

**ANTI-PRIVATISATION FORUM, SOUTH AFRICA  
APPLICATION TO COMIC RELIEF  
STAGE 2**

**I. APPLICATION SUMMARY**

**NAME AND ADDRESS OF ORGANISATION: WAR ON WANT  
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APPLICATION TITLE: SUPPORTING NEW GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA  
COUNTRY OF WORK: SOUTH AFRICA, GAUTENG PROVINCE  
NAME OF PARTNER ORGANISATION: ANTI-PRIVATISATION FORUM  
DURATION OF PROJECT: START: APRIL 2002 END: MARCH 2005  
TOTAL BUDGET: £185,776 (COMIC RELIEF IS BEING REQUESTED TO FUND IN ENTIRETY)  
APPLICATION UNDER AFRICA GRANTS PROGRAMME, INNOVATION GRANTS PROGRAMME**

**SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

1. **Capacity-building of community organisations** through thematic workshops on privatisation and commodification of basic services and training for community representatives on leadership and organising
2. **Establishment of an office to facilitate running of the project and staff training**
3. **Meetings for networking, planning and mobilising** to create a space for organisations fighting privatisation to come together to discuss, share and develop common strategies for action and intervention.
4. **Advocacy work at local, national, and international levels.** This includes:
  - Continued publication of the bi-monthly *APF Monitor*
  - Pamphlets, posters and information sheets on what is the APF, privatisation and its negative social consequences
  - Meetings and debates with key government officials and other relevant stakeholders
  - Developing community-led campaigns against privatisation and its link to increasing poverty levels
  - Media work (newspaper articles, community radio interviews, press conferences and press releases)
  - National and international exchanges for representatives from grassroots organisations
5. **Research into the impact of privatisation and commodification on poor communities**, and dissemination of information on the effects of privatisation, alternatives to privatisation and community struggles against privatisation
6. **Legal support to members from community organisations** to ensure that constitutional rights to have access to basic services are implemented.

**II. BACKGROUND**

In 1996 South Africa adopted one of the most progressive constitutions worldwide, whose content is essentially developmental and reflects the country's commitment to address inherited disparities and imbalances. The 1996 Constitution explicitly states that everyone *has the right: to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being, to have access to adequate housing, to have access to sufficient food and water*, and explicitly states that *every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services*. Despite these progressive developments, South Africa has become the most unequal society in the world, recently surpassing Brazil, with an alarmingly high rate of HIV/Aids infection. This increasing disparity is linked to the government's adoption in 1996 of a structural adjustment principle-driven economic policy called the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy. This policy was prefaced on the institution of low budget deficits, privatisation of state assets, relaxation of labour laws, and low inflation to attract foreign investment that would lead to economic growth and job creation.

Since the adoption of GEAR, more than half a million jobs have been lost as a result of reducing the size of the state through the privatisation of state assets and services, including the provision of basic services such as water and electricity. As a result of GEAR, the budgetary allocation made to local government has been reduced by 80% since 1990. This self-induced crisis, has forced the privatisation of basic services such as water and electricity, since local government – in charge of delivery of these basic services – is now unable to afford service provision. In addition, social spending has been reduced, and the building of much needed schools is largely driven by donations made by the private sector. Moreover, while the majority of the population are denied access to basic services, the government willingly allocates R46.5 billion to buy arms and makes the repayment of the apartheid debt a priority.

For several years, disadvantaged communities held on to the belief that the government would deliver on both its programme and constitutional promises outlined above. The African National Congress came to power in 1994 on a programme of action

known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). According to the principles contained in the RDP, the government's resources would be mobilised to provide all citizens with piped water, electricity, health services, housing and other means to live with dignity; government would be the provider of essential services to address the imbalances created by years of apartheid rule. However, once GEAR was adopted, there was little talk of the RDP thereafter. In 1999, the ANC promised the provision of "free basic services for all" who could not pay, as part of its election campaign; however, to this date this has not materialised. Coupled to these political and economic developments, many community and union leaders were absorbed into government after 1994, thus creating a vacuum of grassroots organisations that could mobilise and organise the poor and hold the government accountable to its promises.

After years of brewing discontent, community members began to let their voices be heard through a series of spontaneous demonstrations and marches against the privatisation of basic services such as water, electricity and housing. In the last year, a number of concerned residents' groups have begun to spring up throughout the country with the aim of opposing privatisation of basic services, fighting for social justice and the extension of socio-economic rights. The levels of poverty and unemployment brought about as a result of privatisation have been compounded by an extreme inequality in the supply of basic services as a result of their being run on a profit, rather than needs, basis. To illustrate this, black township residents consume less than 2% of all South Africa's water, compared to the 7% consumed by the swimming pools of middle and upper income neighbourhoods. Yet, in the face of widespread poverty and rising unemployment, water prices have risen at over 50% above inflation. (P. Bond, Municipal Services Project, Wits University, 2001). Similar rises have occurred for electricity and rents in the past few years. In addition, in a study recently conducted by the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee in conjunction with the Municipal Services Project at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, it was found that residents in rural areas pay 48c/kWh, Soweto residents pay 28c/kWh, while high income residents and large businesses pay 16c and 7c/kWh, respectively. Moreover, the push for cost recovery throughout the country has led to a large-scale shift from flat-rate systems to metered consumption. For previously disadvantaged communities, this has resulted in considerable price increases, sometimes more than 400% over their flat rates, despite the fact that the average real price of electricity has decreased by about 15% since the early 1990s (Eskom, 2001). Also worthy of note is that a major cholera outbreak affecting over 100,000 people, killing 220, most of them women, children and elderly, was traced back to water cut offs in KwaZulu Natal province, where water had just been privatised. As prices for basic services rise, communities are facing evictions, as more and more people become unemployed and unable to meet their bond repayments due to the skyrocketing of interest rates brought on by GEAR. As these examples above show, in a country where 60.7% of black households live below the poverty line, those already in poverty are the ones who feel the impact of privatisation the most.

With the aim of fighting for social justice, the provision of basic services to poor communities, and the decommodification of basic services, the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) was formed in Johannesburg in July 2000 by the coming together of community organisations, NGOs, trade unions, student organisations and activists. The APF is an umbrella body that represents a broad range of organisations that have come together to strengthen the ability of poor communities to organise and demand their rights to basic services. The APF has a Council that acts as its executive, made up of all the constituent organisations, a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. It also has a number of sub-committees, namely education, research & information, media, organising and finance made up of representatives from the different community organisations. The organisations that make up the APF include the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, Kathorus Concerned Residents Committee, Lekoa Vaal Community Forum, Inner City Community Forum, Pimville-Klipspruit Concerned Residents, KwaThema Unemployed Organisation, Tembisa Concerned Residents' Committee, Daveyton Peace Civic, Jubilee 2000 South Africa, Keep Left, Campaign Against Neoliberalism in South Africa, Youth for Work, South African Students Congress (Wits), Gauteng Hawker's Association, South African Municipal Workers' Union, National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Wits), and the Alternative Information and Development Centre. Most of the APF's membership is composed of community members, the majority of whom are unemployed. Participation in the APF is voluntary.

For most of its activities, the APF relies on member donations. The only exception, as will be discussed below in more detail, has been the support received from the Municipal Services Project at Wits University, which has made available funding to run a series of community workshops.

### **Supporting research**

Since the APF runs on a voluntary basis, it has not had the resources, neither financial nor human, to be able to conduct its own research on the impact of privatisation on poor communities and on the resulting increasing levels of poverty. However, earlier this year, one of our member organisations, namely the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, was invited by the Municipal Services Project (MSP) at Wits University to participate and conduct a study on electricity provision in Soweto. This led to the publication in August 2001 of a booklet entitled "The Electricity Crisis in Soweto", as part of the Occasional Paper Series published by the MSP.

For pertinent statistics relating to poverty and unemployment, the APF relies on data made available by the government-run Statistics South Africa, while information on privatisation of basic services and its impact is obtained from the MSP, the Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC), SAMWU publications, as well as ILRIG.

#### ***Reviews on progress to date***

The APF is a fairly new organisation which has not received previous funding from Comic Relief. Due to its newness, no formal reviews or reports of progress have been compiled. However, weekly activist meetings, bi-weekly Coordinating Committee meetings, as well as monthly Council meetings serve to review progress and outcomes of collectively-planned activities, such as workshops, marches, debates, meetings with government officials, as well as of the activities of each of the sub-committees. The upcoming National Exploratory Workshop, which, for the first time, seeks to bring together community organisations from different parts of the country that share struggles against privatisation and social justice, will allow the APF to make a formal assessment of its activities, achievements and future challenges.

#### ***Working together with other organisations***

The APF has been working together with other civil society organisations that struggle against poverty, privatisation and rising unemployment. One of these organisations is the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO). Promoting social, economic and development policy in the interests of the poor is central to SANGOCO's vision of a truly transformed post-apartheid South Africa. In this regard, SANGOCO engaged in a programme of promoting pro-poor policies that comprised declaring a war on poverty, engaging in an apartheid debt campaign and a People's Budget process to allow greater civil society participation in the national budget allocation process. Very recently, the APF worked closely with SANGOCO in its preparation for participation in the parallel NGO Forum to the World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban in September 2001 to make the link between racism and poverty.

In August of this year, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) launched a national anti-privatisation campaign calling for a stop to the privatisation of Eskom, the national electricity supplier, as part of government's iGoli 2002 process to privatise basic services within the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council. COSATU opposes privatisation on the basis that it will lead to higher costs and worse quality services for the poor (and thus to increased cut-offs due to the inability of most township residents to pay), and to the massive retrenchment of workers brought about by outsourcing and corporatisation. This campaign culminated in a massive national strike at the time of the World Conference Against Racism. The APF supported and participated in COSATU's activities. As part of its role, the APF sought to demonstrate to workers that privatisation affects them also as members of their respective communities and therefore they have an important role to play in ensuring that the voices of their communities are organised and heard. The relationship with COSATU can be built upon; however, since COSATU belongs to the Tripartite Alliance that governs the country, it often sees the grassroots movement that is being built under the APF as a threat due to its lack of political affiliation, rather than as a movement of community organisations that want to make their voices heard to make their own government more accountable.

In addition to SANGOCO and COSATU, the Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC) has provided the APF with valuable administrative support, as well as access to their own publications. Moreover as part of its programme to fight against poverty, unfair trading practices and social justice, AIDC runs a series of public seminars that address contentious social and economic issues. Several members from organisations within the APF have been invited to participate and share their own experiences with, and struggles against, water and electricity cut-offs, as well as evictions.

As already mentioned, the Municipal Services Project at the University of the Witwatersrand has provided valuable research that informs the activities of the APF, as well as financial support. In particular, through its financial contributions, the MSP has made it possible for the APF to run five public workshops in the last year within different communities such as Soweto, Vaal, and Kathorus on issues affecting these communities. Workshops have focused on understanding privatisation and its effects on communities, training community members as trainers, and understanding people's rights of access to basic services such as water, electricity, housing. These workshops have also allowed community members to share their struggles in the form of marches, reconstructions, and discussions with government officials.

While the above organisations provide much needed support and bring together different sectors of civil society, namely unions, academic institutions and NGOs struggling for similar objectives as those of the APF, they do not often have a direct link with the poor communities that they strive to support. In this regard, the community organisations joined together under the bottom-up umbrella structure of the APF not only are beginning to fill a vacuum that exists at grassroots level, but also add their own voice and day-to-day experiences of struggling against the negative effects of privatisation.

### **III. AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The main aim of this proposal is to build strong grassroots and community mobilisation against privatisation and to facilitate the rebuilding of a strong South African 'civil society' which can articulate and mobilise in favour of an alternative development

agenda based on the constitutional rights of every person to have access to basic services such as water, electricity and housing. As such, the activities of the APF aim to prevent the penalisation of the poor by the commodification of basic services and to promote policies and service delivery which will provide for the basic needs of South Africa's majority.

Specific objectives that inform this proposal are: The free supply of 50L of water per person per day as promised by the government; the free supply of the minimum amount of electricity needed for health, hygiene, cooking and heating; the introduction of a progressive block tariff system, ensuring lifeline services are cross-subsidised from rich to poor; the scrapping of arrears for the poor; an end to water and electricity cut-offs; an end to evictions; and an increase of national government funding to local government for service provision.

The above aims and objectives inform the following activities to be carried out under this proposal:

1. **Capacity-building of community organisations** through thematic workshops on privatisation and commodification of basic services and training for community representatives on leadership and organising
2. **Establishment of an office to facilitate running of the project and staff training**
3. **Meetings for networking, planning and mobilising** to create a space for organisations fighting privatisation to come together to discuss, share and develop common strategies for action and intervention.
4. **Advocacy work at local, national, and international levels.** This includes:
  - Continued publication of the bi-monthly *APF Monitor* in both English and local languages to follow the struggles and gains made by community organisations in their fights for social justice.
  - Pamphlets and information sheets on what is the APF, privatisation and its negative social consequences
  - Meetings and debates with key government officials and other relevant stakeholders
  - Developing community-led campaigns against privatisation and its link to increasing poverty levels
  - Media work (newspaper articles, community radio interviews, press conferences and press releases)
  - National and international exchanges for representatives from grassroots organisations to learn and build on experiences and activities in the fight against the commodification of basic services
5. **Research into the impact of privatisation and commodification on poor communities**, and dissemination of information on the effects of privatisation, alternatives to privatisation and community struggles against privatisation.
6. **Legal support to members from community organisations** to ensure that constitutional rights to have access to basic services are implemented.

### **Capacity-building of community organisations**

#### *Thematic workshops*

Since the beginning of 2001, the APF has been running a series of workshops with participants from each of the community organisations that constitute the APF in townships from which these organisations derive. These workshops were organised based on issues and topics that community organisations were eager to learn more about. To build upon the already-offered workshops, community organisations under the APF have identified the following thematic workshops to be conducted in both English and local languages.

- **Workshop on understanding privatisation**, its effects on the provision and access to basic services, as well as on leading to higher levels of poverty (i.e. retrenchments, cut-off of services as they become run on a profit-motive, etc)
- **Workshop on water** addressing the rights afforded to everyone in the Constitution to have access to sufficient food and water, examination of government's policies on water privatisation, of community struggles against water privatisation, as well as the consequences of possible free 6000 liters of water *per household* (as proposed by government) and exploration of alternatives to privatisation such as cross-subsidies and block tariff systems.
- **Workshop on electricity**, to be run along the same lines as the water workshop in order to explore not only the rights in the Constitution to human dignity and safe environment, but also cross-subsidies for lifeline services, the consequences of electricity cut-offs on poor communities, as well as initiatives being undertaken locally to defy ongoing cut-offs.
- **Workshop on housing, access to land, and evictions.** This workshop will explore the basic constitutional right of everyone to adequate housing, the current policies that inform government's housing subsidy and land decisions, the struggles that communities have undertaken to stop the police from proceeding with evictions, as well as possible activities such as meetings with relevant officials and human rights bodies to stop evictions.
- **Workshop on understanding how government works**, the functions carried out by each tier of government, as well as ways of influencing government policies (i.e through parliamentary submissions, public comments on new bills, etc.). Due to the regressive education system inherited from years of apartheid rule, as well as the current managerial approach to governance, poor communities have very little understanding of how government works and the ways in which, aside from voting, they can make their voices heard and influence government decisions.
- **Workshop to acquire knowledge about the South African Constitution and its Bill of Rights**, which sets out the basic rights that everyone is entitled to. This includes socio-economic rights, as well as equality, non-discrimination and



the right to have their human dignity respected. This workshop would also include sharing information about the entities that can be approached for redress, such as the Human Rights Commission, Lawyers for Human Rights, etc.

As the APF continues to expand, there will be a need to repeat some of these workshops as well as build upon the workshops already offered to enable community members to be empowered and obtain a more solid grounding on the issues that inform their own struggles.

#### *Training for community representatives on leadership and organising*

While the community organisations that have come together under the APF have done so based on the initiative and leadership of community members themselves, community members would like to be supported in asserting their leadership in situations when they face police, government officials, as well as community members with other agendas. In addition, communities would like to have more training on participatory forms of organising and mobilising. The APF has already successfully conducted a **“Train the trainer”** workshop with a series of representatives from each of the member organisations in the APF to empower them to become trainers themselves in their respective communities. The APF has successfully ensured trainers' attendance at most of the workshops that the APF has conducted. However, these workshops have dealt with thematic issues and therefore have not addressed broader issues around leadership and organising.

#### **Establishment of an office to facilitate running of the project and staff training**

The APF currently operates out of the premises of the AIDC offices in Braamfontein, central Johannesburg. It relies on its members for access to computers, telephone and fax facilities. The APF would be able to secure its own office within these premises as long as it can cover its running costs, mostly rent and communications costs. These premises have a large meeting room appropriate for meetings and presentations. The office will require some basic furniture as well as a computer and a printer to facilitate the production of publicity materials. In September 2001, the Heindrich-Boll Stiftung Foundation donated a used photocopying machine which will facilitate small-scale production of materials. Most importantly, the office will house a resource centre that will require the purchasing of some books and publications, as well as the compilation of journal and newspaper articles that can be made accessible to members of the APF.

The running of the APF requires the employment of one full-time person to deal with administration, communication with community organisations, gathering information for the resource centre as well as the overall running of the office. Since this person is likely to be a member of one of the communities the APF works with, s/he will require some basic training on computer and administrative skills. In addition, while the treasurer will oversee financial decisions and transactions, the APF will require a part-time financial assistant with proper accounting training to ensure adequate record-keeping.

#### **Meetings for networking, planning and mobilising**

As previously mentioned, one of the recent developments in South Africa has been the re-springing up of community organisations and activists who, in their own ways, have begun to engage in a new battle for basic rights and social justice. However, these struggles have so far happened in isolation from each other, based on each community's immediate needs. The APF, so far, is mostly composed of organisations predominantly situated in Johannesburg and surrounding areas.

The strength of the APF rests on the ability of community organisations and other members of the APF to be able to come together periodically, discuss developments in each of the areas covered by the APF as these unfold, as well as agree on courses of action in the face of new developments. Since the move towards cut-offs and evictions has been intensifying in the last year, APF organisations need to have on-going contact and communication to share their struggles and plan activities quite quickly. For instance, very recently, Eskom announced that it would intensify its campaign to cut-off electricity in Soweto to all residents who could not afford to pay. This drastic and inhumane action, which left many households including pensioners without access to electricity for cooking and heating purposes, required a quick response from all members of the APF to participate in meetings with Eskom officials, local councillors, media exposure, as well as sit-ins at Eskom. Last month, Eskom announced that it would suspend the cut-offs in Soweto until consultations with government are concluded.

Besides the APF's regionally-based efforts, no attempt has been made so far to bring together community organisations in different provinces and localities that face similar battles against poverty, in the form of water and electricity cut-offs, and evictions. However, based on intense discussions with community organisations and activists from trade unions, NGOs and student formations who are part of the APF, the APF is preparing itself to host a National Exploratory Workshop at the end of November 2001, in an attempt to bring together community initiatives from around the country that have taken up campaigns around service delivery in the post apartheid South Africa. It is envisioned that this 3-day workshop will not only allow community organisations to come together to strengthen an independent voice of civil society, but also to share strategies, activities as well as lessons learnt from these interventions, and coordinate activities such as marches and boycotts at national level. To ensure the sustainability of this initiative, it is envisioned that a second national workshop will be held towards the end of 2002. This workshop would assess progress with the activities that came out of the first one and develop further mechanisms to strengthen cooperation across community organisations as well as nationally-coordinated activities.

In addition to this yearly meeting of organisations, the APF will plan a series of smaller meetings with representatives from community organisations nationally to consolidate strategies, share progress on activities, as well as prepare for the next annual workshop. In addition, the APF will organise meetings to network with other community organisations, trade unions and NGOs who are also devoted to fighting against poverty and privatisation of basic services.

**Advocacy work at local, national, and international levels** is required not only to raise awareness among the broader South African population, but also to learn from the experiences of community organisations fighting similar battles in other countries.

#### *APF Monitor*

As part of its advocacy work, the APF produces a bi-monthly publication, called the *APF Monitor*, in both English and local languages that describes the struggles and gains made by community organisations in both Johannesburg and other areas throughout the country, in their fights for social justice, as well as aims to explain government policies on privatisation and their negative impacts on poor communities. Despite the usefulness of this publication, due to financial constraints, the *APF Monitor* has not been produced in large enough quantities.

#### *Pamphlets and information sheets*

In addition to the publication of the *APF Monitor*, the APF has relied on the goodwill of its members to print a series of pamphlets and information sheets that describe what the APF is, who constitutes it, why its members struggle against privatisation, constitutional rights against basic services, as well as the link between privatisation and increasing poverty. However, due to the reliance on a few members who are in an economic position to contribute in this regard, publication has not occurred in large numbers.

#### *Screening of videos and documentaries and hosting of cultural activities*

As part of its advocacy work, the APF will engage in community screenings of videos and documentaries done by independent producers in South Africa and other parts of the world, as a fundraising activity. There are currently a few videos that have been produced locally on community struggles for water, electricity, housing, access to land and forced removals. The APF will also seek to obtain videos from other countries to enable the linking of community struggles and learning from the actions taken by different groups to resist poverty and social injustice. In addition, the APF will rely on cultural activities such as plays and poetry readings to popularise community struggles for basic services and needs.

#### *Meetings and debates with key government officials and other relevant stakeholders*

Despite South Africa's long history of struggle, debate and speaking out against apartheid injustices, there has been little room to build on that culture of debate. Whenever individuals criticise government with the aim of holding it accountable for its often-inverted policies and priorities, people are labelled as "reactionary" or "unpatriotic" and as unwilling to work towards the establishment of "the new rainbow nation". This one-sidedness is also exemplified by the unwillingness of most TV channels that belong to the public broadcaster to engage in independent investigative reporting and be critical in their interviews with government officials. To begin to fill this gap, the APF plans to hold meetings and debates with government officials, basic services providers and community representatives to allow disadvantaged communities to raise their voices and engage in face-to-face critical discussions.

#### *Developing community-led campaigns against privatisation and its link to increasing poverty levels*

Through its meetings, networking activities, and the National Exploratory Workshop, the APF in conjunction with community organisations in other provinces will strive to have national days of action against privatisation and the commodification of basic services. In March 2001, the APF organised a march in Soweto to mark Human Rights Day. The march was attended by thousands of residents, particularly women and pensioners, demanding their right to basic services and to a "better life for all" – another one of the government's election promises. Other initiatives underway are campaigns to boycott the payment of electricity to protest against Eskom's unfair billing practices and arrears as well as for government to implement its "free basic services for all".

The APF plans a series of community-led marches, campaigns and collection of signatures, to coincide with important days in the South African calendar and to emphasise the need for cross-subsidies, free lifeline services and a progressive block tariff system. These days include Human Rights Day, Freedom Day and Reconciliation Day. In addition, the APF will join campaigns spearheaded by communities at local level to resist ongoing events, such as cut-offs and evictions.

#### *Media work*

Members of the APF will continue to engage in media work, by encouraging and providing assistance to community members to share their experiences and struggles in fighting poverty through the publication of newspaper articles and participating in community radio interviews to address the non-literate sectors of society. In addition, the APF will continue to hold press

conferences to publicise its activities and campaigns, as well as issue press releases surrounding government policy decisions and unfair actions against poor communities.

#### *National and international exchanges for representatives from grassroots organisations*

The APF will facilitate national and international exchanges of representatives from grassroots organisations to learn and build on the experiences and activities of different communities in their fight against the commodification of basic services. A few community representatives from the APF were invited to attend global events such as the demonstrations against the structural adjustment policies of the IMF and World Bank in Washington DC in April 2000, and participate in the forging of an alternative development agenda as part of the World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January 2001. This past September, People for Global Action (PGA) invited two community representatives to attend a conference in Bolivia to share their experiences in struggling against water and electricity cut-offs, as well as evictions. Up until now, however, the community organisations within the APF have been forced to rely on the extension of invitations to attend international events, due to the lack of adequate financial resources.

As part of this application, the APF will seek to reciprocate exchanges, as well as increase exchanges with community representatives from other countries, focusing primarily on Africa and Latin America.

**Research into the impact of privatisation and commodification on poor communities**, and dissemination of information on the effects of privatisation, alternatives to privatisation and community struggles against privatisation. Methodologically-sound, empirical research is key to measure the impact of privatisation of basic services and a prerequisite to be able to begin influencing government policy around these issues. As previously noted, the SECC was actively involved in the survey conducted by the MSP into the negative impact of the privatisation of electricity in the township of Soweto. This kind of research needs to be expanded both across poor communities and to include water and housing. Several members of the APF have either extensive experience in conducting socially-relevant research, or work for research NGOs and are committed to providing guidance in conducting surveys of this nature. As part of this research, community members will be trained on administering surveys and temporarily employed as researchers to collect data in their respective communities. This practice, often used by progressive NGOs engaged in research in South Africa, facilitates access to communities, serves to address language issues and empowers community members by imparting skills.

In addition to conducting its own research, the APF will continue to collaborate with entities involved in relevant research, as well as disseminate information gathered by others, through the *APF Monitor*, community meetings, workshops and debates.

**Legal support to members from community organisations** to ensure that constitutional rights to have access to basic services are implemented. Community members often require legal assistance to confront service providers over unfair billing and arrears, as well as attempts by service providers to attach property for non-payment of services. In many cases, community members are not aware of their legal rights and recourse and therefore unknowingly enter into arrangements that are detrimental to them. Moreover, community members often face police arrests in their attempt to defend their access to basic services. Legal support funds could also help to support initiatives such as that already undertaken by the Legal Resources Centre in upholding the government's constitutional obligation to provide decent housing to destitute South Africans.

#### **Sustainability**

The issue of sustainability poses a challenge for an umbrella body like the APF. All of its members work on a voluntary basis. The overwhelming majority of its members are people who are either unemployed or who rely on informal forms of employment to earn an income and who are themselves victims of cut-offs or evictions due to their inability to afford basic services. To attend meetings or workshops, members often require assistance to cover basic travel costs, as the townships from which they derive are far away from each other as a result of apartheid geography. Furthermore, since the actions and activities of the APF challenge government's policies directly and do not provide a service such as health or social assistance, the APF has great difficulty in accessing any government financial resources. This is compounded by the fact that both national and international donors often do not feel comfortable with funding initiatives that might directly challenge the policies of the government in power, despite the ability to show direct links between increasing levels of poverty and privatisation policies.

The APF will be able to raise some funds through selling the *APF Monitor* and future surveys, and charging admission to video showings and cultural events. However, prices cannot be too high, as this would deny access to the communities that the APF works with and wants to reach.

#### **Beneficiaries of the project**

The main beneficiaries of this initiative are disadvantaged community members who have to struggle to make ends meet and deal with the manifestations of privatisation of basic services in the form of cut-offs and evictions. This includes a large

number of HIV infected people, pensioners, and disabled people who are denied access to a safe and healthy environment. Moreover, electricity and water cut-offs have particularly affected women and children. The lack of proper lighting in townships is conducive to violence against women and rape. In addition, women are increasingly burdened with trying to carry out traditional tasks such as cooking and washing due to the lack of access to electricity and water. Children are restricted to doing homework during daylight hours, which is greatly aggravated during winter months, as there are fewer hours of daylight. More generally, the unaffordability of electricity has pushed many poor households to revert back to the use of coal for heating and cooking, thus exposing them to higher risks of contracting respiratory diseases due to smoke inhalation. The lack of access to running water and water-borne sanitation systems has also led to an increase in water-borne illnesses such as cholera, and disruptions in personal hygiene. Lastly, the lack of access to water, electricity and lack of housing has had a devastating impact on households that rely on the income generated through informal home businesses such as hairdressing and catering.

The push for cost-recovery as a result of privatisation and its corollaries of job losses and cut-offs for non-payment of basic services are subjecting the majority of South Africans to live in poverty in unhealthy and inhumane conditions. For most, this is not what they expected from the "new South Africa" and many are now uniting to speak up against social injustice and poverty.

### **Work-plan**

#### **YEAR 1: April 2002 – March 2003**

##### **1. Capacity-building of community organisations**

- 1.1 Hold five thematic workshops, on a bi-monthly basis, with a maximum of 10 representatives from each of the community organisations that comprise the APF, ensuring balanced gender representation and rotating localities for hosting the workshops
- 1.2 Hold three training workshops on leadership and organising with 5 representatives from each of the community organisations that comprise the APF, ensuring balanced gender representation

##### **2. Establishing an office and staff training**

- 2.1 Acquire office equipment, computer equipment, email setup, and acquisition of books, journals and newspapers
- 2.2 Hire administrator and financial assistant
- 2.3 Provide training for administrator

##### **3. Meetings for networking, planning and mobilising**

- 3.1 Weekly meetings of APF Sub-committees (Education, research & information; media; organising; finance)
- 3.2 Bi-weekly meetings of the APF Coordinating Committee
- 3.3 Monthly meetings of the APF Council
- 3.4 Networking meetings with community organisations, NGOs, and unions outside of the APF
- 3.5 3 Preparatory meetings with representatives from community organisations at national level
- 3.6 2<sup>nd</sup> National Exploratory Workshop

##### **4. Advocacy work at local, national, and international levels.** This includes:

- 4.1 Continued publication of the bi-monthly *APF Monitor* in both English and local languages
- 4.2 At least 4 Pamphlets (on privatisation of water, electricity and housing, SA Constitution & Bill of Rights)
- 4.3 1 Information sheet (in English and local languages) on what is the APF, privatisation and its negative social consequences
- 4.4 Video screenings on a quarterly basis
- 4.5 2 public meetings and debates with key government officials and other relevant stakeholders
- 4.6 Developing community-led campaigns against water and electricity cut-offs and their link to increasing poverty levels based on ongoing struggles and important dates in the South African calendar
- 4.7 Media work (newspaper articles, community radio interviews, press conferences and press releases) linked to on-going developments
- 4.8 2 national and 2 international exchanges for representatives from grassroots organisations

##### **5. Research into the impact of privatisation and commodification on poor communities**

- 5.1 Undertake at least one 300-household participatory research survey on the levels of poverty, and effects of the privatisation of water, electricity and access to housing in one poor community from which APF community organisations derive
- 5.2 Ongoing dissemination of research and information on the effects of privatisation, alternatives to privatisation and community struggles against privatisation through meetings, workshops and debates.

##### **6. Monitoring and evaluation**



- 6.1 Monitoring through regular meetings of community organisations within their communities
- 6.2 On-going through APF Sub-committee, Coordinating Committee and Council meetings to assess progress on planned activities and plan future activities
- 6.3 Evaluations by workshop and training participants at the end of each workshop and training session
- 6.4 Annual internal evaluation with participation of representatives from all APF member organisations

**YEAR 2: April 2003 – March 2004**

**1. Capacity-building of community organisations**

- 1.1 Hold five community workshops on same basis as above, on themes and issues identified by community organisations, on a bi-monthly basis
- 1.2 Hold three training workshops on leadership and organising to cater for new community organisations who join the APF

**2. Meetings for networking, planning and mobilising**

- 2.1 Weekly meetings of APF Sub-committees (Research and information, media, organising, finance)
- 2.2 Bi-weekly meetings of the APF Coordinating Committee
- 2.3 Monthly meetings of the APF Council
- 2.4 Continue networking meetings with community organisations, NGOs, and unions outside of the APF
- 2.5 3 Preparatory meetings with representatives from community organisations at national level
- 2.6 3<sup>rd</sup> National Workshop with community organisations fighting privatisation and its effects on poverty

**3. Advocacy work at local, national, and international levels.** This includes:

- 3.1 Continued publication of the bi-monthly *APF Monitor* in both English and local languages
- 3.2 3 pamphlets as above and two additional pamphlets (on how government works, and influencing government policy)
- 3.3 1 Information sheet (in English and local languages) on what is the APF, privatisation and its negative social consequences
- 3.4 Video screenings on a quarterly basis
- 3.5 Designing and showing of a community cultural activity that depicts the negative effects of privatisation on poor communities
- 3.6 3 public meetings and debates with key government officials and other relevant stakeholders
- 3.7 Developing community-led campaigns against water and electricity cut-offs, and their link to increasing poverty levels based on ongoing struggles and important dates in the South African calendar
- 3.8 Media work (newspaper articles, community radio interviews, press conferences and press releases) linked to on-going developments
- 3.9 4 national and 2 international exchanges for representatives from grassroots organisations

**4. Research into the impact of privatisation and commodification on poor communities**

- 4.1 Undertake at least another 300-household participatory research survey on the levels of poverty, and effects of the privatisation of water, electricity and access to housing in another poor community from which APF community organisations derive
- 4.2 Ongoing dissemination of research and information on the effects of privatisation, alternatives to privatisation and community struggles against privatisation through meetings, workshops and debates.

**5. Monitoring and evaluation**

- 5.1 Monitoring through regular meetings of community organisations within their communities
- 5.2 On-going through APF Sub-committee, Co-ordinating Committee and Council meetings to assess progress on planned activities and plan future activities
- 5.3 Evaluations by workshop and training participants at the end of each workshop and training session
- 5.4 Annual internal evaluation with participation of representatives from all APF member organisations

**YEAR 3: April 2004 – March 2005**

**Continue and consolidate the activities under 1., 2., 3.** (*addition*: ensure hosting of cultural activity in at least 3 poor communities), **4.2** (as above), **5.**

***Meeting Comic Relief's grant making principles***

*Uniting disempowered people to improve their lives*

The APF owes its existence to different community organisations, NGOs, trade unions, student groups and activists who, faced with rising unemployment, unaffordability of basic services and the general inability of the majority population to make

ends meet, joined together to make their voices heard to fight social injustice and work towards a truly development society and government. In its year of operation, the geographical spread of the APF has expanded from Soweto and Kathorus to the Vaal, Daveyton and recently Thembisa and KwaThema townships. The APF serves to build the capacity of these community organisations in their daily struggles and thus fill the current vacuum of independent community struggles for basic rights and needs.

#### *Strength in unity*

While the APF has focused on bringing together organisations from the Greater Johannesburg region, it has also felt the need to begin linking with community struggles in townships and cities in other parts of the country. This realisation is what inspired community organisations and other member groups of the APF to organise a National Exploratory Workshop that seeks to share experiences between community members and devise strategies and activities for united national action.

#### *An innovative approach*

Through its focus on building a strong grassroots and community movement against the negative effects of privatisation, the APF aims to empower people to assert their rights, make them active participants in the struggle against poverty and the forging of an alternative development agenda. Rather than relying on NGOs and human rights bodies to fight for changes in policies, the APF seeks to support community organisations to engage in activities that can make government accountable and change its detrimental structural adjustment policies. In this regard, the APF's advocacy work is geared towards the active involvement of community members and the popularising of their experiences and struggles. Similarly, the APF's capacity building activities aim to make poor communities aware of their own rights, about how government works and different ways in which they can begin to influence policies through leadership and mobilisation. In this regard, the APF aims to empower communities and engage in activities to bring about lasting, positive changes in their lives. Of course, the gains might be seem relatively piecemeal at first, such as stopping evictions in a particular area or rejoicing over the suspension of cut-offs. However, succeeding in small battles can allow community members to gain a level of confidence to broaden and deepen their struggles for social justice.

#### **IV. ROLES OF PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

The current structure of the APF emanated out of an APF Summit held in July 2000, attended by over 200 participants. At the Summit, participants pushed for the formalisation of decision making structures within the APF. Based on these proceedings, the APF Council was constituted as the decision-making body of the APF (see *Memorandum of Association* for overall APF structure). The APF Council, which meets on a monthly basis, is composed of at least 2 and no more than 5 representatives per member organisation, a Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Each member organisation present at the Council has one casting vote in all decisions affecting the APF, with the Chairperson having a deciding vote in the case of a deadlock. The Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, who are themselves members of affiliated organisations, have been elected by the member organisations in the Council to manage the everyday affairs of the APF and oversee the implementation of Council decisions and activities. At each Council, the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer provide brief reports of their respective activities. The Chairperson acts as the APF spokesperson and oversees overall progress with activities decided upon by the community organisations that make up the Council. The Secretary ensures that notices of meetings reach member organisations; minutes are taken, reproduced and circulated; and networking with community organisations, NGOs, and unions outside of the APF is ongoing through correspondence, as well as joint meetings with representatives from APF member organisations. The Treasurer oversees the overall financial affairs of the organisation and disburses funds to community members to cover transport costs, catering and venue hire for workshops and training as per Council decisions. With the recent opening up of an APF bank account, the Treasurer exercises control over the signing of cheques, together with the Chairperson and the Secretary. The APF Council decided that cheques require two out of three signatures of the Treasurer, Chairperson, and Secretary.

The agenda for APF Councils is set by the APF Co-ordinating Committee. This committee meets fortnightly and is composed of one representative per member organisation. As such, the matters discussed at Council meetings derive from the activities carried out by community members in their respective communities and developments requiring support and intervention. In this forum, the media, education, research and information, organising and finance subcommittees of the APF, which are themselves composed of representatives from member organisations, also relay progress on their respective activities and raise matters that need to be communicated to, and decided upon by the APF Council, such as dates for the holding of workshops, and campaigns; the production of advocacy materials, and interest by new organisations in joining the APF. In addition, the administrator, who will work closely with the APF Secretary, will be able to raise any matters requiring attention and adoption with this committee. Similarly, the financial assistant will work closely with the Treasurer and the finance subcommittee to report on on-going income, expenditure and progress with record-keeping which will form part of the Treasurer's report to Council.

In addition to these structures, the APF also has an Activist Forum that meets on a weekly basis to follow on-going progress with specific activities and strategies, as well as ongoing developments within communities, in between Councils. This forum is open to representatives from APF member organisations without limitation on numbers. However, this is not a decision-making body; any matters arising from this forum must be brought to the APF Coordinating Committee for discussion and possible incorporation onto the Council agenda.

By adopting a highly participatory structure, the APF enables community members to take the lead in making decisions affecting their own communities and shaping the role and activities that give the APF its profile. This structure also allows members from different communities to share ongoing developments in their community-based experiences of fighting privatisation, learn from successful strategies pursued by different organisations, and support activities in different communities. Moreover, through participation in specific sub-committees community members are involved in targeted activities such as organising and networking with NGOs, unions and other community organisations; influencing the structure and content of workshops and training sessions; brainstorming over fund-raising activities, campaigns, pamphlets and so on.

This structure, which facilitates the unity of organisations and the broad consolidation and support of often disparate community activities has enticed community organisations to join the APF to strengthen their struggles. It has also been through its advocacy and joint actions such as campaigns, marches, meetings with government officials and services providers that the APF is in the process of developing solid relationships with local communities in the Greater Johannesburg area. While community organisations monitor developments and implement activities in their own communities, the building of a united front represented by the APF facilitates the networking with unions, NGOs and community organisations that currently operate independently of the APF to ensure that they either support or join the current struggles of the APF. It is envisioned that as the APF grows through the empowerment of community-based organisations, increasing numbers of community members will hold the government accountable by putting pressure on the government to both revisit and change its economic policy to redistribute resources and enable access to basic services to the majority population in South Africa, as stipulated in the Constitution.

## **V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The outputs and activities will be monitored regularly in the following ways:

- ❖ Regular meetings of community organisations that belong to the APF within their communities.
- ❖ Weekly meetings of APF Sub-committees, bi-weekly meetings of the APF Co-ordinating Committee and monthly Council meetings to assess progress and obstacles on planned activities.
- ❖ Evaluations by workshop and training participants at the end of each workshop and training session.
- ❖ Annual internal APF evaluation with participation of representatives from all APF member organisations.
- ❖ An annual report of progress with financial reports. Financial records will be audited by a professional accounting firm in Johannesburg.
- ❖ A War on Want staff member will visit the project once a year to monitor and evaluate the work of the project.
- ❖ External evaluation at the end of the third year of funding.

## **INDICATORS**

Through its activities, the APF seeks to achieve the following:

- ❖ 300 community members are trained on understanding privatisation and its manifestation as cut-offs and evictions, their constitutional rights to basic services as well as government's duties to facilitate access.
- ❖ At least 120 community members receive leadership and organising training. The impact of this training is reflected through initiatives undertaken by these community members within their own communities, with local authorities and through participation in public meetings and debates.
- ❖ The number of community organisations belonging to the APF and empowered to negotiate and organise is progressively increased as a result of activities such as campaigns, debates, marches, as well as publicity materials.
- ❖ The APF raises its profile and popularises the effects of privatisation through radio, TV and newspaper coverage as a result of its advocacy and media work. This is made possible by an increase in community members who are involved in radio interviews and in the writing of letters to the editor and newspaper articles.
- ❖ Advocacy work through campaigns, community resistance, debates and meetings with government officials, and service providers lead to a reduction in water and electricity cut-offs, as well as evictions.
- ❖ The APF increases legal support and advice to APF members from community organisations detained by police and misled into unfair service re-payment agreements. APF supports precedent-setting legal cases to hold government accountable for affordable water and electricity provision.

- ❖ National and local campaigns and days of action are progressively increased through networking, planning meetings and coordinated action emanating out of the National Exploratory Workshops. This serves to build a national movement to fight against privatisation and its link to poverty and for people's constitutional rights of access to basic services.
- ❖ Advocacy work at community and national level successfully pressurises government to implement its free basic services policy and consider cross-subsidies from rich to poor communities for the provision of water and electricity.
- ❖ 6 bi-monthly issues of the APF Monitor are published each year and disseminated widely within South Africa.
- ❖ 2 research projects into the impact of privatisation on poor communities are completed after 2 years with the active participation of community members and used as part of the APF's advocacy strategy with government officials and service providers.
- ❖ 6 national and 4 international exchanges allow community organisations to share experiences of fighting against the negative effects of privatisation, reflect on their own work and build on new strategies and activities.
- ❖ The APF manages to forge a supportive working relationship with unions, NGOs and other community organisations currently operating independently of the APF as a result of networking activities.

