Rural Development Initiatives in the Eastern Cape: A Focus on Activities of SEED and Mvula Trust

INTRODUCTION

This report presents a case study of development initiatives in villages in and around Matatiele and Kokstad in the Eastern Cape. It is important to emphasise that the case study focused on villages around these two towns because while the towns themselves are under KwaZulu-Natal, the surrounding villages and homesteads are under the Eastern Cape. The case study was undertaken as part of SAIDE’s ongoing research into critical success factors for successful implementation of distance education in rural areas. In particular, the visit to these villages intended to understand and document the work done by Sustainable Energy, Environment and Development (SEED) and Mvula Trust. This was done to ascertain the feasibility of introducing a distance education component in their work.

In our visit to SEED in Matatiele and Mvula Trust in Kokstad, we found that there existed a number of other community-based organisations and committees. While some of these organisations and committees had working relations with SEED and Mvula Trust, they existed independently. On the other hand SEED and Mvula Trust had during the course of their projects, facilitated the formation of a number of community based committees that promoted their interaction with local communities.

This report is divided into three main sections. The first section starts by giving details on how data was collected and the sources thereof and then it presents a brief background of the area that was visited. The second section presents findings and is divided into three sub-sections. The first sub-section focuses on SEED and in its activities in and around Maluti and Mount Fletcher districts. The second sub-section focuses on Mvula Trust and its activities in and around Kokstad. The third sub-section captures briefly case studies of other organisations of significance in that area and how they operate. The third section is an analysis and suggests ways in which SAIDE could work with some of these organisations.

SECTION 1: METHODOLOGY

This case study of programmes and rural development initiatives in the northern part of the Eastern Cape province focuses on the activities of the Mvula Trust and SEED. It also gives some information about other NGOs, CBOs and programmes operating in the area. Interviews and document analysis were the two main data gathering techniques.
1.1 INTERVIEWS:

SEED
The following interviews were conducted with individuals and focus groups from various community based organisations and committees in Matatiele (SEED).

- 1 on 1 interview with Mr. Boyce Plaatjies – SEED’s Rural Development Facilitator.
- 1 on 1 Interview with Mrs. Sissie Matela – Programme Manager at Environment Development Agency (EDA)
- 1 on 1 interview with Mrs. Julia Kain – Co-director of Matatiele Training and Communication (Mattcomm)
- 1 on 1 interview with Mrs. Malelhohonolo Nkungu – Project Co-ordinator, Itekeng
- Paired interview with Mr. Maxwell Mnja member of the Maluti Development Co-ordinating Committee and Mrs. Mosilo Kuadi, EDA Development Facilitator who is also a member of the MDCC.
- Paired interview with Ms. Neliswa Nongogo and Mr. Momelezi Mbedla – Members of Sakhumzi Community Organisation
- Focus group discussion members of the Ukhahlamba Tourism Association - with Mr. Simon Lesia, public relations officer, Mr. Keletso Moektsi and Mr. Isaac Lukhosi, representatives of CBOs in the association
- Focus group discussion with Mr. Maxwell Mnja, treasurer; Mr. Fundile Mafunda, Chairperson; Wezile Valashiya, Secretary; Anna Jafta, Member of the executive and Mamkwana Mafunda, Community Member – all members of the Caba-Mndeni Cooperative

MVULA TRUST
The interviews in Kokstad (Mvula Trust) had been organised in a different manner from those in Matatiele (SEED). In an attempt to demonstrate to us exactly how she worked with communities, Ms. Thabisa Vaphi, the development facilitator at Mvula Trust had organised community meetings which were attended by headmen, community members, learners, people from various committees and community projects, nurses, teachers in various villages. Even though some of the meetings never materialised we were still able to interview representatives of committees. The following people were interviewed during a community meeting held at Fama Junior Primary School on the 05th February 2001. During this meeting, a group of learners participating in the Mvula Trust initiated Child to Child Project performed a play showing the importance of washing hands after using a toilet and how failure to do so could lead to various diseases.

- Focus group discussion with members of the Fama Village Water and Sanitation Committee (Simon Mzimela, Nomakhaya Xwai Vumile Vika, Gift Noveka, Qumba Faneko FN Mbaligontsi, N. Casela, C.Vava and K. Nompu).
- Paired interview with Mrs. Noxolo Mtyundyuto and Mrs. Nondumiso Vabaza – both were nurses from Holy Cross Hospital
- 1 on 1 interview with Mrs. Christina Vava – representative of Thembeni Poultry Project
- Focus group interview with Mrs. Virginia Makamisile, Sara Nokeva and Florah Nomgca of Masakhane Sewing Project
- Paired interview with Mrs. Cepu and Mrs. Sobantu – teachers from the Fama Primary School
About 40 people of which 21 were men attended a community meeting at a primary school at Corinth on the 06th February 2000. The meeting, which was honoured with the present of the local councillor, started with discussions on community needs that included, road construction, building a pre-school, community hall, post office boxes, clinic, telephones and a high school. After the meeting, we had:

A focus group interview with members of the Water and Sanitation Committee (Mr. Wilson Dlamini; Mr. Farrington Mngundaniso; Mrs. Irene Mangisa; Mrs. Vitta Gubhela; Mr. Johannes Madlala; Mrs. Nozibela Dlamini; Mrs. Abigail Julya and Ms. Thulisile Dlamini.
A 1 on 1 interview with the local councillor, Mr. Thanduxolo Ndlebe.
We also visited the Sinamva Sewing Project where a group of women were busy sewing a school uniform.

A community meeting that was to take place at Gxwaleni on the 7th February 2001 did not materialise because the headman of the village called and emergency meeting on the same day. People went to attend the meeting of the headman. However, we managed to interview the following people who did not attend the headman’s meeting:
1 on 1 interview with Mr. Mbulawa Makaya – Chairperson of Gxwaleni Water and Sanitation Committee
1 on 1 interview with Mrs. Nomtheto Maibutho – Community Health Development Officer at Mount. Aylif Hospital
1 on 1 interview with Mr. Nyameko Dlakavu – Environmental Health Officer, Mount. Aylif Hospital

Another community meeting had been organised for Phepheni village for the 08th February 2001. Most community members could not attend this meeting because of bad weather. A short meeting was held with those who were present. During the meeting a group of “onompilo” (community health workers) performed a play showing the importance of washing hands after using a toilet. A Focus group interview was held with “onompilo” who attended the meeting.

1.2 REVIEW OF PRINTED DOCUMENTS

In addition to the interviews conducted with various stakeholders, we also reviewed some of the documents produced by their organisations.

1.2.1 DOCUMENTS FROM SEED

SEED brochure – not dated
SEED Update, Volume 1, Number 1: July 1999
SEED Update, Volume 1, Number 2: November 1999
SEED Update, Volume 2, Number 2: August 2000
SEED Update, Volume 2, Number 3: December 2000
Draft Report for Preliminary Assessment of Sustainable Energy Opportunities in Maluti/Mount Fletcher Districts, Eastern Cape, October/November 1999
1.2.2 DOCUMENTS FROM MVULA TRUST

Maru A Pula – Newsletter of the Mvula Trust – Issue No. 17, July 2000
Maru a Pula – Newsletter of the Mvula Trust – Issue No. 19, December 2000

1.2.3 DOCUMENTS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND PROGRAMMES

A document entitled basic information about the Environment and Development Agency Trust (not dated)
Incomplete draft report for Maluti District Planning: Land development Objectives and Integrated Development Plans (April 1999)
An initial brochure of the Matatiele Training and Communication (not dated)
A Committee Skills Workbook: Implementation of Training for Community Road Projects

1.3 BACKGROUND

SEED in Matatiele works mainly in surrounding Maluti and Mt. Fletcher districts. Mvula Trust operates from Kokstad, and in a number of villages in that area. Matatiele and Kokstad are very small rural towns lying to the northern part of Eastern Cape (EC) province and almost of the border of EC and the province of KwaZulu-Natal. For some reasons, the two towns fall under KZN while the surrounding villages, fall under the Eastern Cape. The villages surrounding the two towns, like many other rural villages in South Africa, are visibly very poor and characterised by high levels of unemployment. During the day the towns are vibrant and rather overpopulated as people from the surrounding villages gather there to do shopping and to phone their friends and relatives. It is not uncommon to see disillusioned men and women hanging aimlessly around the corners and liquor stores. In the evening, buses, mini-buses and vans, with people packed inside and their luggage tight on top of the buses and canopies could be seen taking people back to their respective villages leaving the towns relatively quiet.

The 1996 census shows that a total population of about 264 191 people lived in Mt. Fletcher and Maluti districts. Levels of education are generally very low as the census showed that about 20% of the people living in these districts had never been to school while about 1.8% had attained matric. As a result of low levels of education and perhaps in ability of the towns to offer better jobs, levels of income were also generally very low. The statistics show that about 5% of the people were employed while more than 60% did not get any income. Access to basic services such as telephone, electricity and water supply was almost non-existent. More than 77% of the population living in the area did not have access to telephone. Only about 5% of the 58460 households that had access to some form of energy had access to electricity either from Escom or from other sources. About 19% of the households had access to
piped water either in dwelling, on site or through public taps while about 58% still had dams, rivers, streams or spring as their sources of water. The statistics presented here do may not include villages around Kokstad. However, one doubts if these would differ significantly with those of Mount Fletcher and Maluti districts.

SECTION 2: PROGRAMME CASE STUDIES

SEED

The Sustainable Energy, Environment and Development Programme (SEED) promotes sustainable energy and environment practices in rural and urban development. The Energy and Development Group (EDG) is the main organisation responsible for Urban SEED which has projects in Gauteng, Cape Town and Durban. The Energy and Development Research Centre (EDRC) co-ordinates activities of the Rural SEED. SEED implemented its activities in two phases. Phase 1 (1999-2001) was being implemented in collaboration with the Danish Organisation for Renewable Energy (OVE) and funded by the Danish Environment and Development Co-operation Programme (DANCED).¹

Since our focus is in rural development, this section will focus on Rural SEED with specific reference to its activities in Maluti and Mount Fletcher Districts.

Rural SEED

The idea of the Rural SEED Project first developed in discussions between EDRC and Danish NGOs in 1996. It emerged from a realisation that despite good intentions and policies from government to improve provision of energy in rural areas, there was need for an organisation that was going to act as a link between energy suppliers, authorities, community groups and local development NGOs.²

Some of the aims of Rural SEED were to:
- bring more attention to actual energy needs and opportunities in localities;
- provide good information about the energy options available, and to access them, in order to help local energy users and planners select their best options;
- provide information on economical and efficient energy use, health and safety aspects and more sustainable management of resources;
- encourage greater “integration” of energy solutions in important activities such as education and health services, water, supply, telecommunication and income-generating activities.³

Among issues that had to be considered for Rural SEED was identifying localities where the programme was going to be implemented and identifying other NGOs and CBOs to work with. Areas were identified in the northern parts of the Eastern Cape and Northern Province and two Rural SEED facilitators were appointed, Mr. Boyce Plaatjies for the EC and Mr. Thomas Phooko for NP.⁴

¹ SEED Update.1999. Volume 1, Number 1, July 1999, p.2
² SEEd Update.1999. Volume 1, Number 2, November 1999, p.3
³ Ibid
⁴ Ibid
Rural SEED in Maluti and Mount Fletcher

Mr. Boyce Plaatjies, the SEED facilitator in the area said that the programme started its operations in Maluti/Mount Fletcher district in 1999. Before the programme started, a preliminary assessment of sustainable energy opportunities in the area was conducted in October and November 1999. A number of questions guided the study. These questions sought to find out types of fuel used in the area; sources of the fuels; problems people experienced in getting these fuels; appliances used; energy related problems experienced in the area; etc.  

The findings of the assessment which were to form the basis for SEED’s intervention showed that there existed a number of projects in various communities. These included:

- Working for Water - an initiative of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. It aimed at clearing land of alien wattle trees and to manage the cleared areas to avoid soil erosion.
- Water projects - where various service providers were supplying water in various communities;
- Poultry projects - in which people bought, nurtured and sold chickens to generate income;
- Community gardens - where people were allocated sites to plant vegetables;
- Wool growers - a project that involved people who owned sheep;
- Farmers’ associations - projects that brought together people involved in various types of farming activities;
- Sewing projects - where women made clothes to sell to communities;
- Baking projects - projects intending to provide bread to communities;
- Wire making - to provide fencing for gardens and kraals, etc.

The assessment further showed that most of these projects required some form of energy to succeed. However, there were difficulties generally, in terms of accessing some of these sources of energy. For example;

- Electricity - had not been installed in many households;
- Paraffin - was expensive;
- Gas - had major safety concerns and filling stations were far;
- Wood - also caused its own problems such as erosion;
- Cow dung - was dirty and smelly and no longer abundantly available because there were few cattle;
- Solar energy - people had no knowledge of its pros and cons;
- Candles - also expensive;
- Diesel/petrol - expensive and filling stations were far.

Aims and Objectives

SEED based its intervention on the findings of the energy situational analysis in Maluti and Mount Fletcher. The programme, through its facilitator in the area, had to plan its intervention. Mr. Plaatjies outlined the following as aims of the first phase in the area. In many ways, these were in line with the general aims of Rural SEED:

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5 Plaatjies B, 1999. Draft report for Preliminary Assessment of Sustainable Energy Opportunities in Maluti/Mt. Fletcher Districts (October/November 1999) Presented to SEED Programme Steering Committee Meeting
6 Ibid
7 Ibid
- Introduce the concept of energy and make people aware of the importance of energy;
- Helping communities identify their energy needs and draw plans for their energy needs;
- Introduce communities to various ways of conserving energy; and
- Establishing co-operatives to address energy needs of the communities.

Disseminating Information about SEED

As SEED was new in the area, Mr. Plaatjies had to make people aware of its existence in the area through holding meetings with various community structures. These included, local authorities (including chiefs), transitional regional councils, Mvula Trust, various government departments operating in the area, development forum and projects and electricity suppliers such as Telkom. Following meetings with leadership structures he also organised meetings with communities to address them about energy issues. In particular, Mr. Plaatjies selected five villages for implementing SEED projects. These were Mvenyane, Magadla, Pontseng, Mzungwane and Seqobong.8

According to Mr. Plaatjies, the Energy Summit coordinated by SEED and held on the 06th October 2000 was one of best ways through which information was disseminated. The aim of the Summit was to encourage exchange of experience and information between representatives of the energy user communities, government, and service providers. It also aimed at discussing practical strategic direction.9 The Summit was graced by the presence of officials of the national provincial and local government structures; NGOs; Eskom; Shell SA and communities.

SEED has also thought of future plans not only of disseminating information but of ensuring that communities’ energy needs could be met without having to travel long distances by the creation of Energy, Environment and Development centres. The centres will serve two purposes. Firstly, they will be Energy shops selling paraffin, gas, solar cookers, Pre-payment cards for electricity, telephone cards etc. Secondly, they will serve as information and education centres. The information and education site of the centre will be staffed with educated persons to be trained and supervised by SEED facilitator.10 It is not clear who will pay the salary of the manager of the centre. Clearly, unless funds are obtained to pay for personnel, it is unlikely that the centres will be sustainable. One option is that the cooperatives work from them and contribute to their maintenance.

Formation and Roles of Energy Committees

Following meetings with relevant leadership structures and communities in the area, energy committees were formed. Mr. Plaatjies described an energy committee as a voluntary body elected to represent a community in discussions and in decision making on aspects of local energy.11 Some of the requirements for election included, motivation and commitment to carry out tasks, acceptance by majority of the

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8 Interview with Mr. Boyce Plaatjies, SEED Rural Facilitator, 30/01/2001.
community, accountability to those represented and literacy and numeracy skills to handle administration matters. Working with the committees Plaatjies found out Eskom’s plans to provide local villages with electricity.

Formation and Roles of Co-operatives

Mr. Plaatjies was in the process of forming co-operatives in various villages. He said this idea was pursued after SEED could not persuade Shell SA to sell gas and paraffin directly to communities. Subsequently, it was decided that co-operatives would have a legal identity and operate as a business so that they are able to enter into agreement with companies such as Shell SA. These co-operatives would be responsible for running the Energy, Environment and Development Centres that were discussed earlier. One co-operative, called Caba-Mndeni has been formed. The co-operative has already raised about R4000 from its members and are in the process of building an Energy, Environment and Development Centre. Mr. Mafunda, the chairperson of the co-operative, informed us that they had a meeting scheduled for the 14 February with the Eastern Cape Development Corporation to negotiate for funding. He also said that they had had a meeting schedule for the 08 February 2000 with Shell SA to discuss possibilities of buying paraffin directly from the company.

Training

Training is provided at various levels. We focus first on training for rural energy facilitators. Mr. Plaatjies said that before they started their work as facilitators, they attended training that took about two months in Cape Town. The training focused on helping the facilitators understand various aspects of energy and community development. They also went for further training in Denmark for about one month to visit. During the visit different projects using energy generated through various means were visited. Additional training is provided through ad hoc workshops as the need arises. Plaatjies said that they did not get certificates for their training.

Secondly, there is continuous training for energy committees and co-operatives. Mr. Plaatjies said that he organised a number of workshops for Energy Committee in order to make them understand issues around energy and their roles and responsibilities as energy committees. One of these workshops was held in Mvenyane on the 29 February 2000. In this workshop, a brief overview of SEED was presented, participants outlined their expectations, they brainstormed the role of energy committees. People were also divided into groups to discuss some of the issues and report back. Another training session was organised on Co-operative Business Skills targeting people interested in forming co-operatives. The participants were given training in the following areas:

- Definition, background and purpose of Co-operative organisations;
- Co-operative principles;
- Structure of Co-operative movement;
- Types of co-operatives;
- Legal regulation of co-operatives;

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12 Ibid
13 Interview with Mr. Boyce Plaatjies, SEED Rural Facilitator, 30/01/2001.
14 This was said by Mr. Mafunda in a focus group interview with members of the Caba-Mndeni Cooperative, 01/02/2001
- How do co-operatives differ from other businesses;
- Organisational development (Structure, Culture, Vision and Strategy);
- Co-operative governance;
- Developing leadership; Role Functions and activities of the board;
- Developing and maintaining members motivation;
- Community vision;
- What is management?
- Management principles;
- Co-operative Management (Value based management; Principles of Co-operative Management; Marketing Management; Personnel Management and Conflict Management);
- Financial Management (Business plan; Income and expenditure statement; Balance sheet; Costing and Budgeting; Financial planning and Record keeping);
- Information management;
- Strategic management in Co-operatives (Why strategy is essential? Responding; Managing joint ventures and merges);
- Fundraising in the Co-operative context.

The third type of training was for community members. According to Plaatjies in some cases training was provided for committees who were then expected to train community members in their respective area.

Eskom provided Plaatjies with materials that included videocassettes, charts and some booklets and pamphlets entitled electrowise, which he used for training. He also received materials from the Paraffin Association of Southern Africa to teach people on safe ways of using paraffin.

**COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS**

In introducing Rural SEED in communities, SEED looked for partner organisations such as development NGOs, CBOs and local authorities. In accordance with this spirit, the Environment Development Agency Trust, which has offices in Matatiele and in Pietersburg in the Northern Province became the main partner in that SEED Rural facilitators in both provinces are housed in EDA offices. Ms. Matela, the programme manager at EDA Matatiele confirmed that she was responsible for managing and supervising the SEED facilitator. In some cases, SEED and EDA ran workshops together. For example a representative of EDA even presented on “Energy for sustainable development in rural context” at the Energy Summit on the 06th October 2000. Mr. Plaatjies confirmed that SEED had good working relations with all structures of local governance in the area including chiefs. In some of the communities, for example, at Seqobong, Chief Lebenya headed the energy committees.

Besides EDA and committees and co-operatives that were formed through SEED initiatives, Mr. Plaatjies introduced us to many other companies, NGOs and CBOs that operated in the area. These included; Itekeng, Matatiele Training and Communication Company and Sakhamuzi. From our interview Mr. Plaatjies and

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16 Cowan, B. 1999. SEED Update volume 1, Number 2 November 1999, p.3
representatives of these organisations, it was clear that no formal collaborations or partnerships had developed between these organisations and SEED. Mrs. Nkungu, project co-ordinator of Itekeng confirmed that Mr. Plaatjies did visit her organisation to introduce himself, his organisation and its roles. However, there had not been any further discussions between the two.  

According to Mr. Plaatjies, collaborations with government departments were not always easy. He said that he was aware that their head office in Cape Town was communicating with the national government on various aspects relating to energy. However, he did not have details of such discussions. He maintained that he had tried several times in vain to involve the Eastern Cape provincial government in what he was doing in the area. He had written several letters to the office of the Premier and to the office of the MEC for Finance in the Eastern Cape but had not got any responses. Through the support of the local Member of Provincial Legislature, Mr. Chris Mosilili, he managed to organise the Energy Summit which brought people from different communities together to share their experiences about energy provision. According to Mr. Plaatjies, the local Maluti TRC had been very supportive of the SEED initiatives. He was hopeful that the new council would also be as helpful because most of the people who were councillors in the previous Maluti TRC have been re-elected into the new council.

Mr. Plaatjies further pointed out that SEED had hoped that the government would adopt its model and appoint rural facilitators to do what SEED was doing. However, this had not happened.

Challenges and Future Plans

According to Mr. Plaatjies, he has only carried out activities for the first phase of the project in the Maluti/Mount Fletcher districts. He said that the second phase was being planned. Mr. Plaatjies had not been impressed with the participation of youth in most of the community initiatives that he had been part of. He thought that the biggest challenge for phase two was to get the youth involved in energy issues. In an attempt to involve the youth, Mr. Plaatjies took four learners from a school in one of the villages to a Wild Life competition in Durban. The purpose of the competition was to encourage the youth to design energy related projects. He was also planning to organise an energy competition for the youth in that area. While Mr. Plaatjies admitted that he had not done much to involve youth, he indicated that his colleague in the Northern Province had organised a Youth Energy Summit in collaboration with the Youth Commission. The Summit also included prospects for some of the participants to get bursaries to study energy.

Issues

SEED is doing important work in the area. It has established committees and has started introducing innovation such as co-operatives, whose role should be to facilitate development in communities. There are a few challenges: SEED has only one development facilitator in the area. He therefore can not work with all villages in the district given the long distances and bad roads between villages. This will certainly affect the speed with which SEED would like to see development happening in the area. Development would happen faster if at least, there could be one development facilitator for every two or three villages. Obviously, this would have certain implications. It would mean that more people need to be trained as rural development facilitators. The issues of training more rural development facilitators raises some questions; whose role (financially)

\[1^{17}\] Interview with Mrs. Nkungu, Project Co-ordinator, Itekeng Project, 01/02/2001
should it be to train these people? How are they going to be trained? And, once they have been trained who is going to employ them?

1.1 Who should carry the cost for training rural development facilitators? This is obviously a difficult question. At the moment SAIDE wants to see if introducing distance education components would work in courses specifically targeting rural people not so much at high level. For piloting purposes therefore, SAIDE and SEED should consider identifying few learners with potential from the structures that SEED has formed and registering them on a course. In this case SAIDE and SEED should share the costs.

1.2 How are identified people going to be trained? As indicated already the main mode will be distance education. These first groups of learner whom we expect to be drawn from either the Eastern cape or Northern Province or both, will have the current Rural SEED facilitators as their mentors. The mentors will be require to meet the learners one or twice a month for contact sessions to help learners with what they do not understand. They could also contact their mentor telephonically. In other words the SEED facilitator will only be overseeing projects that would mainly be implemented by the students.

1.3 Who is going to employ them? As far as we understand most people already have volunteered to work in various energy committees and co-operatives. This means that people understand what voluntarism is all about. We should explore chances of exploiting the fact that people do volunteer.

How do we attract youth to participate actively in issues of rural development. In most cases volunteers are adult? However, it does seem that the youth could be drawn into such initiatives especially if they would be linked to some qualification, which could open their employment opportunities. The fact that currently most volunteers are adult has its own implications when thinking of offering a course. We agree that getting some training is likely to be enough of an incentive, especially if it is linked to some form of accreditation so we need to investigate this when we research the materials. We still need to ascertain which SETA would accredit education relating to energy.

For what level or levels should the course be designed? Another challenge is for both SAIDE and SEED to determine the level at which training is to be offered. We could offer a course at higher education level, for example, a modular course for people who have matric that would give them credits for NQF 2 level programmes. We may offer a course at lower levels, for example, ABET 1 for communities possibly as part of their literacy programme. Whichever level we choose, the adult learner should always be the target audiences.

The language in which materials are prepared will be another important issue. In various meetings that I attended in villages, it was clear that people were most comfortable with and able to convey their messages easily in their local languages. However, language for materials may be determined on the basis of target audiences. If both SEED and SAIDE choose to target people who have matric, then use of English might be appropriate whereas if the target people who can not read and write, use of local language might be appropriate.
MVULA TRUST

Mvula Trust was founded in August 1993. Its mission is to improve the health and welfare of poor disadvantaged South Africans in rural and peri-urban communities by increasing their access to safe and sustainable water and sanitation services. In 1995 Mvula Trust signed an agreement of co-operation with the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to Work on its Community Water Supply and Sanitation Programme. In terms of the agreement, the Department funds projects identified by the Trust and implemented in accordance with its policies. Mvula also co-operates with the department in piloting new approaches and promoting good practices in the sector.  

Mvula is a well-established Trust that has its head offices in Johannesburg and regional offices in Durban, East London, Empangeni, Kokstad, Nelspruit, North West, Northern Cape, and Pietersburg. For purposes of our research we visited the Mvula Trust office in Kokstad to understand how Mvula worked with communities in and around Kokstad. Because of the manner in which our contact, Ms. Thabisa Vaphi, had organised meetings in communities, there had not been anytime set aside for an interview with the regional management. However, through visits to various communities and a short and rushed interview with Ms. Vaphi we managed to have some understanding of how Mvula Worked with communities in the area.

Mvula Trust in Kokstad

Mvula Trust was responsible for supplying water and implementing sanitation projects in a number of villages in the area. The programme had also undertaken responsibilities of educating people on basic health issues and safe ways of using water. Mvula was instrumental in forming Water and Sanitation Committees responsible for facilitating the water supply projects.

Formation of the Committee and their Roles

In our discussions with Water and Sanitation Committee from Fama, Gxwaleni and Corinth villages, it emerged that while some of water committees were initiated by communities themselves, Mvula Trust was also instrumental in encouraging the formation of such committees in some of the villages. The purpose of forming these committees was to ensure that communities were represented in discussions around their water needs and that they were part of decision making. People serving in these committees were democratically elected in community meetings and so had a mandate to represent their communities. From our discussions with the Water and Sanitation Committee in Corinth, it was also clear that some of these committees did not only focus on water but on other development needs as well. For example, at a community meeting held in Corinth on 07th February 2001 and chaired by Mr. Farrington Mngqundaniso who is also chairperson of the Water and Sanitation Committee, a number of issues including road construction, building a clinic, houses for teachers etc, were discussed.

Discussions with various Water and Sanitation Committee members also confirmed that the concept of sanitation and the subsequent formation of Sanitation Committee

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18 About Mvula Trust –http://www.mvula.co.za/
19 Ibid.
were some of the innovations that Mvula Trust introduced to them. In most of the villages, Sanitation Committees were formed at a later date and they merged with the Water Committees to form one committee. The main responsibility of those elected to be in the Sanitation Committee was to learn and educate communities about basic health issues that included building toilets, washing hands after using a toilet, keeping the environment clean by throwing rubbish in holes etc.

Each of the Water and Sanitation Committee consisted of women who were known as “onompilo”- (community health workers). These women were responsible for educating members of the community about basic health issues. The concept of “onompilo” was also something that Mvula Trust introduced in communities. Requirements to become “onompilo” were commitment to community development and being able to read and write as their responsibilities included going to the hospital to collect medication for the elderly and the sick.

Training
Mvula Trust was instrumental in ensuring that the committees they had established in communities were trained so that they understood their roles well and were capacitated to carry out those roles. Mvula Trust run some of the training sessions while others were run by other companies. Mr. Mbulawa Makaya, Chairperson of Gxwaleni Water and Sanitation Committee confirmed that after their water Committee was formed, they were taken for training at Mzitlava Training Institute. Among topics covered at training were (i) starting projects (ii) supervision (iii) bookkeeping (iv) management (v) sustaining a project. The water and sanitation Committee at Fama also said that they attended training. The Water and sanitation Committee said that they went for training run by Africon Engineering. During the training they were taught about different types of pipes and how to connect them. The training also included office work such as bookkeeping, how to collect and bank money-tariffs for repairs, writing reports, using a cash book to keep records etc.

Training “Onompilo”
Mvula Trust also ran some training sessions for “onompilo”. The “Onompilo” at Fama confirmed that they did attend participatory hygiene and sanitation training (PHAST) that was run by a facilitator from Mvula Trust. According to the women, the PHAST tools covered diseases such as diarrhoea, contamination of water, sanitation etc. They were also taught about the Child to Child Projects whose intention was to use children to conscientise other children about health issues. “Onompilo” at Corinth said that besides the training offered by Mvula, they also attended training at Centocow Hospital. The training at hospital focused on diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Cancer, TB. They also learned how to take care of the sick and how to make sure that they took their medication. “Onompilo” said that they did not receive any certificates for the training that they have undergone. However, they agreed that they were given some materials including PHAST to use when training community members.

Training for the trainers
Ms. Vaphi indicated first that Mvula Trust appointed people with experience and background in rural development. Besides that, Mvula Trust’s internal policy encouraged people to develop their capacity and this has made capacity building for development facilitators an ongoing phenomenon and aims at enabling facilitators to
understand and use PHAST methods and tools effectively. Mrs Vaphi further indicated that some of the development facilitators have taken courses in Participatory Rural Appraisal to enable them to do their work effectively and efficiently.

Collaborations and Partnerships
Mvula worked very closely with many other organisations both on the technical and social aspects. For purposes of our visit, we were less interested in technical collaborations and partnerships than in social collaborations with specific reference to training. Besides the Water and Sanitation Committees mentioned above, who had working relations with teachers in schools, nurses, environmental officers and health educators, we found that in schools there were at least two teachers who worked with a facilitator from Mvula Trust on the Child to Child Project. Nurses, particularly school nurses, from various hospitals were also involved in the Child to Child Project which according to Mvula facilitator, Ms. Vaphi was still new and had not made any significant inroads. Mrs. Maibutho, a Community Health Development Officer, based at Mount Aylif confirmed that in most of their visits to villages to address them about health issues, they used transport provided by the Mvula facilitator because they did not have their own transport. Mr. Nyameko Dlakavu, the Environmental Health Officer at Mount Aylif, echoed the same sentiments.

Conclusion
Most of the issues emerging from the visit at Mvula Trust are similar to those that emerged from the visit at SEED. Unlike SEED Mvula Trust had about three full time trainers. However, these trainers had to travel long distance working with communities some of them more than 100 kilometers away.

Mvula Trust had also established Water and Sanitation committees whose main responsibilities were to oversee and facilitate water supply and sanitation projects in communities. These committees represented communities in decision making relating to decisions about water.

Some of the facilitators at Mvula Trust had established working relations with a number of other structures, individuals and CBOs. For example they worked closely with teachers and nurses. Some of the innovations introduced by Mvula Trust included the Child to Child project.

Most of the people who participated in the water and sanitation Committees were elderly people. As with SEED, this has implications with regard to materials development. The materials will need to have adult rural learners as a target and the issue of language will require serious consideration.

OTHER IMPORTANT PROGRAMMES AND STRUCTURES
As indicated earlier, the purpose of the visit to the northern part of the Eastern Cape was to understand the activities of Mvula Trust and SEED in the area. We also indicated that we found that there were a number of other organisations operating in

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20 Interview with Mrs. Nomththo Maibutho, 07/02/2001
21 Interview with Mr. Nyameko Dlakavu, 07/02/2001
that area, which we could not ignore. This section presents brief case studies of some of those organisations and their main activities. Details of these organisations are covered in interviews write-ups presented in Appendix 2 of this document.

Environment and Development Agency Trust (EDA) Matatiele

The EDA Matatiele Pprogrammes is a branch programme of the EDA Trust and national NGO that was established around 1977 as a protest organisation. According to Ms. Matela, EDA started its operations in Matatiele about 16 years ago. Ms. Matela further confirmed that EDA had since shifted its mandate to that of working in community upliftment programmes. Its main purpose is to build the capacity of and enable rural people to spearhead their own development.

EDA Matatiele’s two main projects were the Community Based Land Management project and the Land and Institutional Development Project. In accordance with EDA principles, the programme in Matatiele also embraced participatory development processes incorporating appropriate methodologies such as PRA-rooted Household Livelihoods Analysis in its work with rural groups. EDA Matatiele has been very instrumental in the formation of various structures to co-ordinate development in the area, including, the Maluti Development Co-ordinating Committee and the Ukhahlamba Tourism Association.

EDA Matatiele consisted of 10 staff members (8 women and 2 men) with a range of skills that included, development facilitation, conflict resolution, environmental planning and management, integrated development design, agriculture business development, household livelihoods assessment, permaculture and sustainable land use, environmental education, tourism development, soil and water management, participatory hygiene and sanitation training (PHAST).

While EDA is not a formal training institution, it has provided hands on experiential learning and capacity building for a number of projects that included the District Planning Committee, School Governing Bodies and Land User groups. They have also provided training to income generating projects in various communities. There is no doubt that EDA is a well established organisation in Matatiele and that they have over the years built a reputation for themselves.

According to the Programme Manager Ms. Matela it is the programmes’ internal policy to allow their staff members to develop themselves. Besides the various workshops that staff members are exposed to, they could also go on study leave to pursue their educational interest with institutions of higher learning and the organisation normally keeps their post secured for them to come back and work.

Matatiele Training and Communication

The Matatiele Training and Communication is a closed corporation (CC) which was started by Ms. Julia Cain and her business partner Cindy Illing. Its main aim was to provide training to rural communities on the reconstruction and development programme (RDP) water projects. Ms. Cain explained that their company did not directly go into villages on its own rather that it worked with various organisations seeking to provide water to rural communities. For example, where Mvula is involved, they entered communities through Mvula and where the Department of Water and Forestry is involved, they enter through the department. In most cases they were contracted or sub-contracted to provide training to communities on how to use water safely.

Mattcomm had at some points been tasked to evaluated various community water projects and they had primarily worked with Department of Water and Forestry and Mvula Trust. Ms. Cain indicated that they have also done some work for Department of Public Works, the Wild Coast District Council, Water Research Commission, and Rural Support Services (RSS).
Mattcomm had two qualified facilitators who did most of the training in communities. Ms Cain and Ms. Illing were both responsible for developing materials to be used for training. The facilitators also contributed to materials development by always giving the materials developers feedback about whether the materials worked well or not.

Materials developed for training included booklets, workbooks, posters, and videocassettes. According to Ms Cain, they have found use of videocassette to be more useful and interesting to rural people because in these cassettes, they had shots of people from other projects relating their own experiences. In most cases, participants in workshops were able to relate to some of the things said by those appearing in the cassettes.

Itekeng

Itekeng is another small community based organisation operating from Matatiele. According to the Project Co-ordinator, Mrs. Nkungu, Itekeng was formed in 1994 to bring together a network of rural development co-operatives. It served as a mother body of co-operatives around Matatiele. Itekeng establishes co-operatives where do not exist, them. The projects that co-operatives would be engage in included: poultry, farming, sewing, baking, brick making, piggery, cattle breeding etc. Mrs. Nkungu further indicated that some people had expressed interest in carpentry and beer making but these had not been introduced because no training had taken place in these areas.

According to Mrs. Nkungu, Itekeng’s main role is to provide training in skills that communities need. For example where co-operatives had been formed, they provided training for them to understand what it means to be a cooperative. Such training focuses on skills such as bookkeeping, chairing meetings, report writing, minute taking etc.

Sakhumzi

Sakhumzi is a community-based organisation which started in its operations in the village of Mvenyane but had since expanded and was operating in 13 villages around Maluti. According to our informants, Neliswa Nongogo and Momelezi Mbedla, the project emerged because the RDP had encouraged communities to form structures that would facilitate development. Sakhumzi had realised that activities in communities were not the same. Some communities dealt with sewing while others dealt with other projects. For that reason Sakhumzi was formed to be an umbrella body to ensure that village projects are well coordinated. Some of the projects they are coordinating include: piggery, poultry, sewing, wire making, brick making etc. The organisation also provide training to people involved in these projects. Some of the topics they cover when doing training include: forming organisations, sustaining the organisations, financial management, bookkeeping, etc. During the visit to Sakhumzi offices we found that they had just returned from running a training workshop on life skills and leadership skills. Members of Sakumzi themselves have had to undergo training to be able to train communities. Three members went for training at the Environment and Development Agency (EDA) with whom it has close working relations.

Health and Environment Officers

During the visit to Mvula Trust, the facilitator introduced us to health and environmental officers whose work is of great value. (See Appendix 2)
Community Health Development Officers
These officers differed from “onompilo” (health workers). “Onompilo” are volunteers. While they work closely with Mvula Trust, they are not paid. On the other hand Community Health Development Officers or Health educators as they are sometimes referred to, are qualified professionals. Most work for the Department of Health. According to Mrs. Maibutho, in terms of these officers job description, they are suppose to be working in and with communities educating them about health issues and encouraging them to start self-help projects such as gardening and growing vegetables. However, in some cases and for various reasons, these officers were based in hospitals rather in communities where they belong. The main reason why some of these officers like, Mrs. Maibutho, could not be in communities was that they did not have transport to take them to communities. Since they worked in hospitals they had to wait for mobile clinics going out in communities to be able to reach out to communities. She said that this made their work very difficult because often nurses on mobile clinics have their agendas and ways of doing things and they did not always accommodate community health development officers agendas and plans.

Mrs. Maibutho further indicated while the health development officers were at times allowed to attend workshops. It was not always possible. This was because whenever there were workshops to be attended, it was mainly nurses working in the hospitals who attended. This limited the chances of the health development officers to attend such workshops.

Does the MT pay the onompilo? If so they are not volunteers.

Environmental Health Officers
The Environment Health Development Officers are also qualified health officers. Their job description differs slightly from that of the Community Health Development Officers. Some of their duties as outlined by Mr. Dlakavu include:
- Control communicable diseases
- Control waste disposal
- Provide pure water and sanitation
- Control noise and air pollution
- Do routine inspection to food and non-food handling premises
- Do food sampling
- Promote health education in communities
- Check on occupational health and safety of workers in industry and work institutions etc.22

According to Mr. Dlakavu, their job description also requires that they should be working in and with communities. However because they also did not have transport to drive it to communities, they were based in hospitals and that hindered their work.

In terms of training, Mr. Dlakavu said that there are workshops organised for Environmental Health Officer, which covered various topics. For example in the year 2000 about four workshops were organised that covered topics such as occupational health, food and air pollution. He said that he was also aware of the existence of a number of courses offered at distance which he could register for in order to enhance

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22 Interview with Mr. Nyameko Dlakavu, 07 February 2001
his capacity. However, because he did not have money, he has not been able to register.

SECTION 3: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

During the field trips to SEED and the Mvula Trust we found that there are many NGOs and CBOs operating in the northern part of the Eastern Cape. Most these organisations had almost the same objective, that is, to develop the rural communities in that part of the world. While some of those organisations had specific areas of focus, for example SEED focusing on energy and Mvula Trust focusing on water, some like EDA covered various issues relating to rural development. It is encouraging to note that some of these organisations have also developed sophisticated ways of working with rural communities. Most have established committees and are introducing new innovations in the form of rural co-operatives, which have become vital voices of the ordinary people living in those villages.

These committees have been formed to represent communities in decision making and project planning. In some cases, for example with regard to some of the water and sanitation Committee formed by Mvula Trust, the committees are expected to take greater responsibility. These committees are responsible for co-ordinating and implementing water projects. They are expected to collect tariffs from community members to and to account for all that money. Training has therefore become a necessity to ensure that the committees carried out their responsibilities as expected.

Discussions with representatives of various income generating projects such as sewing groups, poultry projects etc, showed that the significance of training cannot be over emphasised. For example, some of these projects had received financial support from various government departments but have not been trained in how to manage their business. Subsequently, some of them closed. Some of the NGOs and CBOs operating in this area are small. Some have a employed small number of development facilitators or use volunteers. On the other hand the area itself is vast, villages are scattered and roads are bad. This makes it difficult for the facilitators to travel around. Subsequently, the amount and the quality of training that they can offer to community members are also affected.

What was encouraging however, was to notice that within the scattered villages there were champions who spearheaded development initiatives. At the same time it was clear that those champions also needed trained rural development facilitators with whom they could discuss and shape their ideas. It was noticeable that most of champions were retired migrant labourers (people who had worked in the big cities for a long time). These people seemed to have an understanding of what development means although their ideas are rooted in urban development rather than rural. In such cases the rural development facilitators become important to try and help the champions think of development from a rural perspective.

Notwithstanding the good development work done by various organisations in the area, there are some concerns which SAIDE and its partners need to be aware of. The first concern relates to the issues of duplication of services. The programme/organisational case studies clearly show that some of the organisations
offered basically the same services. This creates an unnecessary competition in particular for financial resources, which are very scarce. At the same time there are enough projects needing training?

Secondly, committees and co-operatives established by some of these organisations comprised largely of elderly people. In most cases, the champions of development are old people. The involvement of youth, where it is available is very minimal. This would have particular implications if there is need to develop learning materials. Such materials would have to have an adult rural learner as the target.

The third concern relates to training. Given that the numbers of the rural facilitators is small making it impossible for them to implement and monitor projects in many villages, there is need to think of training more rural development facilitators in both energy and water-related issues. This is obviously a contentious issue that raises a number of questions. For example, whose role (financially) should it be to training these people? How are they going to be trained? And, once trained, who will employ them?

The fourth concern relates to levels of provision of the course. Both SAIDE and partners need to determine the level at which training is to be offered. A course could be offered at higher education level, which may require matriculation. Another course may be offer at lower levels, which will not require matriculation but people could register for it on the basis of prior learning. In both cases the adult learner should always be at the centre. Meaning that some thinking has to be done regarding materials to be used.

ANSWERING SOME OF THE QUESTIONS

The question, who will take financial responsibility of training participants, is more problematic, however, for purposes of piloting, SAIDE and partners may have to find a sponsor for the first group to be taken on a particular course. The potential students should be registered on a course offered through distance learning and should be drawn from the existing committees. The qualified rural development facilitator in the area should be tasked to become their mentor holding contact sessions with them twice a month to guide them through their work.

An alternative to providing a course which learners need to pay for could be to offer a non-formal course to volunteers and this course will not be accredited. The question is, to what extent is such a course going to be able to attract young people? We have indicated earlier that the biggest challenge in some of the rural development initiatives is the involvement of the youth. Will youths trained leave rural areas for urban?

The question, who is going to employ them, is another difficult one. However, our assumption is that most people already have volunteered to work in various energy and water and sanitation committees and co-operatives. This means that people understand what voluntarism is all about. People to be registered for piloting purposes should be drawn from those who have already volunteered. The biggest challenge, as indicated earlier, will be that most of the people who have volunteered in these committees are adults.
WHAT AREAS SHOULD PEOPLE BE TRAINED IN?

For purposes of piloting use of distance education to promote development in rural areas, there were two areas that I was particularly interested in. SEED was moving towards creating co-operatives, which would have a legal identity and could enter into business arrangement with companies. The concept of co-operatives is new and more training is required to make people aware of what co-operatives are and what they can do. For this reason I would propose that training materials be prepared in this area.

Mvula Trust had interesting initiatives aimed at training people in sanitation. Each Water and Sanitation Committee had about three or more women known as onompilo (community health workers. The roles of these women included attending training on issues relating to basic health and were expected to pass on their knowledge to ordinary community members. Some of their duties included going to hospitals to collect medicine for the elderly and ensuring that the elderly people took their medication. While these women were volunteers, the basic requirement was for them to be able to read and write.

I thought these women were given a small salary.

If these women were to receive further training, they could play a more important role in promoting health in their communities. This is particularly important in rural areas where hospital are far and roads to the hospitals are bad. For these reasons, I would suggest that materials be prepared to train these women in basic health.