Ten Years of ASIST
The Past, Present and Future

Contents
Editorial ............................................... 2
History of ASIST ................................. 3,4
ASIST and rural roads .............. 5,6,20
Access and rural employment .... 7,8
Urban infrastructure upgrading ... 9,10
Training in labour-based technology ................. 11,12,22
ASIST Africa and the future ....... 13,14
ASIST Asia Pacific .................. 15,16,17
Forthcoming events .................. 18
News ........................................... 19
Country project news .............. 21,23,24
I doubt if anyone can have missed the fact that we are now in the year 2000. This has a special significance for ILO/ASIST. ASIST is now 10 years old. This being the case we thought it was a time for reflection on past undertakings and a look at present activities and even a glimpse into the future.

In comparison to other bulletins, this edition has a heavy focus on the ASIST Programme itself, and the many partners which have been associated with ASIST over the years. From modest beginnings, David Stiedl as Director guided a steady expansion of the Programme. Its growth is testimony to the acceptance and expansion of labour-based methods, rural planning and urban up-grading, and the continued need for further expansion.

In this editorial I would like to emphasise that what follows in the bulletin, by way of achievements of ASIST, have only been possible as a result of the efforts of many people. The dedication and calibre of many partners in Governments, the pool of international, regional and national experts upon which ASIST has been able to draw, the consultant and ILO teams in various country programmes, the Employment Intensive Investment Specialists within the ILO, and not least the continued support of the donors, has made progress possible.

As in previous bulletins we are pleased to include articles from the ASIST-Asia Pacific Programme which is also expanding its influence rapidly. There are moves to have a more combined effort in the future in terms of a bulletin from ASIST-Africa, ASIST-Asia Pacific, the ILO offices in South America and Francophone Africa, as well as from the Employment-Intensive Investment Branch in Geneva. We will see what develops, but please if you have any ideas or thoughts on this we would be happy to hear from you.

The next major event in the labour-based calendar is the Regional Seminar in Cairo hosted by SFD from the 15th to the 19th of October. We hope to see many of you there and look forward to a lively exchange of views.
ASIST: How it began, what it is now and where it is going

By Jan de Veen, Vlissingen, The Netherlands

The pre-ASIST environment

In the mid 1980s several factors contributed to a very different perception of the role of public works in developing countries and the manner in which they should ideally be implemented. First, there was the growing realisation that many public assets, such as infrastructure for transport, water supply, health and education, were being lost because of a lack of maintenance. Many initiatives were taken to deal with this maintenance crisis. A well-known example was the Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Programme (SSATP) with its different components dealing with road maintenance, urban and rural transport, and rail and waterways.

Second, the slow but steady economic deterioration in many countries resulted in a reduced effectiveness of Government technical ministries, plagued by severe budget reductions, poorly functioning equipment holdings, shortages of foreign exchange and personnel problems of insufficient, underpaid and ill-motivated staff. Innovative responses were needed to halt the vicious circle of less resources leading to reduced effectiveness leading to poor infrastructure, which in its turn negatively affected economic performance.

At this time also there was a significant push for greater private sector involvement and increased commitment and accountability of the ‘stakeholders’ (including users, funders and implementers) of public works. This implied that different concepts of planning for and carrying out public works were required and that new opportunities came about to involve local communities and small contractors in this field.

The technical and economic case for labour-based approaches had long since been made. Large scale force account programmes in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa had shown that labour-based methods were competitive in terms of quality, cost and
The response

In this context it was therefore important to provide those countries and projects with experience or an interest in using labour-based methods for public works with the means to grow, while at the same time looking for the ways and means to engage small local firms and communities. Possibilities existed in both rural and urban environments in the design and execution of road, water and soil conservation works, as well as in the building and maintenance of community buildings such as schools and health facilities.

Both the donor community and the ILO acknowledged that a concerted effort was needed to (i) stimulate the large scale use of local resources for these different types of infrastructure and, (ii) respond to the manpower, skills and funding requirements of public works planned with and implemented by the local stakeholders. At the time the ILO provided advisory services in this field directly from Geneva and through a handful of ‘Regional Advisers’ based in Bangkok, Nairobi and Abidjan. These services related primarily to the design of labour-based pilot/demonstration projects, but did not address the need for international interaction and training. There were gaps in the provision of high-level management training for large numbers of managers, the availability of technical information and in the exchange of project experiences. Although training and general information was given, projects mostly operated in isolation in their national contexts and managers often felt the need for specialised information as well as for more interaction with relevant labour-based programmes in other countries.

The ASIST initiative

Africa

In June 1990, building upon the experience obtained with (i) the development and running of pilot international training courses for engineers and senior technicians at the Kisii Training Centre in Kenya (sponsored by the Swiss Development Co-operation) and (ii) an East and Southern Africa sub-regional project of advisory services for labour-based works (funded by NORAD), two inter-related workshops were held in Nyeri, Kenya. The objective of these workshops was to define the need and funding requirements for international initiatives dealing with training and information services (workshop 1) and advisory support (workshop 2) for labour-based works. Senior representatives from partner Governments, donors and the ILO attended the workshops. They produced project outlays for two regional service projects of three years duration. Those were subsequently integrated to become the ILO African programme of ‘Advisory Support, Information Services and Training (ASIST)’ for labour-based infrastructure works.

ASIST initially covered 12 countries in East and Southern Africa, but provided support to international training and information delivery on a global scale. Since 1991 ASIST was evaluated several times by independent teams and reviewed by its stakeholders on a regular basis. ASIST’s continued relevance was consistently revalidated. The most recent of these exercises, which took place in Harare, Zimbabwe in November 1999, also reviewed the more recent ASIST components dealing with ‘Access and Rural Employment’ and ‘Urban Infrastructure’ respectively.

Asia

The Asian financial crisis and ensuing unemployment—particularly of low skilled workers—resulted in a number of Asian Governments initiating large-scale employment-intensive public works programmes. Unfortunately, those that were set up tended to neglect the quality and productivity aspects in favour of the requirements for quick and large-scale employment. Consequently the risk was significant that these programmes would reconfirm the old prejudices about labour-based techniques being backward, wasteful and slow. In order to reduce this risk, the ILO took a number of initiatives, particularly in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, to ensure that the long term aspects of labour-based works were taken into account. The recently (May 1998) established ‘ASIST - Asia and the Pacific’ (ASIST-AP) programme, set up within the organisational structure of ILO’s Regional Office in Bangkok, was the vehicle through which advisory support and project development services were delivered to these countries and others throughout the Asian region. ASIST-AP established strong links with ASIST Africa, particularly in relation to the provision of information in the labour-based field. Information exchange between the two programmes and ILO Geneva on the most recent developments in terms of access and rural employment, and urban infrastructure has also been important.

Where to from here?

The demand for the type of services provided by ASIST, complementing the ILO advisory work carried out by its regular Multi Disciplinary Teams, is growing fast. ASIST programmes continue to be an indispensable means for the ILO to apply its policies on the ground and to make a real impact at project level. The existing ASIST programmes in Africa and Asia will continue: the former at its current level, the latter with an expanding team. Efforts will also be made to launch ASIST-type programmes in Latin America and West Africa. For the foreseeable future the focus of ASIST work will be to (i) apply the principles of labour policies and practices and private sector development, set out in the ILO’s two recently published Guides and, (ii) continue its research, policy development and project implementation with local communities to deal with access and infrastructure in both rural and urban environments.
ASIST and rural roads

By Gamelihle Sibanda, Angela Kabiru-Kang’ethe and Ida Chimedza, ASIST

Why roads?

Many people often ask why ASIST is involved in road planning, design, construction, maintenance, etc., whereas the ILO is well known for its role in fair labour practices. The answer emerges when one understands the goal of ASIST. In a nutshell, ASIST’s ultimate goal is poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods. In simplistic terms ASIST’s strategy utilises the dual output of infrastructure provision whilst creating employment. Labour-based methods have a relatively higher potential for employment creation (typically up to 4 times more than equipment-based methods).

Interventions

It should be noted that ASIST is ‘involved’ in roads, but does not ‘build’ roads. ASIST acts as a catalyst through advisory support, information services and training. This means that ASIST works in a symbiotic relationship with other organisations with shared values. ASIST draws on its experience developed through collaborative research and through working with partners in various countries. The benefit of this to our partners is that they can learn from other people’s mistakes and they can also build on ‘best practices’ from elsewhere.

Impact of ASIST

The impact of ASIST should be viewed within the scope, capacity and limitations of an international and regional ILO programme that is funded by international donors. The impact describes what ASIST has been able to achieve working with Governments, contractor associations, local authorities, expert networks, international agencies, and organisations that represent the interests of local communities.

In terms of rural roads ASIST identified indicators against which the impacts and effects of promoting a wider use and application of labour-based technology can be monitored. These are described in the sections that follow.

Policy and the legislative environment

ASIST has played a significant role in developing and formulating a national policy on LBT (labour-based technology) in several countries. For example, Namibia’s parliament has adopted a progressive multi-sectoral policy that was formulated through Green and White Papers to which ASIST contributed. In South Africa, ASIST’s policy work has been towards supporting the Department of Public Works in developing policy on community-based public works. In Zimbabwe ASIST’s collaboration with the Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperatives has led to a better understanding of LBT as an instrument for employment creation, and to specific inputs towards the preparation of an Employment Creation Act and in the Road Sector Green Paper. ASIST and the Feeder Roads Programme has had a similar influence on the new Road Policy in Mozambique, which among other things reaffirms ‘the relevance of the use of labour-based methods, thereby providing jobs for the rural population whilst taking into account the gender factor’.

Influencing policy is difficult and the results are often slow in coming. For example, Botswana, despite its long experience with donor funded LBT programmes, is only now making moves to foster a sound policy on the use of LBT.

Structures to represent user interests

Recognising that communities, their representatives and other stakeholders, should be more actively
Interview with Mr. Letsie, Elem Construction, Maseru West, Lesotho

Mr. Letsie, a contractor from Lesotho, underwent the Road maintenance and regravelling (ROMAR) training in 1994. This training was carried out by the Labour Construction Unit (LCU) of the Ministry of Works (MoW) with assistance from the ILO. Mr. Letsie is one of the 60 contractors who have undergone this training in Lesotho. Although the training was adequate and beneficial, one area where additional training would be useful was on tendering and costing. Many contractors find it difficult to determine unit rates when preparing tenders. This is particularly evident when you find huge differences, as high as 100,000 Malotis (US$14,085), in tenders for the same job.

Challenges faced by contractors

On qualifying, the contractors are awarded, through a ballot system, routine maintenance contracts ranging between 20 – 30km that last for eight months of the year. A few periodic maintenance and rehabilitation contracts are also available from the Ministry of Works, which the contractors have to compete for. As the number of contracts is so limited the competition is extremely stiff and the contractors often bid at unreasonably low costs just to win the bids. This usually results in the contractors carrying out the work at a very low profit margin or none at all. Contracts are not carried out at market value. Operating under these conditions the contractors are challenged to produce quality work within the agreed time. In addition, the contractors find it difficult to purchase or hire equipment or expand their businesses.

With the limited number of contracts available many of the contractors remain idle for the better part of the year and some have not had the benefit of applying their acquired skills in the field. Many have turned to other other kinds of work such as building construction and agricultural work such as ploughing. This has meant that most contractors’ businesses have not grown or developed.

In order to overcome these challenges, the government should award more contracts; a minimum of 18 contracts a year would help alleviate the current problem to a certain extent. The government should also speed up the contract awarding process, possibly by increasing the staff dealing with this.

Role of the Contractor Association

The contractor association in Lesotho assists contractors in obtaining bids security and performance guarantees from the bank. The association has approached the government to provide more work, and has also approached the central bank and other financial institutions for financial assistance, but their efforts have not been fruitful. This has discouraged some contractors from joining the association and others from renewing their annual subscriptions. One of the ways in which the association could benefit the contractors would be if there were a revolving fund made available, through for example the ILO, and administered from a local financial institution to contractors who were members of the association. This would encourage membership.

Role of ASIST in supporting contractors

The primary benefit that contractors have had from ASIST is the training, which has greatly enhanced their capacity to perform. ASIST should provide additional training and refresher courses, which would be useful in providing contractors with additional skills to enable them to broaden the range of work they can perform. The refresher courses would be particularly beneficial to those contractors who have remained without work for extended periods of time, to keep them in the market.

 Asked about his own experience Mr. Letsie stated that he has been fortunate and has obtained a number of periodic maintenance and rehabilitation contracts, enabling him to provide some employment to the community and to expand his business. On the future of labour-based roadworks contracting, there is still a great potential for work but the government resources are constrained in the current economic environment. Although the government has promised sub-contracts for drainage works and other road rehabilitation work, nothing is forthcoming yet. But Mr. Letsie is optimistic that the situation will improve in the near future and intends to remain in the business.

Guide on Labour Policies and Practices for Employment-Intensive Infrastructure works. A series of awareness creation workshops are planned, and two have already taken place in Zambia and Namibia. The involvement of workers, employers and government, as well as NGOs and other agencies, in a partnership and tripartite dialogue is expected to ensure fair working conditions and lasting benefits to the economy over the coming years. continued on page 20
Access and Rural Employment (ARE) component of ASIST

By Fatemeh Ali-Nejafard, ASIST, Harare

Introduction

The ARE component of ASIST’s programme can only be appreciated through fully understanding the global socio-economic trend and related trends in Africa. It is within this framework that the achievements and the future role of this programme component can be fully recognised.

The world economy has gone through radical changes since the 1980s with the introduction of structural adjustment. This process has emphasised economic liberalisation, through deregulation of prices and foreign capital controls, decreasing state budget deficits through cuts in subsidies, devaluation of national currencies and privatisation of inefficient public enterprises. The primary aim of these polices and instruments has been to bring about improvements in the market for production and services by removing trade barriers and rigidities. However, many developing countries have been ill-equipped to take part in and benefit from the increased international trade. The consequences have been reflected in an increase in unemployment, and a vicious cycle of poverty, social tension over scarce resources, and insecurity in many developing countries, including those in Africa.

In response to these global economic trends and changes, decentralisation policies (among other measures) in many African countries have been pursued and accelerated. This has led to an increased vested responsibility in the regional and local level institutions for economic development and employment creation, though not necessarily with the means to carry them out. Subsequently, the need for building local capacity for planning, implementation and monitoring is critical if decentralisation is to effectively enable a more rational allocation of scarce resources according to real priorities.

Relevant to serious problems of unemployment and poverty in Africa, the ARE component of the ASIST programme has maintained its focus on improving rural access to basic and socio-economic services and facilities as a means through which it can contribute to the reduction of poverty in rural areas. There is an inherent relationship between lack of access to socio-economic services / facilities and poverty. These services are often not accessible to rural populations, thereby depriving them of employment opportunities, education, health care, safe water, markets, etc. Unless a community has access to these facilities and services, it has little chance of getting itself out of poverty.

The 1998 Human Development Report of the UNDP and the World Development Report of the World Bank indicate that in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a population of 614 million and an average GNP per capita income of US$ 500, the overall access to health services is 56%, to safe water 45% and to sanitation only 37%. Poor access to basic services contributes to an infant mortality rate of 91 per 1000 live births and a life expectancy of 52.5 years in these countries. These access problems are even worse in rural areas of Africa where 90% of Africa’s poor live. Only 49% of the rural population in Sub-Saharan Africa have access to health services, 35% to safe water and 29% to sanitation.

Access and Rural Employment component

In spite of the growing recognition of the scale of rural access and transport problems and of possible innovative ways of addressing them, rural access and rural transport remain peripheral to the policy making process and its budgetary allocations continue to be meagre. In recognition of this, a Rural Access and Employment component (formerly known as the Rural Travel and Transport, RTT component), was added to complement existing ASIST activities. It was argued that, while ASIST could raise the efficiency of road projects within the transport sector, the
**rural accessibility**

effectiveness of roads depended on other factors, such as:
- proper planning to select which roads to improve
- the availability of appropriate means of transport, and the location and accessibility of essential social services.

The focus of ARE is therefore:
- to create awareness of rural transport and accessibility problems
- to influence national policies that address the transport needs of rural populations
- to introduce and promote rural accessibility planning and access interventions.

**Achievements**

The activities of the ARE component of ASIST have contributed to an increased awareness of serious problems of rural access among stakeholders and consequently, to the implementation of interventions that address difficulties of access in rural areas. These activities have taken place at the central, provincial and district levels in target countries and among various target groups.

In all the countries supported by ASIST, there is an increased awareness of key issues related to RTT, which is reflected in an increased interest by governments and the rise in their demand for ASIST services. ASIST has substantially contributed to an increased local capacity for planning and implementation of RTT interventions. This has been evident in Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe in terms of acquired skills and knowledge by the local communities, and the experience gained by staff of local organisations involved in pilot projects.

In collaboration with RTT partners (the World Bank and International Forum for Rural Transport and Development, IFRTD), ASIST has contributed to the development of RTT policies in several countries. Zimbabwe has started the development of an RTT policy following the completion of a study on rural transport that was initiated by and carried out with technical support of ASIST. In Malawi the formulation of a policy on Rural Travel and Transport has reached its final stage and is ready for implementation. In Zambia the RTT policy is in its implementation phase.

ASIST’s ARE component has contributed towards institutional capacity building, RTT research and studies and production of information and training materials. ASIST provides information services on rural accessibility planning and disseminates information material on this subject.

ASIST has provided inputs on ARE at regional and international conferences and seminars. Access issues and appropriate planning are being discussed more seriously at regional workshops, seminars and training courses, in which ASIST information services has played a valuable role. The above-mentioned activities have been implemented in and technical inputs provided to Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition, initiatives have also been taken in Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa to address their expressed demand for specific rural travel and transport services.

In addition ASIST provides training services on rural accessibility planning, through collaboration with, and technical support to, universities and training institutions. ASIST introductory courses on rural accessibility have been integrated into regular courses and curricula of the University of Zimbabwe, the University of North in South Africa, the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, the University of Zambia in Lusaka, and of the Kisii Training Centre in Kenya. The course materials and information supplied by ASIST have raised awareness among students, civil engineers and planners on rural access problems and the need for appropriate planning tools.

The key strategies in implementing the above activities have included institutional development (local communities and institutions in particular) and close collaboration with UN organisations, donors, The World Bank, IFRTD, NGOs and other development agencies. The nature of this collaboration has covered initiatives pertinent to rural accessibility planning, research and studies, institutional capacity building and production of information and training materials. These services have increased the profile of ASIST and the demand for its services.

**The way ahead**

In view of the past experiences, lessons learned and achievements, technical and advisory services of this component and its interventions will continue their emphases on:

- Contributing to sustainability and institutionalisation of project activities through:
  1. Building up local capacity in planning, implementation and monitoring based on a needs based, multi-sectoral, gender sensitive and participatory approach, linked to available resources, the existing planning structure and development goals at different levels. This is complementary to on-going and planned initiatives of governments, donors and development organisations in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The created synergy will greatly contribute to a better and more efficient use of scarce resources in the region.
  2. Expanding the existing collaboration with major rural travel and transport players / partners and UN organisations in the region through complementary and joint activities and pilot projects.
  3. Increasing the technical and advisory support to training institutions, universities, NGOs and local organisations while maintaining the on-going support to these institutions.

- Assisting governments and local NGOs to raise funds for implementation of pilot projects whose focus is on improvement of rural accessibility.

- Identifying the information gaps, producing and disseminating information and training materials on subjects pertinent to:
  1. planning and rural access
  2. gender and transport
  3. rural infrastructure
  4. financial management for affordable, appropriate and accessible means of transport
  5. impact studies of pilot projects related to rural access.
ASIST support to urban infrastructure upgrading in low-income areas

By Wilma van Esch, ASIST, Nairobi

The urban environment

By 2015, for the first time in history, more people in developing countries will live in urban than in rural areas. The challenge facing the developing world today is to cope with the adverse consequences of rapid urbanisation, which include a deteriorating living environment and high unemployment. Nearly a third of the world’s urban population is living in a state of absolute poverty and the incidence of urban poverty is highest in African cities.

In some African cities 50-70% of the residents live in unplanned settlements (e.g., Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Lusaka, and Kampala) whose features include:

- lack of basic services such as safe drinking water, sanitation, access roads, drainage and waste management
- high unemployment
- limited space available for infrastructure due to lack of planning and high population density
- insecurity of land tenure
- lack of resources
- absence of appropriate and affordable construction standards.

In the past many governments felt that these unplanned settlements were only a temporary phenomenon and would disappear as soon as the economic situation improved. However, time shows otherwise and the number of people living in unplanned settlements is only increasing (Kibera is an unplanned settlement in Nairobi with more than half a million people). Many African governments have by now recognised that unplanned settlements are there to stay and are embarking on policies to provide basic services to the urban poor.

Current ASIST involvement

ILO’s history in urban infrastructure upgrading in Anglophone Africa only started in the early 1990s when residents of an unplanned settlement in Dar es Salaam together with the City Council approached ILO for assistance to reduce the severe flooding in the settlement. The initial proposed plan would have resulted in demolishing 30% of the houses within the settlement (already marked with an X on the wall) and as the residents had no place to go this was unacceptable to the community. The same problem occurred in an unplanned settlement in Uganda where stormwater drainage had to be constructed within a densely populated area.

In 1997, during ASIST III, urban infrastructure upgrading became an integral part of the ASIST programme. Although the focus remained on infrastructure upgrading there was also a strong emphasis on capacity building of the community and municipal councils and the development of modalities to ensure that residents were involved in the construction and maintenance works. Therefore, in addition to the labour-based approach a community-managed approach has also been adopted to ensure full participation of community groups in the planning and implementation of the works.

The experiences during the last three years have resulted in a further development, that of the community contract as a tool for actively involving the community in the implementation of the works. The tool ensures that the community members keep the initiative. Partnerships with the council are promoted and technical and contract management skills are imparted to the community and to the council.

Knowledge on appropriate methodologies where local resources are used to improve basic infrastructure is often lacking. Besides demonstration projects and awareness creation study tours, ASIST III has placed much emphasis on developing suitable training material and courses for urban council staff, community supervisors and contractor personnel such as planners, engineers and site supervisors. The only viable way of developing low-income settlements is...
by creating local capacities to address the challenges in these areas.

During the last few years it also became more and more obvious that services such as waste collection and the operation of water supply systems need to be an integral part of the upgrading approach. Waste management is a particularly important issue to address, as it will affect the construction of works and the maintenance of the created assets. Close linkages and co-operation have been established with the ILO InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Development Enterprise and with programmes such as Start and Improve Your Business. Training material for community waste collection enterprises is being jointly developed, and will be published soon.

Standards for infrastructure and services are set at levels that are often unaffordable for urban councils. Urban infrastructure is expensive if the current conventional standards are applied and might result in the demolition of existing houses. Such an approach would be too costly for application on a wider scale and would be difficult to maintain. Appropriate standards include the acceptance of gravel roads for low volume access roads within the settlements, which can be maintained by the community.

It has been recognised that, in the short term, Local Government Authorities will not have sufficient resources to regularly carry out maintenance activities including those in unplanned settlements. Therefore the sense of ownership and the availability of skills within the community are essential for establishing routine maintenance arrangements. This has been achieved in an unplanned settlement in Dar es Salaam where a road toll system was established, authorised by the council, whereby the community collected funds for routine maintenance. The community issued small maintenance contracts to community contractors who had been involved in the construction.

What could ASIST do in the future?

- Provide policy guidance and awareness creation on the use of labour-based and community managed approaches in urban upgrading
- Develop and disseminate best practices (guidelines) on labour-based community managed urban construction, operation and maintenance
- Mainstream the current experiences and integrate the approach in large-scale investment programmes and establish support units on a country level
- Develop demonstration projects in countries that are not yet familiar with labour-based urban upgrading works
- Network with other organisations such as CARE, IHE, IHS (universities in the Netherlands), Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), Habitat (UNCHS), WEDC of Loughborough University, donor agencies and consultancy firms
- Develop appropriate technology solutions related to drainage, drinking water supply, sanitation, solid waste management, street pavement etc.
- Develop and facilitate training for all partners
- Develop contracting and maintenance guidelines
- Conduct and publish poverty impact studies
- Develop and disseminate labour policies and practices in community works.

---

Obituary

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of our colleague Colin Relf at his home in England in May of this year. Colin most recently worked as an International Adviser for the ILO within the DPW in South Africa. His enthusiasm for work, clarity of thought, inspiration and open personality won him many friends and admirers. We offer our sincere condolences to his family, and his colleagues in IT Transport.

In memory of Colin, who suffered from diabetes, friends and colleagues in the WFP have set up a Colin Relf Memorial Fund to assist poor young women diabetic patients in Dhaka, Bangladesh. For more information on this fund, designed to support a very vulnerable group in society, please contact Joan Fleuren by e-mail: joan.fleuren@wfp.org or Fax: +880 2 8119 069.

---

New publications

The urban material source book: A guide for community-managed and labour-based upgrading of urban low-income settlements.

George Simba and Jan Fransen. ASIST, 32pp, July 2000.

The urban material source book has been published and provides a list of materials available from the ASIST Information Service on community-managed and labour-based upgrading of low-income settlements.


This Source Book seeks to put together a selective list of the key publications our clients have found useful.

Training material source book: A guide for trainers in labour-based roadworks

Andreas Beusch. 1997.

The purpose of this guide is to assist trainers for labour-based roadworks to select and develop appropriate training material.
Training in labour-based technology

By Annabel Chite and Angela Kabiru-Kang’ethe, ASIST Nairobi

Over the past ten years the training component of ASIST has supported several national training institutions, training projects and programmes and international courses in several countries within the Sub-Saharan African region and beyond. This support has been in the form of development of course curricula, training materials, carrying out training needs assessments, assisting in the actual delivery of the training and in the evaluation of training programmes. The outcome of this support has been that several hundred engineers, technicians, consultants, contractors, and trainers have been trained. The initial training support was primarily focused on the rural roads sector, but over the years this focus has expanded to include other areas such as urban infrastructure and rural accessibility planning.

Collaboration between ASIST and KIHABT

KIHABT and ASIST have collaborated closely in the areas of information, training, study tours and advisory support. The information service was originally located at Kisii Training Centre (KTC) before relocating to ASIST in Nairobi. ASIST has also provided lecturers for various courses held at KTC. More than 400 people have participated in the international courses held at KTC. This indicates a very successful collaboration. Participants from the international courses can be found at various projects across Sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of Asia like Nepal, Cambodia, and the Solomon Islands.

From 1975 the ILO played a major role in the co-ordination of labour-based programmes in Kenya through the Minor Roads Programme. The Roads 2000 programme did not take off so well, partly due to the ILO taking a more observatory role in it. The training element of LBT in Kenya has benefited from the experience gained from the advisory support of ASIST in various programmes.

Challenges

It required several years to gain the confidence of the clients in accepting LBT as an alternative technology.

In the area of training it was important to make sure that the client was confident that the international courses run by ASIST and KTC were at par with courses held elsewhere in the world. Quality assurance of the product being offered was of significant importance.

There were also administrative barriers that had to be overcome, including clearing of participants at border posts and ensuring that the security of the participants was guaranteed for the duration of their attendance.

Trends of LBT

- In the early 1990s execution of works was by force account (government employed direct labour). Governments ran projects and there were some food-for-work projects that used labour-based roadworks to address poverty by creating employment.
- It is evident that there is now greater utilization of LBT through contracting, and the private sector has accepted LBT as an alternative technology for building roads.
- Achievements in the development of intermediate equipment in LBT have reduced the gap between equipment-intensive and labour-intensive.
- In the private sector LBT is likely to be utilized more efficiently with better equipment.
- In the past ten years there has been a greater acceptance of LBT as is demonstrated by the accept-
training

ance of LBT in the academic technical field. LBT is being introduced in mainstream university curricula at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and in polytechnics.

- LBT research and development in the academic field has also increased.
- There is more diversification in the use of LBT. It is spreading to sectors outside roadworks due to the wider acceptance of the technology and how it works. The other sectors include urban infrastructure, water and upgrading of shanties.

Areas of need for LBT

There are still various areas where there is a need for more knowledge and training on LBT

- Training of engineers on adaptation of technology related to LBT
- Supervising contracts
- Development of new course material for new areas of need, and the integration of core material from existing courses to create new and improved courses.

In the development of new curricula, KIHABT and KTC have found that they have to develop curricula for new products for which there is no existing curricula e.g. contractor supervisors course. If this is to be done for international clients as international curricula it is felt that it will require more than the internal capacity to ensure standards are met. An international organisation like ASIST would be required to provide secondary support in the development of the courses and the validation and quality control of the courses.

What could be done better

ASIST was offering a product to programmes that has been accepted as very useful and important. Some of the funding to the programmes should have been used to sustain the work that the ILO was doing there, i.e. develop a sustainable funding support system. The donors could have put a certain percentage of their funding to respective programmes towards the sustainability of the product that ASIST is providing to that programme to ensure sustainability. This would make the service less vulnerable to donor climates and moods. Sustainability of training has been secured through institutionalising it within KTC. Some products are not that easy to sustain, e.g. information services.

The ASIST programme was created by and for the use of local clients housed under the ILO. The split of ASIST from Nairobi to Harare, Zimbabwe, was made with no reference to the client for whom the service was created. The clients conviction is that the whole initial move to Harare was not made in the spirit that ASIST was created, and it was not in the interest of the user. It was felt that it was done for the convenience of the ILO carrying out organisational restructuring procedures. It was strongly felt that the net effect of this split in location was that there were two offices spreading out their capacities. In addition, at the time the split was made there were no really active labour-based works going on in Zimbabwe. Some LBT clients felt that the office should probably have moved to Dar es Salaam or Ethiopia where there are multi-disciplinary offices. The clients have at various forums repeatedly stated that the ILO/ASIST office should move to Nairobi. Despite this, the ILO seems determined to move the office to Harare.

There is a general observation that perhaps francophone Africa is not as privileged as anglophone Africa in having access to information, advisory support and training regarding LBT. It was suggested that ASIST should utilize the existing tools that have been developed for anglophone Africa and adapt these for use in francophone Africa.

Lessons learned

- Internationalisation of services requires a lot of expertise, resources and efforts.
- No one country has a monopoly on knowledge; sharing ideas facilitates more knowledge transfer and learning.
- International courses bring together LBT practitioners from other countries to share ideas and knowledge.
- The advantage of ILO experts doing follow ups and evaluations of the courses, and confidently vouching for the product.
- To develop high quality training courses one needs the involvement of various institutions and organisations. In addition financial and technical support is also critical.

Credit goes to ASIST and the Swiss in this respect.

Editors Note

1 Prior to the split of ASIST in 1994, a consultative meeting was held in Kenya with the clients, partners and donors, at which the decision was reached to have an office in both Nairobi and Harare.
2 There is an MDT in Addis Ababa but not in Dar es Salaam. There is also an MDT in Harare.
3 The Appuis et Conseils aux Travaux d’Infrastructure pour l’Emploi et l’Entreprise en Afrique (ILO / ACTIF) programme provides similar services to ASIST for francophone Africa.

Interview with

Dr. Kofi Ampadu

Dr. Kofi Ampadu, the Co-ordinator of the African Universities Network provided an overview of the network’s activities. The African University Network is a loose interconnection of African Universities and other institutions involved in labour-based engineering, with the purpose of sharing resources such as teaching material, human resources through academic staff exchange visits, and research results and findings. There are currently eleven African universities and a number of other institutions involved:

African Universities

- The University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana
- The University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
- The University of Natal, Durban, South Africa
- The University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- Jomo Kenyatta University of Agricultural Technology, Nairobi, Kenya
- University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe
- University of Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda
- University College of Lands & Architectural Studies, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia
- Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique

Associated Institutions

- ILO-EMP / INVEST Branch, Geneva, Switzerland
- ASIST Nairobi, Kenya and Harare, Zimbabwe

continued on page 22
What of the future—more of the same or completely different? The signs are that the next phase of ASIST will be somewhere in between. A proposal is under preparation for a further three year programme (2001 – 2003). The exact level of funding for the future ASIST is not known and this will influence the range and nature of services which the new programme can be expected to deliver.

There are many aspects of employment intensive investments and improved accessibility that ASIST is working on at present, and these must continue and be further developed in the future phase. However the context in which we all work never remains static and there are new developments and challenges continually facing ASIST and ASIST partners.

In this short contribution to the Bulletin, I should like to outline the major areas that the next phase of ASIST is expected to address.

**Policy and legislative support for employment intensive investments**

ASIST aims to increase its support to partners in terms of working with them to create a conducive environment for promoting technology choice, employment friendly investments, labour standards, and small scale local enterprises. This favourable environment can best be achieved through national and regional level awareness creation, continued co-operation with universities and other higher level learning institutions, and the establishment of national level policy planning units and policy and legislation development.

This approach results from experience of successful projects and programmes on the ground being unsustainable due to lack of policy support at a central government level. However if policy makers are to be convinced, they will need to have access to demonstration sites or on-going programmes to experience the positive results of the employment intensive investment approach for themselves. This policy work has started under the present phase of ASIST, but will be given increased importance in the future.

**Strengthening of partnerships, particularly in light of decentralisation policies and in support of improvements in low-income urban areas**

With financial and capacity constraints often evident at local authority level, maximum use must be made of partnerships and local private sector capacities.

Partnerships can involve communities, private sector, local authorities and other branches of government, funders, professional institutions, workers’ organisations, and employers’ organisations. The thrust of ASIST’s work will be to develop the partnerships into formal arrangements and contracts to ensure that all partners are aware of their responsibilities and are bound by them.

**Introduction of appropriate planning systems and procedures at community and local authority levels**

This will continue the work already carried out on the development of Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP), and support the increased use of ‘bottom-up’ planning techniques in both the urban and rural settings. It will also expand the co-operation with universities and other institutions of higher learning.

**Appropriate technical standards and procedures developed to design, manage and maintain infrastructure works including good labour practices**

ASIST is traditionally seen as being a programme dealing with labour-based methods in rural road construction. From the above three points it should be clear that the mandate is now much broader.

Road construction and maintenance will continue to play an important part in the work of ASIST, due to the potential for increasing employment. However, in the future there will be a greater emphasis on spreading the employment intensive and local resource use approach to other infrastructure sectors, (i.e. agricultural infrastructure, water supply, sanitation, rural and urban
ASIST the future

access infrastructure). This will require awareness raising, training, technical advice, development and dissemination of guidelines. In addition this will be linked to the important work of diversification of the local labour-based contractors and the re-orientation and training of local consultants, in the use of local resources in diverse types of infrastructure.

The information base, capacity and skills are further developed

With the expansion of the use of labour-based methods to different types of infrastructure, the information needs for these sectors will need to be assessed and information proactively sought to fill the gaps. New and revised training courses will be developed with partner institutions to address gaps in the ever-evolving working environment both in the rural and urban sectors. Information sharing with ASIST-Asia and other EIIP specialists in francophone Africa and South America will continue, and demand is expected to rise.

Capacity increase and skills development is particularly relevant for the private sector, but also for the management skills required of the public sector in effectively tapping into these resources. In particular new emphasis will be placed on the re-orientation and training of consultants.

Research into suitable standards for rural and urban infrastructure and the implication for maintenance and whole-life cycle costs is an area which ASIST, in partnership with others, will be actively pursuing.

Systems for ensuring adequate flow of funds

In the past ASIST has concerned itself with the optimum use of funds once available. What is now anticipated is that ASIST will enter the debate with partners such as financial institutions and governments as to the deployment of funds at a national or regional level to optimise employment opportunities in the construction sector. As staff turnover in both government and donor agencies is very high, this is a continual process and cannot be viewed as a one-off initiative.

So, what else is new?

As can be seen from the above points the future work will involve many new partners and access and dissemination of information will be more demanding due to the location and diversity of partners. However, this is viewed as a pleasing challenge as it indicates the spread of interest in employment intensive investment.

ASIST will also continue the recent trend of developing more working relations and stronger connections with other parts of the ILO structure in addition to the EIIP Branch. There is increasing co-operation with the multi-disciplinary teams in the region and closer contact with the Regional Office in Abidjan. On a professional level, the increase in activity with regard to labour standards and social protection is enhancing links to the departments and specialists working in this area. This is also true for co-operation with enterprise development specialists, particularly in the urban sector.

The ILO now has an in-focus programme on crisis response and recovery, which focuses on the effects of crises (e.g. natural disasters, post conflict situations etc.) on employment and the interventions necessary to recreate employment opportunities during the recovery period. Links are being established with this programme, as there is a common goal to direct as much of the funding being offered for reconstruction to employment intensive interventions where appropriate.

Where will ASIST be?

Now this is a good question! The current proposal is to continue having a presence in East Africa (Nairobi), especially with links to KTC, and for the provision of information services. However there have been strong recommendations that all the advisers should work from one office allowing better synergies and complementarity of effort, and that the main information centre should be in the same office and available directly to them. At present it is suggested that this should be Harare, but keep watching for more news on that decision.

Who will be in ASIST?

Fresh job outlines will be created for the new programme, and while it is important to retain continuity and experience, it will also be important to match the job outlines to what the next phase of ASIST is expected to deliver.

The composition of the ASIST team continues to change as can be seen below:

Harare

Since the last Bulletin, Phillipa Tsiga has taken over the post of Administrative and Finance Assistant and is now keeping a close eye on the Harare expenditures and general financial situation.

With Phillipa in the administration office we have been joined by a new senior secretary, Luna Katiza, and she is working at the front desk with Mercy Nyamanhindi.

We have also been joined by Elias Madondo, a national professional from Zimbabwe, who is working as a Programme Officer.

On the technical side, we have been fortunate in engaging Dejene Sahle, from Ethiopia, as a Senior Technical Adviser.

Nairobi

Ann Obara has left ASIST to take up a more permanent situation in Nairobi, and we wish her all the best. At short notice, Violet Kwanda has replaced her and is now responsible for the administration and finance in the Nairobi office.

Angela Kaburu-Kang‘ethe is back in the Nairobi office at the end of her maternity leave and our congratulations to her and her husband on the birth of their baby boy.
ASIST Asia Pacific....

By Mike Shone, ASIST-AP, Bangkok

Participants at the ASIST-Asia Pacific review in October 1999, in Bangkok

...Two years of rapid response to increasing demands in the region that two thirds of the world's poor, or 900 million people, call 'home'...

ASIST-Asia Pacific was conceived in 1996 as part of a global ILO programme of development planning and development engineering, where local and national level technology interventions through better knowledge would lead to decent work, reduced poverty and better living environments.

The project was launched in May 1998 after a rapid preparatory and fundraising period during 1997 and is based in Bangkok with a small team comprising Mike Shone, Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), Chris Donnages, Senior Planning Specialist, Paul Munters, Associate Expert, (who replaced Jan Sakko when he transferred to ASIST-Africa in late 1999), Prayoonsri Likhitdechasakdi, Programme Assistant, and Supaporn Runtnavee, Project Secretary.

While conceived before the Asian financial crisis of mid-1997, the start of the ASIST-AP project coincided with a period of severe economic downturn, and rapid increases in unemployment and poverty. The demand for the services of ASIST started at a very high level and has remained so ever since, and yet the region is really the home of labour-based work methods with particularly strong traditions still in China and the Indian subcontinent.

The immediate response of the World Bank and other agencies to the Asian economic crisis was to activate Social Safety Net programmes involving 'mega' public works and 'greening' activities, providing short term employment. In the case of Indonesia more than three million persons have been engaged on World Bank and other such schemes with more than 500,000 in Jakarta alone. Many of these schemes in the so-called 'Padat Karya' programme were set up only to distribute income, and as engineering works they were often poorly planned, implemented and incorrectly targeted.

ASIST-AP was then invited to participate in later missions of the World Bank for reassessment of their 'public works' programmes in Indonesia and advised on a more sustainable and labour-based approach. In fact, with AusAID funding, the ASIST team has now worked with the Public Works Department (PWD) to develop programmes using labour-based (LB) methods which can employ 1.2 million persons from regular Public Works budgets, simply by gently moving the current equipment-based programmes towards more labour-based work methods and without radically changing current systems.

ASIST-AP has focused its attention on the institutionalisation of labour-based technology (LBT) in regular recurrent national works programmes. Apart from Indonesia, ASIST-AP has achieved important progress in the institutionalisation of LB methods in the Philippines where President Estrada has signed Executive Order 94/1999 that made labour-based, equipment supported (LBES) methods the technology of first choice. Work to support the institutionalisation of LBES methods in national programmes has become a key feature of ASIST-AP's work in other countries as well. The promotion of such programmes being based on special 'employment potential' studies. Targeted procurement reform is also quickly gathering support in the region.

ASIST-AP has been working in a total of 12 Asia Pacific countries but at the beginning of 2000, there were only four operational in-country projects with full-time project personnel: Cambodia, Laos PDR, the Philippines and Nepal.

ASIST-AP has established good links with both the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank as well as with DFID, Sida and AusAID, all of which are major development players in the region and are well disposed towards LBT in infrastructure works.

The second main focus of ASIST-AP has been local level planning or Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP), which has a significant and distinctly Asian character. With the appointment of Chris Donnages to ASIST-AP in February 2000, ASIST is already working on an expansion of IRAP activities with programme proposals now seeking funding in India, Bangladesh and Indonesia. IRAP-Asia is already at the forefront of local level planning initiatives in the region and is now being adopted as a national programme in the Philippines, Laos PDR and Cambodia.

The activities of ASIST-AP differ from those of ASIST-Africa because of the experience so far of relatively larger scale labour-based operations and the generally better-resourced situations of the Asian countries and their capacity for change.

LB Contractor training, as is currently being undertaken by the ILO in Cambodia for instance, does not require a great investment in plant and equipment, which are often available for hire in the local market. There is also a remarkable

1 From October 2000, Mike Shone will be stationed in Geneva as Senior Crisis Specialist. His replacement will be announced shortly. Keep yourself updated on the Web!
Ten Years of IRAP in the Asia-Pacific region

By Chris Donnges, ASIST-AP, Bangkok

The development of Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP) in the Asia-Pacific region started in 1989 in Aurora province, a remote province in the Northern Philippines. Working with the Provincial Planning and Development Office and an EU-supported area development programme, the ILO started studying rural household’s travel patterns and transport demands in order to identify priorities to improve rural transport.

This initial work was based on the work on rural transport and mobility in the late eighties to develop a rural transport planning discipline for Africa. The basics of this work were introduced in the Philippine pilot project. The project team working with this project soon agreed that the Asian political, economic and social context differed considerably from the African context and that a modified methodology had to be developed from an Asian perspective. This methodology became known as Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning or IRAP.

The initiation of the pilot project in the Philippines soon attracted the interest of the Philippine Government, and with the support of various donors such as USAID and the Netherlands the activities were extended to 15 more provinces. In the mid-90s it was assessed that the majority of priorities evolving from the planning process were actually implemented by Local Government Units (LGUs) using their own decentralised budget.

Other countries in the region became aware of the technology and requested assistance to pilot test the feasibility or adapted all or selected components of the IRAP approach with or without ILO assistance: Bangladesh (1992), Laos PDR (1995), Indonesia (1995), Sri Lanka (1997), Vietnam (1999), Cambodia (1999).

Different IRAP projects were supported by various donors to develop and strengthen special components related to the planning process such as:

- community participation in rural infrastructure development (UNDP/ESCAP)
- environmental considerations (ILO Geneva)
- rural road planning (Sida)
- gender (The Netherlands)
- Geographical Information System (GIS) (The Netherlands)
- ethnic minority considerations (UNDP).

As a result, a firm and technically sound methodology now exists which, with minor alterations, can be used in most countries throughout the Asia Pacific region. The trend towards decentralisation and the increased focus on poverty present an opportunity for the ILO to promote, develop and support its efforts to create employment and alleviate poverty in a sustainable manner.

IRAP has been identified in the Philippines and Laos as the preferred tool for rural infrastructure planning. Both countries foresee a nation-wide application in the next few years, and LGUs and donors now often base their investment decisions on IRAP priorities. Cambodia is rapidly expanding on its IRAP programme and seeks to integrate the procedures into new rural development programmes. Government requests for implementation of IRAP components in Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh and India have been developed into project proposals, and are awaiting donor support for further development, expansion and implementation. Initial contacts with Mongolia, China and Vietnam pointed out the potential of IRAP.

Donors in the region such as ADB, UNDP and Sida have indicated their interest to integrate IRAP planning tools into their supported rural development programmes. DfID recently approved co-funding of ILO’s ASIST Programme in the Asia-Pacific region, including the assistance to existing IRAP initiatives, and the development of new country programmes.

ASIST-AP will continue to develop its approach to IRAP through research and development and collaboration with ongoing projects and universities in the Asia Pacific region. In addition, an urban model will be developed for application in unplanned settlements.
ASIST-Asia Pacific review 1999

By Paul B. Munters, ASIST-AP, Bangkok

On the 26th and 27th of October 1999, the second regional review and planning workshop of the ILO Advisory Support, Information Services and Training project for Asia and the Pacific (ASIST-AP) took place in Bangkok, which was organised around the central themes Development, Infrastructure and Employment.

Assessed were the achievements since the launch of ASIST-AP in May 1998, the needs concerning the integration of labour-based technology into national and local infrastructure planning and programmes in key countries of the region, and new priorities and funding needs for the period until 2001.

The 40 participants included Government representatives from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand, representatives of key donors (ADB, AusAID, DFID, GTZ and Sida), local and international experts from ILO Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) projects and universities in the region, officials from ILO Geneva, and the staff of ASIST-AP. ASIST-Asia Pacific has demonstrated the potential of labour based technologies to create sustainable employment while achieving good quality standards of infrastructure works at competitive cost. Its contribution to private sector development, through local contracting, and to optimising the use of local resources and capacities has also been proven.

The workshop reviewed the contributions that ASIST-AP has made since its launch. It has been active primarily in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines, as well as in Vietnam, Nepal, Cambodia and Lao PDR, assisting Governments in the institutionalisation of labour-based technology in their planning and implementation of regular infrastructure works programmes, and providing support to specific initiatives where labour-based technology is being applied as part of local infrastructure development.

In its short life, ASIST-AP has established a solid network of partners and contacts in priority countries in the region, and has already added value to a number of existing national and local initiatives through its technical support services. It has clearly demonstrated the appropriateness of its approach and services to the needs of Governments and agencies working to maximise the impact of infrastructure investments on employment and local development.

Priorities for the future

In the near future, ASIST-AP’s activities will focus on four priority areas:

- advising and supporting countries in which planning programmes and labour-based works have been introduced and implemented as a strategy for development or poverty alleviation (Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam, Pacific Islands)
- linking ASIST-AP’s work with investment programmes of the major donors and financial institutions, in particular ADB and the World Bank
- expanding ASIST-AP’s information and training services on labour-based technology and accessibility planning, in particular through the creation of a website, and establishment of a Regional University Network.

Plea for Information

If any reader has information about, or experience with, constructing and rehabilitating small earth dams by labour-based methods, please contact ASIST Information Service.

Sustainable rural transport in Vietnam

By Paul B. Munters, ASIST-AP, Bangkok

In October 1999, a training course on ‘Sustainable Development of Rural Transport in Vietnam’ was organised with ASIST-AP at the Hanoi University of Transport and Communication (HUTC). A team of three ILO specialists from Laos, Cambodia and Thailand contributed to the course, with custom-tailored sessions on appropriate technologies, rural transport planning and small-contractor development, district officers and supervisors of the Ministry of Transport and Communication.

The general principles of labour-based appropriate technology, Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning, and small contractor development were explained during the course.

The HUTC is keen to continue the cooperation with the ILO in the following areas:

(a) Training of planning officers and supervisors on rural transport. This is to provide the necessary skills to manage projects on rural development.

(b) Offering engineering expertise and skills in carrying out rural transport projects.

(c) Offering knowledge and skills necessary in managing, exploiting and maintaining rural roads. The purpose is to (i) transfer knowledge of appropriate management methodology in utilising the rural transport system, and (ii) supply necessary skills in maintaining and repairing roads.

The ASIST-Asia Pacific team is currently examining ways of being further involved in rural transport programs in Vietnam.
## Forthcoming events

### Eighth Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners, Cairo, Egypt, 15 – 19 October 2000.

**Fee:** US$550 includes participation in all sessions, site visits to projects, seminar papers, proceedings, lunches, morning and afternoon refreshments, transport and reception. It excludes international travel, insurance and hotel accommodation. Registration deadline is 1st October 2000.

**Contact:** The Social Fund for Development (SFD)

Address: 8 El Aanab Street
Mohandesseen, Giza
Egypt-12311
Tel: +202-3380971
Fax: +202-3380970
Email: regi8@sfdegypt.org

### IHS courses

**MA in Urban Management** (in collaboration with the Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands)

**MSc in Urban Environmental Management** (in collaboration with Wageningen Agricultural University, The Netherlands)

**MSc in Urban Housing Management** (in collaboration with Lund University, Sweden)

The 16 month Master Degree programmes start in September each year.

**Contact:** Institute of Housing and Urban Development (IHS)
Tel: +31-10-402-1560
Fax: +31-10-404-5671
Email: admission@ihs.nl or ihs@ihs.nl

### WEDC

**Distance Learning**

WEDC now offers the following modules by distance learning at a fee of £800 each:

- **Community Management**
- **Low-cost sanitation**
- **Urban Infrastructure**
- **Water and Environmental Health**
- **Water for Low-income Communities**

**Contact:** WEDC Institute of Development Engineering
Tel: +44-1509-222885
Fax: +44-1509-211079
Email: WEDC@lboro.ac.uk

### Intech Associates


**Fee:** US$4,150 includes tuition material, accommodation and meals, site visits and local transport.

**Contact:** Andreas Beusch
Intech Beusch and Co., Switzerland
Tel: + 41-81-353-7975
Fax: + 41-81-353-7976
e-mail: abeusch@spin.ch

### KTC courses

**Pilot-course for Site Supervisors**

Labour-based Community-Managed (LBCM) Upgrading of Urban Low-Income Settlements. The first Basic course will be held in Kisii, Kenya from 13th November – 1st December, 2000.

Kisii Training Centre (KTC) and Kenya Water Institute (KEWI) are developing a new training-programme in Kenya with assistance from ASIST, Intech Beusch and TES Consultants. The target group is Site Supervisors from communities, municipalities, and contractors. The aim is to equip site supervisors with the knowledge and skills to supervise urban infrastructure upgrading projects in low-income settlements. The training programme is divided into two courses each lasting for three weeks. The objectives for the courses are:

1. **Basic Course**

At the end of this course the trainee will have acquired the basic skills and knowledge, and have improved attitudes, to carry out day-to-day site supervisory work under guidance using LBCM approaches.

2. **Skills Course**

At the end of this course the site supervisors will have the skills and knowledge to supervise and execute urban infrastructure works using LBCM approaches.

### Roadworks courses

**Engineers' course in labour-based road construction and maintenance,** 9 October – 18 November 2000, Kisii Training Centre, Kisii, Kenya.

**Fee:** US$5,900 includes tuition, field visits, practical training, course materials, transport, meals and accommodation.


**Fee:** US$4,200.

**Senior Technicians' course in labour-based road construction and maintenance,** 9 July – 11 August 2001, Kisii Training Centre, Kisii, Kenya.

**Fee:** US$5,200.

**Engineers' course in labour-based road construction and maintenance,** 8 October – 17 November 2001, Kisii Training Centre, Kisii, Kenya.

**Fee:** US$5,900.

The fees include tuition, field visits, practical training, course materials, transport, meals and accommodation.

For the above courses contact:

- The Resident Instructor
  - PO Box 2254, Kisii, Kenya
  - Tel/fax: +254-381-21634 or Tel: +254-381-30699
  - Email: KTC@form-net.com.

### ESAMI courses

**Road Maintenance Planning and Management,** 6 November – 1 December, 2000, ESAMI Headquarters, Arusha, Tanzania.

**Contact:** The Admissions Officer, ESAMI
PO Box 3030, Arusha, Tanzania.
Tel: +255-57-828688
Fax: +255-57-828689
Email: esamilib@habari.co.tz
Workshop on labour policies and practices

By Ida Chimdenza, ASIST Harare

This workshop was held in Windhoek on 15–16 February 2000. It is the second in a series of national workshops on labour policies and practices. The first workshop was held in Zambia in November 1999. Forty-five participants who included government officials, contractors, social security authorities and ILO representatives attended it. The objective of the workshop was to provide a forum within which the role players in the Namibian labour-based sector could discuss the challenges posed in the area of labour policies and practices with a view, ultimately, of reaching a consensus on how these challenges should be addressed.

In Namibia, labour-based methods have been in use since 1991. In 1995, the ILO produced a report (later published as a guide in 1995), which discussed the application of labour standards. The guide also made several suggestions towards the improvement of labour standards within the labour-based roads sector. In 1999, the White Paper on Labour-based Works Policy was approved by Parliament. It aims to guide the various economic sectors to meaningfully use the available human resources through labour-based works.

The main issues discussed during the workshop were on labour standards, social protection, and social dialogue. The participants identified the following problem areas under each topic.

Labour standards

The discussions and recommendations in this group covered the following issues: severance pay; the payment of overtime; public holidays and Sundays; payment of sick leave; annual leave; occupational health and safety; collective agreements; and meal breaks.

Social Protection

This group focused on the issues related to the provision of social security coverage for labour-based workers. The main issues under this were on the: registrations under the Social Security Commission (SSC); registration fee; contributions to Social Security; access to Social Security; receiving benefits from the SSC; the coverage of adult family members assisting the employee to perform tasks.

Social dialogue

The concerns of the group were centered on communication problems between various players in labour-based works including, client and contractor, and contractor and labour-based workers. They also discussed affirmative actions for female contractors and people with disabilities. Lastly, the group recommended that the labour-based workers form organised groups to enable collective bargaining.

A full report on the workshop is available from the ASIST library.

Impact of ASIST Bulletins

By Peter Bentall, Consultant, UK

The Bulletin, a variety package of useful information mostly contributed by practitioners in the field, and thankfully not all male engineers. Whether it has been practical designs for tools and equipment; advice on giving training presentations; discussion of contracting issues; publications reviews; training course details, or, most usefully, details of the projects ongoing in the various countries, there is nothing that I have been inclined to ignore as being of no interest.

As a private consultant I am often asked ‘if I know someone who can...?’, and the information of who is doing what, and where, has often helped to identify people who may be available for the next project.

From the first issue, highlighting Roads 2000 in Kenya, the traditional ‘rural roads’ emphasis has developed into other areas such as urban works, rural transport, gender considerations, accessibility planning, and environmental issues—to mention a few. Each Bulletin has a theme and a useful centre-fold, which in themselves form a valuable reference collection, and for those who also receive the documented Proceedings of the Regional Seminars, it would be impossible to say that practitioners lack any resources for doing their jobs and promoting the technology.

Only one topic I think that has so far not received sufficient attention is ‘research’—into construction standards; cost comparisons; contractors profitability; impacts on local communities; economic impacts and so on. We claim so many benefits of labour based construction technology; we are hard pressed to prove them.

So is there anything to criticise? If all this information and collated experience of labour-based works resides within ASIST and is expounded in the Bulletin, how is it that many projects still seem to be trying to reinvent the wheel? Are the project personnel—local and/or expatriate—making the best use of this wealth of valuable material? My personal view is that they are not.

Bulletin 6 for example introduced the flywheel-crushing machine and we’ve seen it demonstrated at the Regional Seminar—but how many projects operate them? Some Advisers still seem unaware of their existence. Why also are we still having so much trouble with tractor hitches when the problem has been discussed endlessly? The value of good hand tools has been continuously emphasised but in which country has a local tool making industry been developed?

The fault lies with us—the end users. We are not communicating; interacting; networking (?) Whatever happened to the Letters page in Bulletins (not seen since No. 2). So many good ideas from various sites I visit never get shared.

Does the Bulletin reach the right people—not just us ‘the believers’ but also the decision-makers—project formulators—the donors and funders?

Do we need an ASIST ‘Lovebug’ to swamp the internet? ’new century’—’new guard’—’new communications technology’—time for me to ‘bow out’?
The successful implementation of LBT rural roadworks and their positive impacts in the countries where ASIST has worked, would not have been possible without the very fruitful partnerships and collaborations ASIST has developed with the governments, NGOs, community organisations, consultants, contractors, universities, training institutions within these countries, and the donor community. As ASIST expands into new and existing sectors it is hoped that these partnerships will continue to flourish and new ones be developed.

Interview with Jairos Mavhiza, Consultant, Zimbabwe

Mr Jairos Mavhiza has been working in both the public and the private sectors of the labour-based (LB) industry for the past 14 years, based mainly in Zimbabwe, and a few years in Mozambique. Currently, he is a Planning Engineer under the Labour-based Advisory Unit in Zimbabwe. In 1991 he received on-the-job training during the pilot project for LB road construction which included hands-on training. He attended the Kisii International Engineers course in 1992 and has participated in several workshops, seminars and conferences on labour-based technology (LBT).

Development of Local Consultants

Zimbabwean consultants comprise a team of former small-scale consultants and former government employees who were selected by a board. They were trained to take up the role of supervision and quality control on LB sites, but due to limited resources such as financial, transport and access to laboratories, their involvement in major LB works is currently minimal. When the programme for the establishment of these consultants was set up, it focused on the technical aspects of preparing the would-be consultants for their job and little attention was paid to other issues such as the provision of resources. The Government has got plans to address this situation.

Role of ASIST

ASIST has been active in the promotion of LBT and is a good source of information on the subject. As a neutral body, ASIST has been in a good position to advise governments, compared to other institutions or individuals.

ILO should be more involved in the orientation/induction of site managers in order to give a more thorough explanation or briefing of concepts. This is important to avoid diversion from proper LB operation procedures by the implementors. ASIST should also act as a vetting body for LB operations for standards control. There is a big potential for LB in Africa. LBT should be introduced in secondary schools and expanded in tertiary institutions so that the people are aware of the technology early in life. More effort needs to be put towards sensitizing policy makers so that they accept and implement LBT. In Zimbabwe, LB methods are becoming more appropriate due to the devaluation of the currency and the shortage of foreign exchange.
Towards the end of 1999 the duration of the project titled Application of Labour-Based Methods in South Africa (SA) came to a close. During the project period terms of references for various studies and research proposals were developed. It is believed that the results of these studies and research activities would help the government in the formulation of appropriate strategies and policies directed to the use of labour-based methods in the construction sector. A project document was prepared to carry out these studies, research activities and to provide support to various groups including support to organised labour and emerging contractors.

The National Department of Public Works (NDPW) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) participated in the development of the project document, and UNDP agreed to provide funding. The project document was signed at the end of January 2000. The first activity carried out by the project was organising an all-inclusive workshop focusing on South Africa’s experience on the development of emerging contractors. The workshop, organised in collaboration with the National Roads Agency (NRA), attracted participants from government departments, the private sector (consultancy and contractors) and the emerging contractors themselves. A wide range of constraints were raised at the workshop including access to equipment, and financial support. The government acknowledged the constraints and promised to address them.

The NDPW is leading government’s effort in addressing past imbalances in the construction sector. It has developed a procurement document titled Targeted Procurement (TP) (the use of public sector procurement as an instrument of social policy), to be used as a means to redress the imbalances. TP is part of the bidding document and complements the standard instructions to bidders. It specifies the minimum goals, e.g. level of employment generation, participation of selected target groups, etc., that have to be included in the bid and sets an incentive mechanism for incorporating the specified goals higher than that of the minimum levels. This will enforce government’s policy of redressing the imbalances using public works with the ultimate goal of covering the whole construction sector.

NDPW, in collaboration with ASIST, would like to carry out an assessment of TP. The assessment will cover wider issues including policy, implementation and training requirements. The assessment is timely in the context of the South African government’s intention to share this approach with other Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries.

Northern Province

The Northern Province (NP) is characterised by very high unemployment and this is likely to increase due to the various restructuring of the management of state assets. The provincial administration has developed policies and strategies which emphasise job creation and infrastructure development. At the request of the Northern Province Roads Agency (NPRA) ASIST fielded a consultant to prepare a proposal for the development of small scale contractors who will participate in job creation and infrastructure maintenance in the province.

The proposal has been presented by NPRA to the local office of the Department for International Development (DfID) for funding the project. DfID SA in principle agreed to fund the project. The project plans to train emerging contractors who will be participating in the maintenance and rehabilitation of low trafficked roads. The training includes theoretical and practical training on labour-based methods of road maintenance and construction and business administration. The Department of Rural Roads (DRR), Lesotho, has been identified as the main training provider as it has wide experience in the training of contractors using labour-based methods. DRR has suitable field practice training sites close to the training centre.

Project appraisal will be carried out during June – July 2000 so that the project commences before the end of the year. The project implementing team together with NPRA will be addressing some important issues that are key to the success of the project. Some of the issues include access to equipment and loans, appropriate procurement documentation, the role of financial institutions in supporting the programme, possible relaxation of government financial rules, and design and adoption of appropriate standards, etc.

Labour-based roadworks in South Africa
training

continued from page 12

- ILO/EAMAT (Eastern Africa Multidisciplinary Advisory Team), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Loughborough University (MART Project), Leicestershire, UK
- Labour Intensive Works Unit (LIWU), Kampala, Uganda
- Department of federer Roads (DFR), Accra, Ghana
- International Institute of Infrastructural Hydraulic Environmental Engineering (IHE), Delft, The Netherlands

The idea for a network came about during the fourth ASIST regional seminar for labour-based practitioners held in Johannesburg, South Africa, where a group of university representatives held a brainstorming session to see how various universities with an interest in labour-based engineering could support each other. This idea was developed further during a similar meeting held after the fifth regional seminar in 1996 in Accra, Ghana, and thereafter an informal network was initiated. After the sixth regional seminar in 1997 held at Jinja, Uganda, the network was formalized and a co-ordinator appointed. The network has since been gathering momentum.

The ILO has been the ‘prime mover’ of the network, facilitating forums for meetings at the various regional seminars, as well as acting as a mediator between the donors and the universities. The ILO has also been responsible for contracting the development and publishing course materials now in use by various universities and institutions.

**Achievements**

- A number of universities have successfully incorporated elements of labour-based engineering into their undergraduate curricula, such as Kumasi, Witwatersrand, and Dar es Salaam.
- Through the network academic visits have been coordinated, academic staff from the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania to the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agricultural Technology in Kenya, and from University of Natal to the University of Witwatersrand.
- The network has published and disseminated four newsletter issues and is currently working on the fifth. This newsletter acts as the primary mode of information dissemination, providing the universities with an opportunity to share research results. The recipients include all the ten universities, who in turn disseminate it to their own set of contacts, other member institutions, ILO programmes, as well as donor institutions. Though no formal survey has yet to be conducted to assess the value of the newsletter, the coordinator has received enquiries and requests for copies from a variety of readers both within and outside the region.

**Future development of the network and the role of ASIST**

The network should continue to play a role in:

- linking academic institutions together and facilitating the sharing of the limited resources available. The network should assess and establish a database of available human resources in the region and act as a clearinghouse. The database should consist for academics involved in LBT, and resource persons in general. It should consist of personal information, information about his/her educational background, his/her area of specialization (in general), the specific area of expertise in labour-based engineering (e.g. theory of labour-based engineering, productivity measurements, contracting, urban works, rural roads, financing etc.). This information will be kept and updated by the network coordinator. When a university needs help in an area, they can approach the coordinator who will go through the database and make suggestions of the appropriate person to contact.
- mainstreaming of labour-based engineering as a recognized discipline. This could only be achieved through strategic planning and some restructuring of the network with input from the ILO. The current operation of network presupposes that labour-based engineering is already well-known, accepted and practiced but this is not always the case. There is a need for greater physical contact of those involved to build up expertise within the region, and to organize and build up research and syllabii. ILO/ASIST could assist in sourcing funding and in planning.

**Challenges in establishing a viable network within the African environment and how they could be overcome**

- The main mode of communication for the network is email, it therefore depends upon a reliable telecommunication network which is not always the case in Africa. In recent years there has been some improvement in this area.
- Timelines of information flow between network members has also been a challenge. In most African countries where academic staff are not very well remunerated, the academic staff often seek additional sources of income. Their attention and time is therefore divided which affects their responsiveness towards network activities.
- Mainstreaming labour-based engineering in curriculum to bring it in line with other disciplines is another major challenge. For this to be achieved the policy environment within which the technology is operating needs to be amenable. A certain amount of advocacy work is necessary first at the donor level and then at the government level, as donors have a strong influence on African economies. Governments need to be committed to considering labour-based technologies to solve the problems of poverty, provision of infrastructure and unemployment. This advocacy work could be carried out by ILO/ASIST.

**ASIST Website Update**

The ASIST-Africa and ASIST-AP websites are now housed under the EIIP website.

Visit the ASIST websites at: www.iolo.org/asist

for more information on the EIIP go to:

www.iolo.org/employment/eiip

**Lessons learned**

To establish a viable network appears simple but to be successful requires a lot of time, effort and commitment. It may not be an overnight success but do not give up!!


(undergraduate course; Postgraduate course; Orientation course and; Audio-visual material for courses on labour-based road engineering)
**Impact of ASIST on PUSH**

By Simon Kunda, PUSH, Zambia

The urban food for work project, Programme Urban Self Help (PUSH), was initiated to cushion the effect of the structural adjustment programme that was introduced by the Government of Zambia in the early nineties. The programme targeted the less privileged in low-income urban settlements. The objectives of the programme were twofold: to alleviate poverty and to upgrade the infrastructure in low-income settlements. The approach used to achieve the above objectives was through the concept of food for work. Labour-based technology (LBT) was applied to improve the existing infrastructures in low-income areas so that the residents of the settlements could participate in the Programme. This creates a sense of ownership among the residents of the infrastructure created. ASIST played an active role in the implementation of the programme especially in the provision of technical expertise. In 1991 and 1992 the ILO conducted a training course on labour-based road construction works for the technical staff in Lusaka and in the Copperbelt in Ndola. The course was especially beneficial to the road site technicians and engineers who had very little knowledge of labour-based road construction approaches.

In 1996 ASIST participated in developing the Food for Assets Programme document, which is a more sustainable programme compared to the food for work programme.

PUSH has received publications and manuals on labour-intensive works from the ASIST office in Nairobi, Kenya. The information has helped PUSH to improve its strategies in implementing LBT works in low-income settlements in Zambia. PUSH has also been able to use the information as guidelines to develop work norms for certain activities carried out during upgrading of infrastructure in squatter settlements.

PUSH established community-based contractor groups in order to find lasting benefits for its programme participants. It is expected that the local authorities will hire the trained groups to carry out routine maintenance works on assets created in low-income settlements and other public works when the need arises. Through exchange visits, workshops and training programmes, PUSH has learnt a lot from ASIST especially with regards to community contracting, community-managed and labour-based upgrading of low-income settlements. PUSH had the privilege to learn and share experiences from the success of the Hanna Nassif project in Kinondoni district in Dar-es-Salaam during the International Training Course for Engineers and Town Planners held from November 1-12, 1999 in Tanzania.

The impact of ASIST on PUSH has been beneficial and we are confident that the collaboration will continue so that the urban food for work programme is converted into a more sustainable programme.

---

**Malaba Town Council — Impact of ASIST**

By Joseph Agingu Sweta, Malaba Town Council, Uganda

Malaba town has benefited from training received from the ASIST supported Kisii Training Centre (KTC).

**Road works**

Malaba town has only one tarmac highway; the rest of the roadwork is of earth or murram roads. Almost three-quarters of Malaba town is rural-urban.

In the past a grader or bulldozer used to be hired to open roads for the community. However, this has been overtaken by use of manual labour works. The Council has opened rural access roads totalling 96 kms. The labour force for these works has been hired from the local community the road is serving. This has proved to be cheaper than hiring equipment. It has also made it easier for the community to see the importance of the road and ensures maintenance and sustainability.

Overall, the Council realised that it saved 50% when it used local manual labour input compared to equipment based inputs. The council has been funding this activity from its internal revenue collections and funds from the Central Government.

**Drainage works**

After training at the Kisii Training Centre in Kenya, the advantages of LBT was realized. The council started to excavate trenches for storm water drainage systems using LBT. It has so far excavated a trench totalling four kilometers. It is hoped that by the end of this exercise the town will be free of stagnant water and impassable roads.

**Building construction and sanitation**

Other activities influenced as a result of the KTC/ASIST training have been building construction, where community contracting is encouraged, and sanitation improvement works, where LBT methods are being tried.

**Project costing and evaluation**

KTC/ASIST training has improved the council's project costing and evaluation practices.

**Advantages of labour-based technology**

- Reduction in cost of the project
- Economic standards of the community are uplifted
- Labour is readily available
- Sustainability and maintenance easier
- Community moral is boosted as they accept the project as theirs
- Work can proceed at any given season of the year
- Unemployment reduction and hence criminal rate reduced
- Applicable in a wider range of land varying from rocky to very weak and marshy areas.
Egypt’s Social Fund for Development (SFD)

Labour-based contractor training programme

By Carl E. Berentsen, I.T. Transport Ltd., Egypt


Within this framework the immediate objectives of the project are defined as:

- To contribute to employment creation through improved social services and improved physical infrastructure, which particularly are benefiting poorer segments of the population of Upper Egypt.
- To increase the capacity of the SFD to serve as a vehicle for long term poverty alleviation.

SFD has implemented a large number of LB projects throughout the country since 1992. However, the Danida funded contractor training programme is the first SFD project which follows a defined, systematic programme in training of contractors in labour-based technology on water, roads and irrigation projects. This is done through a carefully selected combination of theory and practical exercises, largely following formats successfully implemented by ILO and UNDP on a number of similar projects. This training programme is presently scheduled from year 1997 through January 2001.

The initial outline of SFD’s new contractor training programme in labour-based technology was prepared in 1997 by I.T. Transport Ltd. and Carl Bro Management. An outline for a programme to train 150 new small scale contractors was completed, including a draft standard curriculum for a three-batch national modular training programme.

In December 1997, Danida entered into TA Agreements with Carl Bro Management (with I.T. Transport as sub-consultant) and SFD to further develop, implement and monitor the new labour-based programme throughout Egypt. To assist the TA team and SFD, a local consultancy contract was awarded to Chemonics Egypt in August 1998.

Each ten-month module comprises a progressive integration of theoretical and practical sessions, through a careful four-step selection of candidates, and inputs by international experts at various critical points of the programme. A total of seven such visits have been made from August 1998 until May 2000.

The initial reference material were publications by the ILO. The six ‘Improve Your Construction Business (IYCB)’ manuals were translated to Arabic, and will be published later this year.

More than 16 tailor made training manuals were developed in Arabic by the training consultant in cooperation with other experts. These will all be available as quality training documents on similar programmes in other Arabic speaking nations.

Nine tenths of the trainees who successfully completed the final sub-contracts from the first two batches of the programme are now members of Egypt’s Contractors Union (Grade 7) and are proceeding with their new career by tendering for projects independently.

In parallel to training of new contractors in LB methods, SFD and their consultants are also merging these efforts through a systematic workshop programme and sub-contractor scheme with ‘established’ contractors; i.e. contractors who are already registered with SFD on a national scale.

At this point it is estimated that SFDs training programme will have created more than 400,000 work days by the end of the programme, with total contract amounts (LB subcontracts and main contracts) in excess of US$ 8 million.

The expected results from this programme should reach more than 230 LB contractors of various sizes, plus 30 oriented NGOs trained/or introduced to the technology in a period of only two to two and a half years.

From the early stages of SFD’s LB training programme, the project claimed large international interest. This was initially done through employment of a range of international training experts, but also through close contact with the ILO and other organisations.

SFD and the training consultant were represented at the Seventh Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners in Zambia in May 1999. As a result from a poll taken among the participants in Lusaka, it has now been agreed that SFD will host the next conference in Cairo from October 15 to 19, 2000 and more than 500 letters of invitation have been sent out.

Welcome to Cairo!!!

Irrigation canal covering project in upper Egypt

photo by Carl Berentsen