

Report on the Implementation of the Entrepreneurial Development Programme for the year: 1st January 2008 to 31st December 2008

1. Objectives

To provide the active disadvantaged rural families with the opportunities, passion and capacity to achieve the following, and influence, motivate and assist others to do the same:

- Be members of sustainable community structures.
- Achieve self reliance and sustain an ever-improving quality of life, including the reconstruction of families.
- Address the causes of poverty.
- Benefit from Home Food Security.
- Own a profitable business that will serve as a role model.
- Be aware of, understand and actively address the HIV and Aids pandemic with a special focus on causes, symptoms, transmission, avoidance, stigma, alternate lifestyle, management of the virus and the provision of community based support and care.

Note:

1. "Active" refers to those who are willing to actively engage and mobilize themselves towards self-reliance; "disadvantaged" refers to those who live in poverty and are vulnerable and marginalized.
2. Each of the above qualitative objectives is realized through the principle of progression, from Year One (beginnings) to the last year of the ACAT programme cycle (mentoring others).
3. The quantitative value of each objective is achieved through specific numbers allocated to the strategies that flow from the objectives.

2. Strategy One: Identifying the Target Group and the formation of Entrepreneurial Groups of 5

Activity : Wealth Ranking

The programme continues to expand within the areas we serve but has not moved into any new areas. We moved into 8 new zones/wards during this reporting period. In two zones - one in Okhahlamba, the second in Nqutu – the demand to participate in the programme has been strong. This is due to the fact that the traditional leaders in those areas are strongly supporting this programme. In these two areas the Community Volunteers are committed and well able to handle more groups. A decision was taken to allow one member (instead of the normal 2) from each group to attend a Basic Life Skills course. On return, that member plus the identified Community Volunteer would ensure that the remaining members are trained in the material and thus in the programme. The high demand for ACAT's services led to this pilot. The balance of the areas expanded as planned.

Activity : Forming Groups of 5

The objective is to establish 10 new groups in each of the eleven areas we work in. Therefore, the total new groups for the year would be 110. In this year 151 groups were established as a result of 32 groups being established in Okhahlamba and 33 in Nqutu, which is more than planned but was reported on in the previous activity. The groups in these zones are doing well as a commitment to good follow-up was agreed to. In other areas this approach would be more difficult to implement as the Community Volunteers in those areas are not as active. We will in future be able to adopt this approach in other districts as the Community Volunteers are trained and motivated.

Overall, the programme started with 699 groups on our books, and 151 were established this year, so the programme as a whole now has 850 groups of 5 registered. This therefore exceeds our target of 830 by this year by a total of 20, and has been achieved by using our trained Community Volunteers through the Community Management Committees to establish groups. This has happened with fewer staff members, and indicates the good work done in the field.

The next step after the initial establishment of a group is the follow-up visits the groups receive either from the Extension Officer, or the local Community Volunteer. Once the groups are operating well they attend the Combined Group meetings, and are only visited if advice, illness, encouragement is needed, or if problems need to be addressed. This approach has been adopted as it is difficult getting to groups in the areas that are wide in extent (many kilometres) and often rugged in terrain. The Extension Officers had 2 066 visits to groups, while the Community Volunteers undertook 1 755 visits. In all therefore, there were 3 821 visits to groups spread over the year. There were also 316 combined

meetings where groups were represented 1 790 times, while the CVs held 397 combined meetings with groups being represented 2 484 times. The counting of groups is collated on a monthly basis. It can be deduced that, when the number of group visits and the number of meetings at which groups are represented are added together, the interactions with groups total 8 095. Therefore there is an average of 674 interactions with groups per month.

Activity : Group Training of G5s in Basic Life Skills

A group is registered when two group members have attended the Basic Life Skills course (we have the 2 exceptions this year as reported in the Wealth Ranking activity, where only 1 per group attended). The course addresses the Basic Life Skills of the individual, as well as training in implementing the programme as a group, and is basic to the development of our target group in both the Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP) and the Sustainable Agriculture Programme (SAP). To accommodate both programmes, the number of one-week training courses have been increased. This year 14 Basic Life Skills courses were held and were attended by a total of 503 participants. The breakdown is 246 from the EDP, 202 from SAP, and a further 55 from partners or interested parties.

Activity : Baseline Surveys

The baseline survey is routine. To ensure that it is complete and handed in, a rule has been set that the group can only participate in the Basic Life Skills course if they have the completed Baseline Questionnaire. The information on this form is then captured on a database as a record of the group and its participants as well as being used when evaluating the progress of group members. This year the information of the 151 new groups was sourced from the 755 baseline questionnaires submitted. The forms are also accompanied by a photograph of each member, taken with a digital camera. The digital photographs are downloaded and stored electronically.

Activity : Monitoring of the G5 groups by the EDP Leader and Programme Assistant

The programme now has a momentum of its own as the benefit to the groups is recognised by communities. The EDP Leader did not get into the field as much as he would have liked. However, the CMCs are now overseeing the well-being of the groups. The EDP Leader attended 12 CMC meetings. Where he could not attend, he delegated senior staff to attend so that there was an ACAT presence at the meetings. The CMCs are held accountable for planning and holding meetings by an ACAT representative attending.

There were 22 field visits where the EDP Leader visited each area to observe the progress and also listen to the comments of the group members – their successes as well as their problems. The Programme Assistant visited all areas to record the testimonies of group members and take photographs of exceptional entrepreneurs in order to have documented examples of what the programme is achieving, as well as material for the photographic report.

3. Strategy Two : Promote, Teach and Facilitate Household Food Security

Activity : Establishing Home Gardens

As reported in June 2008, this activity is an important element of the programme. Over the year the inflation rate, and thus the cost of food, have skyrocketed. Many testify to great savings as they now eat from their gardens. The value of gardens is now really being appreciated.

The summer rains were late; however when they did come, there was more than usual. The reports from the various areas indicate that, in the main, the gardens are looking good and productive. There were incidents reported of water logging, rust on plants, hail damage, and pest damage (grasshoppers). Most gardeners plant in spring for summer harvest, and then again in early autumn.

During this reporting period 687 gardens were established. This is 91% of the membership of the new groups. The total gardens established through the programme therefore now stands at 3 861, which coincidentally is 91% of the group membership.

The two limiting factors influencing good gardens are weather and a lack of fencing. The weather we can do little about; however, the fencing problem can be addressed. The approach has been to encourage the group members to use, as a start, whatever is available to secure the four door-size garden beds. It has been amazing to see the many creative ways in which the gardens have been secured. Some gardens are well-secured, while marauding livestock can easily break down less secured boundaries. During this year funding was secured to assist 9 gardeners in each area with fencing materials to construct a secure garden. The EDP partnered with SAP in the implementation of this project. SAP managed the whole process, with the entrepreneurs benefiting. We thank SAP for this assistance. In all, between both programmes, 93 gardens had fencing materials delivered to them and they are in various phases of erection.

Activity : Gardening Workshops

These workshops are in demand as they bring information, knowledge and motivation for ongoing production. To extend our services, the Extension Officers hold workshops, while competent Community Volunteers also hold their own workshops. During this period 169 gardening workshops attended by 1 634 group members, and sometimes neighbours, were held by Extension Officers. The CVs held 360 workshops with 2 255 attending. So in total 3 889 benefited by attending gardening workshops. Some Extension Officers also include, in the training, different strategies to add value, such as bottling (eg atchar) or drying produce. Others train on how to store the vegetables.

Activity : Provision of Basic Garden Inputs

At the beginning of the programme, the problem of gardeners sourcing good seeds or seedlings was one of the major reasons why the gardens in many instances failed. It was planned that, as a service to the groups, the programme would facilitate the transporting of these inputs from the local nurseries for the group members. This has proved hugely beneficial and is one of the factors that ensure continuing production in the gardens. As has previously been reported, the programme has grown the skill levels of the gardeners. Now there are many who are growing seedlings and selling them to other groups or community members. In one area a nursery co-operative has been formed. Nurseries have been established by the G5s in different zones and are looking to produce for their local markets. For this reason, many seedlings are now sourced locally. The programme still however offers to transport seedlings into the areas, and in this year the following were facilitated into the areas:

- 822 packets of seed
- 75 645 seedlings
- 881 pockets of seed potatoes

The groups are also benefiting from inputs and tools being offered by local municipalities or the local agricultural department, who are promoting vegetable gardening to the communities. Our strength is that we offer both training and follow-up. They supply the inputs, and there seems to be little other commitment shown to the communities.

4. Strategy Three : Stimulate Economic Activity and Establish Survivalist Businesses

This strategy is vital to the poor in the areas served, both rural and peri-urban. The years of economic growth in South Africa has not materially affected the poor, although there have been improvements in job creation. The extended public works programme has been of benefit in the rural areas where it has been rolled out. It has been of limited assistance as the work is only for a 3-month period, and then those that are working must make way for others. This helps, but does not secure an ongoing income. The EDP has thus become a lifeline to many families as they have started their survivalist businesses. As we write, we do not know the effect that the global meltdown will have on the group members. It will probably have some negative effects, as most of these global problems negatively affect the poor.

Activity : Start-up of Survivalist Businesses and Provision of Micro Loans

The start-up of survivalist businesses in the rural areas we serve is proving to really benefit the families involved in the programme. It is found that the challenge of earning some income changes the mindset of the poor, where, due to participating in programme activities, they are nudged into some kind of income generating activity. This mobilises them into planning, organising, and being active. Some already have micro-businesses, but have no training or understanding of mark ups, cash flow, business income, personal drawings, etc. We teach this in basic terms and the reports received of the benefit of this training to the businesses is encouraging.

The first step the entrepreneurs take is to qualify for the R300 group loan exercise, and is to give the G5 members an opportunity to put their training into practice. As this is an entrepreneurial programme, it is expected that all 755 members from the 151 groups will participate. This therefore makes a total of 4 250 group members who have been given the opportunity to start up a business. There are a few that, due to hidden agendas, do not qualify. There are also some who "fear" credit and do not want to borrow money for fear of being unable to repay. We counsel them and encourage them to try. In this year 480 entrepreneurs took out the R300 loan and started their enterprises. The balance have not yet qualified.

The repayment period for the R300 group loan is 5 months. On repayment of the loan they qualify for the R500 individual loan or the R750 agricultural loan (which has different repayment conditions). After this they step up to the R1 000 loan. We again report that the trend within our target group is not to take out loans irresponsibly. Most of the entrepreneurs use their own savings and profits to grow their initiatives.

The loan distribution during this reporting year is as follows:

January to December 2008				Total since programme began	
	Particulars	No. of Loans	Value this year (R)	Total No. Loans	Total Value of Loans to date (R)
Level One	Group Loans - R300	96	28 800	605	181 500
	Loans to replacement members	12	3 600	112	33 600
Level Two	Individual Loans – R500	171	85 500	2 305	1 152 500
	Agri Loans – R750	25	18 750	123	92 250
Level Three	Individual Loan – R1000	9	9 000	122	122 000
				Sub-Total	R 1 581 850
				Old CFP Loans	R 59 218
	TOTAL	313	R145 650		R 1 641 068

The issuing of the R300 group loans are now processed through the Community Management Committees. The funds are deposited into the CMC's account, from which they are distributed. The CMC is also responsible for the collection of these loans and their repayment. This system, although in its infancy, is working well. The individual loans are still processed through the ACAT office. The plan in future is that, once good management of the handling of group loans is established, the next step is to include the individual loans. All this is a process of holding the CMC responsible and accountable, while capacitating them to handle all the savings and credit in the future. The first aim is for them to be seen by the community as credible and trustworthy. With the present system the repayment rate stands at 84%, which is an improvement on the 80% reported in the six-monthly report. This is mainly due to the CMCs assisting with credit control.

Activity : Promote Savings

This activity is strongly promoted by the programme, and we feel that we have been successful in this in that all areas report on forms of savings being used. In many instances they use their savings to offer credit to other group members, family members, or neighbours. It can be reported that 1051 group members are involved in savings and credit.

Activity : Business Skills Training

The level of business skills is very weak in the areas which we serve, therefore the basic training we offer the entrepreneurs has a profound impact. There are many testimonies of how simple recordkeeping has ensured profitable business. The workshops held are well attended as the entrepreneurs acknowledge that the information they receive is beneficial. In this period the Extension Officers held 202 workshops with an attendance of 1 941, while the competent Community Volunteers held 374 workshops where the attendance totalled 2 345. In total therefore there were 576 workshops held, attended by 4 286 members. The 47% increase in workshops over last year is a good indicator of the benefit the entrepreneurs receive from the workshops.

Activity : Extension Services

Extension work is time consuming, but vital to the development and progress of the entrepreneurs. As with the other strategies, the Extension Officers carry this out with the assistance of Community Volunteers. This enables the programme to spread much wider than it would through the efforts of a sole staff member.

There are many aspects to the extension work. The most important is constant interaction with and motivation of the groups, business advice, gardening advice, training workshops, loan applications, transporting group members to training, coaching and assistance to the Community Management Committees, credit control, networking, and referral. These are duties of the Extension Officer which, as reported, are extended to the Community Volunteers. These are planned and carried out on a monthly basis, and reported on through a monthly monitor which is submitted every month, and includes signed attendance registers of the workshops held.

Activity : Specialisation

The overriding principle of development is that the participants are ultimately directed to have the skills and capacity to continue their initiative profitably and independently. To achieve this, we have now included what we term specialisation. In planning this we researched and found that the government would assist rural communities by supporting co-operatives. Meetings were held with the Department of Economic Development to understand their conditions for assistance. To enable the group members to ultimately form co-operatives, we decided to plan two steps towards the formation of co-operatives. What we are presently doing is the first step. The EOs are introducing members from

different groups, but having the same interests. Those that choose to specialise are now forming interest groups and co-operating together for a common good.

The range of interest groups include gardening, sewing, broiler producing, broom making, supplying cattle feed, block making, carpentry, beadwork, tourism, herb production, pig production, potato production, and grass sleeping mats.

The second step involves the interest groups inviting the Department of Economic Development (DED) staff to the CMC meetings where they are introduced to these interest groups. If satisfied, the DED staff then take the process further, which entails training in all aspects of co-operatives, which includes business plans and production loans. In Impendle this training is complete and the co-operatives are now waiting for the next step. In other areas there is still negotiation with the Department, and some areas are still to invite the Department. This is an exciting culmination of the development process of the entrepreneurs to the point of independence from ACAT.

5. Strategy Four: Identify and capacitate Community Volunteers to assist in implementing the development programme.

Activity : Identifying Community Volunteers (CVs)

Community Volunteers are the vehicle for sustainable development as they are resident in the area, and are usually well known and trusted. ACAT has requested that the Community Management Committees identify the new CVs annually, as well as co-ordinate the CV assistance through the year. In this year's intake we started with 67 CVs. By the third training near the end of the year this number had dropped to 42. The projected dropout is the reason more were accommodated to start with. A reason for the dropout is, firstly, that commitment is needed to be a Community Volunteer, as assisting the poor in difficult conditions is trying. The second reason is that, as they attend the courses, their confidence and self esteem build and as a result some go out into the employment market and are often successfully employed, and not able to continue assisting the programme.

Statistically, we started the year with 107 CV. 67 new CVs came in for training, while 32 withdrew, leaving us with a nett number of 142 involved in the programme.

A "thank you" training time and dinner was held from the 19th to 21st February. Representatives from each area were present. A financial thank you gift for every participating CV was handed to the CMC Chairpersons, who were also requested to take these gifts back to the areas and distribute them to the CVs with our heartfelt thanks for the wonderful work they had carried out during last year.

Activity : Work with Strategic Entrepreneurs

Strategic entrepreneurs are capacitated community members that cannot volunteer their time, but can be used as a valuable resource to the community. They get to know the Extension Officer, CVs, or groups, and assist in many ways such as with specialised training, being members of committees of Community Based Organisations in which the group members are involved, lobbying for the groups and community, and accompanying group members to local authorities or government departments to request assistance. These strategic entrepreneurs are used as and when needed as they are locally available. There are 30 that offer their assistance regularly, and many more who are unknown to us but assist the groups and their members informally.

Activity : Groups trained by Community Volunteers (CVs)

As the programme matures and the CVs are well capacitated, they become more valuable to the community. They are now being co-ordinated by the Community Management Committees, who ensure that there is training held in all the zones. The training workshops held by the CVs in this period were:

Workshops	Particulars	Attendance
374	In business	2 345
360	In gardening	2 255
734	TOTAL	4 600

The Basic Life Skills and CV modules that are trained at the ACAT Main Centre are used as the training material for the group members.

Activity : Extension Work

The extension work of the CV is similar to that of the Extension Officer in that they organise combined meetings to hear reports from the groups and respond to them. Groups are visited individually when they are newly established, to assist the groups with bonding and supporting each other. The problematic groups are also visited to sort out the problems, or

for purposes such as credit control or arranging change of membership. This is time consuming, with the CVs having to have patience and commitment to continually assist. In this period the CVs had 1 755 visits to groups. They also held 397 combined group meetings, with groups being represented 2 484 times. We value this input of the CVs as it ensures that the programme continues to progress.

Activity : Community Volunteer (CV) Training

The value of this strategy has been commented on throughout this report. The CVs are key to the ultimate sustainability of the development in the community. We therefore put significant effort into improving their knowledge and capacity through training. They appreciate this and there is always a demand for this training. In this year we have trained more than in previous years:

- CV1 = 44 + 23
 - CV2 = 33 + 23
 - CV3 = 42
 - CV4 = 17
 - CV5 = 21
- Total: 203

Activity : Community Volunteer Co-ordinator (CVC)

The CVCs were introduced to help the Extension Officers who, due to staff shortages, were overseeing two areas. The CVCs were identified by the Community Management Committees. There are 7 CVCs working, with one due to withdraw as a staff member was found for that area. The CVCs are paid a small stipend related to their performance. When identifying the CVCs, the CMCs found competent, committed CVs to take up these positions. These CVCs are very productive and are of great assistance as the Extension Officers run between their two areas.

6. Strategy Five: Promote and Facilitate the Establishment of Sustainable Community Structures

Activity : Establishment of Community Management Committees (CMCs)

This year the CMCs have been a focus. It was planned to have CMCs established in each of the 11 areas. Establishment in 10 of the 11 areas was achieved, with zone committees formed in the 11th. This one will form a CMC next year.

The CMCs have, during the year:

- Identified new Community Volunteers
- Co-ordinated the assistance of CVs in their zones
- Co-ordinated training workshops by the CVs in their zones
- Formed new groups of 5, and organised their attendance at the Basic Life Skills courses
- Processed the R300 group loans
- Overseen credit control
- Where there is a demand, expanded into new zones

The CMCs are becoming known in Municipal and Government circles, and in some cases have been invited to participate in local forums. They have also been asked to present the work they are doing to local traditional leadership, and government meetings in the communities. As reported previously, they are starting to work with the Department of Economic Development to form co-operatives. Most CMCs have worked closely with the Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Social Development (Welfare).

The CMC chairpersons and their secretaries attended a 3-day report-back and training time. This reporting back from each area is very helpful. There are many questions and much advice given to each other. The weaker CMCs can see what can be achieved by listening and learning from those that are more advanced. There is also a motivational element in this. On returning they are all motivated to improve.

Activity : CMC Training

The training material was completed in Zulu, and a two-week course was held in the latter part of the year. The course content includes the material from the Leadership Skills Course. The chairman and secretaries of all the CMCs were

invited to attend. The attendance was 23 and 24 for the two weeks respectively. This course will now be offered on an annual basis as we plan to capacitate all members of the CMCs.

Activity : Savings and Credit Included as an Activity of the CMC

Nothing much has been done in this regard. The plan is to get the CMCs fully capacitated, established, and implementing the development programme in their areas. As the impact and benefit of this is realised by the groups, the trust and confidence in this structure will grow, we hope to the point where they will entrust the CMCs with their savings. As is the case with development, this will take some time; however, the objective is for savings and credit to be a function of the CMCs.

The CMCs have opened bank accounts and are generating income, some from association fees, donations from members, income from government departments for services rendered, or interest from savings by the CMC members. One CMC, of its own accord, is receiving savings and lending out to its members.

7. Referrals

Group members often make requests outside of the activities of the programme. Our response is to work out with them how the problem can be resolved, and then direct them to that particular person, hospital, clinic, government department, municipality, etc. This is a routine activity and it is found that most assistance is requested by new group members. Those that have been in the programme for some time are confident enough to seek out their own assistance.

8. Networking

Networking is a mechanism that the poor use well, especially in this time of effective communications. In general today most families, even the poor, have access to a mobile phone. This has raised the profile of networking as now it is not too difficult to be in touch with other groups, organisations, CVs, contact people, etc. This networking has really assisted the group members.

The Extension Officers network mainly with government departments, municipalities, and organisations that have a presence in the areas we serve. Networking has taken place with Red Cross (food parcels), Rural Women's Movement (science bursaries), local health workers, churches, Colleges of Further Education (FET), and Drop In Centres.

9. Exposure Visits

Visits from group to group, zone to zone, and area to area are encouraged, with the Extension Officers planning for these activities throughout the year. Group to group visits are organised by themselves, while zone to zone visits are organised by the Extension Officer as there are often logistics to sort out. In this year there were 77 of these exposure visits with 597 group members participating in this activity. The area to area visits are more difficult to organise as they usually involve transporting group members over long distances. The group members are co-operative, and do not mind the discomfort of travelling as they enjoy meeting other groups, seeing what they are doing and how they are doing things. This is a highlight for the members. This year there were 13 area to area exposure trips, with 137 group members participating.

10. ABET

The two learning centres are operating well, one in Umzumbe and the other in Emnambithi. In Umzumbe there are 14 learners. They have progressed well and can now read the local newspaper. In Emnambithi the levels of education of the 30 learners vary according to their individual progress. There are reports of group members now filling in bank forms which they could not previously do. They also can now read directions, and do not have to rely on children or strangers.

ACAT continues to co-operate with the two NGOs that are rolling out ABET in the province, namely Tembaletu and Michaelmas Trust. There is an additional learning centre in Umzumbe involving 30 learners, while in Emnambithi there are an additional three learning centres with 105 learners attending training, operated by these NGOs.

There are still government ABET learning centres available in almost every area in which we operate, so adult education is available to the group members.

11. Mainstreaming HIV and Aids

The mainstreaming of HIV and Aids was integral to the programme from its inception. It was difficult to include it at first, but over the years it has been accepted as an element that is addressed in the same way as all other elements.

The programme is being affected as there are group members that have passed away. These are not admitted to as being Aids related, so it is difficult to ascertain numbers. What is now normal is the high number of funerals, as well as the increasing number of orphans in the communities. There are different types of initiative taken by group members and community members in all the areas to address the plight of the orphans. Examples are: through making homes available as a type of day care (for the young), safe houses for school going children, feeding, soup kitchens, and rudimentary care centres. These are driven by the communities, although some do get of assistance from the Health Department, Welfare Department, or relevant NGOs.

From the programme's point of view, issues relating to HIV and Aids are addressed at group level as well as at combined meetings. There were also 146 awareness meetings that 1 971 group members attended. The Extension Officers also co-operate with the Health Department with the organising of workshops. These are not as effective as including the subject in routine meetings.

The numbers fluctuate, but at the time of this report there are 153 G5 members or their families being cared for by group members. The difficult statistic to comprehend is that there are 164 child-headed homes that are being assisted by groups or their members. There are also 140 neighbours or community members being cared for by the groups or group members.

Due to adopting mainstreaming, our model was included in a guide to mainstreaming titled "*Responding to HIV and Aids – A Practitioner's Guide to Mainstreaming in Rural Development Projects*", sponsored by Misereor – Das Helfswerk. In the latter part of the year a consultant spent a week here updating information and analysing our implementation so as to update and improve the book as they have plans to reprint the guide.

The staff have found it emotionally draining to work closely with group members, family members, and even work colleagues who are experiencing their own trauma as this disease affects them. To address this, we have had to be sensitive to each situation. This is an added challenge and responsibility to the already full work load of the Extension Officers.

12. Causes of Poverty (COP)

The approach of challenging the group members to identify the cause of their poverty instead of complaining about the symptoms, and then doing something about it is bearing fruit. COP are discussed at group meetings and combined meetings. Special meetings were held to discuss this, but the attendance at these meetings dropped so it was decided, as for HIV and Aids, to include the topic in combined group meetings. This is working well as group members are responding to "what has made them poor". Some strategies used to address the causes are:

- * Minimise unnecessary costs
- * No impulse buying
- * Address useless habits
- * Discipline of saving
- * Plant crops instead of buying
- * Cut costs of funerals
- * Address costly habits and superstitions
- * Use what they have wisely
- * Know how to use natural resources.

Of course, some fear change and are "comfortable" in their poverty. These we constantly encouraged to address at least one issue. Change is slow in these cases.

13. Capacity Building

Capacity has many facets. In the programme we acknowledge that all people have life experiences that have made and formed their thinking, attitudes, and behaviour. The approach therefore is to take these elements, improve on them, and give the group members further knowledge and skills to be able to make better informed choices and decisions. This is the principle found throughout the many activities in the programme. It is difficult to evaluate the increase in capacity, but it is acknowledged and spoken of that, in participating in this programme, there is change. Group members are encouraged to plan, organise, and put into action this increased capacity. The result of this is that families are working together, there is increased confidence, change in thinking and behaviour, and improvement in food, finances and assets. There is no doubt that the programme capacitates its participants, the group members.

14. Staffing

As reported in the six-monthly report, Mrs Olive Mbambo retired at the end of July. She lived and worked in the Umzumbe area. Mr Sifiso Khumalo took over her responsibilities from July. He spent April, May and June working with her to learn the zones and meet the groups. Having previously been a Community Volunteer in that area made the transition easier for Mr Khumalo. As reported in the six-monthly report, Mr Mbongwa came onto staff for two months, and then moved onto a more lucrative position in government. On the positive side, he is working with the EDP groups in the position he filled in government.

There have been no other movements regarding staff during this year. There are therefore still 9 Extension Officers servicing the 11 areas (including 2 Community Extension Officers).

Field Audits

A field audit Mr T Madondo's work in Nqutu was carried out by the two programme leaders. The work was found to be very good.

There were plans to audit a further 2 Extension Officers. However, due to more training than planned and illness of staff members, we did not carry this out.

Community Extension Officers

Mrs Nombulelo Khumalo (Umzumbe West) and Mr Thulani Duma continue to be community based Extension Officers on our team.

15. Staff Training

Training

Two new staff were orientated and trained over this year. Mr Mbongwa resigned as reported. The other, Mr Brian Miyanda, will be working in the Sustainable Agriculture Programme, although he will be available to the training team at the ACAT Main Centre.

There were two training weeks for the staff, the first on extension methods, and the second on agriculture, business and health.

Training at Staff Meetings

Four staff meetings were held this year. During the training days the Community Volunteer courses 2, 3, 4 and 5 were trained to familiarise the staff with the content.

Training Experience

One team member attends each week-long Basic Life Skills Course or Community Volunteer Course on a rotational basis. This refreshes their knowledge, training techniques, and builds their capacity for the future.

Three Community Volunteers are invited to every Basic Life Skills course for practical experience in training. We try to invite those that have been identified as having an interest and ability to train and to improve their teaching skills.

16. Summary of Quantitative Objectives for the period 1 January – 31 December 2008

Description of Activity	Objectives for 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2008	Achieved	Comments or reason for deviation
Forming of Groups	110	151	Big demand. In 2 areas, 1 group member per group trained
Basic Life Skills Course	10	14	More courses due to inclusion of Sustainable Agriculture Programme
Survivalist businesses established	550	755	More groups established
Group Visits: Extension Officer Individual visits Combined group visits Total EO visits	2 500	2 066 <u>1 790</u> EO <u>3 856</u>	Focus this year was on constant interaction with groups as this results in more successful groups. Groups are visited individually as well as having interaction at combined group meetings. Individual visits usually when a group has a problem
Group Visits: Community Volunteer Individual visits Combined group visits Total CV visits	2 580	1 755 <u>2 484</u> CV <u>4 239</u>	
Grand total of visits:	5 080	8 095	
HIV & Aids awareness	4 800	1 971	Reduced attendance due to being weary of attending awareness meetings
ABET serving areas	2	2	No deviation
Community Volunteers attending training 1 st year 2 nd year	20 20	67 23	1 st year took in more to make up for drop outs. Good interest in becoming Community Volunteers
Number of business skills workshops	110	EO 202 CV <u>374</u> <u>576</u>	Demand for business workshops is high. Including the CV's training to the group members has increased numbers substantially
Number of group members attending	1 210	EO 1 941 CV <u>2 345</u> 4 286	
Number of garden workshops	110	EO 169 CV <u>360</u> <u>529</u>	Demand for garden workshops is high. Including the CV's training to the group members has increased numbers substantially
Number of group members attending	1 210	EO 1 634 CV <u>2 255</u> 4 889	

17. Lidgettton Farm

The farm continues to operate on a self-sustaining basis. The small beef herd has increased to 26. Some cattle were sold, and a new Nguni bull was bought to improve the gene pool of the animals. The income from the sale of animals is used to meet the farm expenses. The animals are fed on a low cost basis, being kikuyu grass pastures in summer, and ryegrass pastures in winter supplemented with a root crop (Japanese Radish) and veld hay. During mid-year Mr Rick Phipson took on the responsibility of handling the farming section.

Buildings on the farm are still rented out for additional income that is utilised for the maintenance of the property.

In this period, the focus has been on maintenance both of the farm and the Centre. The maintenance has been extensive as for many years only basic running repairs were done.

A generator has been purchased due to the uncertainty surrounding the supply of electricity. Having to be responsible day and night for about 40 trainees per week, it was felt that we had to have backup. A room has been built to house the generator. Security has also been improved by erecting a proper entrance to the Centre, with an electric gate, which has been planned for many years.

18. Fleet Management

Due to the extensive distances to the rural communities we serve, vehicles are imperative for the effective roll-out of this rural development programme. Managing the fleet has been difficult as the major costs of fuel and oil are beyond our control. The price of fuel rose dramatically this year - higher than anyone foresaw or could budget for. We tried to accommodate this by economising on travelling, without affecting the programme implementation.

Servicing and repairs were also costly as inflation also increased dramatically. The fleet is managed on a day-to-day basis as we use the First Auto Fleet Management System (a subsidiary of First National Bank). This enables all costs to be analysed according to trade norms before being authorised. We are aware that this is a high cost element of the programme, and will monitor it continually to ensure that the fleet is managed efficiently.

19. Performance of Programme

Positive aspects of the implementation

- Holistic Approach

The implementation of a holistic approach to rural development has proven successful in that the families participating in the groups have, in one way or another, improved their quality of life financially, health-wise, relationally, and for those interested, spiritually. The organic growth of the programme as friends and neighbours recognise the benefit of the programme proves that beyond doubt.

Those that are truly entrepreneurs have started up thriving business enterprises. Others earn income from agricultural production. There is also room for those that do not succeed in this, as they have the opportunity to be involved in the social side of support, or with caring for the other group members.

- Foundational Teaching

The basic foundational training offered by the programme has a remarkable influence on mobilising the poor to be active in addressing and improving their home situations.

- Registered Co-operatives

The programme has now grown to the point where common initiatives lead to the formation of interest groups. These will eventually form registered co-operatives that are independent of this development programme.

- Developmental Activity

Many groups and group members are sourcing information, advice, or services outside of the programme. Previously there was no development activity.

- HIV and Aids

The comprehensive information on HIV and Aids through the training given to the programme participants, has had a dramatic impact on how the disease is handled in the areas we serve. Most of the initiatives surrounding this disease have been community-driven due to the information and training they have received through the programme.

- Home Food Gardens

The value of the home food gardens is testified to by all. The training material content is limited, but has the vital principles for a successful home garden. It has been amazing to observe the produce that is harvested from these home gardens. The vegetables from the gardens were also appreciated when the food prices escalated so much. Eating from the garden helped the family budgets.

- Input is Multiplied

The assistance and involvement of the community volunteers has enabled the programme to go wider and further than we anticipated. Their assistance in holding training workshops has increased the information and capacity of the communities. They themselves have become a local resource.

- Community Management Committees

The Community Management Committees now understand the concept of governance and will be governing the development process, while the Zone Committees will implement the programme in their zones. This is now becoming clear and in time, where it is being well applied, it will be an effective, meaningful and relevant community structure in our province.

Problems, Bottlenecks and Weak points

- Weather
The problem that is often reported is the extreme weather conditions, such as vicious storms, hail, snow, flooding, fire and drought.
- Co-operation with Government
Working and co-operating with Government at Provincial level is very difficult. They have their own plans and strategies in which the NGO sector does not feature. At ground level we do, in some cases, successfully co-operate with the government officials, but in many cases they see the NGO as a competitor.
- Fencing
The fencing of the home gardens is a major problem. The gardens are often fenced with inadequate materials, which are no match for the hungry marauding livestock in winter.
- Trauma of Field Staff
The emotional distress and trauma our field staff are exposed to as they are working with families that have dying members. This is now a common occurrence, and the constant demand on the Extension Officers for emotional and logistical support is becoming a heavy burden to them.
- Staff recruitment
Recruiting staff for the programme remains problematic. The skills needed for a programme that has a holistic approach are difficult to find.

Strategies to Overcome these Problems, Bottlenecks and Weak Points

- Weather
Extreme weather conditions are difficult to overcome. Agricultural practices that limit damage are taught to combat this.
- Co-operation with Government
Although co-operation at the higher level is difficult, the strategy we are using is, where possible, to build a relationship with the local officials.
- Fencing
A fencing programme was planned and is being implemented. There needs to be a plan to extend this assistance further.
- Trauma of Field Staff
Those who feel emotionally burdened need to be given the opportunity to deal with it, through either in-house or external counselling.
- Staff recruitment
Look into new strategies to utilise the present staff on a wider front, by including more Community Volunteers.

20. Conclusion

2008 has now drawn to an end, and the implementation of the EDP has followed the workplan. The benefit to the group members is increasing and improving as they participate in the programme over a longer period. From an implementation perspective, the programme has been implemented better this year than previously. This is because the Extension Officers are more experienced, the older groups are settled and working, and the new groups have role models in the older groups to follow. Now that the CMCs are fulfilling their role of co-ordination and governance, there is little reason why this development will not sustain itself in the coming years.

From these experiences we are now confident that we can pass our development principles and experiences on to the partner organisations that are looking to us for help, and that they will be just as successful in their constituencies.

We once again express our sincere appreciation to all those that have supported the Entrepreneurial Development Programme, and assure you that this initiative has improved the lives of thousands of the poor in this province. In closing, we acknowledge and honour God, who is the source of our passion and resolve to serve our target group and in doing so, extend His kingdom. We see this as a great privilege.