

school drop-outs, and petty criminals. They believed the priority was to acquire skills on how to make contact with such groups and integrate them into youth projects. To meet their needs, role plays shifted the emphasis to coping with difficult encounters with anti-social youth groups and less attention was paid to the formal groups. This is what social learning is all about — it is hearing the local communities point of view and responding appropriately.

3. Collective Action:

Collective action deals with the thorny issue of community participation. Glib statements are made about the need for the community "to be involved", but the nature of the involvement is seldom elaborated on. What degree of participation is hoped for? Are communities merely to endorse a decision and support services that have been imposed on them? Or are communities to have a say in the planning and implementation of new services? These are the thorny issues that have to be wrestled with but clearly government departments in KwaZulu need to consider ways and means of actively strengthening and increasing the degree of participation in local level projects and services.

The starting point for translating strategy into programme development lies in building bridges between the departments and working towards consensus amongst top government officials and planners. Once this has been achieved, local level committees can begin their co-ordinating role. This is not a top-down approach but rather an all important effort to ensure that once a bottom-up dialogue for development begins, there is a better informed and equipped top level bureaucracy to respond to the issues that cause concern at local level.

The process of dialogue and the working towards consensus has already begun. Recommendations, based on the views of all departments will be made to the Cabinet and thereafter suggested strategies will be elaborated further into local level programmes.

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Pension problems

During the course of the 1984/85 financial year approximately R113-million was allocated for expenditure on old age pensions. The amount far exceeds the total budget of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and also exceeds expenditure on health services.

The social costs to the community and the escalating dependency on pensions is an important issue. At family level the issues can be summarised as follows:

1. Many families are almost totally dependent on old age pensions. The amount (R65 per month) payable bi-monthly as an old age pension exceeds the wages of very many domestic, farm and "casual" workers; it also exceeds the income generated by small home industries.

For thousands of rural families roles are switched as the aged becomes in effect "the breadwinner" and adult men and women are the new generation of "dependents". This distortion of roles is creating problems and obstructing the growth of family members into their traditional roles.

2. The concept of pensions is relatively foreign to African communities where care of the aged has always been a vital function of the family. Urbanisation, escalating poverty and the ongoing destruction of the traditional way of life has eroded away concern for the aged.

At a broader community level the total dependency of families on so-

cial pensions precipitates serious problems.

The increasing dependency on social pensions may well be contributing to the stagnation of subsistence agriculture and other self-reliant "survival" activities. Now that total families "depend" on pensions in fact means that total families are now dependent on the Government.

This is in direct conflict with the Buthelezi Commission's (Vol. 2, 420) recommendations that the overall goal of integrated health, welfare and other related services should be total community development which should work towards "community decision-making and the heightening of morale and community commitment for development and change".

It is also in conflict with the philosophy of Inkatha as indicated by the President of Inkatha, Chief M G Buthelezi who, in an opening address to a *symposium on community development* (1983, 7) stated: "It is crucial that community development starts off with the principle that self-help is a central formative principle. Communities must accept the challenge of doing something for themselves. There will be no manna from heaven for them, and Inkatha must tell them this and mobilise them to help themselves."

The more the "Government" accepts responsibility for pensions, the more it is assumed that this indeed is where the locus of responsibility for the aged and disabled is. The responsibility is thus shifted from the individual and family to the Government.



The social costs

If the Social Pensions were not there, the realities of the situation deriving from poverty and unemployment would emerge. In this way intervention at the highest level would become necessary which could well result in proper and meaningful planning of long term development strategies to combat rural poverty.

An investigation into the needs of the Black aged in the Witwatersrand area (Nel, 1984, 5-6) indicated that the needs of the aged went way beyond the rands and cents of Social Pensions. The responses of the aged suggested that loneliness, poor health and lack of mobility were very important concerns for the aged.

Matron Nkosi in her remarks during the opening of the Zamazulu Nkosi Centre for the Aged on Saturday, November 17th, 1984 described the pitiful plight of most aged in the townships who, in the absence of adults who are at work and children who are at school, are locked into their own rooms/houses for their own safety. She has also frequently drawn attention to how, in an overcrowded situa-

tion in a township, the aged are relegated to all sorts of nooks and crannies. A sleeping place such as under the dining room table, or on the floor of the kitchen is not uncommon.

The position in the rural areas is hardly different from the urban areas except that the problem of overcrowding is less common. The loneliness of the aged may be compensated for by the responsibilities they have to assume for the care of children. Ultimately this too brings its own array of problems when very often with advancing age and senility the burden becomes intolerable.

While Social Pensions are currently absorbing 24,8% of the total KwaZulu budget and serving as a critical life support system for Black communities — the specific needs of the aged are perhaps being overlooked.

From an economic, social and developmental point of view, the "Social Pensions approach" to alleviating poverty in the Black communities is believed to be creating more problems than it solves. The KwaZulu Govern-

