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SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION

This airgram transmits an evaluation of the Special Self-Help program in South Africa prepared by Summer Intern Sydney A. Lewis. Ms. Lewis visited 23 of the 27 FY 1982 projects during the summer of 1983. The initial portion of her paper focuses on the role of foreign assistance in South Africa, the development priorities reflected in the Embassy's Self-Help program, criteria for selection and evaluation of projects, and the role of project managers and beneficiaries of projects.

From this assessment, she develops a series of recommendations on the selection of projects and the implementation of the Self-Help program. The most important suggestions are that the Embassy: emphasize development of teachers and teaching resources over construction of classrooms; attempt to develop work preparation projects for unemployed black youth; favor projects with well-qualified managers; consider funding projects in the "independent" homelands; establish greater contact with project supervisors, encourage inter-project cooperation and develop a project self-evaluation procedure.

The Embassy believes that Ms. Lewis' recommendations are worthwhile and will be discussing ways that they may be implemented before beginning the FY-1984 project cycle. Nickel.

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Enclosure

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THE SPECIAL SELF-HELP PROGRAM IN SOUTH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

In a nation where First World and Third World problems stand side by side, the issues underlying development assistance are both unique and complex. This report focuses on the following issues as they apply to the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Program: the role of foreign assistance within the South African context, development priorities, self-help as a vehicle for positive social change and appropriate criteria for project selection and evaluation. The questions of who should benefit from Special Self-Help Projects and who should manage these projects are also addressed.

Analysis and evaluation of the Self-Help Program is based largely on the performance of projects funded during Fy 82. This program funded twenty-seven projects at a total value of \$150,000. In terms of effective community organization and development, the Program proved to be successful. Specific strengths and weaknesses are detailed below. Lastly, various recommendations for improving the Embassy's Program are made.

Development Aid in South Africa

In determining the role assistance programs should play in South Africa, one must first ask whether development aid is needed at all, and if so, is it necessarily desirable. On the one hand, macroeconomic data verify South Africa's economic strength; it is the sole "developed" country in sub-Saharan Africa. On the other hand, assessment of the country's needs from a microeconomic perspective yields an entirely different picture. The development needs of South Africa's majority are great and call for urgent attention. The question is whose attention?

The student riots of the late seventies forced the South African Government (SAG) to pay greater attention to the needs of black youth. In the past 6 years, the government has invested substantial amounts in black education, particularly in urban townships. For the vast majority of blacks though, there has been little substantive change in socio-economic opportunities; great potential for human growth and development remains untapped without the necessary catalyst for change, be it through education, work or recreation. Foreign assistance programs can assist the black community by providing the resources to catalyze positive change.

The argument is frequently raised that financial assistance from the international community merely removes the burden of development from the shoulders of Pretoria. The government thus continues to renege on its responsibility to improve blacks' living conditions. Whether foreign governments support black

development projects or not probably has little impact upon Pretoria's development efforts; given the fact that the SAG would not support the projects in any case, the only potential losers are blacks if the decision is made to not provide assistance. The issue is not whether the SAG is able to support community development projects but whether it is willing to do so. As long as the government continues to place the development needs of blacks at the bottom of its priority list, there will be a valuable role for assistance from the international community.

Development Priorities

Priorities of any effective development program must clearly reflect the needs and aspirations of its beneficiaries. Thus far, the Ambassador's Self-Help Fund has focused primarily on black education. The need appears to be greatest within this field; blacks also hold education as a key priority.

Virtually all of the Embassy's Self-Help Projects supported educational activities of one sort or another. As noted in the table below, educational projects ranged from building classrooms to establishing youth clubs in urban townships.

1982 Embassy Projects Grouped by Activity

Type of Activity	Number of Projects	Self-Help Funds
a) Building classrooms	3	\$ 41,500
b) Educational materials	3	16,200
c) Pre-school education	4	13,500
d) Library and study facilities	4	18,100
e) Informal educational projects	7	31,700
3 youth clubs		
1 alternative school		
2 sewing clubs		
1 adult literacy program		
f) Agriculture	4	18,000
g) Cooperatives	<u>2</u>	<u>11,000</u>
	27	\$150,000

Some types of projects were considerably more valuable in terms of their ability to widen socio-economic opportunities for blacks than others.

In order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the 1982 Program, each of these activities will be examined briefly. Each category raised unique issues and problems relating to

community development.

Building classrooms. The three classroom building projects helped meet educational needs in KwaZulu; classroom buildings in the rural areas tend to be extremely overcrowded or even non-existent. In many respects, classroom construction is an ideal Self-Help project. Project supervisors generally have considerable experience in building and have thus developed a cost-efficient system for implementing additional school projects. From the Embassy's perspective, classroom construction is advantageous because it clearly involves a one-time investment; furthermore, the projects' results are easy to monitor. The Self-Help component of these projects is generally strong as families are willing to financially support classroom building projects.

In spite of these many positive features, one must question whether building classrooms is actually the best investment in terms of uplifting the quality of black education in South Africa. Classroom construction is valuable only to the extent that additional learning materials and teachers are provided. Lack of qualified teachers and inadequate supply of books proved to be problems with all three projects.

Educational materials. This set of projects is extremely valuable in terms of its contribution to improvement of black educational standards. Through provision of reading materials, two projects had an impact upon many schools and thousands of young people. Given the paucity of stimulating educational materials available to blacks, these types of projects should be emphasized in future Self-Help programs.

Pre-school education. Development of creches and day-care facilities are of particular benefit to working mothers in the urban townships. Although these projects had merits, the Embassy probably over-invested in pre-school education at the expense of other important educational activities.

Library and study facilities. Creation of libraries and study facilities greatly enriches students' educational experiences. Young people have the opportunity to pursue their own interests and work independently.

Informal educational projects. The benefits of such projects tend to be less concrete, and thus, more difficult to monitor. Two of the youth clubs proved to be outstanding self-help projects; the third youth club was hampered by problems within the community, as well as management problems. The "alternative school" project was one of the least successful Self-Help projects. By its very nature as an alternative school, its aims were nebulous and its actual contribution to black education was limited. Although informal educational projects can potentially play important roles in community organization, they also are more prone to management problems due to their less well-defined parameters. Consulate and Embassy Self-Help officers

should check project sites before allocating funds to such projects.

Agriculture. Agricultural projects' results were affected by the drought. In one case, Self-Help funds were used to support a feeding scheme at local primary schools; this type of endeavor is not appropriate for the Self-Help program as it involves repeated expenditures as opposed to a one-time investment.

Cooperatives. These projects proved to be valuable in terms of their contribution toward building self-governing community groups and generating income.

Outstanding needs. Two types of educational projects that are desperately needed in South Africa but have yet to be funded by the Embassy are teacher training and work preparedness programs.

-- Training. In KwaZulu, headmasters and teachers alike raised the problem of unqualified teachers. Due to the limited benefits offered by the teaching profession, people only resort to teaching when they are unable to receive better employment. Morale is low among teachers. Teacher training programs would help to address black education's greatest need: the need for qualified and committed teachers.

-- Work preparedness. Work preparedness programs would be valuable to young blacks seeking employment in South Africa's difficult job market. The Thusong Youth Center is in the process of developing a course which provides lessons in business English, job-searching and interviewing techniques.

Criteria for Selection and Evaluation of Projects

The types of activities which have proven to be successful Self-Help endeavors have been noted above. A review of last year's Self-Help Program shows that the most successful and productive projects have particular qualities in common. These characteristics serve as useful criteria by which to select and evaluate projects.

Strong community involvement and participation. As part of the Self-Help Program, all projects should involve community participation to some extent. While some projects' self-help component consists of cash, more successful projects involve community participation at all levels. For example, at Tinkani Textiles, 23 women operate and manage a textiles cooperative; they work as a group to make production and marketing decisions. Profits from the cooperative's sales are channeled into other community development projects. This contrasts greatly with the library project sponsored by the Appellabosch College of Education. The community has no interest in helping to renovate the library; the project has received no cooperation from the KwaZulu Works Department.

Careful management of finances. Self-Help project supervisors vary with respect to their experience in managing money. While the Treasurer of Eshowe Christian Action Group kept accurate records of literally every nail used in school building projects, the Chairman of Nyanga Art Project overspent his \$1100 grant by nearly double. Faulty management of funds is certainly a problem which the Embassy would like to avoid. One option is to select only those projects whose supervisors have demonstrated prior successful project management. Such projects should be given priority, but not necessarily to the exclusion of individuals and/or groups who have a well-defined project in mind, yet lack extensive experience.

Ability to address community needs. Projects which play an important role in meeting community needs are generally well-supported by local residents. Community members are willing to become personally involved to ensure the project's success. The Border Council of Churches is a good example of such a project. Resettled villagers in the Ciskei were taught gardening techniques; the vegetables provided by home gardens helped people to meet their most basic needs.

A successful Self-Help project embodies these three characteristics. These qualities are largely a function of the project supervisor's ability to plan carefully and manage well all aspects of the project's implementation.

SELF-HELP PROJECT MANAGERS

Although all projects aim to benefit either black or colored communities, the projects' managers come from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Given the self-help orientation of the Embassy's program, it is somewhat ironic that the majority of project managers are white. Out of the five projects sponsored by the Johannesburg Consulate, three were sponsored by wealthy white liberal women from Johannesburg's northern suburbs; the other two were managed by prominent community organizers in the colored townships. Although the race of project supervisors is clearly not relevant in the selection of projects, one advantage of the Self-Help program is that it gives blacks an opportunity to develop both organizational and managerial skills.

Another related issue is that white managers clearly seem to have easier access to funds from large institutional donors in South Africa, and thus, their projects tend to be on a larger scale; relative to the project as a whole, the Embassy's contribution is rather small.

Managers of successful Self-Help projects share the following characteristics:

- Community leaders: Project supervisors who are also leaders within the community are able to rally greater

support for their projects. People are aware of their activities within the community and are eager to become involved in their projects.

- * Understanding of community dynamics: Many of the Embassy's Self-Help projects are located in areas where community bonds are weak or even non-existent. Individuals who understand the dynamics of community organization and development are able to bring people together to participate in group activities in spite of other divisive forces.
- * Dynamism: Successful project managers tend to be dynamic and committed individuals. Perhaps this quality enables them to organize in situations where no previous social structures exist.
- * Planning and management skills: Managers who have the ability to plan for both the short and long term are at a distinct advantage in project implementation. Effective management skills enable project supervisors to take full advantage of whatever limited resources may be available to the organization.

Beneficiaries of the projects

Another important factor to consider in selection of Self-Help projects deals with who benefits from the project. The focus of the 1982 project was clearly Black youth; four projects directly benefitted colored individuals. Both of these targets are appropriate ones within the context of Special Self-Help.

When dealing with issues related to beneficiaries, geographical concerns also come into play. Although the Embassy did not support any projects in the Orange Free State during 1982, the Special Self-Help program for 1983 will fund two projects in that region; Embassy and Consulate officials will continue to be on the look out for appropriate self-help projects in the Orange Free State.

The Embassy supported numerous projects in the "Self-Governing States" and one project in "independent" Ciskei. The Embassy's involvement in the homelands clearly raises a number of complex and sensitive issues. Increased funding of the Self-Help projects in the homelands could be misinterpreted as a sign of recognition; on the other hand, providing no assistance could also imply some form of recognition. At the same time, Africans in these areas have great needs.

Recommendation for Ambassador's Self-Help Program

Implementation of the following recommendations would strengthen the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Program:

- * In selecting projects, the Embassy should give priority to activities which provide libraries and study facilities

for students, organize teacher training, work preparedness or vocational programs, or assist in the organization of cooperatives.

- The Embassy should carefully evaluate the project manager's capabilities. Priority should be given to projects with managers who have demonstrated prior successes but not to the exclusion of individuals and/or groups who have a well-defined project in mind, yet lack extensive experience.
- Taking the requisite political considerations into account, as well as the great needs of Africans in rural areas, the Embassy should consider a moderate increase in funding for Self-Help projects in the "independent" homelands.
- Embassy officials should attempt to establish greater contact with Self-Help project supervisors. Although it is clearly difficult to visit projects in rural areas, many of the projects are located in fairly close proximity to the Embassy and constituent posts. Project supervisors appreciate visits by Embassy officials; as stated by one project guide, a visit changes the meaning of the grant from just a mere "handout" to more genuine interest in the project. As project supervisors are generally very active in community affairs and are keenly aware of 'grass-root' political thought, close contact with project managers can be mutually advantageous. Embassy summer intern found discussions with project supervisors to be extremely informative and politically enlightening.
- As a number of Special Self-Help projects involve production of artistic goods, it would be beneficial to both projects and the Embassy to organize exhibitions of their work through U.S.I.S. The public would thus become better informed of our efforts to assist blacks. Furthermore, such support would greatly encourage participating projects.
- In order to assist project supervisors who have had relatively little management experience, the Embassy should develop a brief manual relating to project implementation. The manual should be concise and provide general guidelines on such topics as project planning, budgeting, accounting and community development.
- Embassy's Self-Help projects frequently overlap in activities and problems. Embassy officials should encourage cooperation among self-help projects such that they provide mutual support and advice to one another.
- To assist with the Embassy's evaluation procedure for self-help projects, projects themselves should submit a brief progress report. The Canadian Embassy has implemented such a procedure and has found it to be of assistance in evaluating its program.