

Rural Community Development School for 'Maritzburg

BASED at the University of Natal's Pietermaritzburg campus, the School of Rural Community Development will provide training to facilitate rural development initiatives. It will operate at two levels - in the university and in the community. "What is clear is that there is a need for training and that there are already a lot of non-government organisations doing some training in communities. It is important that the school does not duplicate what is already taking place. Instead, it should try to build on what already exists," says Professor Sangweni. He is currently carrying out a survey of existing training activities. "There is a wide range of community based organisations and we need to find out where they operate and at what levels they work," he says.

The School will draw on several faculties at the university, in particular the Agriculture and Social Science Faculties. Discussions have been held with the Agriculture Faculty about a bachelor's degree which focusing on agriculture and rural development. Such a degree would involve course work on project identification and management, extension methods and leadership skills. It is hoped that this degree course will be offered by 1994.



Professor Stan Sangweni, head of the Rural Community Development School at the University of Natal's Pietermaritzburg campus.

Similar discussions have occurred with the Social Science Faculty. It is hoped a degree course will be formulated with courses such as rural sociology, geography, regional development and rural development.

Discussions are also underway about the possibility of offering post-graduate degrees within the Sociology Department with an emphasis on rural development.

Sangweni believes it will be important to emphasise training in management of people and material resources.

What non-degree courses the school offers will depend on the results of the survey currently being undertaken. These results are expected to be ready within the next two months. It is hoped that these courses will start in 1993. They will involve training at local level (community members and leaders) and technical training for service organisation staff.

Wide exposure to development issues

PROFESSOR Stan Sangweni, head of the University of Natal's School of Rural Community Development, has had the benefit of exposure to development issues in several parts of the world. As a young boy, he grew up in Jobstown, a freehold area near Madadeni in Natal. His secondary schooling took him to Marianhill, near Pinetown. His tertiary study took him to Lesotho's Roma University. Further tertiary study, around rural development issues, took him to Canada, the United States, Holland and back to Africa (Lesotho and Swaziland).

In 1974 he joined the United Nations Economic Commission For Africa. Based in Lusaka, Zambia, his work brought him in touch with the problems facing Africa. Among others, the Commission tried to promote regional cooperation.

In 1982, while based in Nairobi, Kenya, he left the UN Economic Commission to join the UN Environmental Programme, where he worked until his return to South Africa in December 1991.

While he was out of South Africa, he also became active in the ANC's Education Council and was among the people who set up the Solomon Mahlangu Training Centre in Tanzania. The school became a model training institute.