

THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED ADVICE OFFICES OF SOUTH AFRICA

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The CAO sector will be enriched with the establishment of ACAOSA, the Association of Community-based Advice Offices of South Africa, later this year.

ACAOSA will differ from its predecessors, as the organisation will directly support the provincial forums as they continue to co-ordinate the work of CAOs on the ground. ACAOSA will serve as an operational body, unifying the sector through national leadership and committees. The organisation will work effortlessly to act as the national voice for community-based advice offices, focusing on the interests and issues that impact the current 320+ advice offices in all 9 provinces.

2013 has proven to be a significant year for ACAOSA. The year began with provincial meetings that included all forums in their respective provinces. The meetings were an opportunity to bring the provincial forums onboard with the strategic intervention processes currently managed by Nadcao. The meetings were fruitful as a consensus was formed on the roadmap (outline by the National Working Committees) detailing the establishment of ACAOSA. The provincial forums also used the meetings to hold their first engagement of the year.

Following the provincial meetings, two General Council meetings were held in Mpumalanga and Northern Cape in order to address the process of electing leadership into the provincial forum structures. The meeting was a success as the process was finalised and both respective provinces received newly elected leadership into their provincial structures.

On 15 March, ACAOSA, in conjunction with Nadcao and the Technical Support and Dialogue Platform (TSDP), held an inception meeting with the 18 National Working Committee members at the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre in Johannesburg. The initial meeting aimed to achieve the following: discuss the nature of the leadership programme; outline a programme of action with ACAOSA leadership; and establish sub-committees to lead specific programme areas and action tasks.

From the initial meeting, the following priority areas were identified:

- Strategy development and implementation
- Communications (internal and external)
- Building of the organisation
- Conflict management and mediation

Stemming from the outcomes and deliverables of the inception meeting in March, ACAOSA held its first official leadership retreat in Johannesburg on the 27-30 of May.





During this 3-day workshop, 18 National Working Committee members - appointed by their respective provincial forums - came to discuss issues and phases concerning the launch, establishment and sustainability of ACAOSA. In August 2013, the Interim Executive Committee will participate in a 2-week National road show that will involve all CAOs in the country, as they discuss the progress in the development of ACAOSA.

From the initial meetings, the following preparatory groundwork was identified:

- Registering ACAOSA as a legal entity;
- Fundraising for the establishment of ACAOSA;
- Drafting the Constitution, standard of operation, code of conduct and MOUs;
- Working towards an interim board of directors and executive members;
- Working on the marketing, branding and profiling ACAOSA; and
- Ensuring proper communication with relevant parties.

In addition to resource mobilisation, NADCAO and TSDP will work together to help build ACAOSA. Among the list of tasks and responsibilities is the establishment and management of the CAO Sustainability Fund, which has received interest and financial pledges by donors and funders.

ACAOSA will substantially benefit the sector, enhancing aspects such as:

- Streamlined communication from the national level to the individual CAOs;
- Unified campaigns and strategic opportunities;
- Strengthened interaction and networks;

- Regulating the quality and standard of training;
- Increased participation;
- Fundraising support; and
- Involvement in leadership processes.

The role of Nadcao:

Nadcao will support ACAOSA by conducting engagements and consultative meetings with the leadership core as well as key stakeholders and partners. Under a Secretariat role, Nadcao has helped to facilitate the election of 4 individuals to form the Interim Executive Committee and Nadcao will work with this and other Committees to develop, among others, a communications strategy that will ensure that CAOs are at the forefront of their own development, growth and sustainability.

'There is immense value in Community Advice Offices; their role is profound. They help to advance democracy and are places where people are known and trusted. They have networks, contacts and are best suited to facilitate community consultation, discuss issues of development and encourage public participation.'

Janet Love, South African Human Rights Commission.

ACAOSA Leadership:

National Working Committee of 18



Interim Executive Committee:



John Moerane

Lucille February

Nobuzwe Mofokeng

Seth Mnguni

The launch of ACAOSA will take place on 28 November 2013. The new leaders of the advice office sector will be unveiled at the event.