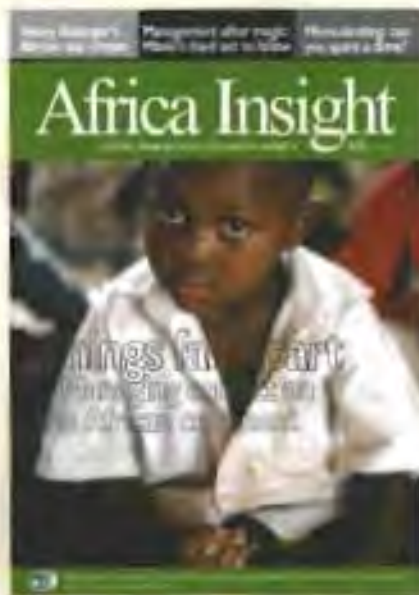
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