

# GADRA

Advice & Community Work

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Annual Report

January - December 2011

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The Siboneni Marimba Band in a practise session



Our Social Worker, Judith Rungani, with a student from Hobson House Rhodes University, distributing food parcels to victims of the June 2011 floods in Joza township.



Lessons in making compost



Our very first Isiba Egg - with Zukiswa and Ron



Recycling old crutches to support our tomato plants



Our second batch of Inyosi Honey was harvested in October 2011



Casual Day Campaign September 2011



Participants in the Mentorship Training in Port Alfred, October 2011



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Some of the GADRA staff members for 2011



# **GADRA ADVICE & COMMUNITY WORK ANNUAL REPORT 2011**

- **OUR VISION:**

The eradication of poverty as a priority; and, promoting the dignity, inclusion and independence of all those who seek our assistance.

- **OUR MISSION:**

The capacity building and empowerment of our beneficiaries and the community as a whole through sustainable social welfare and skills development programmes for the Blind & Partially Sighted, as well as the unemployed and acutely poor.

- **OUR COMMITMENT:**

To perform our daily tasks with respect, understanding and empathy, and to continually re-assess our service delivery, vision and mission to ensure that our work remains relevant to those that we serve.

- **WE BELIEVE:**

We believe in respecting the basic human rights of all individuals, remaining accessible and accountable, in upholding confidentiality, and delivering services that are professional and relevant to the community.



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# COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF 2011

## Management Committee

<b>Chairman</b>	Advocate Bevan Boswell
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Prof Terence Beard
<b>Treasurer</b>	Tara Booth
<b>Secretary</b>	Zukiswa Ngcete

### Committee members

Virginia David-Engelbrecht  
Wiebke Welgemoed  
Bulelwa Mangani  
Wilfred Appollis  
Prof Desmond Eve

### Staff Members

Carol Venter	Director
Nosiphiwo Ndawonde	Development Officer & Guest House Manager
Zukiswa Ngcete	Secretary / Administrator
Nosakhele Ngcingci	Seamstress
Nomakwezi Mtwa	Blind project co-ordinator
Colin Ngqoba	Computer trainer / Music instructor
Richard Nzwana	Braille instructor (beginners)
Fikile Mshiywa	Braille instructor (advanced)
Madoda Makhalima	Mobility & Orientator
Judith Rungani	Social Worker
Bongani Nanto	Gardener
Francois Mentoor	Driver

### Volunteers

Ron Roberts      Food Gardens Project Coordinator / Grounds & Buildings maintenance





## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

GADRA Advice has in the past financial year continued to evolve and adapt to the changing needs of the Grahamstown community which we serve, as well as the financial difficulties which we and other NGOs constantly face. Elsewhere in this report Carol sets out in detail the various projects which we have initiated and continued during 2011. Of particular note is the blossoming (excuse the pun) of our Food Gardens project, which has grown to become one of Advice's biggest and strongest projects. With the departure of Ron Roberts, our volunteer from New Zealand, Zukiswa Ngcete has stepped into the role of co-ordinator of this project and has done a sterling job. She has taken the project from strength to strength, with particular emphasis on commercialising production. As it stands, we cannot keep up with demand for free-range eggs and in addition continue to sell our other produce to a large wholesaler.

Our work amongst the visually impaired has also remained strong, with the Givens Hostel being continually over-subscribed and Advice receiving numerous accolades for its work.

As Carol states in her own report, Advice increasingly focuses on life skills and other workshops in schools. This continual refocusing and reorienting of our programs is testimony not only to the lack of inertia we have as a small organisation, but is also indicative of the innovative thinking employed by Carol and her team.

When I made my report for our last AGM, I commented that our finances were strong and healthy. Unfortunately the situation has changed for the worse since then, not only for GADRA Advice but for virtually all NGOs across the country. We have had to tighten our belts and Carol has been very good at minimising costs and maximising income. Fortunately, we recently received confirmation from the Lotto that our grant application has been partially successful. Whilst we did not receive nearly as much funding as we applied for, the amount which was allocated has made it possible for us to continue to be a viable and strong organisation, and furthermore means that we can persist in our long-term goals. Many NGOs throughout the Eastern Cape and no doubt throughout the country have had to close their doors in the last year, due to the severe decline in available funding, especially those who have traditionally relied primarily on Lotto funding. It is a testament to everyone at GADRA that we are one of the few organisations in Grahamstown who have in fact received any funding from the Lotto this year. Further proof that Advice is well administered is that one funder has in fact asked Carol to administer funds on behalf of another NGO, for an agreed upon percentage of that funding.

Since the last AGM, Tara Booth has settled into the position of treasurer and with her help our annual audit has been a relatively painless procedure this year. We also welcome Charnel Koen as our new office administrator and she has brought with her many great ideas for streamlining the organisation and saving money. In conclusion, I once again thank all of our funders, without whose support we could not survive. I also extend a special thanks to Carol and her team who make our task as a committee such a pleasure. Lastly, I thank all the members of the Committee for once again freely giving of their time, skills and energy in service of the people of Grahamstown.

**BEVAN BOSWELL**  
*CHAIRMAN*





## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2011 was our 53rd year of service delivery to the Grahamstown community and proved to be yet another busy and productive year.

The year was focused on building on and strengthening our existing services and programmes, but we were able to expand on a few other areas, most especially, training through workshops and lifeskills programmes in schools. The details follow later in this report.

We are pleased to report that our staff turnover remains low. Our Social Worker, Judith Rungani, relocated to Johannesburg in October after 9 months with us (as well as 6 months as a Social Work student the year before). Judith was an invaluable asset to the GADRA Advice team, increasing our number of beneficiaries assisted with counselling services, running substance abuse awareness programmes and working closely with the Visually Impaired. In October 2011, we also said a sad farewell to our full-time volunteer, Ron Roberts, who had joined us to assist with the Food Garden's project through our partnership with Volunteer Services Abroad (VSA). Ron was instrumental in getting the Food Garden's project firmly off the ground and taking it to great heights when he secured a contract with a local grocer to purchase our produce. Ron and his wife, Karen, moved on to Dubai after their volunteering contract came to an end after 2 years in South Africa. Ron's departure was a big loss for all of us who had grown so close to such an incredibly generous man.

As the Food Gardens had become one of our biggest projects, we could not afford any setbacks when Ron left. Zukiswa Ngcete, who had been in the position of our Office Administrator for a number of years, stepped into Ron's position with great ease as she had been working closely with him and taken a keen interest in the project. At the same time as Ron's departure, we extended the Food Gardens project to include 20 hens and moved into producing free-range eggs. Zukiswa, with Madoda Makhalima and Bongani Nanto, have done a tremendous job with the project.

Some of the highlights of 2011 include our Siboneni Marimba Band competing at the International Marimba Festival In Gauteng for the 3rd year in a row, and our Blind Project's Co-ordinator and one of our Blind beneficiaries attending the South African Council for the Blind's 40th Biennial Conference in Kimberley in October 2011. I had the privilege to attend the Mail & Guardian / Southern Africa Trust Drivers of Change Awards in November 2011, after GADRA Advice was nominated for the Award. Although we did not win, the opportunity to brush shoulders with so many inspiring individuals and NGO's from across Africa was an unforgettable experience.

I would like to sincerely thank our wonderful Management Committee who give so freely and selflessly of their time, guidance and expertise to ensure that GADRA Advice continues to go from strength to strength. And to our dedicated team of staff members who make all the work happen at the ground level, thank you for your commitment and passion for not only the Organisation, but for the community which we serve.

Here's to the next 53 years!

Carol Venter  
DIRECTOR

## PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Our projects and programmes are divided into two main areas:

- 1) Social Welfare and Development Services for the Acutely Poor
- 2) Skills Development for the Blind and Partially Sighted

### 1. SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES FOR THE ACUTELY POOR

- **Food parcels**

Remaining true to our history, we continued to distribute food parcels. With thanks to support from the Grahamstown Feeding Association and staff from Rhodes University, 40 individuals / families received parcels every month, this means that 480 were distributed in 2011. We do not believe in creating a dependency but we do believe that the acutely poor cannot be expected to attend school, seek employment or take their chronic medication on an empty stomach.

- **Clothing / care parcels**

Beneficiaries of our clothing donations are usually victims of disaster such as shack fires or heavy rains, such as those that fell in June 2011, destroying many homes in the township. At times, families living in informal dwellings are also robbed of their possessions. Supported by a number of individuals, university Residences and Societies, The Mission of St Pauls, local schools and NGO's, we are able to distribute items of blankets, shoes, linen, school uniforms and general clothing to people of all ages once a week, after careful assessment by our Social Worker or Development Officer. 417 were assisted in this way during the course of 2011.

- **Soup Kitchen**

Started as a weekly soup kitchen in 2010, this project grew to twice a week in 2011. This was made possible not only by the fresh greens produced in our garden, but by kind support from the Cathedral Women's Fellowship and Shoprite's Mobile Soup Kitchen. More than 50 people are fed through the soup kitchen each week, mostly the elderly and patients collecting their chronic medication at the Day Hospital next door.

- **General enquiries, assistance, counselling and referral services**

As the need in Grahamstown steadily grows due to the relentless unemployment and poverty in the area, the number of individuals and families who seek our assistance also continues to increase. The problems that were presented at our office during 2011 included:

- Unemployment
- Maintenance issues
- Homelessness and general poverty
- Queries into school fees, uniforms and bursaries
- Queries into skills training
- Child-headed families
- Substance abuse
- Grant applications



"Donations from the Grahamstown Roundtable"



In many cases, Nosiphiwo Mani, as our Development Officer, would refer the clients to local resources such as the Legal Aid Clinic, FAMSA, Child Welfare and SASSA. Others were seen to by our Social Worker, Judith Rungani, for counselling and support services. 512 individuals and families were assisted this year, compared to 409 in 2010.

- **Training, Community development and awareness**

2011 saw our team extending our services further into the community development arena, most especially through training and awareness. Many of our workshops were focused on Substance Abuse topics due to urgent need for services in this area.

The following took place over the course of 2011:

- A Substance Abuse workshop with the Angus Gillis Foundation Health Champions (10)
- A Substance Abuse workshop with the Department of Social Development's Teenagers Against Drug Abuse (TADA) Co-ordinators (12)
- A 5-day Mentorship training workshop as part of a Crime Prevention Programme in partnership with the Department of Social Development with schools in Port Alfred and Bathurst. (60 learners)
- A Substance abuse workshop for the Grahamstown Social Work Forum (15 Social Workers)
  
- Judith Rungani run a very successful Substance Abuse Awareness programme in the Grahamstown East schools, giving learners the opportunity to express themselves through posters, drama and poetry. Judith also ran an intensive Lifeskills programme for the Gen-Ex group, a local community project for at risk-youth.
  
- 20 unemployed youth (clients registered with GADRA Advice and APD) were able to complete the 5-day leadership training programme run by Media Works
  
- Carol Venter ran a number of groupwork programmes for learners at Kingswood College as part of their Substance Abuse prevention programme.
  
- Nosiphiwo Ndawonde was fortunate enough to attend the Social Development Summit held in Port Elizabeth in October 2011, where she attend a number of interesting discussions and networking sessions on issues pertaining to social issues in the Province, and we were all able to attend a session on HIV/AIDS presented by Child Welfare.
  
- Through our various networks including the Local AIDS Council and the Social Work Forum, we were able to participate in a number of events such as Heritage Day Celebrations, Child Protection Week and World AIDS Day.

- **Tree of Joy Project**

The Tree of Joy is a project run by the Sunset Rotary Club in Grahamstown, collecting gifts from members of the Grahamstown community and distributing them to beneficiaries from local NGO's and schools. This year saw 40 of our beneficiaries enjoying a meal and receiving a Christmas gift handed out by our very own "Mother Christmas", Nosiphiwo Ndawonde. For most this is the only gift they will receive the whole year and the event is a very joyous one for all. We also use this special occasion to handout certificates to all those who graduated from the Skills Development Programme during the course of the year. It is a lovely way to end a busy year before we close for the Festive Season!



## 2. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR THE BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED

13 learners successfully completed our Skills Development Programme in 2011 – 6 males and 7 females. Additionally, another 5 were enrolled in the Programme but did not graduate and continued in 2012.

This number was slightly down on our 2010 total of 19 due to the fact that some learners took slightly longer to grasp some of the skills, e.g Braille, and we allow our beneficiaries to learn at their own pace. We can also only accommodate 4 residents in our Elizabeth Given Guest House at a time so there is often a waiting list running.

The majority of our beneficiaries were referred through the Nkosinathi Foundation in Port Elizabeth and REHAB in East London.

We were very fortunate to receive funding from The Mission of St Paul's, Utrecht, which allowed us to put up "Blind-friendly" railing and additional ramps to ensure that our Centre is 100% accessible. We were also able to put up signage in our parking area to warn drivers about the presence of Visually Impaired Persons. We have since not had any accidents or injuries to our staff or beneficiaries.

The following services were offered:

- Beginners and Advanced Braille literacy classes
- Beginners and Advanced computer literacy classes using JAWS software for the Visually Impaired. Learners are equipped to work in programmes such as Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, Word and basic Excel.
- Extramural and social activities: gym, swimming, games, marimba drums and music
- Assistance with application to special schools for the Visually Impaired, and referrals to local Optometrists for eye-testing and check-ups (Dr Davies and Jenny Gopal)
- Orientation and Mobility Training for new clients: how to walk with a cane, getting to know the GADRA Advice centre and basic trips to town.
- Weekly trips to the Library for the Blind to obtain Braille literature
- Weekly Current Affairs Discussion Groups to explore and debate topics of interest
- Assistance with low-vision / assistive devices: canes, talking watches etc obtained through the Council for the Blind's Resource Centre in Pretoria.

The following projects deserve a special mention:

- **Bee-keeping**

After our first honey harvest in 2010, our bee-keepers were able to harvest again in late 2011 after a few delays due to not being able to use the Makana Meadry's extractor. We were able to purchase our own honey extractor in October and this allowed us to harvest honey without any assistance from the Meadry for the first time.

Unfortunately we do not have many hives and have not had much success in removing hives to add to our container as the hives that we were called to assist with were almost always in inaccessible places. Still, the 6 hives we do have provide the most delicious honey and we have no problem selling our Inyosi Honey.



The Shoprite Mobile Soup Kitchen delivers a donation of soup and bread for our soup kitchen

Mother Christmas hands out another gift at the Tree of Joy celebrations







The Beginners Braille class sensitize their fingers before starting a Braille lesson

A view of our chicken run with part of the main Food Garden in the background



- **The Elizabeth Given Hostel for the Blind**

Our guest house for out-of-town learners had another successful year. We only accommodated 4 guests for the duration of the year as they took the entire year to complete their training. We thus ran a waiting-list and only took in new learners at the beginning of 2011.

With thanks to funds from the Given Trust, regular maintenance was done on the building and additional burglar bars were put up.

The fee of R500 per month per learner, which covers all meals, transport and a room of their own, is a very reasonable fee but we did not increase it in 2011 as we are very aware of the fact that most of our beneficiaries are supporting a number of family members on their grant.

- **Food Gardens for the Blind**

By the end of 2011, we have 11 functional gardens benefiting more than 50 (Visually Impaired Persons as well as their family members residing with them). Furthermore, under the guidance and direction of our volunteer, Ron Roberts, the main garden was extensively extended to allow us to grow more crops. The local 'Fruit & Veg', continued to support the project by purchasing all produce harvested.

A proud moment was a visit from the Albany Horticultural and Liliium Society. The members were impressed with our gardens and especially our recycling efforts by using old crutches to secure tomato plants.

Another exciting moment was when Bongani Nanto, our Blind Gardener, received his very own water tank with thanks to donations from the Mission of St Pauls in Utrecht, Netherlands. Bongani has a large garden that he takes very good care of as the vegetables provide his family with additional income and food. Obtaining his own water tank meant that his family finally had access to running water and the garden could continue to flourish, even in the hot Summer months when droughts are inevitable. A water tank was also donated for the Guest House and this meant that the garden there could be well-maintained and provide healthy meals for the guests.

The Food Gardens not only provide a small income for our beneficiaries, but also greatly improve the food security and nutrition of those participating in the project, as well as the family members that reside with them. It is a project we are very proud of and will continue to expand on in the future.

- **Isiba Eggs Projects**

After a visit from one of our main funders, Southern Africa Trust, the idea of venturing into chickens and eggs came to be. Knowing we had our Funder's full support, we purchase our first batch of "spent hens" in October 2011 after using an old outbuilding to create a hen house and chicken-run. Our Isiba (meaning "feathers") eggs were also purchase by "Fruit & Veg" as there is a great demand for free-range organic eggs such as those we are producing. The Visually Impaired are actively involved in this project by assisting with feeding the hens, cleaning the hen house as well as cleaning and packaging the eggs.





The Siboneni Marimba Band in a practise session

- **Siboneni Marimba Band**

The Band had a busy year with many bookings for performances at special events such as launches, weddings and other celebrations. Frequently hired by various Rhodes University departments and the Department of Arts & Culture, these performances allow the band to raise an income which is shared amongst the members, but even more importantly, with each performance they demonstrate just how capable and talented people with visual disabilities are.

For the 3rd year in a row, the band was also invited to participate in the annual International Marimba Festival hosted by Education Africa in Gauteng in August. The band is the only group with any form of disability that plays at the Festival and this trip is the highlight of the year.

- **SANCB Biannual Conference, Kimberley**

In October 2011, our Blind Project's Co-Ordinator, Nomakhwezi Mtwana along with Noluthando Manqunyana, one of our beneficiaries, attended the SANCB Biannual Conference in Kimberley where they were able to participate in a number of debates and discussions around legislation, policy and inclusion issues for people with visual disabilities. Both returned from the Conference feeling very energised and positive about developments in the sector. We were also very proud of Noluthando for being elected as a representative on the South African Blind Women In Action committee.

- **General**

- \* With thanks to our friends at the Mission of St Pauls, we were able to provide a number of our beneficiaries with assistive devices such as money templates, talking watches, talking calculators and Braille slates. Additionally, a number of games such as Chess and Dominoes were obtained and a weekly games slot included in the timetable.
- \* The Rhodes University Chess Club gave lessons in Chess to our learners once a week over a period of two months.
- \* GBS bank in Grahamstown ran an 8 week Financial Lifeskills course for 12 of our beneficiaries in partnership with APD from May to June 2011
- \* One of our learners was given the opportunity to speak to 18 pupils at Kingswood College as part of their Lifeskills Programme, sharing her perspective and experience of life as a Visually Impaired Person.



## SPECIAL AWARDS & RECOGNITION

We were proud to be acknowledged for our work through the following awards in 2011:

- \* Makana Municipality Civic Awards March 2011: Winner - Community Service category
- \* Makana Municipality Civic Awards March 2011: Overall Winner
- \* We were nominated for the Mail & Guardian/Southern Africa Trust Drivers of Change Award in November 2011

## MAIN FUNDERS, DONORS AND SUPPORTERS IN 2011

We are grateful to all those who supported our projects and services in some way or another during the course of 2011:

Southern Africa Trust

South African National Council for the Blind

Given Trust

Robert Niven Trust

DG Murray Trust

Anglo American

AA Newman Trust

Mission of St Pauls, Utrecht

Holy Trinity Church, Utrecht

Thembisa Trust

National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund

Anglican Women's Fellowship, Grahamstown

Makana Municipality

GBS, Grahamstown

Pick n Pay, Grahamstown

Grahamstown RoundTable

St Andrews Prep for regular clothing donations

Rhodes University IT Department

Rhodes University staff who contribute to the monthly food parcels

The Grahamstown Parenting Network and Susan Powers for continued support

The numerous University Residences who contribute clothing donations

The members of the Grahamstown community who donate clothing and other small items







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