



NETACT ANNUAL (ADMINISTRATIVE) REPORT 12-14 JULY 2004 ZOMBA, MALAWI

1 INTRODUCTION

As with our previous meeting this report follows the agenda sequence. It incorporates the issues discussed in the minutes of the interim Executive Committee Meetings which in turn addressed the issues raised and tasks given by August 2003 Annual Meeting in Stellenbosch (see minutes). The objectives set by the 2001 NetACT meeting, to be achieved by 2007, form part of this report as a way of helping us to see to what extent we are achieving our goals.

It was once again a good year for NetACT. Progress was made with regards to the objectives set by the previous meetings. Our biggest problems were securing funds for the AIDS project, effective communication and progress in attaining some of our goals.

Congratulations to our chairperson on receiving his D Th at Stellenbosch University's April 2004 graduation ceremony (*The interplay between God-images and healing in Pastoral Ministry*). Dr Kasambala also conducted a prestigious Christian Mission lecture engagement at Princeton Seminary in February 2004.

News from our institutions: we should spend some time to listen to one another and as such request each institution to have a short report on developments at their institution. Do we have to congratulate staff members for receiving degrees or other distinctions? Are there urgent needs? Share anything to get us informed on what is happening at each institution. This applies to co-opted Board members too: please tell us where you are and what has happened in your life and work since our previous meeting.

2 VACANCIES

2.1 Dr AE Kasambala

Our Chairperson, Dr Kasambala, has accepted an appointment as Executive Director of the Children without Borders Trust, a ministry of the Presbyterian Church with its office in Durban, SA. Since he is no longer fully employed by Justo Mwale the position of Chairperson has become vacant (see the Chairperson's letter to all institutions dated 02 April 2004). This is not altogether bad news. In Dr Kasambala's job-description the Presbyterian Church allows and expects of him to be involved with teaching and other work that relate to children. Dr Kasambala still has ties with Justo Mwale and has been officially appointed from January 2004 as Extraordinary Lecturer at Stellenbosch and as its "Ambassador to Africa" (amongst others to teach NetACT's AIDS course). NetACT can therefore consider the possibility to co-opt him as boardmember in order to retain his wisdom and services.

2.2 Executive Committee

The Board has to elect a Chairperson for 2005-2007 at the end of this meeting. Our secretary's term is 2003-2005 since he was elected in Aug 2002 in Lilongwe. Our Vice-Chairperson was elected at the Stellenbosch meeting and will serve for a 2004-2006 term. The EC proposes that we ask nominations for the vacancies on Tuesday morning and that we elect the new Executive Committee members early on Wednesday.

3 FINANCES

The financial statements for the year Jan Dec 2003 has been sent to all members.

NetACT has the following accounts: Administration, Weidenhof house, Computers, HIV/AIDS Project, Annual & EC Meetings, Travels & Meetings, Lecturer Exchange, Scholarships, Publications, Curriculum and Ambassador.

Donations received in the 2003 financial year was:

The Hartgerink Trust promised R100,000 with another R200,000 if the University of Stellenbosch can come up with matching funds to the same amount. The Faculty of Theology contributed R68,000 to NetACT. We could therefore count on R168,000 from the Hartgerink Trust (\$13,000 was received in Sept 2003). The R60, 000 was given to fund Dr Kasambala's and other of its personnel to travel in Africa and assist NetACT (the "Ambassador" account was opened for this reason) as well as R8000 for Publications. The ED & PM had several meetings with Vice Rector Claassens and Mr. Sunley Uys on how to get the University to contribute to NetACT's work. So far we have not been successful since all Universities in South Africa are receiving less government subsidy and as such is becoming more dependent on securing "third source" (donor & contract work) funding. A basic argument is that SU is already funding NetACT indirectly since NetACT is using its infrastructure and since overseas funding to the NetACT project is redistributed to NetACT institutions.

Specific funding projects / proposals:

- CORE and CARE proposals: Mr John Chettle, official fundraiser of SU in the USA, secured \$25,000 from Pres Bush's AIDS money for NetACT in 2003. A second CORE/CARE proposal for \$75,000 was submitted by the end of 2003 which we were given to believe would be received by the end of 2003. The US government, however, changed policies and proposals had to be submitted in Johannesburg, SA. Mr Chettle visited NetACT in March 2004 and guided us in submitting a new proposal for \$150,000. We are waiting to hear whether it has been successful. In the meantime our AIDS program don't have enough money to attain the objectives set at the 2003 Annual Meeting.
- We prepared a Proposal for the Church of Scotland to fund our "Preaching on Aids in Africa" book project. The proposal passed the initial phase and is now in the final round of the selection committee.
- We submitted a proposal to the Dutch IIDE foundation to fund the "Ethics in Africa" project. Our chairperson attended the IIDE project launching in Potchefstroom. We are not very optimistic about this venture.
- We had a very productive meeting with Dr Arrie van der Poel of the Gereformeerde Zending Bond (Reformed Mission Board). He was well briefed about NetACT by Prof Martin Pauw and several NetACT board members. The RMB will be presented with a proposal to fund our Publications and to consider helping with a book project.

- The EC asked a number of South African congregations to help funding *Studying Congregations in Africa*. We have received R15,000 from eight congregations. This money was given to buy books for theological students. We think we can raise enough money to subsidize all our publications for the students of our institutions as well as to help other theological schools in Africa. We need to discuss this.

4 NETACT OFFICE

NetACT wants to realize the following goal by 2007:

- An adequately staffed coordinating office for NetACT has been established.

Pieter van Santen was appointed by the EC as Project Manager for a three year period. The appointment is annually renewed and dependent on funds being available (2003 EC 16) from December 2003. The AGM confirmed the appointment (2003 NB 39)

We reported at the previous meeting that the workload is quite heavy. Faxing, making photostats etc. took considerable time since one has to use the Faculty's equipment at the other side of the building. With EC approval an independent phone line and a photostat-fax machine was installed in the office. It is making a considerable difference.

The EC's responsibilities at the University has increased considerably which meant that the Program Manager is taking responsibility for the general run of all office and local administration duties. Handling the finances, organising meetings and especially looking after the NetACT House take a considerable amount of time.

5 NETACT HOUSE

NetACT wants to realize the following goal by 2007:

- a program for upgrading and further theological training of lecturers at the participating institutions as well as other pastors has been established;

The NetACT house provided the necessary infrastructure to play an important role in realizing this goal.

Strictly speaking the house is a project of Stellenbosch University (SU). However, the NetACT office runs the house with the support of the International Office of SU. The Board visited the house during the 2003 meeting and made several decisions on house rules (Minutes 2003 NB 40& 72). It took considerable time and energy to implement these. It became clear that handling reservations through the International Office was not working efficiently. We therefore installed a good computer with an e-mail network point in the house for the Head Student to have hands-on communication with all parties concerned. We believe that the administration system is now shaping up well and that we will have fewer problems in future.

In a way the popularity of the NetACT house and the growth in the number of students (from NetACT- and other institutions) who are coming to study at SU caught us off guard. The occupancy of the house is very high. As such the house is run profitably and no raise in accommodation fees is foreseen. Through the efforts of the PM a number of cost-effective improvements were made and still more will be implemented during 2004.

A generous donation of \$2500 from Eleanor Hartgerink (from the USA) helped us to upgrade the furniture, kitchen and linen. This is making life much more comfortable and adds to the joy of staying in a fellowship of believers that really look after one another in a remarkable way.

The house has only the head student and his family as permanent residents. All other students may stay only for a period of four months per year. **We would like the Board to confirm this rule.** We suggest that exceptions may only occur when there are rooms available. It should be known that if someone who has not used the house in a specific year arrives, persons staying for periods longer than four months have to find alternative accommodation on their own. It is not the responsibility of the head student or NetACT office to find such accommodation.

Find attached as addendum the House rules and reservation guidelines.

The house is making a good profit. The EC and MD had deliberations with the head of housing of SU (Mr Etienne Human) and he agreed to give us access to the accommodation / running costs account. The house needs to be painted and the garden needs attention. These and a number of other smaller issues were sorted out. We may withdraw money from this account to use in whatever way we deem necessary as long as there is enough in reserve to deal with maintenance. At present the account has a balance of We don't foresee raising the fees for 2005.

Housing is going to be a permanent challenge and the EC should keep an eye open to acquire additional housing for longer term students.

6 COMPUTERS & COMMUNICATION

NetACT wants to realize the following goal by 2007:

- Participating institutions have computer-facilities and are linked through e-mail and internet.

This has been the most frustrating part of our work at the NetACT office. We would like to have a frank discussion on this matter. We don't seem to get reliable communication with RITT, MTC, Angola and ZTC. There were several misunderstandings between the office and Hefsiba. Since there are no ill feelings between anybody we would like to understand the difference in what we expect from one another. It seems there may be a number of reasons: first and foremost: Zimbabwe is in turmoil and most forms of communication are unreliable. A dependable landline has not been installed yet. RITT has no landlines and answered very few of the e-mails sent to them. Angola's College seem not to have electricity and has to go to the synod offices to send and receive mails. Most institutions / board members seem not to use e-mail as a form of regular / daily communication. It will be helpful for the office to know if this is the case. It seems to us that we are also dealing with different institutional cultures. At some of our institutions the workload and infrastructure is such that it is not possible to answer every e-mail promptly.

Proposal: Discussion on communication.

The office tried to communicate with each institution in the most reliable way for that institution. As a matter of policy we send hard copies by ordinary mail to most institutions and as well as a fax.

Mr Johan Lemmer of Wellington helped several institutions with their computers for which we are thankful. The office, however, had a very negative experience with this person. Let's take the cell-phone decision of the last AGM (2003 NB 41a) as an example. Mr Lemmer literally approached the office a few days before leaving and demanded R10,000 for computers referring to his information about Board decisions. We cannot simply give a person that sort of money without following the procedure required by SU. In Angola's case a computer and cellphone as well as other equipment was ordered ahead of time and Mr Lemmer received the necessary money to buy the equipment. It is, however, not working since there is no electricity at the college. We were informed by the head of Operation Mobilisation of the local situation. We were then adamantly asked to buy a generator for the college by Mr. Lemmer. We simply do not have faith in his ventures. The R10,000 that we spent in Angola is, as far as we can discern, not helping us to communicate in any way. In the meantime the cellphone was reported stolen by Rev Campos. Our impression may be wrong and we would like to have a discussion on these issues to prevent similar incidents and to have a clear procedure of how we are going to deal with it.

Our objective to have reliable communication in this information era should stay one of our objectives in a globalised world where instant communication and access to information is the name of the game.

- How are we realistically going to deal with it in NetACT?
- What are the most urgent IT needs of our institutions?

The EC had a meeting with the Executive Director of Logos Information Systems on the possibility of providing electronic libraries to NetACT institutions. It turned out that he had basically no knowledge of situations in Africa. Logos will have a reliable library with in access of 50,000 books available within a year or two. It seems, however, that this technology will not be of much use in most of our institutions since the level of IT skills is not available. We should maybe think of some sort of accreditation level in this regard. Once a college has reached a certain level expertise we should endeavour to supply that institution with an electronic library.

7

LECTURER EXCHANGE

NetACT wants to realize the following goal by 2007:

- An effective system of mutual consultation, lecturer-exchange and networking among the participating institutions is in place.

During 2003 all institutions received visiting lecturers. The AIDS module was taught at all institutions and the Kingfisher Centre helped several institutions (using their own funds for travelling).

The 2003 meeting (NB 46) made important policy decision in this regard:

- We regard this as an extremely important NetACT activity and should place it high on our funding agenda.
- As a matter of policy we should decide whether we are funding the exchange of lecturers between associated institutions or whether we are also going to use our funds to help institutions with lecturers from non-affiliated institutions (compare 2003 minutes NB 46c with 46e).

Since very few institutions took initiative in this regard, we initiated an exchange in which Prof Pauw of the DRC Mission Office organised that Prof Chris Greyling visit most of our institutions to teach on Islam. This topic was expressed as a real need by all our institutions and we are thankful that Prof Greyling is willing to help us again.

We would like, however, to encourage more inter-institution exchanges. Hefsiba is setting the example in the way they are helping Angola. The EC is willing to teach on Studying Congregations in Africa at any of our institutions. Dr Kasambala is both a qualified instructor in AIDS courses and available in this regard and in on any course in Pastoral Theology. He has the support of both the Presbyterian Church and SU to help on their behalf any of the NetACT institutions. The Faculty of Theology at SU made a policy decision that its lecturers should be exposed to other African institutions either helping to teach or being involved in joint research projects with colleagues.

- We should have a good discussion on this issue and come up with a set of guiding principles and concrete decisions.
- Several people volunteered to help. Amongst others (may we add to this list at the meeting);
 - * Mr Rodney Tshaka and Christoff Pauw, both young and bright doctoral student in Systematic Theology at SU (contact the NetACT office).
 - * Rev dr Roger Tucker, Presbyterian Minister in Cape Town, tuckers@xsinet.co.za Practical Theology.

8 SCHOLARSHIPS

NetACT wants to realize the following goal by 2007:

- A program for upgrading and further theological training of lecturers at the participating institutions as well as other pastors has been established.

This NetACT objective has certainly been one of the most successful of all our endeavours as one consider how many people from NetACT institutions have received postgraduate degrees and are studying at this moment. The Weidenhof Street house became a well know international meeting place!

Two scholarships were awarded to lecturers from RITT. A set of regulations pertaining to these scholarships has been formulated (but not approved... Addendum 2). We should however set a time limit for the period between awarding a scholarship and registration / beginning of the actual studying.

Application for scholarship - Chatha Msangaambe

The EC received an application for a scholarship for D Th studies at the SU in 2005 from Rev Chatha Msangaambe, one of the Nifcott lecturers. The application was approved, provided that funds would be available.

Institutions can get the addresses of the PCUSA and Church of Scotland offices from the NetACT office to apply for help with scholarships. In these cases institutions, not the individual, have to apply for the scholarship.

We were able to get a full one year Th M scholarship at Western Theological Seminary (USA) for Christopher Munikwa of Zimbabwe. The Dutch Reformed Mission League is paying most of his travelling costs. Christopher is busy with a D Th at Stellenbosch but needs the type of information provided by the WTS course. Prof George Hunsberger, who visited some of our institutions, had a hand in getting this scholarship to one of our most promising students.

- If possible we should budget for two new scholarships.

9 HIV/AIDS PROJECT

NetACT wants to realize the following goal by 2007:

- At least one course on curbing the spread and the effects of HIV/Aids has been identified and/or developed, distributed and taught, and is in the process of being used in a substantial number of congregations linked with the participating institutions.

This objective has already been attained and is progressing very well. A separate report by the committee will be tabled.

We wish to congratulate the chair of the committee, Janet Brown, on receiving her D Th degree in April 2004 on “HIV/AIDS: between prejudice and alienation.” Her research can be extremely valuable for subsequent NetACT work in this field should we get the necessary funding to be engaged on a congregational level. The EC is going to use her dissertation as a textbook in conducting a three-month doctoral seminar at Princeton Theological Seminary later this year.

10 ANNUAL MEETING

NetACT wants to realize the following goal by 2007:

- An effective system of mutual consultation, lecturer-exchange and networking among the participating institutions is in place.

The 2003 meeting decided to have a shorter and smaller Annual Meeting this year. Zomba kindly invited to host us. The idea was that separate meetings for the book projects should be held (see 2003 NB 57..... And below agenda item 12).

We would like to have one of the remaining institutions that have not yet hosted a meeting invite us for the 2005 Annual Meeting should we decide to have one.

11 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT

The EC regard this aspect of NetACT’s work as absolutely vital. “Upgrading academic standards and institutional capacity building” is central to our mission statement. In our vision statement we said: **NetACT** wants to have realized the following goals by 2007:

- All institutions (as far as applicable) have taken measurable steps towards accreditation by upgrading academic standards and institutional capacity-building.

The Stellenbosch meeting spent a lot of time and energy to work on / be informed about curriculum development. We would like the curriculum committee to report on the decisions made and goals set by the meeting (2003 NB 52).

Dr Scott Cunningham, secretary of ACTEA wanted to attend this NetACT meeting but in the end could not make it because of conflicting dates. The ED would like to suggest a discussion on ACTEA accreditation and whether and how we can support NetACT institutions to work towards that goal.

12 PUBLICATIONS

NetACT wants to realize the following goal by 2007:

- Handbooks on African Congregational Theology have been produced and are used at the participating institutions.

12.1 Studying Congregations in Africa

It is important to read the 2003 Annual Report and Minutes (NB 59) on this issue.

The 2003 AGM finalised the manuscript and the ED subsequently compiled and completed the book, negotiated a publisher and had the book printed. We received the first copies halfway through January 2004 a few days before the first classes at Stellenbosch started to use it. We subsequently sent copies to all the co-workers, academic colleagues who associated with this NetACT project and also to all who helped to fund NetACT projects. Books were dispatched to all NetACT institutions except RITT who have not answered to any correspondence in this regard. Funds were locally raised to pay for quite a number of books and expenses. All institutions received their books free but under condition that it must be sold to students at a price that is locally affordable. Proceeds have to be used to buy books for local libraries. This rule was not applied to SU. Here students bought the book at cost price, i.e. R100.

The book project is absorbing considerable time and energy. We do, however, regard it as one of our crucial objectives. As such it helps NetACT to approach possible future donors and present them with a tangible sign that we are making progress.

Raising funds to provide this book to theological institutions in Africa seems to be a very attainable endeavour. Both DRC and other congregations in South Africa have already made considerable contributions. We believe it will be viable to raise similar support in the USA. As mentioned earlier, the Dutch Reformed Mission League also declared their willingness to support our publication endeavour. We should have a discussion on this issue.

There was a specific request from ACTEA (dr S Cunningham) that we make the book available to ACTEA institutions in Africa at a subsidized rate if we can't donate a free copy to libraries. We need a Board decision on this request. The ED thinks this is a worthwhile request.

Hefsiba and Angola requested the book to be translated in Portugese and pointed out that all the theological schools in Mozambique want to use it as a basic textbook. The ED is negotiating an agreement with the publisher and with a qualified translator who is willing to translate the book

for R8000. Hefsiba is willing to duplicate the book in a less expensive format and to take care of the selling thereof. The Board should confirm this development.

12.2 Other publications

The urgency to proceed with the planning and writing of textbooks that address the contextual situation in Africa in all fields of theology needs to be pursued as a priority. We would like to propose that no annual meeting be held in 2005. The EC will however meet and attend to all matters. The main reason for this proposal is twofold: it is very expensive to get everyone together and secondly we should invest our available resources in getting more people from our institutions involved in NetACT projects.

- We therefore suggest that the 2005 meeting be book-projects with the books on “Preaching on Aids in Africa” and “Ethics in Africa” as a priority. We should affirm Drr J Cilliers and Nico Koopman as convenors for the book projects (Minutes 2002 point 14; 2003 NB75). These convenors should provide a project proposal for their projects to the EC. The NetACT office will assist them in writing the proposals.
- Petra College in South Africa approached the ED and NetACT to ask to consider working on a book and curriculum that will address the plight of children in Africa. “Children’s ministry in Africa” was seen as one of the most urgent projects facing theological institutions and the church. At a Nairobi meeting on a Center for Children and Family in Africa the AEA, AACC & Viva Network supported such a venture. Dr Kasambala will give more information in this regard.
- Other than these, what are the most urgent textbooks required by the institutions?

We need to point out that we have submitted three funding proposals in this regard: to CORE / CARE, the Church in Scotland and the Reformed Mission League in the Netherlands. Even if none of these realises it may be good to use the available funds to get at least the book on AIDS off the mark.

We want to ask the Board’s permission to make use of expertise from other African institutions that are acknowledged leaders in their fields to work with the NetACT members to produce these books.

13 NEW MEMBERS

We have formulated a clear policy on new members. After four years of negotiations the situation in Namibia seems to be coming to a point with the formerly racially divided branches of the Reformed family working together with other churches in establishing and excepting the Namibian Evangelical Theological School (NETS) as their training institution. Several delegations visited SU for the support of the University as well as the Faculty of Theology in their endeavours. Nets and the Lutheran Paulinum Institute (the Lutheran theological seminary) formed the Namibia Research Institute. They want to be accredited to NetACT and delegated their Congregational Studies Team leader, Rev Zach Pienaar to represent them as observer at the 2004 Annual Meeting (Rev Pienaar attended the 2001 and 2002 meetings on behalf of the Namibians). They are also set to support theological training in Angola. We can expect them to formally apply for NetACT membership.

14 GENERAL

14.1 Reaching congregations and congregational leaders:

NetACT wants to realize the following goal by 2007:

- at least one program/curriculum for training of congregational leadership in African Congregational Theology has been developed, has been distributed and is in a process of being implemented in a substantial number of congregations linked with the participating institutions;
- church-leaders at all levels, including women- and youth leaders, are targeted and included in the continuous training programs.

The 2003 EC minutes (26.1) should be read with this section. Nifcott (Rev Msamgaambe) attended the 2003 workshop of Project Africa (with NetACT funding). Four excellent manuals on Preaching, Stewardship, Pastoral Care and Christian Education were prepared by this organization. They are willing to present these courses in any country. These courses were developed to train congregational leadership on a congregational level. Are there any developments in this field?

The Kingfisher Mobilising Centre became a member of NetACT. They are specializing in addressing the abovementioned objectives. Can we receive a report from KMC on how their work is progressing with regard to NetACT and to what extent they want to advise us in these matters.

14.2 Long term NetACT prospects

It is important to think in terms of NetACT's future. Donors and possible partners will be willing to cooperate if there is consistency, integrity and reliable resources associated with the network. Thus far we have managed to develop trust between the institutions and to keep a balance between on the one hand NetACT's independence, and, on the other hand, the role played by SU.

The previous meeting (2003 NB 62) emphasized NetACT's independence as well as its association with an established institution like Stellenbosch. The EC was asked to produce a memorandum of understanding with SU and present it to the 2004 Annual Meeting. SU through its Rector and Vice Chancellor and through the Dean of the Faculty of Theology pointed out that in their mission statement and in management planning (*sakeplan*) NetACT was portrayed as one of the projects that they support and to which they are linked by being a member-institution. The EC found this a reliable enough confirmation of intent.

The fact that SU is willing to contribute in several ways to the NetACT project and has set as one of its major commitments to be involved in Africa, has thus far helped us to secure funds in access of R2 million that has benefited all institutions. As such Stellenbosch has been willing to be the "anchor institution." Donors and possible partners are, however, uncertain whether this is simply the dedication of a few people that will retire in a few years time after which the whole endeavour will fade away.

The EC therefore see the long-term prospects of NetACT supported by:

- The willingness of all institutions to pay their membership fees. Even though member institutions in return receive tenfold and more benefits from NetACT, it is at least a token that prove that everybody is contributing something.
- Secondly, the willingness of SU to actively support NetACT.
- Thirdly, the present ED is willing to commit himself to stay on after his retirement in March 2007 to serve NetACT fulltime for a period of five years under condition that the Board renew his appointment every three years as is the case with other EC members.

We should have a discussion on the ways forward and see if we need to address our vision, mission and goals.

14.3 Approval of Annual Meeting minutes

The EC requests the Annual Meeting to grant it the authority to approve the minutes of the annual meeting (EC 6-12-03 point 14). The Annual Meeting approves its minutes on a day-by-day basis but is unable to approve the work done on the last day.

It was a privilege to serve in and through NetACT.

Jurgens Hendriks
Amon Kasambala
Pieter van Santen
3-06-2004

ADDENDUM 1	Weidenhof House Rules & reservation procedures
ADDENDUM 2	Scholarship Regulations