BLACK
Community Programmes

FOREWORD

This document contains suggestions for action for the Sprocas 2 Black Community Programmes which were presented for discussion at the co-ordinating group of Sprocas in September 1971 in Johannesburg.

The contents represent a rationale for the Black Community Programmes i.e. the aims, the reasons for the programme and the methods which we employ in carrying out the programmes.

This document is being distributed to members of the Black Community with the hope that it will create some understanding of the programmes and their direction.

The Black Community Programmes started on the 1st January, 1972 and are directed from Durban, Natal. A small pamphlet titled "Black Community Programmes" has already been printed and circulated to members of the community. In that pamphlet there is some information about some of the programmes planned for 1972 and 1973. These are still available on request from the Director's office in Durban. We would like to feel that this programme is established for the benefit of the Black Community directed by the Black Community and supported by the Black Community and accountable to the Black Community. For this reason we will welcome any comments or criticism of the Programme from those who feel strong enough about the nature and direction of the programme to wish to share their views with us.

Hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

B.A. Khoapa
Director
BLACK COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

The goals of the Black Community Programmes are:-

1. To help the Black Community become aware of its own identity.

2. To help the Black Community to create a sense of its own power.

3. To enable the Black Community to organise itself, to analyse its own needs and problems and to mobilise its resources to meet its needs.

4. To develop Black leadership capable of guiding the development of the Black Community.

What will it take to get the Programme moving?

SPRO-CAS 2 presupposes an urgency in our situation that will not wait for anyone. If we do not become genuinely connected to the 'gut-issues' of our life here, we risk extinction even before we move a leg.

SPRO-CAS 2 needs to hook-up with forces in the community working for social change and responding to the needs that these communities disclose.

This movement toward involvement will require vital shifts in emphasis from the 'traditional' ways of dealing with community problems.

The following continuum suggests in outline the dimensions these shifts in emphasis must take as we participate 'responsively' in the transformation of the Black Communities.

I will amplify the intent of each shift.

* FROM: SERVICE ... TO ... ACTION

From serving the individual needs of people to action to build a power base for systematic reform in the community.

* FROM: SYMPTOMS ... TO ... CAUSES

From dealing with symptoms to dealing with causes.

- FROM: WORKING ALONE ... TO ... ... WORKING WITH
           OTHERS

    From working alone to working with others to develop an
    overall strategy, that is, working with other community action
    groups, grassroots community groups, churches etc.

- FROM: 'RESPONSIBLE' PEOPLE ... TO ... RESPONSIVE
           PEOPLE

    From people who move with constant caution to people who
    are responsive to community needs. The desire for 'responsible'
    activity is often a cover for doing nothing at all.

- FROM: DIFFUSION ... TO ... POWER

    From offering a little bit of everything towards a reordering of
    resources behind specific goals.

- FROM: DOING FOR THE POOR ... TO ... WORKING WITH
           AND UNDER

    From doing things for people to working with people, helping
    them to discover their needs and helping them organise their
    programmes.

- FROM: WHITEMEN WORKING IN BLACK COMMUNITIES ...
           TO ... BLACKMEN WORKING IN BLACK COM=
           MUNITIES

    From white-staffed programmes for blacks toward pre-
    dominantly black-staffed programmes for black people. The
    hardest job remains:- Whites must learn to work for change in
    the white community. The missionary area for white people is
    not in the black communities, but the white communities.

1. From Service to Action

In past efforts, insofar as we sought to change society, we sought to change it
through the transformation of the individuals that composed it. Yet it is
increasingly apparent that our concentration on individual and inter-
personal relationships and efforts to reform the wayward and to relieve
problems of the 'disadvantaged' has been inadequate and superficial. The
problem we face is not simply that of individual bigotry. The racial crisis is
not caused simply as a result of the sum total of everyone's individual preju-
dice. We are now becoming aware of the ways in which the whole white

institutional life functions subtly but effectively to prevent blacks from genuine participation in the economic, educational, Church and political structures of the country.

Our programmes therefore are called upon to be more than 'remedial'. We must embark on efforts to build among those with whom we choose to work, the means to achieve, and opportunities for using power— political and social. In addition we must assist efforts in white suburban areas towards the same end. They too are largely ignorant of the political process and the role they can play in it. Unlike black communities however, they have 'protectors' whose interest are more like their own.

2. From Symptoms to Causes

Some people have distinguished between 'problems' and 'issues'. When one man cannot get along with his wife, that's a problem; When three men out of ten don't get along with their wives, that's an 'issue'. It's not just a matter of degree. The focus is changed from 'what's wrong with him?' to 'what's wrong with US?'

SPRO-CAS 2 must address itself to the causes of the social ills and other 'disadvantages' of the Black community. To do this we need to get involved in the struggle for quality education, health care, public housing and the myriad other points at which members of the Black community are affected.

3. From working alone to working with others to develop an overall strategy

To change our society, we must ally ourselves with those in the community who are now the vanguard of social change.

Our crisis will not be resolved until an overall strategy is developed which combines the major segments of our society:- Business, Government, Churches, Labour and non-governmental agencies like our own. Only a combination of forces can solve the interrelated problems of white institutional racism.

4. From Diffusion to Power

No one can say with certainty what another community or person really needs, but one can come closer by knowing people in the community itself. Staff people particularly need to be in touch on many levels—with people in present programmes, colleagues in related field, local leaders (both established and grassroots) as well as people presently unrelated to community organisations where programs might be made available.

An agency that seeks to do everything suggested to it betrays an underlying rootlessness and lack of direction. We should seek to do that which we

consider most urgent and that which we have the resources to meet. We can determine priorities on the basis of community needs and then, by reviewing present programmes, determine which programmes are relevant.

5. From doing for the poor to working with and under

The greatest danger facing any agency today is the temptation to do programmes for 'poor' people and for 'black people' without involving them centrally in the planning and execution. We must find ways of ending the paternalistic effect of this practice.

We must instead determine ways in which those whites who are interested can supply resources and technical assistance which black people need to develop programmes in their own communities.

6. From Whitemen working in Black communities to Blackmen working in Black communities

Race is important. The Churches, as well as other 'liberal' agencies dedicated to the achieving of an integrated society, sought to destroy or ignore distinctions between black and white (they sought to be colour-blind rather than colour-sensitive). They said to themselves and others colour is not important ... it's the man in the man that matters. But it didn't work. It did and does matter to both. It matters very much. This is what Black Consciousness is all about, and until this is recognized these agencies cannot move beyond it.

We are increasingly aware of the largely negative impact whites have in the Black community. Certain programmes have turned from placing whites in the black community to actively recruiting more blacks for that work. We now see that much of that work, done with the best of intentions, has often perpetuated a sense of dependency and paternalism.

What we would like to see through these programmes is Blacks working constructively on the 'Black problem' of jobs, education, housing, welfare etc., while whites learn to confront white people and white institutions in white communities with the 'White-problem'.

METHODS

In putting these into effect, there are at least two possible methods of approach:

The first is that SPRO-CAS can set out to establish projects such as self-help' agencies in the black communities to do the work along the line outlined in the body of this document.

If this approach is followed we would require a staff and financial outlay

which would exceed the present means of Spro-cas 2. Also, setting up new projects may tend to duplicate existing efforts, perhaps to the detriment of the designs of the programme as set out here.

The second method is the one I prefer. This approach seeks to *communicate, co-ordinate*, and *co-operate* in a meaningful way with other groups, organisations and institutions—both public and private, in the black communities, to enable them to make the necessary shifts in programme emphasis so that they can create a consciousness of identity as communities, develop sufficient individuals conscious of this identity and belonging and ability to acquire and use resources needed to achieve the goals of unity, self-determination, collective work responsibility, purpose and creativity.

The rationale for this kind of approach is that there are in already existing organisations—welfare, education, recreation, church etc.— 'Change Agents' (Leaders) working in these organisations; What these agents require are skills, information and techniques to improve communication, and understanding of the goals of their organisations. Our aim should be to see to what extent we can help them to be more effective in their own setting—in a sense, to train them to become better 'change agents'.

In this approach stress is laid on the need to encourage communities to identify their wants and needs and to work co-operatively at satisfying them. In this approach 'projects' are not determined but develop as discussion in communities focusses the real concerns of the community. As needs and wants are defined and solutions sought we in Spro-cas may provide the kind of aid which assists the community in meeting these needs. But, the emphasis is on communities working at their own problems. Change comes as a community sees the need for change and as it develops the will and capacity to make changes it sees as desirable.

Our aim should be to heighten this will and capacity to make changes that are desirable. Direction is then established internally rather than externally. The development of a specific project is less important than the development of the capacity of a people to establish the project.

The Churches in this country have indicated, by sponsoring the Spro-cas programme and other programmes, their desire to be involved, in the task of eradicating all those factors that contribute to the 'powerlessness' of the black communities, and it is hoped that as these programmes start the individual churches are going to put their resources and good offices open to the implementation of most of the programmes. Close liaison will be kept with Christian Education Departments of Churches as well as other key persons working on church programmes.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitations of the above approach are:

(i) Action will be slow;

(ii) The action taken is not subject to control by us;

(iii) The programmes that develop may not be the action which we feel we necessarily agree with, and the action taken may move in 'unsophisticated' fashion.

On the other hand we must emphasise the importance of people learning to work together at the problems they conceive to be important, and the probability that such projects as the community undertakes in this fashion will have a meaning and permanence which imposed projects, no matter how subtly introduced, will not have.

COST AND PERSONNEL

To undertake such programmes a Director of the Programmes is obviously necessary. His task will be to organise and give direction to the goals of the programme. Much of his time will be taken by travelling and speaking to groups and individuals as well as setting up such workshops, seminars and conferences as are necessary.

It would appear that a Field Officer whose main tasks would be to collect data about communities as well as keeping contact with points of development will be necessary if the budget can carry such a person.

It also becomes evident that in order to improve and maintain good communication with black communities there will be a need for at least a simple publication to carry news about the Black communities as well as the work of other Black organisations in the country on a regular basis.