



CDRA
annual
report

2009 – 2010



Statement of intent

CDRA is a centre for organisational innovation and developmental practice.

We value people's ability to organise, and so shape the world. We foster and promote innovative organisational forms and practices that seek to transform power towards a just world characterised by freedom, inclusion and sufficiency.

Chairperson's introduction

It is my pleasure to introduce this year's CDRA annual report in a new format. Last year we decided to bid farewell to the old format of focusing our annual report on a theme that mirrored the organisation's journey of practice development. We have come to the realisation that the annual report in its old format has run its course and this one is the first to focus only on programme work, staffing and the financial situation.

This shift is in line with our endeavours of the last few years to work in a more collaborative and externally focused way. Towards this, we realised that we need a new vehicle to take forward learning and voice in a way that has become synonymous with the CDRA. In our endeavours to find opportunities to work more collegially and collaboratively in searching boldly and creatively for the new, later this year will see us launch a publication that will be reflective of this new way of being and working. Such a publication will serve the purpose of amplifying the voice of practice in development discourse.

The CDRA, along with many other civil society organisations, continues to face challenges pertaining to its identity/purpose, financial sustainability and the search for creative new practices. These challenges are a reminder that civil society organisations continue to be shaped by the patterns and systems of the world and that our own agency or activism will enable us to respond to the challenges emanating from such patterns and systems. In response to some of these challenges, in the last year the CDRA embarked on a process of thinking

through and developing initiatives consistent with this collaborative orientation. This has included developing new ways to sustain the organisation financially.

I would like to thank all the board members for continuing to take responsibility for the oversight and accountability and for executing it with integrity – their commitment and dedication to the organisation remain admirable. The board missed the presence of Reverend Peter Grove who was on sabbatical and spent time in the Netherlands. The board also welcomed Nomcebo Mvelase.

My thanks are also directed to the staff members who have continued to work hard in the face of challenges. In the last year the staff members have continued to accompany many organisations – small and large – through processes of learning, change and development. I would like to express my deep appreciation for the many times that they have spent away from family and loved ones in service of the work of the organisation.

Finally, we are deeply thankful to the donors and collaborating partners who support our work and make our learning possible.

Mzwandile Msoki

Chairperson: CDRA Board of Directors



The year in context

In the last year the CDRA has continued to serve organisations committed to the interests of civil society and contributing towards social change and transformation. Without doubt the largest part of our work remains in our own country with a spread from local community-based organisations (CBOs) to larger national NGOs, networks and social movements. Although this constitutes a small percentage of our work, we remain involved in engaging with global civil society organisations. This last year has seen us, through our relationships with various Dutch civil society organisations, get drawn into assisting the Dutch Government in evaluating the impact of their support to capacity building through development aid funding in different parts of the world.

Although we have not undertaken work with any tier of government in the last year, we continue to explore opportunities for meaningful connection and engagement. Notwithstanding this, our work at the interface between government services and civil society organisations is slowly growing and this year, we have taken another small step in building relationships at the interface between business and civil society.

Through our work in South Africa, we remain conscious of working in a context in which the gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow and the deepening inequality continues to be a concern. We continue to experience the growing impatience of people and communities whose expectations of improved delivery of basic services are being dashed. We recognise that the crises of rampant poverty, the growing consciousness of the consequences of ecological degradation and climate change, and the shifting axis of geopolitical power are upping the ante.

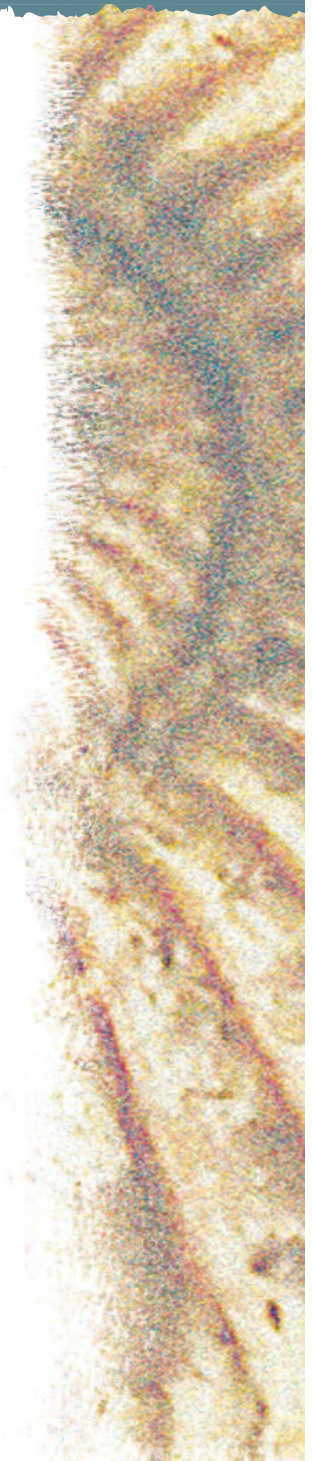
The work of our sector is increasingly shaped by the growing and often unrealistic and un-developmental demands being made on funded NGOs and other civil society formations to prove their impact. As the urgency grows, there is increasing pressure being applied to try and force existing organisational systems and their 'best practices' to address and correct social problems. With our focus on organisation and the effectiveness of civil society organisations and the NGO sector we have been forced to ask bigger questions.


We are learning that the causes of many social problems can be traced to the organising principles of the dominant organisational forms and practices that continue to shape society. 'Effective' organisations are those that tend to extract resources from people and from nature, attribute value to them and concentrate benefits higher up the hierarchy. From our work, we see most

organisations are lacking in their ability to distribute or re-distribute benefits to those who need them most, both within the organisation and in the broader societal system. Increasingly we are asking whether society's most intractable problems are the result of organisational dysfunctions. Or are they, in fact, functions of organisational forms we have valued highly in the past? In the same way we ask ourselves whether poverty is the next 'problem' waiting to be addressed by organisational forms that have been so successful in addressing other human challenges. Or is active impoverishment a critical operating principle of organisations driven by the priorities of growth and of wealth creation and the concentration of such wealth higher up the hierarchy?

There are enormous pressures being brought to bear on the development sector to become more business-like, and more effective in delivering what both business and the state are incapable of. Our deeper intention is to assist civil society in bringing its voice, contribution and influence more strongly than ever into dynamic, developmental relationships with business and the state in shaping broader society. We believe that what is needed is more robust, creative engagement and critical dialogue between the three sectors of society. Through such engagement, organisational forms and practices that hold potential for better meeting the challenges of the future will emerge. Our contribution is to support the building of sovereign organisations that are more effective in their social purpose and to enter into collegial relationships with other practitioners and organisations in exploring and developing creative new practices and approaches.

This year we have become proactive in concretising our collaborative and collegial orientation. This has resulted in CDRA becoming involved in some larger and more long-term programmes that are consistent with this orientation. This collaborative orientation has extended to various aspects of our work – action research, publications and advocacy. Within South Africa, we are working on more coherent strategies and approaches for developing the capacity of community-based organisations and community field practitioners. In another initiative, we have joined forces with three other organisations to engage more intentionally to advocate for improved funding practices to support the work of civil society organisations. At an





international level we have embarked on learning relationships with two Dutch organisations. Behind these different initiatives lies an important acceptance of the need to start working not only differently, but to work in new organisational forms. We are very consciously gathering learning on how to make these much more complex organisational forms really effective.

We have continued to distil from our learning and experience what areas of practice organisations need to develop skill and competence in. We focus particularly on those new areas of practice required to work in new ways that have the best chance of addressing the challenges of our time. We have again assisted others to develop practices that work by running a range of courses and publishing articles. The Barefoot Guide To Working with Organisations and Social Change, a publication that was collaboratively produced, has made a significant impact on the practice of organisations in many parts of the world.

It has been a very difficult year to survive financially, given the greater economic crisis and the dramatic changes within the contexts of those northern countries that have traditionally funded us. We were deeply challenged and in response have developed a financing strategy that enables us to explore and find creative mechanisms through which we can sustain our work financially.

Amidst all of our busy-ness in serving and delivering on our purpose we have managed to continue to take our own development seriously. Our own internal learning processes continue to be the source of much of what we have to offer. Our own first hand learning of what is involved in attempting to be effective in this most difficult of endeavours remains a vital ingredient of what we have to offer others.

Who We Are

BOARD

The Board members are:

Nomvula Dlamini	Farid Esack	Peter Grove
Sisasenkosi Maboza	Shehnaz Meer	Mzwandile Msoki
Judith Mtsewu	Di Oliver	James Taylor
Rory Wilson		

We welcomed a new Board member – Nomcebo Mvelase, who works in the field of environmental health and justice.

STAFF

Shelley Arendse	Nomvula Dlamini	Sandra Hill
Vuyelwa Jacobs	Selena Maharage	Cecelia McGlen
Linda Njambatwa	Desiree Paulsen	Siobhain Pothier
Doug Reeler	Bheki Skota	Sue Soal
Pauline Solomons	Logie Soobramoney	James Taylor
Marlene Tromp	Rubert Van Blerk	Vernon Weitz

After 19 years at CDRA, our much-loved housekeeper, Sheila Mana, known to everyone as Mam' Sheila, retired. We wish her many happy years of retirement in her new home. In her place, we welcomed Selena Maharage.

DONORS

We are grateful to our donors for their continued support.

Our current donors are:

- Cordaid
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienste (EED)



What we did

COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH

Biennial

In May 2009 we held our third Biennial Practice Conference in McGregor. 58 participants from around the world attended, and shared ideas around the theme of '*Organisation for Creativity*'.

Why should we concern ourselves with creativity? Because without creativity we cannot begin to meet the developmental needs of the world. After all, finding new responses to local and global circumstances is, in essence, a creative process.

The claim "development is creativity" emerged strongly from the first two Biennial Practice Conferences. In 2009, we explored what it takes for organisations not just to allow, but to enable, creativity. Each day, participants worked in one of five different art groups (painting, eurhythmy, tango, clay modelling and voice) so that, by directly experiencing a creative process, we could better understand its requirements. We also met daily in small home-groups to connect with self, mull over, crystallise and make sense of each day. In addition, the conference included a guided walk in nature, Open-Space, time for journaling, short plenary sessions, good food and informal conversations.

When creativity is defined by an association with only the intoxicating moments of insights and illumination, the hard work involved lies forgotten. What is this 'hard work' required by creativity? Creativity requires that we become more agile in finding harmony from discord, more nimble in standing back, more supple in seeing, more sensitive in hearing, more confident in ourselves and present in the moment, more flexible in letting go, more lively in rhythm and more animated in form. To read more about the findings of the Biennial 2009, read the report *This is what we need more of: messages on organisation and creativity from the CDRA Biennial Practice Conference 2009*, available on our website.

Conferences

At Trialogue's 2nd "Making CSI Matter" conference in March 2009, Nomvula Dlamini made "an excellent and vibrant" presentation entitled "*How do we nurture developmental relationships to bring about authentic improvement in the socio-economic conditions of people in South Africa?*"

In November 2009 Sue Soal presented a paper on Monitoring and Evaluation at the Inyathelo conference, themed "Our world, our responsibility: Re-energising civil society".

Also in November 2009, Vuyelwa Jacobs and Nomvula Dlamini participated in the Moshi Dialogue in Tanzania – a platform created to discuss issues pertaining to relationships between northern and southern civil society organisations in promoting social development in the south.

Website

The website has been given an overhaul, whereby the look and feel were brought into line with the look of our printed media. At the same time, the way in which the information is arranged was adapted to make it simpler and more user-friendly.

Resource centre

The resource centre usage increased, with a wide range of users, from students to development practitioners to members of client organisations making use of the resources available for loan.

Publications

BOOK:

The Barefoot Guide to Working with Organisations and Social Change was published in July 2009.

Five CDRA practitioners, working in collaboration with writers from several other civil society organisations and a cartoonist, under the title of the Barefoot Collective, compiled this book, which is a practical guide designed to enable leaders and facilitators to help organisations function more effectively. The hard copy of the book is being sold, but it is also freely available as a download on the CDRA website.

The book has recently been translated into Indonesian by VSO, and is in the process of being translated into Arabic by Plan Egypt.

ANNUAL REPORT:

Pursuing a Learning Agenda, August 2009. An account of CDRA's internal evaluation process and outcomes, through sharing extracts of the material generated through the course of the year. Written material was contributed by seven practitioners and two core team members.



ARTICLES:

This is What We Need More Of: Messages on organisation creativity, August 2009 by Sandra Hill

A look at an issue that was addressed during the CDRA Biennial Practice Conference 2009.

NUGGETS:

Freedom, Inclusion and Sufficiency: Another look at what really matters, February 2009 by Sue Soal and Doug Reeler

Exploring three values to address contemporary challenges.

Power in Practice: The ability to listen, the courage to hear, August 2009, by James Taylor

A look at some fundamental challenges around working with power.

LITERATURE REVIEWS:

Collaboration: Fostering critical connections, September 2009 by Sandra Hill

The purpose of this literature review is to seek information to assist in ECDLC programme collaboration.

The role of civil society in the modern aid environment by Charles Cilliers.

This literature review was collaboratively undertaken by the CDRA and PSO and was used to inform a seminar entitled “Rethinking North-South Relationships” hosted by PSO in the Netherlands.

CDRA writings were quoted and reprinted in several books and papers, published in South Africa, Netherlands and the UK:

Aug/Sept 2009 – James Taylor’s article, “*Power in Practice*”, a nugget on our website, was quoted in a paper written by Fons van der Velden, entitled “Overwereld burgers als co-creators van ontwikkeling en durfkapitaal voor een betere wereld”. (Netherlands)

Permission was requested to reprint a CDRA article in an updated edition of the Earthscan NGO Management book. The article is “*Measurement in Developmental Practice: From the mundane to the transformational*” (2003) by James Taylor and Sue Soal. (UK)

Doug Reeler’s “*A Theory of Social Change*” (2007) was quoted in a paper published by INTRAC (UK), entitled “Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building – is it really that difficult?” by Nigel Simister, February 2010.

COURSES

Four external courses were run:

- Supporting Sovereign Local Organisations (SSLO) (July 2009) – 17 participants
- Leading and Managing People Developmentally (LMPD) (August 2009) – 12 participants
- Developmental Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (DPME&R) (October 2009) – 17 participants
- Advanced Facilitation (November 2009) – 12 participants

There were also 11 in-house courses requested:

- Advanced Facilitation for PMU Interlife staff in Sweden
- Developmental Approaches and Skills for Group Facilitation (DASGF) for PMU partners in Thailand
- Advanced Facilitation for PMU partners in Turkey
- DPME&R for PMU partners in Tanzania
- Two DPME&R courses were requested for Rosa Luxemburg (SA) (which became an organisation accompaniment intervention)
- DASGF for Life Choices (SA)
- DASGF for Kicking Aids Out (SA)
- A request for LMPD for ODAC, which became an organisation accompaniment intervention
- SSLO for Red Cross in Thailand
- Advanced Facilitation for VVOB (Zimbabwe)

ORGANISATIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Over the last year we have worked with 51 organisations, 32 of which are South African, 5 from the rest of Africa and 14 in Europe. The type of work done has included learning, strategic planning, team building, OD consultation, development exploration, strategic reviews, evaluation, training, capacity development, research, presentations and panel discussions.



INTERNAL LEARNING AND GOVERNANCE

Homeweeks

For one week a month, almost every month, we make time for dedicated learning in our organisation. During homeweek, as it is called, we share, reflect, draw learning from what has gone before and plan ahead and deal with the organisational maintenance issues.

Nine homeweeks were held in the period under review. Themes covered included:

- Research methodology workshop (March/April 2009)
- Biennial preparation and introduction to Grounded Research methodology (May 2009)
- Shaping and integrating strategy (June 2009)
- Developing programme concepts and teams (July 2009)
- Power in practice (August 2009)
- Collaboration (October 2009)
- Practice review (November/December 2009)
- Reconnecting to our reality, unfurling the future (January 2010)
- Looking inward and outward, tabling new mandates (February 2010)

All the planned homeweeks and Board meetings were implemented. Two practitioners went on sabbatical.

Core Team sessions

Sometimes the core team does its own programme of learning, separately from the practitioners. In the year under review, three such sessions were run, with the topics being Performance Appraisals, Mentoring, and Reviewing homeweeks.

Carrying Group

The Carrying Group (CG) is our name for the management team, consisting of James Taylor, the Executive Director, Nomvula Dlamini, a senior practitioner, and Vernon Weitz, the Organisational Manager. The CG has been very active during the past few months, probing the key question, what is the organisation asking from the CG? The CG sees its role as accountability to the purpose of the CDRA, addressing the issue of leadership, attending to the welfare of staff, holding process and programmes and ensuring the financial sustainability of the organisation.

COLLABORATIVE ORIENTATION AND INITIATIVES

In our endeavour to work more collegially and collaboratively, CDRA has teamed up with other organisations in four major initiatives:

Partnership for CBO Capacity Development

In 2009 CDRA, together with Community Connections, Catholic Welfare and Development and SCAT came together to conceptualise an initiative that will build on the long and rich history of community organising and mobilising that has significantly shaped our society. It will harness the existing knowledge and skills that remain available. It will build mechanisms to ensure that the training and courses that are provided are shaped and co-owned by those who will benefit from them. The specific objectives for the initiative will be to organise learning events that cater for Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and field practitioners and to undertake ongoing research to identify the fundamental elements that best support and sustain the capacity building of CBOs and field practitioners.

All four of the collaborating organisations already have existing programmes for building capacity and have now started the process of sharing resources and experience to increase their impact through collaborative effort. This initiative will enable the four organisations to create the necessary synergies to enable a much greater contribution to the development of CBOs in the Western Cape.

Funding research

CDRA, together with three other Western Cape NGOs – REAP, Inyathelo and SCAT – has commissioned research into the relationship between civil society organisations and the National Development Agency (NDA) and the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF). The research is aimed at providing substantive information from civil society organisations which can be used by the NDA and the NLDTF to identify areas for improvement in its relations – so that the funding relationship can be built on mutual understanding and collaboration, and mutual learning towards continuously improving practice, and ultimately better service delivery.



Bernard van Leer Foundation

This Dutch donor supports CDRA in facilitating a South African Early Childhood Development Learning Community (ECDLC) collective with the aims of strengthening the care environment to improve the wellbeing of young children and their primary caregivers, achieving key outcomes together through collaborative programming, where the voice, strategies and interventions of the ECDLC collective and other collaborators will have more impact than as individual members.

CDRA/Personele Samenwerking met Ontwikkelingslanden (PSO)

The past year has seen CDRA embark on a journey with the Dutch organisation, PSO, based on mutual benefit derived from sharing and learning around specific themes and questions. In spite of the difference in identities, the two organisations share a commitment to the strengthening of civil society organisations and recognise civil society as the seat of the struggles, aspirations, cultural values and creative impulses of the people.

The first phase of the engagement was devoted to building relationship; this was seen as a critical and crucial foundation for any future engagement. Towards this, the two organisations undertook cross-visits to create an opportunity for getting to know each other as organisations and to begin to understand the broader contexts that inform and shape the work and contributions of our organisations. With a relationship of trust as a foundation and commitment to explore creative alternatives and shape more developmental practices, the engagement organically sparked the development of a thematic learning programme focusing on Learning Practices in Social Change.

While this collaboration provides an opportunity to experience what it takes to build interdependent relationships that are not defined by funding at the core, it more importantly creates space for the two organisations to bring their learning journeys together in a way that enables collective learning, meaning making and creation of new knowledge. While this engagement provides an opportunity to shape a genuinely developmental relationship characterised by shared responsibility and learning that benefits and changes practice, both organisations remain conscious of the challenge for it not to slip into the conventional north/south relationships characterised by dependency power dynamics.

IN CONCLUSION

The staff team remains the CDRA's most important asset. The way we work and learn together, and with the Board, is the foundation of the organisation. Regarding our internal functioning, we have continued to actively seek organisational forms and practices that reflect our striving to "become the change we want to see". We are aware that, despite the progress we and many others have made, the questions we are asking will lead us on a journey of ongoing learning.

Detailed Expenditure Statement

for the year ended 28 February 2010

Community Development Resource Association (Association Incorporated in terms of Section 21)
(Registered number 1987/004090/08)

Operating expenses (Rands)	2010	2009
Accounting fees	58,012	16,175
Annual report	40,271	72,517
Auditors remuneration	102,034	76,579
BVLF cost	726,172	390,919
Bad debts	-	61,180
Bank charges	45,354	48,263
Bi-annual conference	275,029	-
Depreciation, amortisation and impairments	114,707	122,748
Employee costs	5,174,271	4,712,910
Forex loss	-	16,549
Governance	70,933	44,591
Home week attendance	29,688	10,500
Hospitality	56,652	66,492
IT expenses	139,596	161,871
Insurance	57,909	36,246
Legal expenses	4,325	16,545
Loss on sale of assets	8	2,838
Networking	298,761	196,663
Other expenses	180,922	289
Outside consultants	12,000	201,359
Penalties and interest	-	54,613
Postage	8,090	12,796
Printing and stationery	46,814	77,016
Publication and production	-	90,343
RSC levies	-	2,941
Repairs and maintenance	49,783	17,936
Research and development costs	74,651	240,029
Security	16,926	9,554
Staff development	31,458	23,710
Telephone and fax	95,063	88,729
Training (transport, travel, venue and accommodation)	275,081	248,712
Utilities	41,527	31,916
	8,026,037	7,153,529
Income		
EED	1,924,524	3,472,542
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	393,365	378,750
Bernard van Leer Foundation	557,998	1,339,854
Cordaid	558,935	1,019,745
PSO	543,050	-
Cordaid Consultancy	551,482	322,105
CDRA	3,496,683	1,560,294
	8,026,037	8,093,290





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