

The Provision of Information to Adults in Rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, by Non-Governmental Organisations

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Information has been recognised as an important factor in the development process. However, little information is available in the published literature on how information is or should be provided to adults in a developmental context. To gain some understanding of how information is provided to such adults, interviews were held with twenty-two representatives of non-governmental organisations working in rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. The study, which falls within

a broad qualitative methodological framework, found that information provision was largely a participative, interactive process in which the oral or verbal method predominated. While other methods of information provision were used, they played, for the most part, a supportive role. Implications of the findings of the investigation for library and information services in a rural context are briefly discussed.

Introduction

Despite the lack of supporting empirical evidence for a causal link between the provision of information and development (Saracevic in Menou 1993, x; Rosenberg 1993, 34), the importance of information in the development process is increasingly recognised, not only by those involved in development work (see, for example, Correa 1995, 92; Wyley 1994, 9; Legwaila and Garebakwena 1995, 63; Du Toit 1995, 611–12; Levin 1995, 18; Du Toit and Strooh 1995, 33; Wishart 1995, 27) but also by the potential recipients of such information:

We [peasants in Burkina Faso] want to be informed because we have information needs ... We know that the problems we faced are faced by people elsewhere. People have found solutions to these problem, but we are not aware of the solutions found ... What should we do to find information? We desire that the institutions which work with us help us to find approaches and structures that can satisfy our information needs (quoted in Correa 1995, 92).

Mchombu (1995, 124) supports a positive relationship between access to information and development when he states that “information is now accepted as an important factor in the sustained development of any society because it reduces uncertainty, and enhances awareness of possible actions to take to solve problems.” Wakelin and Simelane (1995, 41) point to the importance of information provision in “capacity building” and in “empowering communities” and argue that a lack of information acts as a barrier to development. Information provision has been termed a “formidable factor” in determining whether developmental efforts in Africa are successful or not (Adimorah 1995, 30).

Information is seen as a critical resource for people and communities in both rural and urban areas (Mazie and Ghelfi 1995, 8). However, the lack of information provision in rural contexts remains a problem. Referring to Africa, Moyo (1995, 62) points to the alarming information gap that exists between rural and urban areas and

how little is being done to bridge this gap. In the South African context, Wakelin and Simelane (1995, 41) point out that "whilst information is becoming increasingly available to urban-based organisations through the media, modem link-ups, workshops and literature, the historical marginalisation of rural-based people continues." This view is supported by Tomaselli (1995) who outlines the urban dominance of the media in South Africa and contends that the disparities between the developed and underdeveloped sectors of our economy will remain and might even widen (Tomaselli 1995, 6-7). According to Wyley (1995, 6) systems to communicate development information in rural areas of Africa have been "wasteful, inefficient and haphazard". In similar vein a communications workshop in Zimbabwe suggested that "The differences [between 'development practitioners' on the one hand and 'target communities' on the other] with respect to the means or methods of conveying information may result in information being inaccessible to targeted communities" (Zinanga 1995, 6). It is also argued that "Information and communication systems have not been considered a priority or even a component of development planning and resource allocation" (Wyley 1995, 6). [1]

Problem

Referring to the South African context and to the role of information in "capacity-building for development", Wyley (1994, 9) points to the "questions around sources of this information and mechanisms and institutions for making this information timeously available in appropriate formats, and in accessible locations." In similar vein, Rosenberg (1993, 34), referring to rural African communities in general, mentions among other issues, the lack of evidence on "the most effective information transfer methods." Made (1995, 32), examining East and Central African countries, comments on how little research has been done on how best to provide the information that is required. Finally, Correa (1995, 92) notes that while there is no doubt that peasants consider information as being essential to their development she queries the manner in which information is "presently generated, formulated and presented" and asks the question, "is information accessible to them? [2]

What has thus emerged as a problem and which this study attempts to address is *how* information is provided to rural adults. In this regard Sturges and Neill (1998, 206) consider that the "nature of the packages into which information is placed is crucial in provision of information services to the whole community." In similar vein Mchombu (1992, 29) stresses the importance of presentation stating that "relevant content must be supported by appropriate presentation if information products are to have the desired impact. The content might be right but if the presentation is inappropriate the communication process will not be successful." Wishart (1995, 29), referring to information emerging from non-governmental organisation (NGO) circles, also points to "inaccessible presentation formats" and cites this factor as one of the reasons for information not reaching the audiences for whom it is intended.

The perspective of this research is that of the NGOs in KwaZulu-Natal, a component of whose work entails the provision of information to adults in the rural areas of the province. Two reasons lay behind the decision to focus on the NGO sector. Firstly, the writer was familiar with the work done by some of these organisations in terms of information provision and wanted to extend his knowledge of that particular aspect of their work. Secondly, while NGOs in this country have been criticised for various (at times valid) reasons, it is also acknowledged that NGOs have "implemented inventive and worthwhile ideas in development and education" (McLean 1995) and that they "certainly have an edge on government when it comes to creativity, flexibility and a lack of red tape" (Turner 1998). The author anticipated that these qualities would be reflected in their approach to information provision. As Turok (1996) points out, "in general there can be no denying that they [NGOs] have done much to assist local communities throughout the country" and to determine how they go about doing so in terms of information provision was considered a worthy area of investigation. This is not to suggest that other sectors such as government departments are not involved in information provision to adults in rural areas and that if they are that they do not exhibit the qualities (perhaps not the lack of red tape) indicated above. They and other sectors could well provide the focus for future similar studies.

As indicated in the opening paragraph, a premise on which this study is based is that information is a vital component of development, and crucial in this regard is how this information is provided. It is believed that this study will contribute to providing a better understanding of the process of information provision in a rural context and thus lead to more effective information provision by organisations working in the field. Apart from, for example, health and agricultural workers, it could be of benefit to the library and information sector, which has established and is establishing libraries in rural contexts and is grappling with the issue of effective information provision in these areas.

Literature review

Given what has been said above, it is perhaps surprising that studies in the library and information services sector which have as their major focus the manner in which information is provided to adults in rural areas, could not be identified. However, studies do exist which have looked at this aspect as part of a broader study. The perspective though is not that of NGOs. An example of one such sub-Saharan study is that of Camble (1994) on the information environment of rural development workers in a Nigerian state. His research, among other things, examined the communications media they used in disseminating information on rural development programmes. It was found that personal contact was the medium most used by development workers in disseminating information followed by village meetings and town criers. The qualitative research by Sturges and Chimseu (1996a) on information provision in villages in Malawi also touched on what the authors referred to as "the transmission of information." Various groups of villagers were interviewed and what emerged "was a very consistent sense that word-of-mouth communication by official representatives ... was the most effective and useful means available" (Sturges and Chimseu 1996a, 149). Sturges and Neill (1998, 178) in their chapter entitled "New information services for the whole community" pose several questions that need to be asked about a new form of information service. The two questions of direct relevance to this study are "in what forms should it deliver information? [and] how should

it deliver information?" In answering these questions they provide a useful overview and discussion of relevant initiatives in Africa. They contend that "it is absolutely clear that the delivery method employed by any innovative information service ... must be essentially oral" (Sturges and Neill 1998, 212).

Given the findings and Sturges and Neill's contention above, it is again not surprising that the LIS literature pertaining to rural information provision does tend to indicate that print-based methods of providing information are, for various reasons – one of the major being that of illiteracy – often inappropriate in the rural context. Made (1995, 32), for example, points out there has been an over-reliance on the printed word and the potential of the audio-visual and oral has not been fully realised. In the development communication field Melkote (1991, 218), referring to the Third World in general, points to the presupposition in the field, of literacy and some level of formal education. He argues that "this pro-literacy bias has acted as a major constraint to the diffusion of information to the preliterate audiences ... which ... forms the bulk of the population in rural areas." In Africa efforts are and have been made to use mediums other than print to provide information to adults in rural areas and these have been documented by, for example, Aboyade (1984). In her study of the communication potentials of a library in a predominantly illiterate rural Nigerian village she described audio (tapes), visual (posters) and oral methods of information provision. Diakite (1995) outlines the "Rural Audioblibraries" project in Mali in which cassette tapes are used to "distribute" information to people in villages. Maveka (1991) describes a project in which both audiotapes and radio are used in providing information to "Radio Listeners' Clubs" formed by rural women in Zimbabwe. Katere (1995) describes the use of "community theatre" in Zimbabwe and in the South African context. [3] Wakelin and Simelane (1995) briefly describe a Rural Consultative Forum initiative in which Radio Zulu is used to provide information on development issues to people living in rural KwaZulu-Natal. In the Rural Television Network (RTV) initiative videos (advertisements, movies, and the odd public service programme) targeted at rural adults are shown on television screens located in rural trading stores in KwaZulu-Natal and other areas

(Burton 1994). Where appropriate these initiatives will be referred to in the discussion below.

Definition of terms

Information

Poole's assertion that no generally accepted definition of the term exists and that it is "a concept with many forms whose meaning is idiosyncratic and situational" (Poole 1985, 102) is acknowledged. In terms of this study Mchombu's view that information is that which reduces uncertainty and assists in the decision making process (Mchombu 1995, 124) would constitute elements of a definition. So too would the issue of need, namely information being that that assists in satisfying a need. Finally, information being that which assists in empowerment and capacity building, as per Wakelin and Simelane (1995) above, would also form important components of a definition.

Provision

The term can be used in both a broad and a narrow sense. Broadly, it is used to encompass issues such as sources, sites and mediums (of information provision). In a narrower sense, and in accordance with the focus of this study, it is how information is "put across" (Camble 1994), or "transmitted" and "disseminated" (Correa 1995), "transferred" (Mchombu 1995), "diffused" (Diakite 1995) or "communicated" (Durrani 1987). Thus, essentially, the focus of the proposed study is on what Poole (1985, 103) refers to as an "information channel" defined as "the medium used to convey information," or what Wyley (1995, 4) refers to as "mechanisms for transmission"; these mechanisms, channels or mediums act as the "interface or link between information and the information seeker/s" (Kaniki 1991, 147).

Rural

The term "rural" like the term "information" is difficult to define and Rios (in LaCaile John 1995, 2) goes so far as to conclude that it is "a concept beyond definition." Dictionary definitions of the term are vague: "Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of the country ... as opposed to the town" (Oxford English dictionary 1989, 284). Attempts to

define rural in terms of the characteristics of the population such as poverty and illiteracy are also debatable as these characteristics can often apply to populations in informal settlements in urban areas (Legwaila and Garebakwena 1995, 63). For the purposes of this study, rural will refer to areas which fall outside the urban boundaries the population of which generally exhibit the characteristics outlined by Karlsson (1995, 47-48)[4] in her profile of a rural community. The point made by Lawrence and Paterson (1991, 3) that the rural fabric is not a uniform domain also needs to be borne in mind. These authors note that within this category "a wide range of social groups with varying needs and interests such as elites, squatters, peasants, and landless, are subsumed."

Adult

In this study "adult" refers to any person living in a rural area over the age of 18 and no longer attending school.

Methodology

The research method and data collection technique adopted was the descriptive survey and interview respectively. In accordance with the exploratory nature of the study, the interview could be typed as a "standardised open-ended" one in that questions were open-ended and the wording and sequence of questions was decided in advance, thus allowing for coverage of all issues and the comparison of responses (Gorman and Clayton 1997, 126). The methodological perspective can be described as broadly qualitative (Leach 1991, 159-187) and the problems associated with the use of interviews under this methodology are briefly outlined by Gorman and Clayton (1997, 125), one of which is the large amount of data retrieved and the subsequent difficulty of data analysis (Rice-Lively 1997, 198-221). While acknowledging the qualitative perspective, the data was quantified and results are presented in quantitative terms in order to provide indication of support for a particular approach, point of view, problem experienced and so on. Importantly, however, emphasis has also been placed in the presentation and discussion of the findings on what the respondents themselves said - this in accordance with the qualitative perspective of

“allowing of the voices of participants to be heard when the research is disseminated” (Edwards and Talbot 1995, 159). Thus numerous quotes from respondents have been provided. These “voices” should not be construed as representative in general of NGOs whose work in the area of rural development necessitates information provision. Their inclusion, it is hoped, will lead to some insight and understanding of how the NGOs provide information. Instructive in this regard is the observation by Sturges and Neill (1998, 50) that “most surveys are not to be treated as hard evidence: they only provide clues.”

Twenty-two interviews were held with representatives [5] from a total of twenty NGOs in KwaZulu-Natal. Two of the organisations made available two respondents – with each talking about different subject areas in which their organisations were involved. All the organisations worked in the broad area of rural development. These organisations are listed in the appendix. The criteria for a particular organisation’s inclusion in the study was that their work either focussed on or necessitated information provision to adults in rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. The NGOs were identified initially via two directories (Rural development directory 1997; Beardshaw 1992) and subsequently via the organisations themselves. In terms of the latter, after each interview had taken place or in a follow-up letter, NGOs were asked to identify other organisations that they felt could participate in the study. By the end of the twenty-second interview, no further NGOs could be identified. To elicit participation, and prior to each interview taking place, the NGOs were provided with a letter outlining the purpose of the study as well as an outline of the questions which were to be asked. While respondents were asked to describe and discuss particular projects half chose to talk about the work of their organisation in rural areas in general and the researcher accepted this. One such respondent referred to the systemic approach adopted by his organisation in terms of which projects could not be examined in isolation.

Findings

Types of information provided by the NGOs

The respondents listed a wide range of subject areas in which they were providing information

to adults in rural areas. These included health (nutrition, AIDS and HIV awareness), land (use, management, ownership, rights) water, housing, agriculture (animal husbandry, broiler production, crops, vegetable/food gardens), law and broader human rights issues, financial management (saving facilities), educational opportunities, the environment, resource conservation, and employment creation. A reluctance to focus on one or two subject areas (possibly the core area/s of an NGO) was noted and a holistic approach to development was evident. As one respondent stated, “... the longer you stay in the communities the more you get involved with the other social and developmental issues ... we do find ourselves having to deal with issues relating to schools, to illiteracy, water, roads when it comes to talking about human rights.” As Sturges and Neill (1998, 79) argue, “community needs and problems interlock, and cannot simply be separated into packages called health, work, development etc.”

Rural areas

The type of information provided by the NGOs described above does provide some insight into the context in which they work. Karlsson (1995, 47–48) provides a bleak profile of rural communities in South Africa (see endnote no. 4) while the South African yearbook (1998, 107) makes the stark admission that “rural households comprise the majority of poor homes, and are characterised by severe poverty.” The South Africa survey 1997/1998 (1998) illustrates statistically the extent to which rural areas, in comparison to their urban counterparts, are under-resourced in the areas of electrification, water supply and sanitation. A similar imbalance exists in the areas of unemployment and levels of income and education. The points above also apply to rural KwaZulu-Natal and an aggravating factor could well be provided by KwaZulu-Natal, which although geographically small, is the most populous province in South Africa and also has the largest number of people living in rural areas (Census 1997, 12) who arguably have the least access per capita to development resources, including information. The point made by Lawrence and Paterson above to the effect that the rural fabric is not a uniform domain applies equally to

rural KwaZulu-Natal and needs to be borne in mind. As one respondent in the present study put it “rural areas, as I’ve said, they are not the same”

The rural adults

In the present study respondents were asked two questions concerning the adults with whom they interacted in rural areas – one pertaining to literacy and the other to gender. In terms of literacy the difficulty of establishing literacy levels in general is well known and needs to be borne in mind. Ten of the respondents stated that the adults were more illiterate (60% or more). Two respondents said that there were more literate (with one of these stating that the literacy was a basic or limited one) and the remaining 10 respondents were unwilling, understandably, to commit themselves either stating that they did not know or that it was a “mixture.” What literacy there is tends to be in Zulu. It could be argued that the literacy is, in general, at a relatively low level, particularly literacy in English.

In terms of gender, the adults engaged with by the NGOs were, in the main, female with 15 of the respondents mentioning that there were more women (60% or more). If males were in the majority it was usually in the committee situation but the balance shifted, for example, in community meetings. The type of issue or activity adults were involved in was also influenced by gender with livestock farming noted as being a predominantly male preserve and gardening being done more by women.

How the NGOs provide information

For the most part the questions relating to the *how* of information provision followed a predictable pattern. Respondents were asked “In this project how (in what format) do you provide information to these adults? Do you do so...?” Nine prompts reflecting the various possibilities were then provided. In each instance the respondents were asked to elaborate and this was in turn followed by a “Why?” question and one concerning repackaging for that particular format. The prompts provide a useful basis on which to hang the presentation of the findings listed below.

Oral provision – on either a one-to-one basis or to two or more

Of all the formats provided, the use of oral or verbal means to provide information was clearly the most used with all the NGOs interviewed making use of this format either on a one to one basis or to an audience of two or more.

The term *key individual* was often used when discussing information provision orally on a one-to-one basis. Initial contact with a community tends to be through such individuals who may for example be a chief, an *induna*, or a chairperson or member of an existing committee. Subsequent interaction on a one-to-one basis would take place but often focussed on a specific issue (such as an insurance claim, organisational structure) or with the individual being used as a means to take a process further by being an intermediary or *interface* between the NGO and a community or a committee. Two respondents mentioned one-to-one communication in the context of people who are too shy to ask questions in a group situation “but that [in] talking to them personally he or she becomes free to ask questions.” It was noted that one-to-one is “a very effective way of transferring information” and was specifically used by three NGOs. One of these NGOs involved in the provision of agricultural information, mentioned *farmer to farmer extension* (that is using farmers to talk to farmers) as being

very effective because they themselves are the ones who interact ... they believe in themselves and the information is grasped so quickly, the diffusion of that information is so easily spread and as you know there is sometimes the problem of information not going through because of some structure, problems, all those things ...

However, the provision of information on an individual basis was also viewed as time consuming and its inability to “cover many people” was pointed to. A certain caution with regard to *key individuals* was also apparent. One respondent referred to key individuals emerging “but the danger is they can ... carry on emerging and go beyond...” A second pointed to the problem of people not being “accustomed to passing down information whereas most of the information we do share is stuff that needs to be passed on....” However, the major means of information provision by the NGOs interviewed is orally to two or more people that is a group situation. Thus, ac-

According to one respondent, information provision is “very seldom on a one-to-one because we usually work with groups and although you may communicate with individuals doing that, it is really group work that we are dealing with.”

Workshops were the most frequently mentioned (16 of the 22 respondents) approach to providing information to two or more people. Other instances of providing *group* information were the community and committee meeting. When asked why this approach (in particular with regard to the workshops), the interactive, participative nature of the information provision process was repeatedly stressed. Thus according to one respondent “the workshops are engaging communication, they are not simply a classroom situation where somebody is delivering to others ... a very interactive process.” What is quite clear in terms of the responses is that information provision is not a one-way process “information is not something which one party gives to another party” but an interactive one where the rural adults are seen as providers of information themselves – information is *shared* and the oral format in a workshop situation lends itself to this (“... whereas with this verbal thing it becomes easier for people to get the message”). A respondent referring to the workshop stresses the *sharing* aspect: “skills are shared, experiences are shared, learning is shared and so I think [the workshop] is a very powerful forum for information exchange.” Also apparent in terms of *group* information provision was the necessity of creating the right environment in which provision could take place. In the words of one respondent “the way we conduct the workshop is equally as important as the message we put across.” Thus within the workshop situation respondents often saw themselves as facilitators as “very much part of the learning process” as opposed to information *providers*. At another level respondents referred to the necessity of knowing the community and establishing trust:

... and so getting to know your communities in this information sharing, also building up a relationship of trust is very, very important ...

A further advantage of the workshop cum group approach (and a disadvantage of the one-to-one noted above) is that more people could be reached at any one time.

Print

The use of the print format in information provision is inextricably bound with literacy skills. As noted above there was a reasonably high level of illiteracy (and where literacy skills existed they were often basic) amongst the rural adults the NGOs engaged with. Despite this all NGOs made use of print in information provision and pamphlets, newsletters and booklets were the format most often mentioned. However, in all instances print was not used as the main or the sole means of providing information. The main form of provision was oral and print was frequently viewed as playing a more minor role – apart from being seen as a vehicle for communicating information about, for example, meetings or the NGO itself, it was invariably seen as supporting and reinforcing what took place at an oral level. As such it was also seen as something which one *left behind* and which allowed one to *refer back* to. Thus, according to one respondent

When we do written stuff it's largely that we've been through the content in a workshop, dialogue situation and then for people to have access to it continually we leave the document behind.

A second respondent referred to the importance of print in a specific situation: “... it [having information in print format] is important because if someone wakes up in the night to glance, when you are not there verbally, at the medium.” A third respondent pointed to an unsuccessful venture with a newsletter and noted that the written approach “needs lots of follow up”. Again the oral approach came to the fore with the respondent stating that the written approach “invariably ends with a verbal thing which solves the problem.” One respondent, while recognising the importance of print as being “something the individual can go away with” also pointed out that “print is not given without explanation.” Apart from the question of illiteracy, the inability of print to “allow for that two-way [interactive] process” was commented on by another respondent. He went on to note the “rigidity” of print in terms of the understanding of concepts as well as the issue of culture (in contrast to the adaptability of the oral) as a further limitation:

... because if it's verbal you are able to adjust you know. And also there is the question of culture – there are things

that you wouldn't say in different communities – you have to be very strategical ... verbal allows for this but if it was in print there is no option at all.

Given the low levels of literacy extant, respondents were very much aware of the necessity for “repackaging” information in print form. In particular writing simply and clearly, the use of pictures and spacing and, critically, the need to have the language in Zulu were recognised.

Visual

The two visual formats most used in the provision of information were posters (14 NGOs) and photos or slides (four NGOs). Reasons for using the visual format varied but the most common reason (given by seven of the NGOs) was for generating, or serving as a focus for, discussion in a workshop or group situation. As a respondent pointed out “it [a poster] gets people to talk first. For me it's the main thing to get my people talking.” The visual element was considered by one NGO involved in the provision of information on AIDS/HIV to be a “very important” part of the workshop process: “because you see what a person is, what actually happens, it makes more sense – a person will always picture it even afterwards.” The use of posters to generate questions and serve as a common point of referral was also noted. In the context of low literacy skills “pictures do” as one respondent stated, “take the place of words ...” The use of the visual format is obviously important in terms of adults with limited or no literacy skills. Equally important is that the visual format serves a dual purpose by also providing a “different vehicle for those who are literate” to assimilate information. As with print there was an awareness among the NGOs of making the visual format accessible. Thus in the words of one respondent “The pictures, posters are not complicated otherwise you won't be able to get your message across.” The issue of visual literacy is always present. Thus “I am very aware of a comment made by a rural person who was shown a photo but misinterpreted it totally.”

One respondent referred to the difficulty of providing information on abstract concepts. Thus to try and explain to a community the concept of a “land trust” figures – a house, cattle, people – as well as ten Rand notes were used (“done under a tree and on the ground”). There is possibly

a tendency to associate information sources (and information provision) with “traditional” formats – people, print, posters and the like – but that any thing has the potential to be an information source and, in the right circumstances, an effective one as well. Also in this regard a second respondent referred to the “incredible usefulness” of a three dimensional model of a catchment management area:

It's incredible how that thing communicates across the board whether people are illiterate or scientists – you look at it and you suddenly have this bird's eye view and you suddenly realise why catchment management makes sense. So that's been a very important part of communication.

Audio

Fifteen of the 22 NGOs made use of the radio in providing information and of those, one had also used cassette tapes. Terms used to describe the radio in information provision were positive and included “most effective” (twice), “very effective, incredible”, “quite effective” and “fantastic medium.” The type of information provided via the radio was frequently subject related but the medium was also used to publicise the NGOs themselves and to advertise meetings. Radio was stressed as being a “broad” medium in that it not only reached the communities that the NGOs were in direct contact with but that “everyone benefits from the information” including those who are not accessible by road or in terms of print. The ability of the radio (and in all instance it was the use of “Radio Zulu”) to reach many people, its “broadness”, does have negative consequences. One respondent noted that “one of the difficulties of that medium is that it raises a lot of expectation for people who are listening to the programme and then it becomes quite difficult to deal with the requests that come out of that.” Calls for assistance (which could not always be met) subsequent to a radio slot were the reason for one NGO's reservation about using the medium; a second respondent referred, tongue fully in cheek, to the “five million people phoning in the morning asking why aren't you working in our area.” A further limitation of the radio and one which links in with the “interactiveness” noted above is that “there is no feedback facility ... rural people do not have phones to call in ...”

As mentioned above one of the NGOs had used cassette tapes as a means of providing information to rural adults (a second NGO had an indirect involvement in their use during the 1994 general elections). The aim of the particular project (which at the time of the interview had only been running for a few months) was to provide information on local government in the form of "radio dramas". The information pack consisted of five cassettes, comprising 20 segments and an initial attempt to incorporate the playing of the cassettes in a workshop situation had been unsuccessful. What was being envisaged was "to use clinics, magistrates courts, dipping stations so that when the men come to dip their cattle they would not sit around and drink beer but listen to the cassettes and drink beer at the same time." A successful instance of the use of the cassettes was one woman "who put the cassette up high and loud when women were working in the field." The respondent pointed to the fact that community leadership have been exposed to NGOs and very formal methods of information provision with the result that "they were not falling easily into this alternative method" As has been shown elsewhere cassettes have been an effective means of information provision. Given that they do not require either sophisticated technology or literacy skills, they do have potential in the South African rural context as well but education and experimentation still needs to be done. On a more positive note the respondent noted that the cassettes had generated a lot of discussion. However it was also noted that people were not just happy to listen to the cassettes – they wanted answers to their questions as well, thus the need for oral information provision was again stressed.

Audio-visual (video)

Less than half (eight) of the NGOs had used, or were using, videos in information provision. The most frequently cited reason for not using videos was that most of the communities engaged with had no access to electricity. As one respondent pointed out "The difficulty will be to access it – one would have to bring people in or go up with a generator or find a place with a power source and bring people to that place." Two of the NGOs did in fact make use of generators. When asked

why they used videos, two sets of responses emerged: in the first instance it was seen as a means of getting discussion going (as with the visual formats noted above) and secondly as a means of reinforcing or supporting what had been discussed at an oral level (as with print). One respondent referred to the "permanency" of information as contained on the video: "For me the video has the standard information. As a facilitator I tend to be driven by the group. But the video will always be there as a guide and with one and solid information that never changes." It was clear that the video was not viewed as a "standalone" information source on its own or as one respondent put it "as a methodology in itself" but rather as an initiating or re-enforcing aid and, of course, also as a guide.

Theatre

Eleven NGOs answered in the affirmative to the question of whether or not they used theatre in the provision of information. All mentioned the use of role-play. One other form of "theatre" was mentioned – the use of puppets in the provision of AIDS/HIV related information. Three NGOs specifically stated that role-play was not appropriate. In the one instance the respondent who was providing information specifically on broiler production stated that "these guys [rural adults involved in broiler production] are quite sharp and they know what they want, very specific in terms of their needs, simple targeted thing" A second respondent who also answered in the negative pointed out that the people they are working with have been, and some are, so close to "survival mode" that "role playing as such wouldn't hold much significance – it would actually detract." The third respondent was of the view that role-play would be more applicable with children. However, those NGOs who were using role-play by and large viewed it as an effective means of providing information or assisting in creating a situation that would facilitate such provision. When asked why role-play was used the following answer encapsulates the responses well:

It's fun, entertaining and people often learn through things that are fun and entertaining plus it provides a lot of opportunity for direct participation and we find that

people who haven't talked become reasonably vocal afterwards – so it's really good.

Again there was the tendency to see role play as precursor to subsequent oral interaction or as one respondent put it “a starter for discussion.” While role-play was cited by respondents to assist in tackling and engaging with (often controversial) issues, and in overcoming inhibitions and encouraging people “to speak out with problems they wouldn't mention otherwise, it was noted that “its not enough to have the role play and leave it at that ... you have to follow it up with that [reaction, comment and discussion] immediately. Therefore you're actually using a combination of mediums to get to where you want to.”

Through specific groups in the community

The importance of adopting a group approach to information provision in the rural context was highlighted above. The workshop situation in particular was identified as the approach most conducive to information provision. As one respondent noted “Where you have a group which has a particular shared interest ... the information exchange can be quite rich.” All NGOs recognised the importance of working through groups not necessarily always in terms of actual information provision or “exchange” (as above) but to assist in creating a broader environment which would be conducive for such provision. In order to gain access to and subsequent support from the community it was necessary to work through existing groups, most often a “committee” of some sort (and should the need arise groups based on certain interests or issues such as water, sewing, cattle and gardens would be formed). One respondent expressed the rationale for this approach as follows:

... for it [information provision] to be successful you have to rely on support from the community and to recognise that people organise themselves into a number of groups. The best form of getting to people is through groups because if the groups view your initiative as important they support it and if you have their support your initiative is more likely to succeed.

While one NGO stressed that the group does not become the vehicle for communicating what they, the NGO, would normally be doing, groups were

viewed by NGOs as “information channels”: “... in rural areas information tends to filter down via those channels ... and so you have to tap into those channels if you want to get information to them.” In this regard one respondent referred to groups as “more responsible, accountable, unlike just picking a person.”

The representativeness of the group (whether of the community at large or of people with a specific interest) was often stressed. This laid the basis for the groups also playing a facilitative role for subsequent interaction with a community either on a broader or narrower basis. Thus the group could, in the words of one respondent, be used to facilitate “whatever you are intending to do” and this included things such as initial access to a community, setting up a community meeting, conducting a needs analysis and organising “puppet shows”. One respondent considered that going through groups gave rise to less jealousy in that rural communities are “very sensitive if you're helping somebody and not somebody else.”

Through an individual in the community

As noted above (in section 1) information provision does take place on an individual basis. This provision is limited though and NGOs' focus in terms of information provision is as one respondent put it, “very much on groups.” Respondents mentioned individuals being used to initiate a process, assist in identifying groups, “make things happen, and “spread the message, motivate, [and] support” and these individuals would often remain as contacts. One respondent mentioned that the contact could in fact be determined on the basis of convenience – the spouse of a member having a telephone at work. The necessity of going through headmen and any other authority figures (“if you don't go through the priest you get closed out”) in the community was also raised while two respondents stated that should they work through individuals they would have to be committee members. A reason given by one was the need “to be very careful not to do something for the benefit of the individual and not for the community.” A third respondent mentioned their organisation's concern to avoid the possibility of facilitators (trained by the NGO) “becoming gatekeepers of knowledge” within the community.

Are you able to say which method is the most effective?

Four of the respondents mentioned that the method of information provision used depended on the particular situation. Thus one respondent, expressing concern over having to identify one method as the “most effective” pointed out that “experience has shown us that under different circumstances different methods are more appropriate ... [and] the understanding is that all of them are important.” A second respondent referred to the rural communities themselves noting that “You have to be very adjustable to communities because the way they are structured is quite different from each other. You don’t have a formalized method.” However, of the seventeen NGOs who did mention what they considered to be the most effective method, fifteen mentioned approaches in which information provision took place at an oral level with the workshop cum group situation again predominating. The interactivity that the oral approach allowed was again pointed to as well as the importance of trust in which personal contact played a role. As one respondent put it, “People trust you, have personal contact with you and therefore trust the information.”

What method would be used if there were no limit on resources?

Respondents were asked what method they would use to provide information if there was no limit on the resources available. While two NGOs mentioned that they would make more use of radio and television, a third to a “massive distribution of audio-cassettes” and a further two who mooted the possibility of using drama/role plays, the remaining NGOs (including one of the above) all indicated that they would continue using, as one respondent put it, “more of the same.” Given this, and given the emphasis on the oral approach in terms of information provision, it is perhaps not surprising that the need for more personnel and time was mentioned by nine and six respondents respectively. Again in the words of a respondent there was a need “to have far more intensive, and more often, engagement with the communities” and this essentially could only come about via more personnel and ultimately via more money. It was pointed out that

working in outlying rural communities can be both difficult and time consuming and it could thus be argued that information provision is being hampered because of the constraints in both a qualitative and quantitative sense. As one respondent noted: “We’re finding that the limit of money and personnel limits the amount of time that we can spend, the number of areas we can engage with and also the quality of information and material that can be generated.”

In providing information do you take indigenous information into account?

The issue of indigenous information is one frequently raised in the rural context. With the exception of two NGOs (one of whom did not answer and who were both involved in providing information on issues surrounding democracy and government) all NGOs stated that they took such information into account when they themselves are providing information. The importance which respondents attached to indigenous information was often evident in the initial replies to the question. Thus one had comments such as “Yes, a very important source for us”, “Yes, very much so” “An extremely important question”, “Yes, I think that’s where we begin”, “For us it’s important”, “Yes, we are sensitive to what the people already know” and “We treat it with a tremendous respect.” Indigenous information or “what the people already know” is clearly integral to the provision of information in that it can be seen as laying the basis for and facilitating the interactive nature (as mentioned above) of such provision. As such it also underpins the view of information provision being (also as mentioned) a “learning” process for the NGOs themselves. In this regard, a respondent stressed the importance of

Being aware that people have a certain amount of knowledge ... and experience of what we are going to be talking about. That’s why I say it’s a two-way street – while we discuss issues with them we also learn from them.

It was apparent that the interactive process ensured that indigenous information did not remain isolated/distinctive but was integrated into the information provided by the NGOs not only at an oral level but also subsequently in print format. Thus according to one respondent

Traditional knowledge information is usually incorporated into publications so rather than say this is an indigenous thing it's part of what comes through. If it's incorporated as part of what's happening then I think it becomes more integral to information sharing.

Despite the obvious importance attached to indigenous information two respondents acknowledged that it is something that "lots of us pay lip service to" and that, according to one of the respondents, indigenous information was something that they needed to "acknowledge more."

Discussion

As noted above the major aim of the study was to investigate how NGOs were providing information to adults living in rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal? What has emerged extremely forcibly (and in line with literature review) is the predominant use by the NGOs of the *oral or verbal* medium in information provision in the group/workshop [6] situation in particular. While other forms of information provision were used (and these are discussed below), they remained largely supplementary to the oral – a conclusion also reached by Sturges and Neill (1998, 212) in their book on libraries and information in Africa. The authors, referring to an information service, state that

It is absolutely clear that the delivery method employed by any innovative information service ... must be essentially oral. It can incorporate drama, puppetry, song or any other valid communication method, and the package presented to the user may certainly include the printed word, graphic illustration, audio-tape or even more sophisticated technology, but all of this must either serve, or be served by, oral communication."

Respondents repeatedly stressed that the information provision process was characterised by its interactive and participative nature and it is evident that the oral mode in the group situation best lends itself to this process. Woods' (1993, 26) point that "Most forms of print and broadcast media are one-way – with serious limitations as communication channels" goes some way toward explaining the secondary role played by these media in the study. This is not to suggest that these media played little or no role. As one respondent observed "The communities are very dynamic, you need all sorts of [information provision] tactics to get to them." Various information

provision "tactics" were described and discussed by the respondents and it was clear that the NGOs seldom, if ever, relied on one "tactic" of information provision. What follows is a brief discussion of the other "tactics" used by the NGOs.

Print, as noted, was used by all the NGOs but played a largely supportive and reinforcing role. Despite the view (lengthily articulated by Amadi 1981) that print-based information is largely inappropriate in the African context, Sturges and Neill (1998, 206) argue that

Print materials are definitely important, even in the most resolutely non-library type of service. People want print information, even when it must be read to them by some more literate friend or relation. Print on paper is actually in many ways a very good medium for use in less developed countries. It is portable, little dependent on technology for its use, its content acquires an aura of authority from the form, and it is good to refer back to after a first reading.

This is borne out by the study done by Sturges and Chimseu (1996b) of information provision in villages in Malawi. According to the researchers print was widely valued and trusted by the villagers and was seen as a valuable complement to face-to-face communication (Sturges & Chimseu 1996b, 124). Despite rural illiteracy being identified as "one of the major constraints where the printed word is concerned" (Kularatne 1997, 119), it was not mentioned as an obstacle by the Malawian villagers "because there was always someone who could read text out loud, and illustrations could make the meaning clearer" (Sturges & Chimseu 1996a, 150). The "aura of authority" of print noted above was evident in the present study where one respondent noted the importance a group of small scale farmers attached to getting down in writing what was discussed and agreed on at an oral level. Thus in the words of the respondent who was part of the process "having the constitution written down, knowing its our constitution has been very important." Interestingly, one respondent considered a lack of backup in print as one of the weaknesses of his organisation and recognised the "need to strengthen up on that side of things." Another respondent envisaged print playing more of a role as literacy and the demand for literacy increased.

The most common reason given by the NGOs for using *visual formats* (such as posters and pho-

tos and slides) to provide information was, as mentioned, generating or serving as a focus point for discussion (the oral). A similar finding was made by Aboyade (1984, 254) who observed that "Apart from the visual message ... the posters were useful in starting a discussion of interest to those present." Referring to an initiative in four Francophone African countries in which slides were used as a means to provide information "from one village to another", Correa (1995, 93) notes that the slide shows are followed by debates and, (linking in with the re-enforcing role of print above) by the distribution of brochures, and interestingly, "colouring paper." Sturges and Neill (1998, 209) consider visual forms "essential," pointing out that the visual form has the potential to communicate where written text cannot and "that some essentially practical matters are infinitely better communicated via visual media than they are by either the spoken or written word." The highly successful use of the three dimensional model of a catchment management area by one of the participating NGOs as an information "provider" underscores the latter point made by the authors. The need for visual literacy needs to be borne in mind though as such literacy is not necessarily found in communities which have almost no regular access to pictures." (Sturges & Neill 1998, 209-10) – a point which, as mentioned in the findings, was noted by one of the respondents.

In the few instances in which *audiocassette tapes* have been used in the provision of information to adults in rural areas they appear to have been successful (see, for example, Diakite 1995). Information tapes, as Sturges and Neill (1998, 208) observe, offer immediate benefits in that they communicate "in a familiar way to people who then need not feel disadvantaged by their poor or non-existent reading ability." As noted, only one organisation interviewed was using such a method and the need for innovative approaches to ensuring conducive and appropriate "listening environments" was pointed to. Again, the cassettes had assisted in generating much discussion but the respondent pointed to the need for verbal answers to questions generated by the tapes. The Mali rural "Audiolibraries project" (Diakite 1995) does in fact provide a "feedback system." Reactions to information provided on the tapes is recorded during discussions held after listening

sessions and these tapes are returned to the originators of the recordings (who presumably act upon, and respond to, the feedback) (Diakite 1995, 78). The collective nature of the listening sessions followed by discussions, which is possible with cassette tapes, has been pointed to as a factor in their use in information dissemination (Correa 1995, 93).

This inability of audiotapes to provide for direct interaction was also seen as a limitation of *radio's* use in information provision. While radio was seen in a positive light, in particular its "broadness", its ability to reach many people, by those NGOs which had made use of the medium the lack of a "feedback facility" (many rural people being unable to take part in a phone-in programme) with its use was noted. In their group interviews with Malawian villagers, Sturges and Chimseu (1996b, 120) found that the information provided by radio was considered to be useful but that it required "supplementation and confirmation from services which had the capacity to respond to questions." The shortcomings of radio vis-à-vis face-to-face verbal contact are also illustrated by Burton (1996) [7]. In his focus group discussions with adults in rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal one of the participants noted "I would not rely on the information from the radio, I do not have the confidence to go around talking about it. But what I hear from a meeting is what I can talk about because it is from the horse's mouth." A second comment related to the "invisibleness" of radio: "the radio helps us, but now the problem is that what they tell us to do is difficult to understand because we do not see what they do ... there is no one to ask if you encounter difficulties" (Burton 1996, 17). A project involving the formation of "Radio Listening Clubs", by rural women in Zimbabwe (Maveneka 1991) combined the use of both audiotapes and radio in providing information to women in rural areas. Once the women had recorded their needs and problems, the tapes were followed up by the appropriate agency, corporation or government ministry and their responses on the issues raised by the women were broadcast on a radio programme. Both the audio libraries project described above in relation to cassette tapes and the project described here are characterised by being "group" based and having a mechanism which allows for some form of feedback or interaction (albeit lim-

ited) to take place. Sturges and Neill's conclusion that "Certainly, listening clubs are precisely the kind of link to radio [and, one might add, to audio cassette-based] communication that an information service could foster and benefit from" (Sturges & Neill 1998, 219) is a valid one.

Two sets of responses emerged from the less than half of the NGOs who were using *videos* as a means of information provision. As with print and visual material, video was not used alone but was used in conjunction with the oral. It was used both as a means of getting discussion going and as a means of reinforcing what went on at an oral level. Spencer-White (1994) describes the use of what is referred to as "facilitator-based interactive video" to communicate with rural communities in the then Bophuthatswana on environmental issues. In terms of this approach, the showing of the video is interspersed, at appropriate places, with audience discussion facilitated by the facilitator. Thus the video format is being used to get discussion going (in a group situation). Interestingly, and in accordance with what has emerged in the present study, Spencer-White (1994, 3) notes that "the periods of discussion have been found to be the most beneficial part of the process."

Sturges and Neill (1998, 211), while acknowledging the undoubted popularity of audio-visual communication, point out that "film and video are such seductive media that there is an ever-present danger that they overshadow any [information] message that they are supposed to carry." Applicable to the NGOs in this study is the authors' point that the production of videos is expensive and requires sophisticated technical skill. Their use also requires an electricity supply that is often lacking in the rural areas. The point that the risk of miscommunication is much higher with audio-visual material than with other materials (Sturges & Neill 1998, 211) is also one that needs to be borne in mind.

All eleven respondents who used the method noted the usefulness of role-play as a means of providing information. However, again as with visual and the video, there was the tendency not to view role-play as standing on its own but to view it as a precursor to subsequent verbal interaction and as a facilitator in creating a conducive environment in which that verbal interaction (reaction, comment and discussion) could take

place. An account of the use of theatre in education and development in rural Lesotho (Theatre for village development 1991) stressed the importance of the participatory nature of the process with the villagers themselves becoming performers (as opposed to the theatre group). Interestingly, the oral approach is again turned to as "In the end there is discussion and debate" (Theatre for village development 1991, 67). In fact, in his brief case study of "community theatre" in Zimbabwe, Katere (1995, 9) notes that apart from a discussion being initiated with the audience soon after the performance the feature of such theatre is its participatory nature. He states that "the artists talk, laugh and ask the audience questions ... [and that] There is a lot of interaction between the audience and the artists."

In terms of the present study, however, the impression gained though was that "theatre" was a largely "untested" medium and that a number of respondents, while expressing interest in the medium, had reservations about their expertise in using such an approach. Sturges and Neill's statement that "just exactly how an information service can pass on its messages and responses in performance mode is a question that has yet to be thoroughly answered" is possibly a valid one (Sturges & Neill 1998, 218). Their conclusion that for the most part "the integration of performance with information delivery is a technique that has yet to be developed" (Sturges & Neill 1998, 218) is also valid and is one which would be supported by the NGOs in the present study.

Finally, in terms of this discussion, is the issue of *indigenous information* that is frequently raised when information provision to rural communities in developing contexts is discussed. The vast majority of organisations attested to its importance. First, "what the adults already knew" could be viewed as assisting in laying the basis for and facilitating the verbal, interactive nature of the information provision process. Secondly, the interactive process in turn also assisted in ensuring that the indigenous information was integrated with the information provided by the NGOs. Burton (1996, 16) raises the idea of "mixing" (in this instance "knowledge") from the perspective of the adults themselves. Thus according to one of the participants in a focussed discussion "knowledge develops, it changes depending on generations ... what our forefathers used to do is

no longer effective to us. Not that we have thrown away what we learnt in the past, but we mixed what we learned with what we are learning now." As Sturges and Neill (1998, 58) point out, to view "indigenous knowledge as a fixed corpus from the past preserved for today ... is much too restrictive and ... it fails to take into account the way in which oral society accommodates new knowledge." As noted in the findings above, this integration, mixing or accommodation takes place not only at an oral level but could also occur at the level of print as well.

Conclusion

During the course of these interviews with the NGOs one respondent noted that

information is not something which one party gives to another party but it is a shared process so we see ourselves as gaining information as much as we share information.

Information provision by the NGOs was, as stressed above largely a participative interactive process and it is perhaps not surprising that the oral approach was dominant in this process. While other formats were used none allowed for the two-way "sharing" process to the extent that the oral approach did and when these formats were used they were often used to initiate or reinforce the oral approach. Sturges and Neill (1998, 52) note that "until very recent times, a totally oral society was the norm in virtually every part of Africa. Despite the apparent influence of the printed word the oral mode still predominates, most notably among the rural population." It is apparent that the oral mode still predominates in rural KwaZulu-Natal and it is thus again not surprising that the information provision methods used by NGOs emphasise the oral approach. The conclusion reached by Sturges and Chimseu (1996a, 155) in their study of information provision in Malawi villages is pertinent to the present study:

Radio, audio-visual aids and other forms of technology-based communication, whilst offering useful supplementation to face-to-face contact, are not yet an answer ... Likewise, print media have a well-established supporting role in the communication process, which is capable of enhancement.

The issue of terminology is always an important one and it is apparent that the term "provision" as well as other terms noted above under the definition of terms such as "transmission", "diffusion" and "transfer" are inadequate in describing what actually occurs during the "provision" of information by the organisations. While the writer during the course of the interviews with the NGOs used the term "provide" respondents often used the term "communicate" in their replies. The term "communication" defined by Nair and White (1994, 155) "as a two-way process of convergence, rather than a one-way, linear set in which one individual seeks to transfer [provide? disseminate?] a message to another" is more appropriate in reflecting the two-way, interactive process taking place. The process also fits in with the move toward the concept of participatory communication in which "all the interlocutors are free and have equal access to the mean to express their viewpoints, feelings, and experiences" (Bordenave 1994, 43) as opposed to the dominant paradigm "in which beneficiaries are merely passive receivers of a finished reality" (Thomas 1994, 54). The point made by Melkote (1991, 252) is instructive and confirms the trend observed in this study:

Leading scholars in development communication are now arguing for communication between the benefactor and the beneficiary where each side has an equal chance of influencing the other. The communication model which is envisaged for this would allow for exchange of information, ideas, etc. between equals. The emphasis is on knowledge-sharing rather than top-down transmission of information and teaching.

It is clear that indigenous knowledge plays a crucial role in this approach and the importance that NGOs attach to such knowledge is indicative of this role. The facilitative role played by indigenous information in the information provision process is an area that requires further exploration.

Finally, the emphasis of the study was on how information was provided by NGOs to adults living in rural areas. While reference has been made to library and information services this sector was not the focus of the study and the implications of the findings for this sector need to be detailed and discussed elsewhere. Having said this, however, three points made by Sturges and

Neill (1998), one made by the writer and a fifth one made by Mchombu (1995) which all have a bearing on library and information services in a rural context and which are implicit in the findings of this study are briefly raised:

1. There is a general lack of awareness among writers in the library and information sector of literature outside that sector which is relevant to information in the developing world in particular the literatures of development and communication. The authors state that this is a "significant gap" and point out that "The writing [in development and communication] is generally rooted in a very much better knowledge of African societies and a willingness to adopt much more radical approaches" (Sturges & Neill 1998, 227).
2. There is a need not only for new approaches to librarianship but also the formation of parallel but very different types of "information service to complement and partially replace library service." As they did in the first edition of their book eight years previously, the authors point to the difficulty of "creating an information service model that is less formal, less book-oriented, more locally rooted and more precisely targeted at Africa's real and potential information users ..." (Sturges & Neill 1998, 227).
3. There is a need to emphasise communication "to counter the tendency to provide information in uninterpreted packages. A response is no use if it cannot be understood and used by the receiver" (Sturges & Neill 1998, 228).
4. The fourth point relates to the relationship between the information "provider" and those seeking or needing information. During the course of the interviews in the present study, terms such as "engagement", "trust", "sharing", "two-way process", "learning process", "communicate", "interactive", and "participate" often emerged. They all suggest a very different type of relationship, in library and information terms, between the library and information worker and "end user" but a crucial one if information "provision" in a rural context is going to be effective. Thus according to one respondent "It is very important this relationship. I don't know how to put it in words ... it's a matter of time building this relationship - observing people, listening to them. Listening as information provider is a very, very important thing."
5. The final point is made by Mchombu (1995, 125) who refers to the several writers who have noted the complex nature of information provision to rural populations. The findings of this study are indicative of this complexity and, again coming from the library and information services perspective, "the simple view that to offer a [information] service to rural communities is simply a matter of taking books left over from the urban public library can be [very] seriously questioned" (Mchombu 1994, 125).

Notes

1. Despite the view that information is a critical resource and plays a fundamental role in development Menou (1993, x) disconcertingly points out that "The limited status accorded to information in most developing countries suggests that its potential role is not self-evident."
2. There is in fact a lack of what Mchombu (1995, 125) refers to as "baseline data" in most African countries concerning various aspects of rural information provision and a number of questions still remain to be answered, including the "how?"
3. The most recent and public (and controversial) attempt to use methods other than print to provide information (in this instance information about AIDS) has been "Sarafina" - a theatre production. More positive has been the successful "Soul City" project in this country in which popular drama on the mass media, namely television and radio (supplemented by print), was used to convey health information primarily to young adult women in lower income groups (CASE 1995?).
4. These include race (almost wholly African), poverty, land (over-exploited agricultural land), educational levels (low), age and gender (mainly children, the aged, and women) and employment (subsistence agricultural production).
5. The NGOs themselves determined who in the organisation was best able to respond to the questions posed. In most instances it was the head of the organisation that was interviewed. Other respondents included a development officer, a training manager, a community outreach co-ordinator, a research and development manager, an extension officer, a project manager and, together, a programmes co-ordinator and assistant.
6. Workshops are not without their limitations, being, for example, costly and reaching a relatively small number of people. They are however, viewed "as an important vehicle for information dissemination" (Wakelin & Simelane 1995, 41-42).
7. Focus group discussions were held with both rural men and women in specific rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal. Issues covered included an exploration of the meaning of information and an exploration of media use in households (Burton 1996, 14-15)

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Appendix: *Participating organisations*

Africa Cooperative Action Trust (ACAT)
Aids Action Group
Association for Rural Development (AFRA)
Bridge Foundation
Community Law
Community Life Projects
Democracy Development Programme (DDP)
Evangelical Lutheran Church Property
Management Company
Farmers Support Group (FSG) (Twice)

Institute for Natural Resources (INR) (Twice)
Institute for Multi-Party Democracy
(IMPD)
Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South
Africa (IDASA)
Interface Africa
LIMA
Philisisizwe Association for Development Trust
(PAD)
Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social
Awareness (PACSA)
Progressive Primary Health Care Network
(PPHCN)
Rural Consultative Forum (RCF)

Turntable Trust
Valley Trust

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