

South Africa Country Plan 2001-2004



Statement of Purpose: Skillshare International works for sustainable development in partnership with the people and communities of Africa and Asia. We do this by sharing and developing skills, facilitating organisational effectiveness and supporting organisational growth.

Values

We have identified overall values which will guide our work.

Skillshare International:

- recognises the right of people and communities to determine and develop their own future.
- is committed to organisational and individual development.
- believes working in partnership is central to effective economic and social development.

Strategic Objectives

We have identified five key strategic objectives:

- to assist the reduction of poverty, improve living conditions and create long-term sustainable livelihoods through support for the development process both regionally and in each country where Skillshare International operates.
- to develop broad-based partnerships with organisations in Africa and Asia, working jointly with them to identify their needs in relation to skills and organisational development.
- to identify varied and innovative ways in which the needs of partner organisations can be met within the context of the evolving needs of the region, drawing on and learning from examples of good programme practice.

- to widen understanding and awareness of the importance of international development work through the building of a broader constituency.
- to develop and diversify our resource base, in terms of financial, organisational and human resources, leading to an enhancement of our activities.

Skillshare International has developed a Corporate Strategy setting out our statement of purpose, values and strategic objectives for the five-year period 1999 - 2004.

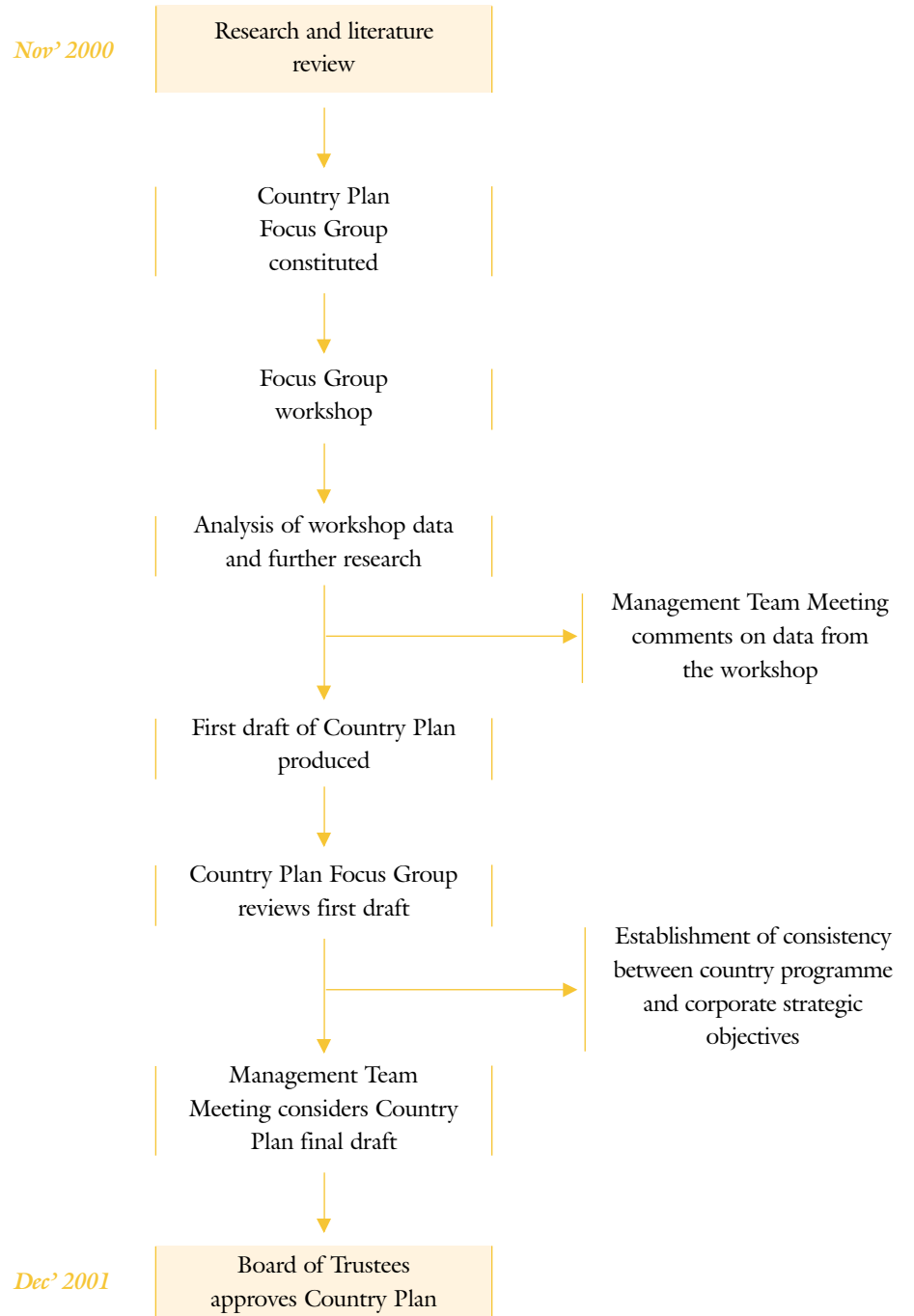
Following the development of the Corporate Strategy in 1999 and the establishment of Skillshare International's regional office in southern Africa, it became possible to develop a strategy for our programme in South Africa, leading to this Country Plan.

The Country Plan interprets our broader corporate objectives and more specific programme strategic objectives that identify the contribution we will be making in this country.

The Country Plan also puts the particular development needs of South Africa in context, as well as providing background information to Skillshare International's involvement.

The development of the new Country Plan has been a process of review and consultation involving the participation of people connected to Skillshare International, both internally and externally, in South Africa. Contributors were drawn from Skillshare International's regional office staff and the Country Plan Focus Group (made up of participants from government and civil society involved in health, trade unions, arbitration and conciliation, education, broadcasting and community empowerment).

South Africa Country Plan Development Process



Country Context

The dimension of human development

“We live in a society in which there are great disparities in wealth ... to transform our society into one in which there will be human dignity, freedom and equality lies at the heart of constitutional order...”

(Constitutional Court of South Africa - Case CCT 32/97 para. 8)

The South Africa scenario is complex. For over four decades the priority issue was the political emancipation of blacks from repressive apartheid laws and policies. 27 April 1994 was the realisation of a true democratic freedom, at least in so far as voting was concerned¹.

In some respects, the new era has ushered in a more complex development scenario. The new constitution guarantees equal rights for all South Africans, including those who benefited from the governing structures of apartheid. But the legacies of apartheid are deep poverty and stark socio-economic disparities and distortions.

Apartheid actually reinforced and improved on the disparities already put in place by the colonial policies.

During the great depression, a research project, referred to as the First Carnegie Inquiry, was commissioned. This inquiry limited its concerns to whites only and so its findings were used to promote strategies for improving the position of poor whites often at the expense of blacks.

A second research project (*the Second Carnegie Inquiry*) had its centre of gravity on blacks. This research project is summarised in the Welson and Ramphela book (1989). It is a vast body of evidence of disparities and inequality in South Africa.

It is true though, as Andre Spier points out in ‘Poverty, employment and wealth distribution’ HSRC – 1994, that “the rising levels of unemployment have a devastating effect on members of **all** population groups”. Be that as it may, it is also true that in order to make a dent in poverty in South Africa, there needs to be a deliberate emphasis to address poverty among poor blacks who form the majority of the population.

The government has recognised this and put in place policies, laws and structures to address the issue.

International development agencies are part of the government’s approach to address poverty as well as decrease the gap between rich and poor in South Africa. Skillshare International shares the aspirations of South Africans in this regard.

¹ It is worth noting that efforts are being made in South Africa to move away from the previous practice of formal racial and ethnic categorisation. In some cases, legislation has been passed specifically to enhance these efforts. Therefore, where these ethnic and racial denominators are referred to, it is purely for purposes of explaining the issues covered in this plan.

South Africa ranks 101st in the UNDP Human Development Index (1999 report). Although the highest in mainland Africa, it trails far behind Mauritius and the Seychelles. In 1989, the distribution of those earning more than 2000 Rand per month was: Africans 2.4%, Coloureds 12.5%, Asians 26.8%, Whites 65%.

In 1999 although the household income for black South Africans was increasing faster than for whites, the absolute gap was widening. The IMF concluded then that the income levels of the black population in South Africa are comparable to those of the poorer countries bordering South Africa.

An important fact is that the burden of poverty is not equally spread over the total population. Women, the very young and the aged are the most severely affected. In 1994, 30% of the labour force had no education, 35% had up to seven years of schooling, 31% some secondary schooling and 3% had tertiary education.

The schools in what were (and still are) black residential areas deliver poor education due to under-qualified teachers, lack of utilities, inadequate teaching materials and historically unequal spending. In 1994, some 11% of black children of school-going age were not attending school and 65% of these cases were due to poverty.

There is a process of integration, the rate of which is not available at present, but in 1994 it was estimated that less than 2% of black pupils could be accommodated in the well resourced previously “whites only” schools. Over 90% of black pupils today still receive inferior education in under-resourced schools.

There is not a single problem in South Africa, which cannot be related directly or indirectly to education.

The socio-economic situation

In South Africa, economic activity can be divided into four sectors: the subsistence sector, the informal sector, the formal sector and the advanced sector. Each sector differs in social organisation, the skills and resources required and the processes involved.

The subsistence sector is flexible and unpredictable. Communities and/or individuals are involved in unpaid work aimed at securing survival. Other characteristics include access to markets and finance being severely limited, if available at all. The subsistence sector operates outside the tax structure. Women are the majority operators in this sector. Approximately 20% of the working population are involved in this sector.

The informal sector is visibly the largest sector and is more structured than the subsistence sector. It is made up of very small business units where the operators are semi-skilled or unskilled. It is also labour intensive and where technology is used it is at a low or intermediate level. Access to finance is mainly through small credit or money lenders or savings co-operatives and NGOs. The informal sector also operates mainly outside the tax structure. It absorbs about 25% of the working population.

The formal sector is highly structured. The operators range from highly skilled to unskilled. The sector covers most specialised or professional tasks using medium to advanced technologies. It provides society with advanced goods and services. In South Africa, this sector is capital intensive and no longer meets the demand for work of a growing population. It is the main source of tax revenue. It absorbs about 50% of the working population.

The advanced sector is informally structured. Operators are highly specialised using state of the art and experimental technology. The advanced sector focuses on research and development, setting new policies, developing new products, new materials and new services. It absorbs about 5% of the working population.

Background to Skillshare International in South Africa

Skillshare International has been working in southern Africa in support of sustainable development since 1990, having grown from the overseas programme of International Voluntary Service (IVS), an organisation whose involvement in long-term development commenced in the 1960s.

Skillshare International currently works in nine countries in Africa and Asia, namely Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and India.

We opened our programme in South Africa in 1997, three years after the end of apartheid.

At that time, our programme focused on education, supporting the delivery activities of Link Community Development with the provision of development workers.

With the establishment of Skillshare International's regional office in Pretoria in 2000, we developed partnerships with NGOs and government departments who became involved in our regional Leadership Development Programme.

Area of focus of the Country Plan

South Africa has a land mass of 1,222,000 km² and a population of 43 million. This presents a logistical challenge for the development of programmes.

During the next three years, Skillshare International will concentrate its efforts in developing a programme in two geographical areas: the provinces of Kwa Zulu Natal and the Limpopo Province. These are two of the poorest provinces with some of the most severe poverty in the country. However, there are a range of organisations and communities in other provinces where it may be beneficial for both sides to develop partnerships.

Skillshare International's country programme strategic objectives

Four sectors of development were identified as priority sectors for the South Africa Country Plan:

- *Empowerment of disadvantaged groups*
- *Rural development*
- *Health promotion*
- *Leadership and democratic governance*

These sectors will guide the operational direction of the South African Country Plan until 2004.

Empowerment of disadvantaged groups

It is a well-documented fact that the poorest of the poor in South Africa exist in unacceptably high numbers. More than 48.9% of people are living below the Minimum Living Level (MLL). These people are mainly located in informal settlements of urban areas, rural areas and former homelands. While the official national illiteracy rate for South Africa in 2000 was extremely high, with one in every six adults being illiterate, it is estimated that 40% of the population is functionally illiterate. In some rural areas illiteracy rates are as high as 60%, alongside unemployment rates of 65%. The national unemployment rate is estimated at 36.7%, although this figure is skewed along racial lines. Unemployment and low income employment is affecting entire communities.

Within these communities, women and children, youth, people with disabilities, gays and lesbians become marginalised from any social and economic possibilities that may emerge. Since 1994, the South African Government, by means of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Policy (GEAR), has attempted to redress poverty. These policies acknowledge the need for joint strategies with the private sector and the development community in areas of educational reform, housing delivery, health reform and land reform. The inputs from development organisations like Skillshare International are viewed favourably in the context of being able to address the rights of disadvantaged groups in society.

During the next three years we will:

- *provide support to build the capacity of community and not-for-profit organisations working for disadvantaged groups, primarily in Kwa Zulu Natal and the Limpopo Province, involved in the development of sustainable income generation and employment/self-employment creation activities and in the delivery of educational, health, water and sanitation and housing services.*
- *support building the capacity of organisations involved in advocacy and awareness raising for marginalised groups (specifically women, children, youth, gays and lesbians and people with disabilities) in order to enhance legal frameworks and achieve positive impacts in relevant policies.*

Rural development

The previous group areas and homeland policies of the apartheid government fragmented communities. The policies made hardly any provision for disadvantaged communities and forced many into dire economic conditions. As would be expected, there is a very high incidence of poverty in rural areas compared with urban areas. Almost 74.6% of rural households are living below the MLL, compared with 28.6% of urban households.

Poor infrastructure over many decades has created an inequality that exists not only between different racial groups, but also between urban and rural communities. This inequality remains prevalent because of limited access to education, food security, land, water and sanitation, infrastructure development and income generation.

During the next three years we will:

- *assist income generation, employment and self-employment initiatives, particularly those aimed at improving food security and the use of local materials, for example, local art, handicrafts and food.*
- *develop, within partner organisations, the skills needed to improve the provision of community services, such as water and sanitation, health, housing, education and training.*
- *support advocacy programmes and initiatives that enhance legal frameworks around land rights to enable individuals and communities access to the law.*

Health promotion that prioritises HIV/AIDS and primary health care

Though South Africa has a highly developed health service that compares quite favourably with that of many developed countries, the inequalities of the apartheid years has created limited access to these services. Many people living in rural areas and informal settlements have such limited access to health services that diseases like measles, TB, cholera and malaria are still prevalent. While there has been great strides in the development of health policies, the implementation of primary health care is slow and inequalities still exist.

The level of HIV/AIDS infection is now estimated at over 4.7 million people (or one in nine of all South Africans). This is having a staggering impact on family life, employment and productivity. It is estimated that by the end of the decade as many as six million South Africans will have died from AIDS related diseases. This threatens to cut the country's Gross Domestic Product by 17%. The number of people living with AIDS (currently the highest of any country in the world) is causing an already strained health system to move even more of its limited resources into care rather than preventative strategies.

During the next three years we will:

- *support organisations that work with people affected by HIV/AIDS through the delivery of counselling, home based care, awareness raising and advocacy programmes.*
- *assist organisations involved in health promotion, education and community health programmes (particularly those aimed at HIV/AIDS, TB, cholera, malaria and sexually transmitted diseases).*

Leadership and democratic governance

While South Africa has managed to overcome formidable obstacles towards establishing representative and accountable political leadership and governance structures, both nationally and provincially, there is still the need to strengthen the new democracy. Some of the key elements for ensuring a stable democracy are democratic governance along with effective and efficient management systems and structures.

The issue of democratic governance is very important if South Africa is considered within the African context, where it has the potential for being a realistic role model in implementing democratic structures.

Decades of internal political polarisation created mainly by apartheid, eventually caused most management and governing structures to meet the needs of only a very small percentage of the population. In the post-apartheid years of transformation, almost every structure is being re-examined. This process of re-examination includes the establishment of new structures, the transformation of existing structures and the re-design of organisations to meet the needs of all South Africans. These structures include school governing structures, community policing forums, NGOs and CBOs, community forums and a range of other organisations where Skillshare International can have a significant input.

During the next three years we will:

- *assist organisations and institutions to strengthen their leadership, democratic governance structures and internal and public social audit/accountability systems.*
- *assist organisations to create strong governance structures, resulting in organisations that serve the needs of a democracy, through the promotion and implementation of our Leadership Development Programme (LDP).*

The implementation of the Country Plan will, throughout the three-year period, be regularly monitored against the strategic objectives defined, as well as at the level of specific programme activities with partner organisations. This will be done using the appropriate systems already in place within Skillshare International or creating the necessary systems for this purpose.

The Country Plan will also be evaluated at the end of the three-year period. This evaluation will look at the impact of the programme at the level of the beneficiaries, in relation to the strategic objectives and long-term partnerships with programme partners.

The strategic objectives will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated, if necessary, according to changes in the country's needs.

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