

ANNUAL REPORT  
2017 - 2018



Community Development Resource Association

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# PURPOSE AND CONTRIBUTION

*The CDRA is a part of the broad movement of civil society seeking transformative change through regenerating cultures and practices that aim to contribute to restoring humanity and ecological balance to the planet.*

*Our scope of work straddles a variety of spaces, sectors and thematic areas from local to global. This continuum of practice and experience extends our capability to provide a unique and valuable offering.*

*Through our work we bring consciousness of what the future needs and the role we all play. We do this because the world is at a precipice and we want to be part of re-imagining and unlocking a different future for humanity.*

*We nourish those we support with different kinds of resources; the most important sources of nourishment are learning together, trust relationships and regenerative practices.*

*We encourage each other to be innovative, to discover what works better, to make visible the pathways of change and transformation.*

# Chairperson's Introduction

Thirty-two years – put differently, 32 years! That's how long CDRA has been around! We have lived and thrived, nearly died, given birth, have been reincarnated, currently dying and being reborn simultaneously - and mercifully were never crucified.

We stand back in awe at we have collectively brought and continue to the field; this inimitably "CDRA thing", the detail to process, to "the message and the meaning are in the method of our practice. And yet we ask, as we always must, "Do we have what it takes?" By the "it" we normally refer to the challenges of organizational development in a rapidly changing period ranging from the mundane "the South African NGO sector just ain't sexy enough for foreign donors" to the "Are we mere health workers – this is curative or preventative - to an industry (that of NGO's and CBO's) that are all cogs in a larger machinery to perpetuate systemic and structural injustice.

The "it" in the "Am I up to it", however, should be critically examined. "Am I up to it", should include, "Am I up to listening to my own deep inner voice that is calling me to enter the wilderness and seek new forms of be-ing and growth?", to seeking new avenues of exploring personal and professional avenues for expanding and deepening my presence in the world? Can I shed other comrades' and colleagues' expectations of what I must but "up to"?

On a weekly basis we are being called upon by others to come and help, come and hold us, sort us out, and we respond - nearly always meaningfully and creatively. Sometimes the OD processes leave us tired and at other times exhilarated – mostly both. CDRA is the only organization that I have served on where a day long discussion on salary revisions can feel like a spiritual retreat. Ok, I admittedly am speaking about a long time ago when our staff component was large enough to warrant a full day for discussing salaries.

It's an old man speaking now – no, it's an Elder, an Elder who is going to be sticking around for a short while still.

Our Director, Nomvula Dlamini, has decided to expand her horizons of the “it” in “Am I up to it?” – to move on to being an Elder. The “it” will no longer be her leadership of CDRA and so she will be leaving us at the end of this year. In our limited visions, we only see the sadness and the pain. At many a funeral, family and friends present it as a celebration. I am always a bit cynical when we are called to celebrate the life of someone at his or her earthly departure. The gaps left by departures hurt badly. And yet, we would be unkind to the departed one to only focus on the fact and the pain of the departure. Nomvula has been a great and creative, leader, colleague and comrade and we will miss her badly.

She will discover and create life beyond CDRA; We would like to be a part of it, but parents must be mindful that too much clinginess messes up things badly.

We look forward with a combination of trepidation and excitement, doubt and faith in CDRA's creativity and agility to grow, to transform and be reborn.

*Farid Esack PhD OSL*



# Year in Context

## A milestone

The year 2017 marked 31 years since the CDRA was established; it is a long time since that day in 1986 when Allan Kaplan, the late Hamo Hammond, Di Oliver, Dirk Marais, Shirley Moulder and others pioneered an organisation that has influenced and shaped the lives and practices of many people and social change organisations. Over the years the CDRA has received feedback from those it has engaged with; many attest to the ways in which the organisation has influenced them personally and professionally.

We continue to receive feedback. Often those who have engaged with the CDRA share memories and turning point moments. There are many from across the world who carry beautiful memories of their encounters with the organisation and the community of practitioners who have been part of the life of the organisation over the years. Many of those who share memories mention how they were inspired, challenged, awakened. They give accounts of how their thinking and practice were influenced and shaped! It is always a delight to listen to the stories shared and to delight in the glorious work of the CDRA.

There is no doubt that over its 31 years of existence the CDRA has achieved a lot and experienced great success. In its 31 years the organisation has undertaken assignments in more than 30 African countries, 7 Asian countries, 5 in Latin America and 9 in Europe. The work of the organisation with local, national and global civil society organisations and donor agencies in South Africa, Southern & East African countries, Finland, Sweden, Netherlands, Brazil, Chile, India, Vietnam, Cambodia and others forms the foundational basis of our impact and practice. In this time period it has worked with over 4000 civil society organisations, social movements, government departments, donor agencies and higher learning institutions and close to 10,000 development practitioners, policy makers, community activists & leaders and organisation development practitioners.

But, this is our history and recent past.

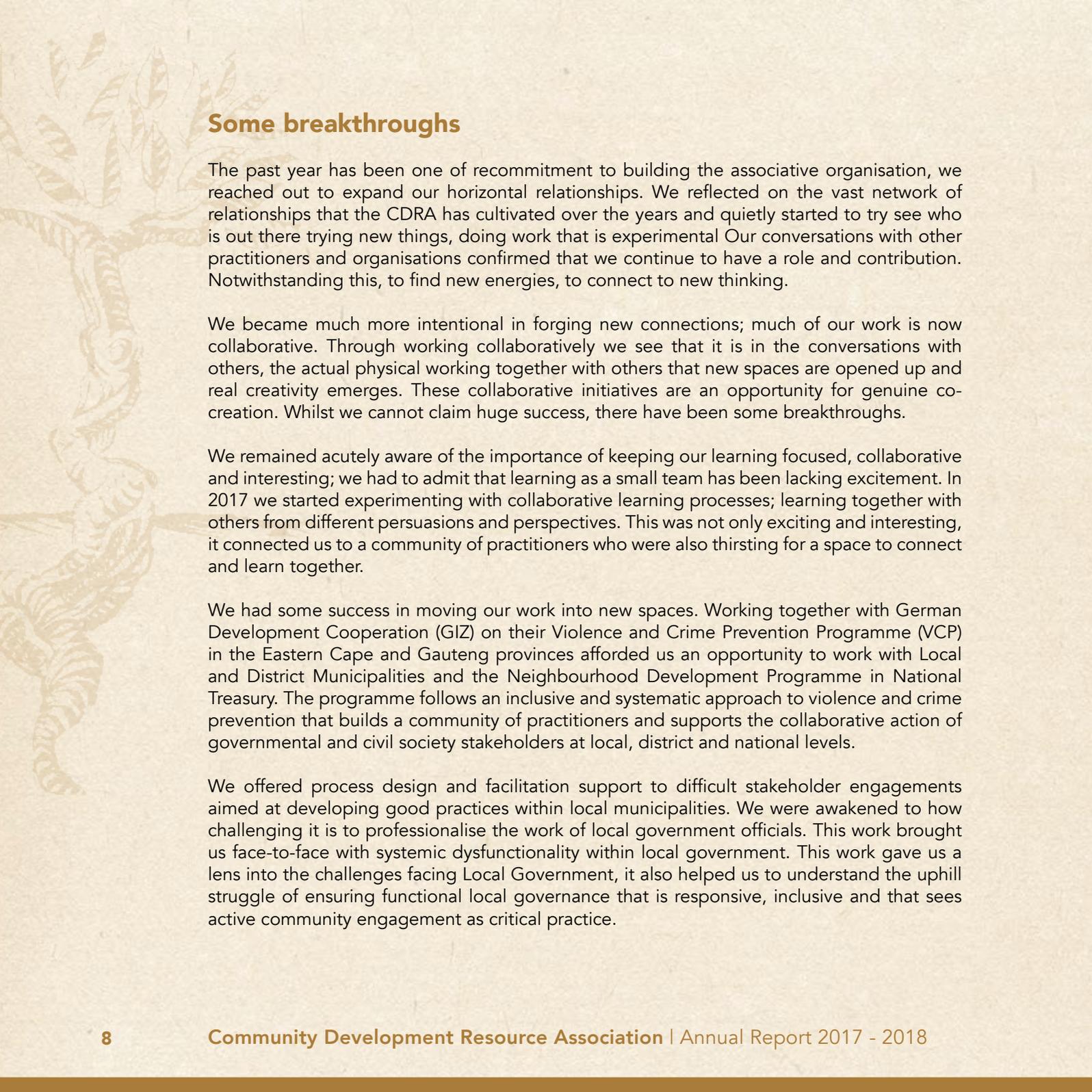
## What can we no longer ignore?

Whilst the long history and glorious track record is worth celebrating, we are cognisant that we cannot simply trade on this but have to use our accumulative experience, knowledge and expertise as a foundation for reinventing ourselves to ensure relevance. Similar to many civil society organisations, we have first-hand experience of how difficult reinvention is in a harsh and difficult context. It demands new energies, it demands innovation.

We used the past year as a time for internal introspection, for rethinking, for reconnecting with our experimental edge, for forging new relationships. We explored moving our work into new spaces, some of these experiences were like a 'baptism of fire'. There are things we could not ignore, we continued to grapple with the issues of our organisational strategy, resourcing our work and the collaborations we needed to forge. We persisted, we learned and in small ways we had some breakthroughs.

Notwithstanding the challenges, we remain resolute to reflect on our existence into the future as well as pondering the contribution we see ourselves making in our context. We can no longer ignore that it is a time when it can't be business as usual. We have done a great deal of internal introspection & reflection. Our resolve; there is need for a drastic shift in thinking, in how we articulate what we offer and in how we "package" our contribution and in how we take ourselves forward into the future.

We could no longer ignore that we know what we offer is needed but are struggling to bring it in ways that innovative and inspiring. In spite of the challenges, as a small team we remain steadfast, dedicated and committed to support those we engage with. But, we recognise that we cannot do it through old approaches and methodologies, we have to bring a "freshness" to our work and practice.



## Some breakthroughs

The past year has been one of recommitment to building the associative organisation, we reached out to expand our horizontal relationships. We reflected on the vast network of relationships that the CDRA has cultivated over the years and quietly started to try see who is out there trying new things, doing work that is experimental. Our conversations with other practitioners and organisations confirmed that we continue to have a role and contribution. Notwithstanding this, to find new energies, to connect to new thinking.

We became much more intentional in forging new connections; much of our work is now collaborative. Through working collaboratively we see that it is in the conversations with others, the actual physical working together with others that new spaces are opened up and real creativity emerges. These collaborative initiatives are an opportunity for genuine co-creation. Whilst we cannot claim huge success, there have been some breakthroughs.

We remained acutely aware of the importance of keeping our learning focused, collaborative and interesting; we had to admit that learning as a small team has been lacking excitement. In 2017 we started experimenting with collaborative learning processes; learning together with others from different persuasions and perspectives. This was not only exciting and interesting, it connected us to a community of practitioners who were also thirsting for a space to connect and learn together.

We had some success in moving our work into new spaces. Working together with German Development Cooperation (GIZ) on their Violence and Crime Prevention Programme (VCP) in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces afforded us an opportunity to work with Local and District Municipalities and the Neighbourhood Development Programme in National Treasury. The programme follows an inclusive and systematic approach to violence and crime prevention that builds a community of practitioners and supports the collaborative action of governmental and civil society stakeholders at local, district and national levels.

We offered process design and facilitation support to difficult stakeholder engagements aimed at developing good practices within local municipalities. We were awakened to how challenging it is to professionalise the work of local government officials. This work brought us face-to-face with systemic dysfunctionality within local government. This work gave us a lens into the challenges facing Local Government, it also helped us to understand the uphill struggle of ensuring functional local governance that is responsive, inclusive and that sees active community engagement as critical practice.

As a team we remain committed to adapting our leadership development work to respond to the need for a different quality of leadership in the world. The collaboration with **The Leading Causes of Life Fellowship** has seen us explore the concept of *generative leadership* and embark on a series of Writeshops to develop a Barefoot Guide on this focus. It is with great excitement that we would like to announce that this collaboration will deliver the resource by the end of 2018.

This guide will be a celebration not only of the Barefoot Guide but of a collaboration with a marvellous group of practitioners working in the public health space in South Africa, Latin America, Norway, Afghanistan and the United States of America. It is in the role that the CDRA played that we truly appreciated what we have to offer collaborative & innovative learning processes. Our experience and expertise in creative process design and facilitation enabled healthy conversation, co-creation and human connection.

The **Facilitating Writeshops** were well received by practitioners and organisations ... those who participated in the different processes continue to talk about how powerful the approach is and how it has helped them to overcome their fear of writing. Our Facilitating Writeshops do not only lead to practitioners, leaders and activists to hone their writing skills ... they processes that nurture people's creativity and deeply connects them to their own ideas, thinking and feelings.

Our collaboration with the **International Forum of NGO Platforms (IFP)** has seen us facilitate a blended learning leadership development programme for leaders of social change organisations. This programme blended face-to-face and online learning. This was a first for the CDRA and feedback from those who participated in the process is encouraging. We are into the second cycle of this innovative initiative with another year of engagement ahead.

Our work with the **Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA)** was a proverbial "baptism of fire". Although we greatly appreciated an opportunity to work in the space where government interphases with communities, there are moments in the process where our naivete showed. We have a lot to learn about engaging with political power and collaborating in processes where such power holds a great deal of sway. Once again, this initiative provided us with an opportunity to see better what we bring. Our deep understanding of social process and action research enabled us to bring all stakeholders into critical yet healthy engagement. In small ways, our work shifted thinking and relationships.



## Our country

Our South African context is fraught with uncertainty, desperation, fear, disconnection, polarisation and a kind of manic activity of development and “fighting fires” on a local government level while presenting a kind of optimism of everything will be alright. But, on the outer chaos and corruption on a political level, there is a sense of opportunity and real change that can be realised, not only by changing the outer but by strengthening and deepening the inner. There is a desperate need for work that actively and expressly awakens and strengthens the human spirit and restores healthy connections. There is need for work that addresses the brokenness, the pain, the trauma, the polarisation, the dehumanising and disconnection. It is this context that gives an opportunity to do genuine transformative work.

There is need for transformation, not only of individuals but of organisations, relationships, institutions, leadership. Such a transformation journey must involve going through pain, facing our demons from the past with courage, honesty and openness. We can see how transformation work must involve educating, conscientising, healing and bringing to the surface what has not been dealt with, named and articulated.

To achieve transformation the sharing of stories and cultivating empathy becomes critical. The transformation needed in South Africa calls for deeper, more authentic engagement – it calls for facilitation of authentic and humane engagements. Increasingly we recognise that the work of transformation has to be associatively and collaboratively undertaken. It is work that demands of us to do more than working together, we have to be *“human together”*.

## What are we seeing that is giving us hope?

When looking into our landscape, we are seeing the beginning of a new wave of need for approaches that help us connect with each other as we build and organise ourselves towards solving the big social and environmental challenges we are facing in the world. Who would have thought a water economist working in the hectic arena of ‘fragile’ states for the World Bank would regard a CDRA approach to Project Cycle Management (PCM) and leadership development as highly relevant? Is the interest in capacity development we are experiencing at present, saying something about such a wave? If this is the case, how do we as CDRA with our collaborators anticipate and prepare ourselves for such a wave?

Courageous activism is emerging from the women in our country. The widespread violence perpetrated against the women and young children of our country is saddening and horrifying. The agency of the women is palpable; women have started to stand up and speak up for themselves. The voices of women and young people are emerging in communities and a new generation of change-makers is emerging.

There is an emerging a focus and interest on community-driven development approaches; there is a call for processes that are about co-creating solutions and co-production of services. In communities there is the beginning of an impulse of wanting to do things together. Communities are demanding to be partners in development and not “subjects to be developed; there is a growing demand for genuine partnerships. Communities are no longer interested in “packaged solutions to the challenges they face” – they no longer see themselves as “needing to be fixed”.

There is a growing call for a focus on innovative approaches that are inclusive, participatory, that are context-based and responsive to social problems. The dependence on donor funding and outside assistance is waning and communities are more interested in what we can learn from each other than how you as outsider can solve my problem.

It is this that we are seeing that is giving us hope and reconfirming the relevance of the CDRA!

*Core Practitioner Team*

# Reflections from practice

## What does the current South African context ask of NGOs?

Any debate or discussion of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the South African context needs to take into consideration that they form a small part of broader civil society. Similar to broader civil society, NGOs have been shaped by various influences – from the roles they have assumed, to the contributions they have made to shaping broader society to the relationships they have forged with other social actors, sectors and institutions. Looking back over decades we see definite shifts regarding various aspects of NGOs. As NGOs navigate turbulent times, we desire a sector that is less obsessed with “survival” and more with social change.

Up till the 1990s the notion of an NGO sector was real; we had a large, vibrant and well organised NGO community. These were run by activists aligned to the anti-apartheid movement. During this period, we witnessed a prominent role given to NGOs in international development initiatives and global issues. As a result, NGOs played a critical role in the democratic transition.

Similar to the state, introduction of a democratic political system ushered in a phase of transition from apartheid to democracy for NGOs. NGOs entered a time of reflection, deep questioning and repositioning - it became a time for assessing organisational mission and questioning social purpose. Those that could not navigate the contextual challenges disappeared. Within the newly defined space a large percentage of leadership from NGOs was co-opted into government; the leadership and capacity drain became another influence that impacted the sector negatively.

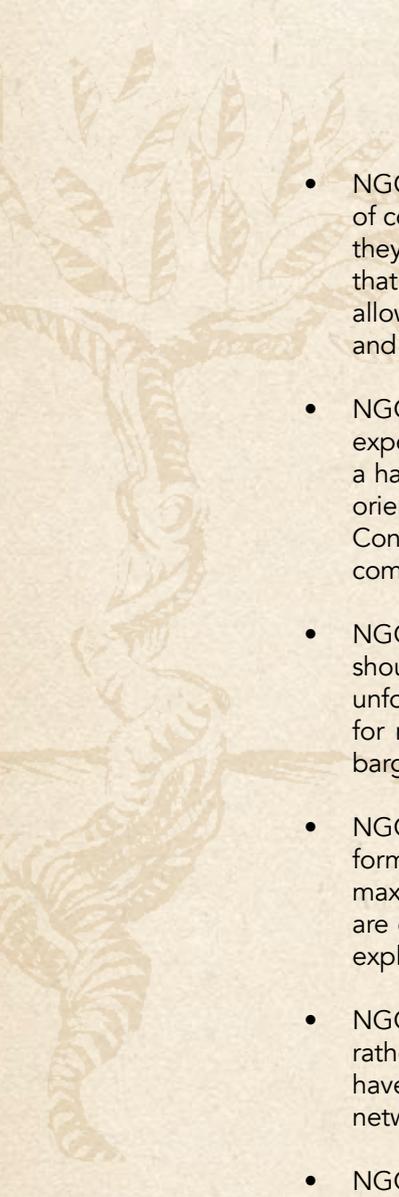
This was accompanied by a reduction in solidarity funding. International funding was now channelled directly to government through bilateral agreements and without meaningful partnerships with the democratic government NGOs were unable to participate in and contribute to development programmes initiated by the state. In a changed context the professionalisation of NGOs happened, they had to demonstrate results. Results-based donor funding with stringent reporting criteria was introduced and proficiency in fundraising became a requirement.

Twenty four years into our democracy, we see NGOs continue to navigate challenges pertaining to their roles, contributions, sustainability, relationships with other social actors, connection to constituencies. As a country South Africa has derailed from the democratic project of 1994 and a departure from the social economic transformation agenda. The undermining of socio-economic rights of people, growing inequality and poverty, endemic corruption, absence of strong, good governance and widespread violence has seen the country plunged into desperation. Not only economically but, also in terms of social and cultural integrity. The moral and social fibre of society is being eroded and the moral leadership the country enjoyed based on its history is something of the past. Whilst NGOs are being challenged, the context also presents opportunities.

But, we have to remember that NGOs as social entities will come and go. Over the last two decades we have seen many NGOs from the 1980s and 1990s disappear. However, we have also seen new ones appear.

### **So, what is asked of NGOs in the current context?**

- NGOs are increasingly asked to work with their own purpose out of clear values and principles that allow for them to unlock and enhance human potential rather than bring from the outside what is perceived to be missing. It is only by demonstrating authenticity of purpose that NGOs will realise their developmental value and transformational purpose. In the South African context, given the developmental challenges our country faces, we have to increasingly question and explore the transformational purpose of NGOs and the contribution asked of them.
- NGOs are asked to be the authentic expression of the voice and will of the constituencies they claim to represent. They have to become a credible voice for the voiceless, powerless and excluded NGOs have to be social change agents in their own right and not as vehicles for the agendas of others. Not even vehicles for the agendas of donor agencies that support and sustain them.
- NGOs are asked to be politically conscious, know their responsibilities and have to understand the power relationships in which they are held. They have to bear in mind that their real power lies in their ability to take risks and the experimental nature of their work. The challenge to NGOs is to reconnect with their experimental, risk-taking work. This is the true work of sustainable change and genuine transformation.

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- NGOs are asked to nurture authentic relationships that contribute towards the creations of collective spaces for dialogue, critical engagement and accountability. As social entities they are requested to create and hold spaces that allow for nurturing of critical relationships that allow people to raise the difficult, uncomfortable questions, create movement and allow for emergence of the new. Such critical relationships allow for working with dilemmas and tensions not as negative forces but rather as change-creating forces.
  - NGOs are asked to commit to continual learning from own experience as well as the experiences of others through horizontal relationships. This will enable them to adapt in a harsh, volatile and ever-changing environment. A learning orientation is crucial; such an orientation acknowledges that you have to learn your way into the solutions & answers. Continual learning will allow for lasting impact and building authentic community that comes from an honest place and creates voice through experience, practice and learning.
  - NGOs are asked to speak to freedom not as licence but freedom with responsibility; they should aspire for freedom that allows the processes of development & transformation to unfold; freedom that allows for the discovery of meaning and purpose – freedom that allows for meaningful and critical engagement and holds a space for and enhances collective bargaining power and action.
  - NGOs are asked to cultivate stronger linkages to social movements, informal grassroots formations and advocacy groups. NGOs are challenged to strengthen linkages that maximise people's choices and open pathways for those voices that are not heard; they are challenged to create and hold spaces that challenge relationships of domination and exploitation and open up pathways for agendas that are truly responsive.
  - NGOs are asked to put less emphasis on delivery, products and information services but rather those that strengthen dialogue and engagement processes. To achieve this, NGOs have to work less towards growing strong, individual organisations but rather work through networks, coalitions, alliances and collaborations.
  - NGOs are asked to work in the realm of change in a conscious and focused way; they have to be intentional in their work of change and transformation.

Irrespective of where the work of NGOs focus, they have to become the foundation for human interactions, a wellspring for innovation & experimentation, the site of transformative practices, the source of societal power and the space where human potential is developed and nurtured. If these are not fulfilled, NGOs remain mere vehicles of delivery for the agendas of others.

*Nomvula*

## **“Theory of Change process facilitation and its many uses”**

*“Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.”*  
- Meg Wheatley

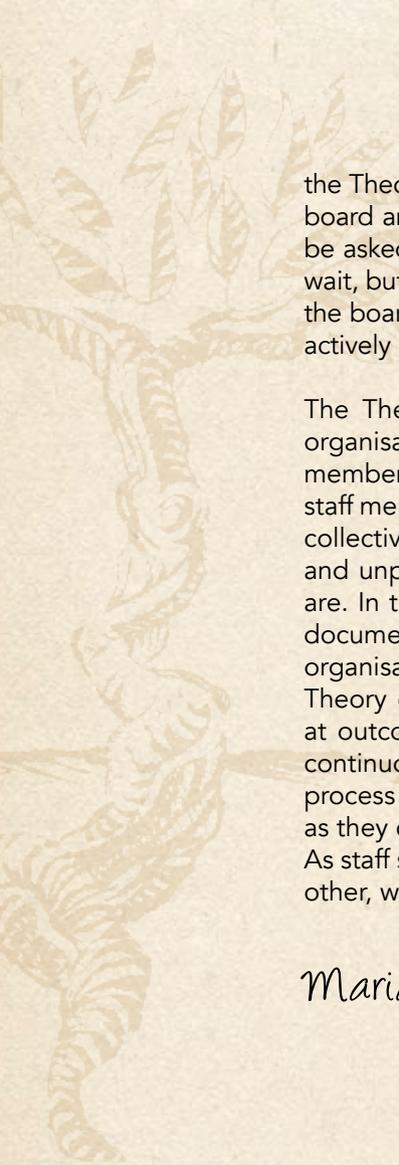
*“Leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their decision, do not organize the people – they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress.”*  
- Paulo Freire

The transfer of leadership from a founding director to the successor can pose a significant challenge for an organisation. After the leader “lets go” his or her shadow (or sometimes actual person) continues to hold strong connections to partners, donors and especially staff members. When the founder remains on the board, after stepping down as the executive director, it can be even harder for an organisation and the new director to bring fresh ideas and a new direction. What can also happen is that the staff members themselves are unwilling and resistant to embrace the new personality, leadership style and - above all - vision of the new leader. The staff members may continue to feel strongly connected to the practice of the previous version of the organisation and resist any changes suggested.

In 2017 CDRA accompanied a number of organisations to develop their organisational Theory of Change. Two of these organisations had recently made a transition from founding director to a new organisational leader.

One of the most important ingredients for a Theory of Change process is that the process requires honest conversations. However, with different power dynamics in the room, this conversation can easily become lop-sided and those who hold senior positions can dominate or even shut down the voices of others. It is therefore important that this conversation is facilitated in a way that is based on respect for all and allows everyone equal “airtime” so that the organisation can get to a common understanding of what it would like to change and where the main focus of the work should be. If an atmosphere of trust and openness can be created in the room, this will allow people to speak openly about their fears and resistances, which can help shift their thinking and make them realize that the process is not about choosing allegiances but about really understanding the purpose and the context of the organisation, and based on that, making the best choices for the future.

In the case of one of the organisations, the new director and her small team of staff could see that a shift was needed from a welfare to a more developmental approach, in one of the poorest areas of South Africa. After a year of continuous struggle, trying to convince the board of her renewed vision and approach, the new director left the organisation – coincidentally - right after



the Theory of Change process was finalised. This left the staff in a limbo, unsure of whether the board and the key donors would accept the new vision and approach or whether they would be asked to revert to the old way of doing things. However, they decided not to sit back and wait, but instead, they actively advocated for the new vision. After three months of uncertainty, the board accepted the new vision, and what's more, one of the staff members who had been actively involved in the Theory of Change process was appointed as the new director!

The Theory of Change, and learning M&E processes generally can be used to heal an organisation that is going through a leadership crisis. The open conversation between staff members can help to crystallise the vision, make visible the organisational values and allows staff members to really interrogate what change they would like to contribute to and how they collectively believe this change (or changes) will come about. As assumptions are surfaced and unpacked, the team gains more clarity on what their organisational learning questions are. In this sense, we have found the development of a Theory of Change (both as a living document and as a process) an invaluable starting point for strengthening of developing an organisational M&E system that is learning oriented. In monitoring its work and revising the Theory of Change regularly, an organisation no longer focuses only on measuring change at outcomes level, but also critically engages with its learning questions and in doing so, continuously improves its practice and understanding of its work. Finally, a Theory of Change process can increase staff members' sense of responsibility for and enjoyment of their work, as they can more clearly see how what they do individually contributes to the bigger picture. As staff sees more clearly how their different projects and programmes relate and link to each other, working in silos is reduced and a stronger team emerges as a result of the process.

*Marianne and Dzvinka*

## The 3 step process to good social facilitation:

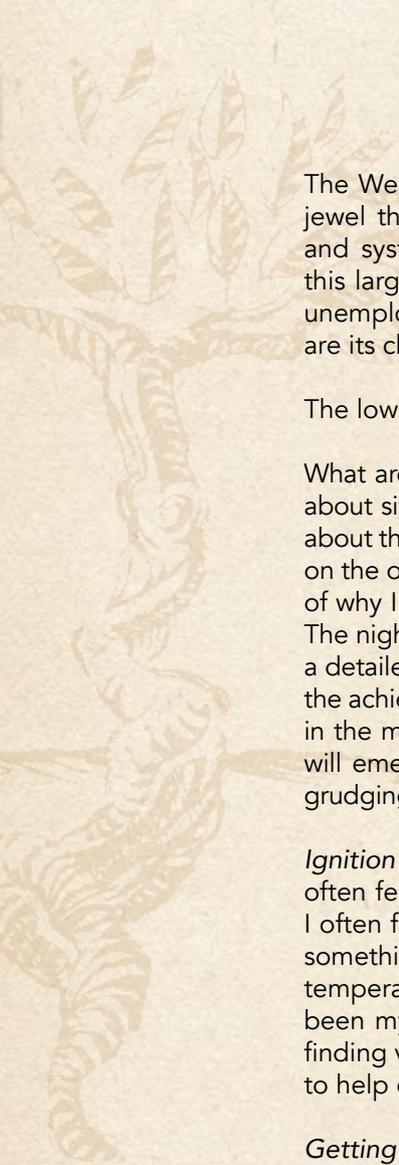
1. Treat people with respect;
2. Get a conversation going, share some useful tools for promoting the dialogue and thinking;
3. Get out of the way.

Social facilitation is a broad term and I'm certain can be seen from a variety of different angles, with some elements having more emphasis than others. In CDRA it is seen as a term which designates who we are and what we do – I am a social facilitator. I've always wondered what exactly it means to be a social facilitator, at times feeling a sense of ambivalence as I'm also satisfied when describing myself as a practitioner, development practitioner or a psychologist.

Essentially my work is about facilitation, but there are many out there who use the term facilitator to describe what they do. What exactly does it mean for me?

During the past year I've had two work assignments, one ongoing that have brought me into the same geographic districts of the Cape Winelands and West Coast. One was an evaluation and the other involved capacity building for a group of CBO leaders. The evaluation involved a programme partially funded by a large European donor. Over a short period 3 years prior the organisation received a large sum of money which spurred rapid growth with new staff and infrastructure. This was followed by a further exchange rate windfall resulting in a further financial injection. Organisational growth and increased complexity drew more and more energy internally and away from where it mattered most i.e. programme quality. By the time the evaluators had arrived, the organisation was in a state of crisis.

In the work with CBO leaders, we were faced with another difficult context. The S.A. government's independent power producer programme in the renewable energy sector requires that 1 percent of all profit (from electricity sales) be spent on social and economic development of communities within a 50km radius of the constructed facility. In a resource poor rural context many local organisations are vying for a piece of the pie. The promise of funding is difficult to resist and competition is fierce, the situation is fraught and how does the windfarm dispense in a way that does not cause further harm.



The West coast and winelands area of the Western Cape is renowned for its beauty. It is a jewel that hides a dark underbelly of Cape history which includes the tot system, slavery and systematic economic subjugation of poor rural peoples. Today the consequences of this largely persist in the lives of the majority of its inhabitants. The social outlook is bleak, unemployment persists, people largely survive on government grants, youth and older folk are its chief victims afflicted by tik, alcoholism and abuse.

The lowly facilitator enters.

What are the different moments as one facilitates? *Preparation* is critical. Now I'm not talking about sitting down and doing a desk survey of sorts. The thinking is about what I understand about this situation. The feeling varies from intense anticipation on the one side and trepidation on the other. Often I'm plagued by the thought of just running away and the consistent lament of why I have to do this kind of work – others get paid much more to do more simple things. The night before each day especially the first is a restless one. Often I have not yet completed a detailed design at this stage aside from the broad strokes I imagine would take the group to the achieving the objective. Most times I'm completely awake before the alarm set for 4 or 5am in the morning. Then, if the night was sufficiently restless, a clearer sense of how to proceed will emerge, in some situations, perhaps only as far as the morning tea. Over years, I have grudgingly come to accept that sleeplessness is a vital part of my preparation.

*Ignition and warming up.* Starting the day is another thankfully much shorter moment. It often feels like a large diesel engine being brought to life from a cold start. After greeting, I often fumble to find the correct words that I hope will bring the process into flame. This is something that I have not really succeeded in getting better at over the years. Perhaps it's a temperate thing. Facilitation which involves standing before people and leading has never been my default inclination. I'm not altogether sure but it may have something to do with finding voice, my voice. Perhaps it is reminding me that in finding my voice, the central job is to help others find theirs.

*Getting out of the way.* This is probably the most difficult thing to do in facilitation, yet I think is the most essential attribute that any facilitator can aspire to. This capacity comes from a deep respect and trust in the humanity and agency of others. It is about being in touch with your power standing in the front of the room. I remember a number of years ago standing in front of a group of 35 rural women, the majority of whom were HIV positive somewhere in the middle of Kwazulu Natal. My task was to facilitate and guide them through a process of dialogue intended to strengthen their network of home-based care givers. I froze during the introductions when several remarked about how happy they were that I was there to ensure that they get funding. Despite all the preparation done by the local NGO to make clear the

role I would play over the next year, this was almost a knee-jerk reaction that could not be avoided. Already there in that specific moment I was predisposed to getting in the way. Not really expecting this, I was knocked off balance and struggled to find a way of saying this was incorrect without them thinking that indeed I was quite useless to them. Here the poverty was dire – they had experienced the wave of the development industry coming through this area in response to the AIDS pandemic. They had seen others standing before them, driving in with the smart 4x4's or flying in bringing the answers and the money. My class, race, level of education, expertise, employee of an NGO, let alone role of facilitator presented every possible impediment one can imagine that would limit my ability of getting out of their way.

*Rubert*



## This is what makes the world go around

*The formal scheme was parasitic on informal processes that, alone, it could not create or maintain. To the degree that the formal scheme made no allowance for these processes or actually suppressed them, it failed both its intended beneficiaries and ultimately its designers as well.*

- Scott, J. (1998) Seeing like a State, Yale University Press, New Haven and London – page 6

I have, like many people, known for years now that the real drama of life, its deepest experience, is scarcely visible, unfolding in the hidden world inside and between people, in our changing relationships, emotions and assumptions, in the unconscious intentions, passions and antagonisms, in what is unsaid, even dimly perceived. In our Barefoot Guide writeshops we call this the “inside story”.

But this quote from Scott, which arrived like a shock to my system (during a Barefoot Guide Writeshop), has propelled my understanding of the informal, and what it represents, to another level. The bell that it rang for me is still resonating.

We know that many leaders and managers imagine that their visible, clever and formally laid plans, their logical systems and structures are what shape and drive the world. When things do not work out as planned they are often surprised and even angered, either with others for not sticking to the script or with themselves for not seeing what was really going on. What they have not yet seen is the life-force of the informal. What they have not built into their plans is that people (being people) are paradoxical, enigmatic, unpredictable. What they have experienced is culture confounding simplistic policies, of word-of-ear chatter and horizontal hearsay making mockery of the straight lines of communication they have carefully constructed to keep tabs on or control over who says what to whom.

But some leaders and managers do learn their lessons when things go awry and start to work more artfully, anticipating the cultural informal, even respecting it, and perhaps learning to consult and to craft their messages more tactfully. But Scott is saying much more: that the formal is not just subject to the informal but parasitic of it, feeding off it, dependent on it for its own life, even while seeking to control or suppress it. This parasitic relationship is starkly illustrated, he points out in the example of when trade unions call for “work-to-rule”, when workers stick to the policies and procedures laid down by management, with the result that things grind to a halt.

In this view, the informal is not just some messy cultural mix of people being themselves despite the system. What we bring to the world in informal expressions and cultural contributions,

when we do not “work to rule”, are a generosity of spirit and deed, whether intentional or not, that represents an immense life-force which almost literally ‘makes the world go around’.

I should not be so amazed by the generosity of spirit and the creative deeds of kindness of people that I witness and experience every day of my life. But I am because generosity seems to run against the tide, so counter to and despite the grand narratives where selfishness, profit- and status-seeking are acclaimed as the drivers of progress, of history itself. From Adam Smith to Ayn Rand to Donald Trump, society has been educated that it’s OK to be selfish.

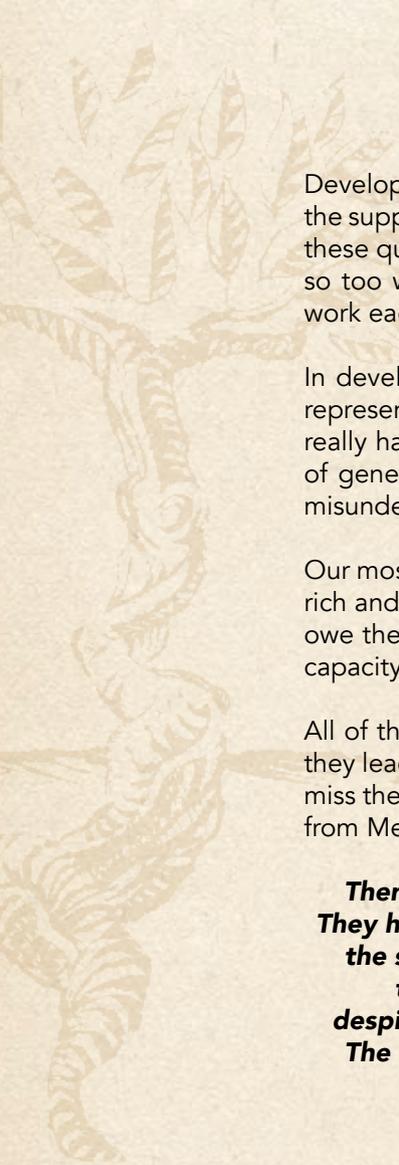
Yet we also lament the loss of that old culture of community and generosity, of mutual respect and circumspection, and we try to envision a future that restores these things. But I am beginning to wonder, in similar vein to Scott’s quote, if the truth is that our modern economy and society is also parasitic and wholly dependent on a contemporary generosity and selflessness that still defines our human condition and motivation, today. We have not lost it at all. Our feet stand on its very ground. *Rather we have lost sight of it.*

Indeed, I imagine that this was as true of the past where for great parts of the world slavery and colonialism were as parasitic on the same human force of nature, that so many of the oppressed held onto, despite their condition, to stay human, to stay alive.

In South Africa, since the turning of the tide in the 1990s, as a white man, I have been thankful, puzzled and almost overwhelmed by the largesse and generosity of spirit shown by black people their former oppressors, forgiving us for unspeakable crimes and offering to walk together as human beings into the future. The tragedy is that too many of us do not appreciate the grace of their fellow citizens, still imagining that black people need them more than they are needed. White people, who can afford to be generous, are the least so.

When we work in community, whether in organisations or neighbourhoods, it should not be difficult to see that the greatest asset that lives there is this neighbourly generosity and the love for each other that people have. It may not be visible to the naked eye, even obscured by the abuse and trauma that often accompanies poverty. But it is there, everywhere, every day, perhaps in corners or lying latent, between family members or neighbours, between friends and even strangers. A cynic may see it as a survival mechanism, people logically knowing, from experience, that they must stick together to overcome common obstacles. But the stories we hear from the field so often go far beyond such calculations.

In the study published on “The Philanthropy of the Poor” [ref], it was revealed that the poor give to the poor in far greater amounts of quantifiable neighbourly aid to survive than ever given by the generous Foundations of heroic billionaires and the aid agencies of the



Development Industry. This does not even account for the kind words, the sympathetic ear, the supportive gesture, the little encouragements that cannot be priced or measured. Without these quantifiable and unquantifiable generousities, not only would communities collapse but so too would the economies and societies that depend on healthy workers turning up for work each day to keep the wheels turning and the tills ringing.

In development-speak, these would be oddly named 'local assets' or 'social capital'. They represent a real life force that we must connect with if we wish to work with people what people really have and are, and to do so respectfully and in solidarity. That human resourcefulness of generosity, love and kindness, alive in almost every human being, however hidden and misunderstood, is always there to be brought forward to shape the future.

Our most difficult task may be with those who have most lost sight of their own humanity. The rich and powerful who think they have no need for generosity of human beings, though they owe their millions and billions to it, is perhaps where the real development challenge lies, a capacity deficit that will take all the ingenuity we have to fill.

All of this suggests that leaders have a real challenge to see the informal life of the people they lead and the life forces they have. But just as we don't see the informal life we often also miss the presence of informal leaders who most fully embody this quality. Consider this quote from Meas Nee, a Cambodian development practitioner:

***There are respected and good hearted informal leaders in every village I have seen. They have hopes for peace and for restoring the life of their village. If they recognise the same qualities in the community development workers who befriend the village they will enlist our help. They will begin to show us that there is a way forward despite the problems. If we win their respect, we will be invited into their company. The changes that they can support are usually quite different from the changes that may be imposed by the district or the commune or the village leader.***<sup>1</sup>

1. Towards Restoring Life in Cambodian Villages by Meas Nee, JSRC Phnom Penh 1999, chapter 5, <http://www.amazon.com/Towards-Restoring-Life-Cambodian-Villages/dp/B001O8WHUS>

Despite the unique context from which this observation originates, many readers will recognize that its wisdom applies to many contexts. Informal leaders work within the informal systems of the community. With intuitive insight they can see or feel what is really happening around them, forces that are seldom visible to the formal leader, and it is out of this capacity that they are able to act with wisdom.

***I am seeking for the bridge which leans from the visible to the invisible through reality.***

Max Beckmann

***Love is a force more formidable than any other. It is invisible - it cannot be seen or measured, yet it is powerful enough to transform you in a moment, and offer you more joy than any material possession could.***

Barbara De Angelis

Doug



# THANK YOU BELOVED SISTER

*Beloved sister Di - what a glorious deed we performed together, all those years ago - thank you for holding the flame even as time wore on, even when it burned your fingers, even when I moved on. Thank you for real friendship - **Forever, Al***

*Dear Di. I confess my sadness on hearing your request to be relieved of your CDRA Board responsibilities after dutifully serving for so many years. I will especially miss your warm smile, curiosity about the work I was doing and the engaging conversations we have had around the times of Board meetings and AGMs. Thanks for your commitment to CDRA, and a special thanks for those warm connections over the years, some of which include chance meetings while cycling through Kalk Bay. The cycle of life continues, and wish you well as you move into new pastures.- **Rubert***

*Devoted constancy, ferociously principled.  
Kind, attentive, civil.  
Thank you Di for a lifetime's example. - **Sue Soal***

*Dear Di,*

*Moral, kind, gentle and wise, thank you for helping to guide the CDRA so well and for so long. - **Doug Reeler***

*Dear Di*

*I have drawn deeply from the quiet strength of your caring and your courage to fight for what is right and for those who have been wronged. Your life's work continues to grow in the individuals and organisations you have shaped through your skill and dedication so generously shared. To me, your contributions represent the highest practice of 'social work'. With deep appreciation and love for you, and the many like you, whose praises are all too seldom sung. - **James***

*Dearest Di, you are an embodiment of courageous activism – we have drawn so much strength from who you are! Thank you very much for the love, caring and a lifetime's dedication to the CDRA. - **Nomvula***



*Dear Di, your genuine concern for humanity has not gone unnoticed. Your internal strength of character is not expressed with force and you command respect without applying pressure. I'm glad to call you my Auntie.*

**- Sisa Maboza**

*Dear Di,*

*The CDRA has benefitted greatly over the years from the committed leadership and dedicated service you gave unconditionally as a board member.*

*You were not only very devoted but played an extremely supportive role and had a vested interest in the work of CDRA. Your presence was visible at our Dialogues Sessions and Learning Events. Your passion for our work stood out and we could not successfully serve and engage in our mission if we did not have your leadership over the years behind us. - **Marlene Tromp***

# Actions we Implemented

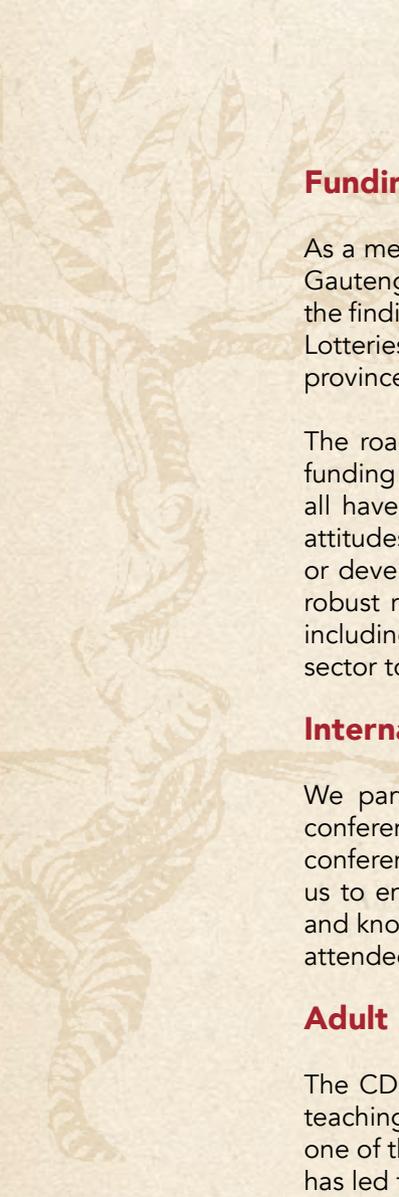
## Voice and Visibility

### Water Convergence

Cape Town was facing a potentially catastrophic water shortage, putting lives, jobs, livelihoods and businesses at risk and we noticed that this growing crisis was not faced well with fractures opening up at many levels, particularly between politicians and civil society. Trust in politicians and the civil service was at a low point, as misstep after misstep is revealed in so many areas and levels of decision making, including a lack of transparency. The situation fuelled many misperceptions, undermining the resolve we need to face the truth. Having seen that some were exploiting the situation for financial, ideological or political gain. No credible leaders emerged to help citizens ask the right questions, to tell the truth or to encourage the people to turn to each other in human solidarity.

As the CDRA we knew this crisis could wake us up to possibilities we have within and between us to cultivate a kinder, more just and sustainable city. We recognised that this called for a special kind of leadership, a *generative leadership* that puts the interests of life and of the whole above our particular personal, group, institutional or corporate interests. We were aware that if the leaders do not seize this opportunity to strive for these higher ends within this crisis then it is quite possible that the opposite will prevail.

Mindful of other initiatives that needed to be embraced the CDRA, working together with John Frame, a water specialist and Professor Emeritus Jim Cochrane, we initiated an engagement with the leaders of the different faith communities who share a concern for all may be the only societal leaders in Cape Town who can, credibly, make a call to these higher ends and bring us together as one people. Practically, we initiated and facilitated a series of conversations working through Dean Michael Weeder of St Georges Cathedral supported by the Most Reverend Thabo Makgoba for faith leaders to convene a gathering that would create an open and relatively safe space to meet each other as equal citizens and to creatively engage, listen to each other's pains, perspectives and ideas, reshape the way we see and relate to each other, commit to facing the crisis together and develop new ways of engaging national, provincial and local government. Although the big gathering envisaged did not materialise, we successfully facilitated connection between the faith leaders and the social movements that were driving a community-based response.



## **Funding Practice Alliance (FPA)**

As a member of the FPA, we participated in roadshows in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Northern Cape, Free State and Kwa-Zulu Natal provinces to share and disseminate the findings from the Civil Society Study conducted by the FPA and supported by the National Lotteries Commission. A total of 105 organisations (inclusive of 3 donor agencies) across 6 provinces participated in the roadshows.

The roadshow was an eye opener to the FPA around the experiences of civil society with funding agencies including local, government and international donors. As a collective we all have to be cautious of not replicating the inequality that exists through our practices, attitudes and behaviour whether we are sophisticated well-funded organisations, donors or development practitioners. In conclusion the roadshows highlighted the need for more robust research on civil society around issues pertaining to the sustainability of the sector including NPO legislative frameworks and the co-creation of an enabling environment for the sector to operate in.

## **International Organisation Development Association (IODA)**

We participated as part of the Local Organising Committee in the international IODA conference that was hosted by South Africa in September 2017. The CDRA presented at the conference and also hosted one of the organisational visits. This provided an opportunity for us to engage with a team of practitioners from across the globe to exchange experiences and knowledge on associative organisation. A total of 150+ delegates from across the globe attended the conference.

## **Adult Education Unit – UCT School of Education**

The CDRA was invited to participate in the recruitment panel for the appointment of new teaching staff. This was followed up by an invitation for the CDRA to make presentations to one of their new Adult Learning programmes. This relationship with the Adult Education Unit has led to the CDRA supporting their curriculum design processes. The Adult Education Unit is aware of the value that the CDRA can bring to their programmes and is keen for us to take responsibility for teaching a module in one of their new programmes.

# Programmes and Learning Events



We supported

**41 organisations**



**110 practitioners**

participated in our public & in-house courses and

## Social Integration Project

This collaboration with the Media Development Diversity Agency (MDDA) has seen the CDRA contribute through action research and facilitation of stakeholder engagement to exploring the use of community radio as a platform for stimulating social integration and cohesion. Through this project we actively worked with Radio Zibonele, Khayelitsha Development Forum and Gugulethu Development Forum, facilitated dialogues with various stakeholders across the Cape Town Metropole and made presentations to local councillors and provincial political principals.

This project gave us insight into the challenges around community engagement practices as well as the power of political processes. Though the process was halted due to political intervention, in a small way we successfully facilitated connection between the community governance structures of Khayelitsha and Gugulethu. Through process support, we created and held a space for the MDDA to engage in honest and robust conversation with community governance structures.



## Barefoot Guide Connection

As CDRA and the Barefoot Guide Connection we have facilitated three writeshops with the Seed Knowledge Initiative (SKI) to produce a Barefoot Guide on seed sovereignty, due for publication early next year. SKI is a working alliance of several organisations across Southern Africa promoting seed sovereignty amongst peasant farmers, including Via Campesina, developing and spreading approaches and technologies that enable local production and distribution of high quality seeds through such things as community seed saving networks and seed festivals, as well as to regenerate the cultures and sacred rituals around producing, storing and distributing local seed. The new Barefoot Guide will provide stories, approaches and methods of the many successful examples of farmers taking back their seeds, helping to inspire and guide others to do likewise.

At the other end of the food cycle is nutrition, and we are collaborating with an informal (as yet unnamed) network of agroecology nutritionists initiating the production of a Barefoot Guide to educate and promote farming practices, food choices, preparation and culture that lead to healthy food on the table. The decline of good nutrition in recent decades has been a silent killer and undermined the healthy development of countless children. This Barefoot Guide will support the growing impulse to counter corporate promoted fast foods made from crops that are produced for bulk and profit rather than quality.

As CDRA and the Leading Causes of Life Fellowship we facilitated a writeshop for a community of **20** practitioners from the **USA, South Africa, Tanzania, Afghanistan and Nicaragua** on Generative Leadership. An editorial team is in the process of putting together the full draft of the Barefoot Guide on Generative Leadership. This Barefoot Guide is due for publication by the end of 2018.

## Accompaniment

We supported a total of **41** organisations and programmes in **South Africa, Netherlands, Lebanon, France, Finland, Lesotho, Sudan and Namibia**. The majority of organisations worked with were South African and included NGOs, district and local municipalities, projects at tertiary institutions. These organisations work across health, advocacy/activism, youth development, environmental justice, gender justice, civic participation, renewable energy and social change. Our work covered process support and facilitation, facilitating writeshops and external evaluations.

## Courses

A total of **110** practitioners participated in our courses on **Planning Monitoring Evaluation & Learning (PMEL)**, **Facilitating Writeshops** and **Community Development Practice**. We hosted a course run by Elin on **Forum Theatre for Community Development**. We ran the PMEL course twice in Cape Town and once in Joburg. The Facilitating Writeshops was a new offering.

## Operations

### Maintenance

In the past year the following improvements to the building were made: replaced 3 windows, tiled the downstairs space of the back offices and installed a water harvesting system.

### Resource Library

We conducted an audit of the resource library and books and materials not relevant to the work of the CDRA were donated to different organisations. Similar to many other organisations with extensive resource libraries we face the challenge of making the huge resources we have accessible to others. For some time now we have explored how to bring life to the resource library.

### Tenants

Although we lost 2 of our long-term tenants, we were able to recruit new tenants into the space. Since sharing our space with other civil society organisations we have learned a great deal about the importance of managing tenant relationships and put in place processes to ensure regular conversations to ensure we review the relationship. Whilst rental income contributes significantly to our income, we are learning how to navigate the uncertainty when long-term tenants move out of the space. In the past year we connected with people who have expertise in marketing spaces and have started to apply some of the lessons learned about co-working spaces and 'hot desks'.

# People of the CDRA



**Board of Directors:** Di Oliver, Farid Esack (chairperson), James Taylor, Kayum Ahmed (deputy chairperson), Khaya Sontsele, Mzwandile Msoki, Nomvula Dlamini (director), Sisasenkosi Maboza

**Core Practitioners:** Adele Wildschut, Doug Reeler, Nomvula Dlamini, Marianne Brittijn, Rubert Van Blerk

**Administration:** Marlene Tromp and Nomonde Mbadu-Getyuah (appointed full time last year)

**Associates:** Charlotte Boisteau (BFG Coordinator), Cristina Temmink, Desiree Paulsen, Dzvinka Kachur, James Taylor, Mabel Fonuchi

**Interns:** Akhona and Lesedi Ramothokang. Sadly we lost Akhona after a short stay. Lesedi was on a 6 months contract.

**Strategic Alliances and Collaborating Partners:**

Barefoot Guide Connection, CCFD (France), Collective Leadership Initiative, F3E (France), Funding Practice Alliance, Good Governance Learning Network, NPO Service Providers Network (Western Cape) and Peter Westoby (Professor Queensland University, Australia).

# Governance & Learning

We thank our board of directors for the unwavering support during the difficult and challenging times the CDRA continues to navigate – your commitment and challenging questions are deeply appreciated.

After almost 3 decades of serving and supporting the CDRA, we would like to take this opportunity to extend thanks and appreciation to Di Oliver who stepped down from the board last year. She served the CDRA with sincere commitment and distinction.

In the past year we had 1 Annual General Meeting, 1 Executive Meeting and 1 full board meeting.

We had 1 planning session at the start of the year, a review session at the end of the year and 4 bi-monthly 2-day learning sessions. In addition we had 2 collaborative practice learning sessions with a group of 12 practitioners. Through our writing practice we contributed to BFG on Generative Leadership. Nuggets were also published for the CDRA web site and IODA newsletter. We participated in dialogues sessions and protest action on topical issues as well as in the civil society initiatives aimed at developing responses to the water crisis in Cape Town.



# Annual Financial Statements

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE ASSOCIATION NPC

(Registration number 1987/004090/08)

Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 28 February 2017

### DETAILED STATEMENT OF SURPLUS AND DEFICIT

Figures in Rand	2017	2016
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Book sales	13 725	7 405
Donations received	5 025	-
Grant income	762 824	178 504
Rendering of services	2 593 383	3 362 254
	<b>3 374 957</b>	<b>3 548 163</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>		
Fair value adjustments	17 377	47 543
Interest received	96 319	114 320
Rental income	332 057	341 946
Sundry income	24 078	7 100
	<b>469 831</b>	<b>510 909</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES (Refer to page 23)</b>	<b>(4 127 564)</b>	<b>(4 424 638)</b>
<b>Deficit for the year</b>	<b>(282 776)</b>	<b>(365 566)</b>

The supplementary information presented does not form part of the annual financial statements and is unaudited.

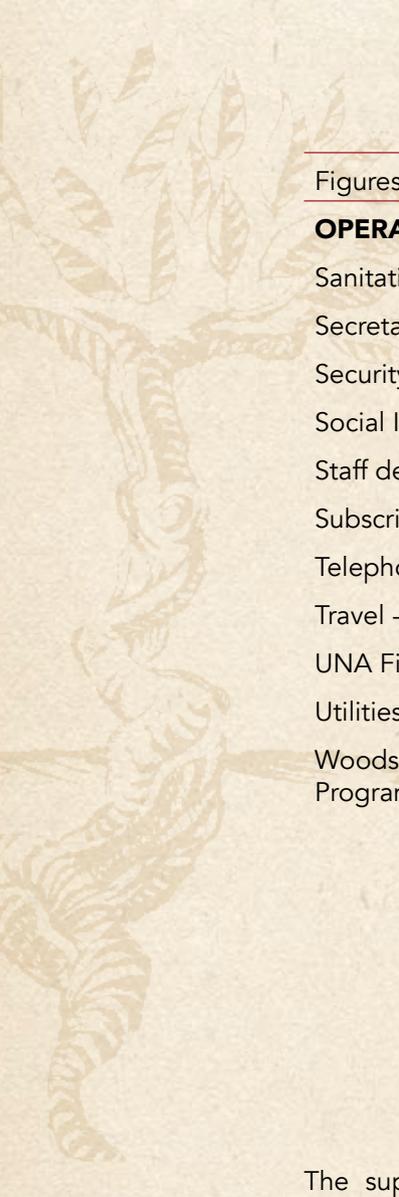
## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE ASSOCIATION NPC

(Registration number 1987/004090/08)

Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 28 February 2017

### DETAILED STATEMENT OF SURPLUS AND DEFICIT

Figures in Rand	2017	2016
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>		
Accounting fees	73 696	100 886
Annual report	10 000	6 593
Auditor's remuneration	52 500	49 500
Bank charges	28 899	26 291
Barefoot Guide Alliance	496 843	621 095
Compiler's fees	13 200	12 500
Consulting and professional fees	-	7 176
Deficit on disposal of assets	9	-
Deficit on exchange differences	112 800	-
Depreciation	47 269	50 609
Development courses	112 108	203 700
Employee costs	345 534	343 667
Governance	37 658	20 812
IT expenses	61 348	55 691
Insurance	32 583	37 029
Networking	2 750	1 319
Office supplies	26 725	25 149
Organisational development facilitation expenses	2 168 822	2 667 692
Postage	2 925	949
Printing and stationery	4 596	7 889
Repairs and maintenance	105 522	25 184



Figures in Rand	2017	2016
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>		
Sanitation and maintenance	4 555	4 584
Secretarial fees	5 374	1 700
Security	11 949	10 241
Social Integration Programme	120 459	-
Staff development	12 471	28 323
Subscriptions	3 611	-
Telephone and fax	39 553	31 883
Travel - local	1 478	3 828
UNA Finland (Power Play board game)	54 322	-
Utilities	78 952	80 348
Woodstock Community Development Action Research Programme	59 053	-
	<b>4 127 564</b>	<b>4 424 638</b>

The supplementary information presented does not form part of the annual financial statements and is unaudited.





NOTES:

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The CDRA logo is a rare Cedar tree, endemic to the Cedarberg Mountains north of Cape Town, whose roots grow miraculously out of harsh rock.