

# WE ARE A FORCE TO RECKON WITH \_\_\_ Hambanathi Women's Action Group



WOMEN TOGETHER ARE STRONG - There can be no other way to describe the womens' group of Hambanati.

We had heard of this group. A resident of Hambanati, a man, had told us, " Hambanati is a place with a difference- the women dominate the organisations there."

We wanted to find out more so that our readers could hear about these women too.

So we made arrangements to meet. When we arrived we were so warmly received and we settled down to hearing about their history.

"We had lots of problems and they were getting worse and too much. The one big problem was in 1979 when the cemetery we were using became full. We were told by the Port Natal Administration Board to go and bury our dead at Ntuzuma cemetery, which is very far, or to cremate our dead, which we didn't want to do.

Well we started to organise. From house to house we went and demanded of all women to come and join a meeting to talk about this problem. Everybody had to come. Anyone refusing had to tell us where she hoped to bury her dead. Did she have a special place?, we asked.





*"You run the Township - you must provide a cemetery!"*

As women, we first met with the Advisory Board to talk about this. But we found them with no power to do anything. So we forced Port Natal Administration Board to meet with us. Soon we had problems. They asked us, "Who are you? What group? Who sent you to us? " We saw that we could fight these problems if we were an organised group, with a message from our organisation. Then we met and formed the HAMBANATI WOMENS' ACTION GROUP.

We told the Port Natal Administration Board that their having no ground for a cemetery was not our problem but theirs . They ran the township so they must provide a cemetery.

So the Town Board gave us Gennezana which is close by. But there was a jump in cost from R12 to R53 . They were at war, but we stood our ground. The Port Natal Administration board eventually agreed to lower them to R12 again. We had won.

Having an organised group had many advantages. We now knew who were members and how many members we had, when writing letters and for purposes of keeping records. We had an identity. We had built up an organisation.



## THE WOMEN'S CENTRE OFFERS LITERACY

The Women's Centre has asked Learn and Teach to run a training course for women who would like to learn to teach others to : (a) read and write in Zulu,

(b) learn to speak, read and write in English.

Any women who would like to help their sisters by teaching a group is welcome to attend the course, which will be run in May, 1985. No formal qualifications are needed. If you are interested in the course, please contact:

THE WOMEN'S CENTRE,  
16 ECT,  
20 ST. ANDREWS STREET,  
DURBAN.  
PHONE - 3011624.

There is usually someone in the office on a Saturday between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.



So what did we do? We said that we will block the rubbish trucks from entering the township. If they went on dumping rubbish we threatened to take the rubbish and dump it on their beautiful golf course in Tongaat!

Then they started cleaning the place and they soon opened a new dumping site. We now have a primary school on the old dumping site. Now that our organisation was solid the Port Natal Administration Board knew we are a force to reckon with. ■

Another problem we had was with the dumping site. The dump site was close to our township. As a result lots of flies and smell and terrible dirty smelling water and papers got into our yards. People used to come and look for food in the night and tsotsies used to hang around.

