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19 July 1993

Mr R Rosenthal  
Technical Committee on the Independent Electoral Commission  
The Multi-party Negotiating Forum  
Fax 011 397 2211

Dear Mr Rosenthal,

**Meeting with the Technical Committee**

I have been asked to seek an appointment with your committee by the Curriculum Development Group of the multi-party project: TRAINING OF PARTY AGENTS. This project is facilitated by IDASA and for your record a copy of the proposal is attached.

In developing a curriculum to prepare party officials to observe the voting and counting with the voting stations, there are obviously a number of issues which are determined by the Electoral Act. However, there are also matters where we believe we have a particular view on how the legislation might support an effective Party Agent programme.

We would thus be seeking clarity about the committee's thinking on the role of party agents and making suggestions about election procedures which relate to party agents. Amongst these are: the keeping of an election journal, the means of appointment of such agents, the titles of officials, and the means of certifying results at local and regional centres.

The persons who would attend this meeting are myself and Dr Patrick Maduna, the facilitator of the project.

Yours faithfully,

PM Graham  
Programme Director

June 1983

# TRAINING OF PARTY AGENTS

## A non-partisan programme in preparation for the South African national elections

### 1. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

Idasa was requested by the Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC) to convene and chair a consultation with representatives from all the political parties and organisations regarding the need to train party election agents, what shape that training would take and how the process of training would happen in preparation for South Africa's first democratic elections.

Three meetings have taken place during which this project has been refined by the representatives of political parties and organisations listed below. This proposal is, therefore, a description of the negotiated and agreed multi-party commitment to non-partisan training.

### 2. PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS

The following parties and organisations have participated in, and support the proposal:

- African National Congress (ANC)
- Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO)
- African Democratic Movement
- Afrikaner Volksunie
- Democratic Party (DP)
- Dikwankwetla Party
- Intando Yesizwe Party
- Inyandza National Movement
- Inkatha Freedom Party
- Labour Party
- Natal Indian Congress
- National Party (NP)
- Pan African Congress (PAC)
- Solidarity
- Transkei Government
- United People's Front
- Ximoko Progressive Party.

Only the Conservative Party has formally declined to attend. No response has been received from the Venda Government, Bophuthatswana Government, the SACP, and the National People's Party.

At the last meeting of the plenary, it was agreed that only parties - and not governments - could be involved in the programme.

### 3. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The initiative for this programme arose out of an expressed need by one of the parties and this was confirmed by the representatives of those parties which have now joined the project.

There is general agreement that party agents (or scrutineers) will play a major role not only in making sure that the election days and the count are free and fair but will act as a resource to

their parties and to the electorate at large in communicating the purpose and process of the election and developing ownership at a grass roots level.

The objectives set by the parties demonstrate their commitment to the elections and their particular concerns and needs for party agents. These objectives were established in working groups comprising representatives of the parties.

#### 4. DEVELOPING THE PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

The programme was developed in a series of meetings as outlined. The initial meeting of April 26 was followed by two further meetings on May 24 and June 15. At these meetings, IDASA, on behalf of SILC and at the request of the parties/organisations, continued to facilitate discussion around the objectives of the training programme, the training content, participation of parties/organisations and time scales.

Idasa has now been formally requested by the parties/organisations to facilitate the training process by taking responsibility for:

- convening meetings
- making necessary arrangements for those meetings
- chairing plenary meetings
- administration ie reports, minutes etc
- appointing a technical committee to produce the curriculum
- identifying trainers
- overseeing the production of a training curriculum and manual
- arranging national and regional training workshops
- managing the budget

#### 5. DECISION MAKING

The programme will be facilitated by IDASA which will act as the responsible organisation. In implementing the programme, decisions will be taken by the plenary meeting comprising two representatives of each participating party. This plenary will meet as regularly as necessary and IDASA will be accountable to it for the tasks outlined in the previous paragraph.

The guiding principles of the process will be:

- multi-party design and management of the process and
- multi-party design and approval of the training content.

#### 6. PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this programme is to train party officials so that they can exercise their responsibility as party agents or voting station watchers on the election days.

In particular the training of party election agents should aim to achieve the following:

- A common understanding of the new Electoral Act, the structures, resources available to political parties, access to voter registration, the electoral process, the rules governing it and the code of conduct that all parties should adhere to.
- Knowledge of electoral malpractice; what constitutes electoral fraud, vote rigging, intimidation and how to avoid this .

- An understanding of the role of monitoring in reducing political tension and skills training in conflict resolution.
- Practical skills for monitoring the electoral process.
- The ability to train others in their organisation to be effective election monitors
- To build up equal knowledge and a common interpretation of the rules, which will promote acceptance of the notion that the election result, however unpopular for a particular party, has to be accepted if the election has been deemed to be free and fair.
- To contribute towards the creation of an atmosphere of political tolerance within communities to ensure free and fair elections.

The training programme should be implemented according to the following guidelines:

- All parties should have equal access to training.
- To build confidence and trust among political players, training should be based on a joint design and programme so that whether it is offered jointly (preferably) or individually the training content is standardised.
- Training should be provided at national, regional and possibly local level. The level of training would depend on the resources and funding of the facilitating and funding agencies. Where parties had limited resources (those historically disadvantaged) provision could be made for more down the line training, subject to resources.
- Training should be undertaken in both urban and rural areas and, where possible, in appropriate languages.
- Should parties/organisations appoint disabled people as party election monitors the training should be sensitive to their requirements and problems of access
- Trainers should make use of comparative research to support their training content.

Facilitation of the training programme would be undertaken by IDASA and the trainers should be independent. The appointment of trainers would be subject to multi-party sanction according to the following criteria:

- competency
- independence (acceptable to all parties)
- ability to communicate with local communities

## 7. PROGRAMME OUTLINE

The programme outline has been prepared so that it contains four phases. Each of these phases can be planned independently. The programme will be concluded before the election date, but a final post election plenary will be convened for evaluation.

### 7.1 Phase one: Curriculum development

The curriculum will be developed by a local team of experts in a series of workshops. It will be submitted in draft form to the parties in mid-July and will be revised following the National Training Event.

There will be subsequent revisions and amendments as the electoral procedures become more fixed and the final Pre-election voting stations agents orientation will ensure that all party agents receive the necessary final information about procedures.

**7.2 Phase two: National Training Event**

On July 30 and 31 an event for four representatives of each party will take place at which the curriculum will be tested. A plenary review will also take place. At this meeting, potential trainers would also be introduced and orientated to the curriculum so that regional events can take place without additional training of trainers.

**7.3 Phase three: Regional training of party trainers/organisers**

In late August and September there will be a training event in each electoral region. By this time the Electoral Act will be known, if not passed into law. The persons trained from each party will have the dual tasks of engaging themselves in organising party agents for their parties and arranging local level training for them based on the principles they receive and the materials prepared by the curriculum group.

**7.4 Phase four: Local training and pre-election briefings**

Local level training will be left in the hands of parties. As an encouragement to joint training a supplementary fund has been established for the Plenary Meeting to disburse some subsidies for local joint training, where possible. In addition, materials will be developed and distributed for these workshops by the programme.

In the final run up to the election days, large gatherings of voting station agents will be drawn together to receive final briefings. While it may not be possible to reach every agent, we estimate that some 10 000 could be given this final briefing.

At these briefings, agents would be introduced to electoral officials, independent monitoring agencies, election paraphernalia and a map of voting station placements.

**8. THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

This programme has been established in advance of the establishment of the IEC. However, with full party backing, it is intended to involve the IEC closely in the programme and to schedule a Plenary Meeting at which the IEC and the parties discuss the programme and curriculum.

Parties have a sense of urgency because this programme has impact not just on the election days but also in the run up to the election. The objectives as defined explain how the parties feel this impact will ensure a more free and fair election.

**9. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further information about this programme can be obtained as follows:

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|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Administration and budgets       | Alice Coetzee  |
| Plenary Meeting secretariat      | Patrick Maduna |
| Curriculum design team secretary | Geoff Brown    |
| Training programme               | Paul Graham    |