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Work Plan for the

GENDER PROGRAMME - "WOMEN DECIDE ON THEIR FUTURE"

by

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WORK SCHEDULE FOR GENDER PROGRAMME

1. PROJECT SUMMARY

This project seeks to formulate a concrete strategy which will form the theoretical backbone of the women's movement in South Africa both during constitutional negotiations and into the early years of the future democratic South Africa. Although South African women, particularly those in the democratic movement, have addressed the issue of women's rights and gender consciousness for many years, a well-defined plan of action which is accepted by all those involved in the campaign, not to mention a Women's Charter, have yet to be formulated. For this very reason, the Community Law Centre at the University of the Western Cape is launching an intensive gender programme. The primary concerns which have arisen in the consideration of the establishment of such a gender programme include the following:

1. Lack of theoretical strategy
2. Lack of communication amongst scholars and activists
3. Lack of community based support and inter-action amongst activists and women's groups
4. Lack of strong constituency

The proposal for a gender programme arose directly from an in-house seminar on "Gender and the Constitution" held in Lusaka in 1989. This seminar inspired a workshop on "Gender - Today and Tomorrow - Towards a Charter of Women's Rights" held between 29 November and 2 December 1990 in Cape Town. The workshop, which was organised by the ANC Constitutional Committee, the Community Law Centre at UWC and the Centre for Developmental Studies, provided the first opportunity at which the ANC working document on the "Bill of Rights" could be tested against the demands of women. The various recommendations made by this workshop clearly made it apparent that a Women's Charter must be included within the Constitution. It also revealed the need for a

concrete theoretical framework for the drafting of such a charter and the supporting women's movement. These problems must be addressed prior to the launching of any type of gender programme within South Africa. For this reason, the project outlined below will work to fulfill this need through exhaustive comparative analysis and consultations with women from both in and out of South Africa.

The South African gender movement has the unique opportunity of gleaning from the successes and failures of women's movements in other parts of the world and utilizing this information in a way that will ensure the success of our campaign. The purpose of the following project is to gather this information into usable form through intensive consultation with international experts in the area of women's rights, feminism and gender. Their contributions will provide South African scholars and activists with real options to formulate into a well-defined strategy for the establishment of a gender-conscious society within South Africa. This strategy will then be taken to activists at a series of workshops for their discussion and consideration within the South African context. These workshops will form the basis for the finalization of a concrete policy and strategy by South Africans who represent various women's groups and other interested constituencies. These workshops will culminate in a national conference, "Women Decide on their Future in South Africa" to be hosted by the Community Law Centre. This conference will produce a final gender strategy for South Africa which will unite individuals and groups in the entrenchment of women's rights and gender consciousness within South Africa.

The Project will be located at the Community Law Centre at the University of the Western Cape. The Community Law Centre has worked closely with the Constitutional Committee of the African National Congress in developing a draft constitution and bill of rights. Several members of the ANC Constitutional Committee, including the Chair of the Women's Desk, Brigitte Mabandla, are members of the Centre.

STAGES OF THE PROJECT

Each of the stages outlined below will overlap and interact with one another.

1. STAGE I - December 1991

Core Committee

Individuals from UWC will be invited to form a core working committee. The first meeting, scheduled for 11 December 1991 at the Community Law Centre, will focus on the general problems involved in establishment of a gender programme. Brainstorming and the formulation of a series of questions which need to be answered will be the focus of the meeting. This committee will also be asked to work with CLC towards the identification of a group of scholars who have been or are presently working in this field. The committee will also serve as the core support group for the gender programme and will meet on a regular basis to evaluate progress of the project.

2. STAGE II - January 1992

Community Consultation with Activists

Step One

Initially, activists and community groups will be approached on an individual basis to inform them about the gender programme and to invite them to participate in workshops and surveys at a later date. The first concern is to simply establish a rapport with them and to develop a feeling of ownership by these groups for the gender programme. Activists will play a crucial role in later workshops during Step Two described below in STAGE IV.

2. STAGE III - January 1992

South African Scholars

The staff of the Community Law Centre, along with other members of the core committee, will identify scholars within South Africa who are currently working in the field of women's rights and gender. Personal meetings will be held with each of these individuals to invite them to play a role in the programme, to obtain their ideas and input and to form a strong constituency for further research. Once selected, the scholars, as a group, will meet with certain members of CLC on a regular basis to remain up-to-date on the research and work of the programme and to make suggestions and critiques.

3. STAGE IV - March 1992

International Experts

Individuals who are considered experts in the fields of feminism, women's rights and/or gender within their respective countries will be identified and invited for two to three week consultative study tours in South Africa. They will meet with many of the scholars, on an individual basis and as a group, to learn about the specific problems which will face the women's campaign in South Africa. They will then return to their respective countries and write comprehensive papers which evaluate theoretical strategies and work plans which have been attempted previously and suggest options for South Africa's women's movement. Their papers will carefully consider all the options which should be considered in South Africa and will serve as evaluative mechanisms for the South African scholars and core committee to use towards the development of a strategy for South Africa.

4. STAGE IV - August 1992

Community Consultations with Activists

Step Two

Once scholars have had the opportunity, both individually and as a group, to analyse and consider the respective options presented by the international experts, selected option(s) will be taken to community activists through one-on-one meetings, small groups and workshops. Participants from a variety of constituencies will be invited to attend these workshops and respond. The central topic of these workshops will be the selection of a specific, defined plan of action that can serve to unite all groups towards the implementation of a gender programme.

Specifically, five (5) regional workshops will be held in Durban, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and Cape Town to discuss the proposed options in detail. After individual and small group meetings have been concluded and the scholars have put forth their suggested plans, all those working groups who have been actively engaged in earlier consultations will meet at their regional workshop to discuss the proposals and to add their suggestions and ideas from the South African and regional perspectives.

5. STAGE V - February 1992

Writing a Strategy for the Gender Programme

During this entire consultative and development process, ongoing publications will take place. The CLC will be responsible for the editing and compiling of these publications into working documents. Publications will be divided into the following areas. However, each of the areas will overlap and draw from others to produce documents which reflect all aspects of the gender programme.

Media Publications

To ignite and encourage public debate about gender issues and policy, CLC, the core committee and international and South African scholars will publish short articles in weeklies, dailies and magazines on proposed options, as well as other gender issues, on a regular basis.

Scholars Publications

As international scholars complete their working papers on possible strategy for the South African women's movement, these documents will be published in academic journals and other publications. Additionally, the analyses and critiques of South African scholars of these papers will be similarly published. Once all international scholars have completed their papers, CLC will compile these into a working document which will be distributed both to scholars and community activists for their discussion and critique. The collective critiques by South Africans will be compiled into a final working paper which will be presented for discussion at the regional workshops.

Policy Proposals and Publications

All previous publications and analyses which arise from the work of international and South African scholars, the public and private debates amongst activists and the community at large, and all of the respective regional workshops will be compiled into a comprehensive document which firmly establishes the strategy and theoretical base for the gender programme. This working draft will serve as the basis for discussion at the conference on "Women Decide On Their Future", tentatively scheduled for January 1993. Following the conference and surveys, CLC will edit the final working draft and prepare this into draft policy proposals for the women's movement. However, throughout the entire project, policy proposals in specific areas will be published by CLC and within other publications.

6. STAGE VI - February 1993

Surveys of laypeople

Prior to the final publication and drafting of proposals, the option which is finally selected will be taken to the ordinary people for consideration. CLC will work closely with the Women's Studies group at UWC in the preparation of a series of surveys and personal interviews which test the strategy chosen by the scholars and activists. This step will ensure that all women are given a voice in the formulation of their strategy and adopt it as their own. If the policy does not reflect the views of these women, it can not be expected to succeed, even if firmly entrenched within a constitution and bill of rights.

7. STAGE SEVEN - January 1992

Data Collection

Throughout the plan outlined above, CLC will be involved in ongoing data collection of information about South African women. Empirical information about how women spend their time, where women work, average income, how many children women have, etc. - basically any information which describes the present situation of South African women from all sectors of society - will be included in this process. The sources for this collation will be (i) consultations with community activists and other women's alliances and organisations, (ii) surveys of women (e.g. Time studies, personal interviews, etc.) and (iii) academic studies.

8. STAGE EIGHT - December 1991

Co-ordination with other projects

The gender programme at CLC will interact with other gender projects, women's alliances and programmes which are currently in existence or that are developed in the next few years. Presently, both the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at University of the Witwatersand and the University of Natal, in

association with their law faculties, have initiated gender projects which are devoting initial studies to the legal problems facing women in South Africa. The empirical evidence which they gather from this work will be invaluable to the gender programme at CLC. Additionally, the Western Cape Women's Alliance will also be integrally connected to the work of CLC. Essentially, all groups or universities which are engaged in similar projects will be invited to take part in workshops and conferences which arise during the gender project as a free exchange of information, especially in the process of data collection, is crucial.