



JOHANNESBURG INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SERVICES (JISS)

VISION

Championing child and family rights.

MISSION

To protect, uplift, promote and sustain the holistic well-being of children, families and communities through the provision of caring, proactive and empowering social services.

VALUES

- **PROTECTING CHILDREN:** The safety and protection of children is a core value.
- **PROMOTING FAMILY VALUES:** The belief that the family system is integral to the holistic development and well-being of children and therefore strives toward the promotion of family values, family strengthening and preservation.
- **DIGNITY & RESPECT:** Respect for the dignity, uniqueness and diversity of every child and family.
- **EMBRACING DIVERSITY:** JISS is a non-denominational, non-racist and non-sexist organisation.
- **INTEGRITY:** Ethical conduct and integrity of staff and board members.
- **PROMOTING CONTINUOUS LEARNING:** Lifelong learning, leadership development and good governance.
- **CHAMPIONING HUMAN RIGHTS:** Human rights, social justice, equality, and pride in JISS' rich history and role in the freedom struggle.

PROFILE

The Johannesburg Institute of Social Services (JISS) is a child and family welfare institute that extends services to individuals, families and communities across the demographics of South Africa.

Child and Family Care Units operate from the two JISS Centres in Mayfair and Lenasia. JISS is the primary welfare organisation in these areas dealing with child neglect, child abuse and family problems affecting children.

The following is provided in the child protection and family care basket of services:

- Risk assessment of children in need of care and protection;
- Child Placement Services in temporary safe care, foster care and Children's Homes;
- Foster care screening, placement and supervision;
- Family Reunification Services;
- Referral with regard to application for identity documents and social grants;
- Child abuse awareness and prevention programmes;
- KINGA WATOTO volunteer programme focusing on orphaned and vulnerable children;
- Senior Citizens' Luncheon Clubs.

Included under the JISS banner is a day care centre, the JISWA Profound Unit for severely mentally challenged children.

JISS is an important centre for the training of student social workers, social auxiliary workers and psychology students who do their practical work under the supervision of JISS' social work managers.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS SERVED

JISS-MAYFAIR

- Mayfair
- Homestead Park
- Mayfair West
- Crosby
- Slovo Park
- Brixton
- Pageview
- Vrededorp
- Vredepark
- Jan Hofmeyer
- Fordsburg
- Crown Mines
- Newtown
- Langlaagte

- Amalgam

JISS-LENASIA

- Lenasia (Extension 1-13)
- Lawley
- Lawley Plot
- Lawley Station

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JISS Centre – Mayfair

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JISWA Profound Unit

5 Suikerbos Street, Lenasia Extension 3

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Donations:

Johannesburg Institute of Social Services

First National Bank (Branch code: 252-505)

Account Number: 5031 001 0059



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Child Protection Organisation (CPO) Registration No.: 12/2/2/8/80

B-BBEE Status: Level 2

www.jiss.org.za



THE STORY OF JISS

For 91 years the Johannesburg Institute of Social services (JISS) has worked consistently to help the poor, destitute, sick and suffering members of the community, despite enormous setbacks and difficulties in a hostile society and political environment.

The organisation's leadership - with the steadfast support of the Indian community - has persevered overcoming incredible obstacles, most of which were deliberately put in its path by the apartheid government.

The story of JISS is thus linked to the turbulent history of Indians in South Africa.

INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 1885 legislation was introduced that was inspired by anti-Indian sentiment and founded on racial grounds. In terms of 'Law 3 of 1885' - the precursor of the Group Areas Act - Indians were residentially segregated into 'locations' and lost their trading and property rights. The implementation of this law set the course for a policy that determined almost every aspect of the lives of Indian people for the next 100 years.

Except for a very brief period when Indians first came to what was then the Transvaal, their lives were characterised by a continuing struggle against inroads made into their limited residential and property rights, and restrictions placed on their means of earning a livelihood.

It was under these conditions that The Johannesburg Indian Social welfare Association (JISWA) – the predecessor of JISS – was born.

PLIGHT OF THE INDIAN COMMUNITY

JISWA was a voluntary non-governmental social welfare organization established in 1934 to address the extreme poverty, poor nutrition and squalid living conditions suffered by the Indian community in Johannesburg after the Great Depression.

JISWA was born when the Indo-European Women's Association drew the South African Institute of Race Relations' (SAIRR) attention to the plight of the Indian community.

The Indo-European Women's Association had, as members, wives of some of the most prominent personalities of the time, and women who were leaders in their own right. Its president, Dr Agnes Winifred Hoernle, played an important role in getting JISWA off the ground, and guided JISWA's work for a further 25 years until her death in 1960.

The Indo-European Women's Association also enjoyed the patronage and support of the Lady Maharaj Singh, wife of the Agent General for the Government of India in S.A. The Kunwarani personally solicited financial aid both in South Africa and India at the time of JISWA's birth and continued to support the organisation during its formative years.

INADEQUATE SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES

The aftermath of the depression highlighted the plight of poor and destitute Indians, especially in larger urban centers of the Transvaal. Health and welfare services were under-developed to meet the needs of the country's population.

Prior to JISWA's establishment, only a few women's organisations and social welfare bodies – mainly of a religious and/or cultural nature - served the Indian community. Their fragmented efforts were inadequate to combat the increasing poverty and unemployment amongst Indians.

The time was ripe for an independent welfare organization to be established that would direct its attention solely 'to assist impoverished members of the Indian community in Johannesburg.'

The Indo-European Women's Association set up a special committee to investigate the best way of achieving that. Dr. Hoernle wrote a letter to the Executive Committee of the SAIRR explaining the predicament many Indians faced.

John Reinallt-Jones, the advisor to the SAIRR, sent a proposal to Kunwar Maharaj Singh in which he put forward the idea of forming a welfare body to serve the Indian people.

JISWA IS FORMED

The Kunwar supported the proposal, and Rheinallt-Jones wasted no time inviting all organisations interested in Indian welfare to attend a meeting. Shortly thereafter JISWA was formed. A constitution was formally adopted, office bearers were elected, and an executive committee was appointed.

JISWA was registered on the 13 August 1934 in accordance with the Charitable Institutions (Control) Ordinance 1926. Herman Kallenbach was appointed the first chairman of JISWA.

JISWA enlisted the co-operation and representation of all the known bodies working amongst the Indian community in Johannesburg, identified the existing socio-economic problems, and began mapping out a range of services. It was clear that JISWA had a mammoth task ahead of it, but a start had been made.

JISWA now had to embark on the serious business of raising money. Restrictions imposed on the day-to-day lives of all Indians, rich or poor, by legislative measures and state policy created a common purpose towards which the community could work.

At its inception, JISWA consisted of three pillars: health, welfare and educational services, and it aimed to serve all sections of the Indian community, irrespective of class, creed, religion, language or politics.

BEGINNINGS IN FORDSBURG

One of the first priorities was to raise the necessary funds to extend and intensify its relief services to destitute families. In 1935 a clinic for women and children - served by three doctors on a voluntary basis - was established in an old cottage at the corner of Lilian road and Bree Street in Fordsburg.

Three months later, the demand for JISWA's services was so great that a full-time nurse/social worker had to be employed.

This was significant because at the time very few voluntary welfare organisations employed full-time staff; there was no state subsidy to help welfare organisations employ qualified personnel; there were only a handful of trained social workers in South Africa; and JISWA was barely 6 months old.

Erna Katz - who came from Germany with experience in providing relief services to the poor - proved to be a godsend to JISWA. She dominated JISWA's work in the early days, became a much-loved personality and house hold name amongst the Indian community in Johannesburg, and went on to serve JISWA with dedication for almost 30 years until her retirement.

Sister Katz was responsible for investigating cases in need of relief, visiting the sick, attending to the clinic, as well as acting as a link between JISWA and other social welfare agencies.

ADDRESSING COMMUNITY ISSUES

JISWA also began looking into various issues affecting the community, for example, inadequate grants and old age pensions, youth unemployment, and the need for girls to be adequately educated. From the beginning the constant struggle to raise funds was present.

In 1935, as a direct result of JISWA's efforts - and in particular Dr.Hoernle's - a school for Indian girls was established in Vrededorp.

Following JISWA's establishment, several important developments took place in the administration and provision of health, welfare and educational services in South Africa.

A national conference was held in 1934 for all those interested in social welfare. This followed the publication of the report of the Carnegie Commission on the Poor White problem. In 1936 a National Conference on Social Work was held. Both conferences favoured the idea of a Department of Social Welfare and this was, in fact, established in 1937.

The publication of a report in 1936 by an Interdepartmental Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Neglect resulted in the introduction of the Children's Act 31 of 1937 to replace the Children's Protection Act 25 of 1913.

As South Africa began to recover from the depression and as urbanisation increased, other important developments included recognition by the State of work done by voluntary welfare organisations, and the development of a policy of partnership and joint responsibility between State and private initiatives in welfare.

RESPONDING TO PROBLEMS IN A DISCRIMINATORY ENVIRONMENT

JISWA's effectiveness during this period was largely dependent on the way it responded to these developments. It quickly became adept at serving a large urban community with major socio-economic problems compounded by discriminatory political policies and restrictive legislative measures.

By the end of the 10th year, JISWA's work was spread over a wide canvass. The organisation had been forced to quickly assume a wider role than it had originally planned: that of child welfare, health organisation, as well as a body dealing with various matters concerning the community's welfare.

By the time the Second World War ended in 1945, the strain of striving to maintain services and the constant battle of trying to make the authorities understand the needs of the Indian community, was beginning to tell.

Between 1945 and 1960 the deteriorating housing situation and continued restrictions on Indian land tenure were some of the deep-seated problems faced by the community.

Not only was there a major backlog in the building of houses, there was the added difficulty that no decision had been made by the authorities about the rights of Indians to own and occupy property.

However, assistance under the Disability Grants Act, the Old Age Pensions Act, the Blind Pensions Act and the Children's Act was extended to include all major race groups.

In 1946, as part of its welfare efforts for children, JISWA established a nursery school.

NEED FOR A HOSPITAL

From the outset JISWA had identified the need for a maternity home for Indian mothers as well as for the training of midwives. After the war JISWA resumed its representation to the Transvaal Provincial Administration. When in 1948 no suitable site for a hospital was found, plans were abandoned.

With the establishment of the Baragwanath hospital as a non-European facility JISWA attempted to obtain special facilities for children, as well as a maternity wing for Indian mothers.

By now, JISWA had developed sufficiently to occupy a central position in the lives of Indians in Johannesburg, and it also became an avenue through which services of other bodies could be extended to the community.

In 1960 Quintin Whyte, Director of SAIRR, was elected chairman of JISWA.

GROUP AREAS ACT BECOMES A REALITY

In the decade that followed, there was a great deal of conflict both within the broader South African community, and within the ranks of JISWA itself.

A new era for JISWA had begun. The direction of its work and activities were determined largely by the shift in the position of the Indian people from the restrictions of the Asiatic Land Tenure Act of 1934 to the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950.

As the implementation of the Group Areas Act gathered momentum, many areas, in which Indians lived and traded, were proclaimed white areas. Families were evicted and forcibly removed from their established homes and neighbourhoods.

The only area proclaimed for Indians was Lenasia, an area to the southwest of Johannesburg. Some schools in Fordsburg / Vrededorp were closed as a means of forcing people to Lenasia.

CONFLICT WITHIN JISWA

Existing hardships within the Indian community were compounded by anxiety over the future and having to adapt to their new surroundings. JISWA's attention was now focused on Lenasia.

In 1961 the Department of Indian Affairs was established entrenching the government's policy of separate development. At the same time, some members of the Indian community were tempted by officials to exploit the situation. A period of intensive and harsh application of the policy of separate development ensued.

As the 1960's progressed, differences in outlook had become evident within the JISWA's ranks.

As the political struggle became more covert (as a result of more detentions and bannings) some members of the Indian community saw JISWA as an avenue through which they could engage in meaningful community service.

It was inevitable this influx of new members would begin to question some of the existing members.

A NEW CONSTITUTION

JISWA's operations were reviewed and in 1963 a revised constitution was put in place. This formed the basis for JISWA's work in the decade that followed, and set the scene for change and new initiatives.

Hardships experienced by the Indian community uprooted to Lenasia forced JISWA to examine its service delivery. The organisation enlisted the services of the SA National Council for Child and Family Welfare to conduct a survey on the welfare needs of the Indian community and recommended ways JISWA could organise and strengthen its work in the areas of Lenasia and Kliptown.

The results of this survey highlighted the dire problems faced by the community and set in motion a series of changes that would alter the face of JISWA.

There was a need for better employment opportunities for semi- and unskilled workers; a reduction in rentals for state housing; better planning for housing; the provision of water-borne sanitation and concessions on rail-fares and electricity charges.

People also faced problems such as unsatisfactory transport and road infrastructure, a lack of postal and telecommunication services and police protection, inadequate schools and a range of issues pertaining to health and hospital services.

SPECIFIC FOCUS ON LENASIA

Over time JISWA's concerns progressively narrowed from a general approach - which embraced all spheres of the population's welfare - to specific aspects of health, welfare and education.

However, from the time JISWA accepted responsibility to serve Lenasia, the question of hospital and medical services for the population settling there received JISWA's special attention.

It was clear the authorities had no intention of building a hospital in Lenasia because Coronation Hospital had been specifically reserved for Coloured and Indian patients. However, JISWA continued to make an ambulance service between Lenasia and Coronationville a priority.

Sister Katz retired in 1964, and following a period of high staff turnover, Cassim Saloojee was appointed in 1967 as JISWA's first Director. It was under his leadership that JISWA achieved many of its significant milestones. In many ways - and for close to 30 years - Cassim Saloojee was JISWA.

A leader with drive and enthusiasm - and a vision for service to the community - Cassim Saloojee inspired staff, committee members and the broader community to make contributions to JISWA both in service and in kind. Over the years he confronted - and attempted to engage with - the authorities to try and improve the lot of the Indian community.

DEMAND IN LENASIA GROWS

JISWA's social workers began making regular visits to Lenasia in 1964 and this represented the first step towards JISWA's operations moving into Lenasia. As the demand for welfare services grew, it became necessary to have a physical presence there and it initially operated out of the Nirvana High School.

As the population in lenasia increased through forced removals of destitute families into the old military barracks, more difficulties - such as non existent sanitary facilities – came to light that needed attention. By 1968 JISWA had made some progress in obtaining civic amenities and essential health and educational services for the population of Lenasia.

JISWA negotiated with the Transvaal Association of Maternal and Family Welfare to establish family planning clinics in Johannesburg and Lenasia and made arrangements with the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board to hold immunisation clinics in Lenasia once a month.

JISWA's work became more defined around certain projects and services and people from all social, economic, and educational spheres began taking an interest in its work.

PLANS FOR A COMMUNITY CENTRE IN LENASIA

Early plans to establish a community centre in Lenasia, as well as a centre for mentally handicapped children captured the community's attention. In 1970 Dr. Whyte retired as chairman and he was followed by KJ Tavaria who had been on the executive committee since 1937. KJ Tavaria's successor was Mohammed M. Gardee. Both chairmen made valuable contributions to the organization.

In 1973, Essop S.Bhana, an astute businessman dedicated to community services, was appointed chairman. It was under his leadership that JISWA felt the impact of a new and more vigorous attitude to fund-raising. Essop Bhana has been involved with the association for more than 40 years, has served as chairman three times, and is currently vice chairman of JISS.

In the mid-seventies the executive committee was preoccupied with the planning of a multi-purpose community centre in Lenasia that would address many of the complex community problems from a single locality.

JISWA's ambition was to create a model that was not only unique for JISWA - and for Lenasia- but also for social welfare provision in the country.

The government of the day refused to allocate land to JISWA to build the centre because its services were offered to people of all races and not only to the Indian community. Other restrictions were applied to enforce compliance with prevailing race laws, but JISWA rejected them.

JISWA's battle ended in 1975 when Pastor Lubbe of the AGS Church agreed to sell JISWA a portion of the church's land in Suikerbos Street, Extension 3, Lenasia.

JISWA did not have funds to purchase the land, but each member of the executive committee personally contributed money so that JISWA could pay the deposit.

The church had intended to establish a crèche but it was convinced JISWA would utilize the land to benefit all sections of the community.

A DREAM BECOMES REALITY

The doors of the JISWA community centre in Suikerbos Street Lenasia were opened in 1978. However; it was the struggle for more than a decade even more than the complete project that speaks of JISWA's perseverance and determination in realising a dream.

The Valiamma Memorial Trust - established to commemorate the young girl who was the first martyr of Gandhi's Satyagraha (passive resistance) struggle - was one of the donors to the JISWA community centre. Her name has been immortalised in the complex's Valiamma Memorial Hall.

The Aisha Thokan Clinic at the centre was financed by the Thokan family in memory of their grandmother.

The JISWA Centre had a major impact on the organisations responsiveness to the needs of the community. It enabled a greater decentralisation of services and a change in focus from providing a range of direct services to encouraging interdisciplinary work.

The 1970's saw a considerable influx of people into Lenasia. JISWA was particularly concerned about the Greyville-Thomsville area, which consisted largely of people from economically and socially depressed backgrounds. At the same time the fight for Indian people to remain in Fordsburg/Mayfair was renewed.

JISWA began to cultivate greater community involvement in its work and invited distinguished people to speak at its functions. It also participated in conferences on child and family welfare, care of the mentally handicapped, and alcoholism.

JISWA CONSOLIDATES

JISWA's work grew in depth and dimension under Cassim Saloojee's direction, going beyond local relevance. The organisation began to make a positive contribution to issues of national importance.

JISWA's image in the wider welfare arena was enhanced, whilst at the same time, it was assimilating understanding, knowledge and expertise within its ranks.

This period was also characterised by a conscious effort to canvass the needs of the community and to facilitate the formation of new community service groups to deal with identified needs and problems.

By 1976 much of JISWA's efforts were directed at Lenasia although significant numbers of Indians still resided within the precincts of the city. JISWA petitioned the Minister of Police to establish a police station in Lenasia to help combat rising crime and, in 1977; a police sub-station operating out of a house was opened.

As JISWA's activities expanded, so did its need to raise additional funds. The organization held successful fetes and established a charity kiosk at the Oriental Plaza which was well supported.

By the 1980's JISWA had evolved into a versatile organisation with first-hand experience in serving an uprooted and relocated community with a wide variety of service needs.

It was this blend of stability and innovation that sparked greater community participation in its activities and ensured the effective marshalling of material support.

A strong community interest in JISWA's activities gave the leadership the confidence to develop a comprehensive welfare service. Dr.Essop Jassat was now chairman of JISWA and he continued in the role until the establishment of a new democratic South Africa in 1994 when he was elected to Parliament. Cassim Saloojee's lengthy tenure as JISWA Director also ended when he, too, was elected to Parliament.

Following a period of consolidation JISWA began to chart its future direction.

THE JISWA TRAINING CENTRE

Another major milestone achieved in the 1980's was the establishment of the JISWA Training Centre in Lenasia. This was the culmination of a dream that began in 1968, when it became evident there was a total absence of services for the assessment, care, training and education of mentally handicapped children.

By 1969 - with financial assistance from the Muslim Benevolent Society - JISWA had established a day-care centre for a few mentally handicapped children at the Patidar Hall in Fordsburg under the direction of Zohra Isane (Director of JISS from 1999- March 2008).

Zohra Isane was the driving force behind JISWA's pioneering efforts in establishing a structured environment where mentally challenged learners could be educated and trained. Rapid growth of the centre soon meant larger premises would be required and JISWA finally received permission in 1970 - after lengthy negotiations with government departments - to occupy unused classrooms in the Fordsburg Primary School.

In 1974 the Van Wyk Commission recommended that the education and training of several mentally retarded children be undertaken by departments of education serving the respective racial groups.

This included registering and subsidising training centers and schools established by voluntary welfare organisations. However, subsidies hinged on these institutions having permanent premises. JISWA believed the only long-term solution to the problem was to eventually establish a residential complex in Lenasia.

The JISWA Training Centre was registered in December 1975 and in 1977 Mahendra Singh, who had a background of work with mentally retarded children, was appointed principal.

EVICTED FROM FORDSBURG

The centre's existence was threatened by the removal of families to Lenasia as enrolment dropped dramatically, and imminent eviction from the Fordsburg Primary School over-shadowed all other concerns.

It was not feasible to move the centre to Lenasia because suitable premises were impossible to obtain and professional staff found traveling to Lenasia difficult. JISWA overcame these obstacles by transporting children to Fordsburg on a daily basis.

When JISWA was served with an eviction notice by the South African Railways at the end of 1978, the Lenasia Muslim Association came to its rescue making classrooms available in the Trinity Secondary School.

However, the situation was far from ideal because children and staff had to travel long distances to get there and a feeding scheme had to be established.

JISWA was unrelenting in its quest to obtain a permanent home for the school. It negotiated vigorously with the Department of Community Development for both temporary premises and a permanent site for the new school.

The development of the centre reached the stage where it was eligible to apply for a capital subsidy to build a comprehensive residential institution. In 1979 the Department of Indian Affairs allocated R1.5 million for 8.5 acres of land in Lenasia's Extension 9. This allocation was subject to JISWA raising an equal amount on a Rand-to-Rand Basis.

Building operations commenced in early 1980 and the school became a highly visible focal point in the Indian community. In 1982 JISWA embarked on a major fundraising exercise that evoked a phenomenal response from the Indian community. In March 1983 the JISWA Training Centre moved from Vlaktefontein to its impressive new premises in Extension 9 Lenasia.

The school, a monument to all those who literally 'threw' themselves into the project, is one of the finest of its kind in South Africa. JISS regards the school as its flagship.

JISWA's 50th year of operation in 1984 re-affirmed that its own history was underscored by that of the Indian community.

In many instances JISWA's hands were tied as it confronted an intransigent state which viewed social welfare - especially in black communities - as a low priority. Still, JISWA's record had been one of real achievement in the face of considerable adversity.

Few organisations had faced the uprooting of virtually the entire community they served, and fewer still had to tackle the many social problems in the community which were exacerbated by the inhumane policies of the apartheid system.

HELPING TRANSFORM LENASIA

There is no doubt JISWA played a role in the transformation of Lenasia from a rudimentary resettlement village to a self sufficient (albeit segregated) community.

That JISWA was able to rise above racial discrimination is, of course, no thanks to the system itself. The direct effects of apartheid on the organisation were a severe handicap: inadequate and unequal government subsidies, a lack of premises, clients debilitated by racial housing restrictions, discriminatory social security provisions and segregated education were just some of the hindrances dealt with by JISWA on a daily basis.

Over the years JISWA never flinched from its fight for human rights. When it's Chairman, Dr. Essop Jassat and its Director, Cassim Saloojee, were incarcerated and charged with treason, JISWA stood firmly behind them.

In 1985/86 South Africa was in the throes of the worst recession since the 1930's. However the steady growth of services and facilities was not eroded by the tide of general economic decline. The community, on which JISWA depended, continued to support it.

POLITICAL TURMOIL

The country's political situation could not have been worse. Thousands of people lost their lives in political violence and activists - including children - became the targets of the security forces.

JISWA believed it was more important than ever for civilised standards and humanitarian considerations to be championed and upheld. It was determined that the limited welfare rights it had struggled to secure - such as parity in subsidies and increased state responsibility for educating the handicapped - should not be allowed to slip away whilst the country was in political turmoil.

Throughout this dark period JISWA believed that the seeds of a new society were contained in the old, and that JISWA's contribution would prove worthy in a changed South Africa where social and economic justice would prevail.

But, it was the late 1980's, and there were many factors over which JISWA had no control. The economy was on a downward decline, the country was in an unprecedented political crisis, and the minority government was determined to shake off its responsibility for the poor.

A new Child Care Act 74 of 1983 came into effect in 1987. This legislation entrenched apartheid under a new name 'differentiation' and encouraged the rigorous application of separate development.

CATERING TO THE AGED

In 1985, following a survey of the aged in Lenasia that highlighted the special needs of the elderly and the breakdown of the extended family, JISWA established a Senior Citizens Club.

In 1990 JISWA dropped the word 'Indian' from its name and changed its name to the Johannesburg Institute of Social Services (JISS). This coincided with an anticipated new role in a post-apartheid South Africa in which it would be able to render its services to people of all race groups.

JISS had always believed change in the country would become a reality and the unbanning of political organisations held great promise for a new democratic South Africa.

A renewed resolve emerged to improve the lot of the country's underprivileged and socio-economically disadvantaged people of all races.

JISS' thrust went beyond charity to providing education, job opportunities, improved health and welfare services, better housing and greater security to enhance the social and economic well-being of all South Africans.

The government of the day then announced that fragmentation of health and welfare and education services along racial lines would be dismantled and that for each of these there would be a single state department to serve all population groups.

Serious dialogue took place within welfare circles in anticipation of far-reaching changes in the field of social welfare and about the re-shaping of social welfare policies to meet the challenges of a fundamentally changed society.

Many foreign governments and funding institutions began diverting financial support from political causes to programmes designed to uplift the country's deprived and disadvantaged people.

JISS CENTRE IN MAYFAIR

Similarly, JISS' services assumed an increasingly non-racial character and it began a fund-raising campaign to establish the JISS Centre in Mayfair.

In 1992, the centre - a functional and spacious building housing the organisations administrative and social work sections - was completed. Local businessman, Mohamed Vally, generously covered the cost of the land and existing buildings.

The JISS centre in Mayfair opened its doors at a time conducive to social initiative and experimentation in the post-apartheid era with programmes for all race groups.

The impact of the Lenasia centre on the community had surpassed all expectations. When JISS had taken occupation, Lenasia was a welfare desert but its social welfare programmes soon blossomed. Similarly, the centrally located Mayfair centre - which offers a direct neighborhood approach - has become an invaluable asset to the community.

SOCIAL WELFARE IN A NEW SOCIETY

In 1994 South Africa's first democratic elections were held and JISS celebrated its 60th year of operation with its Diamond Jubilee. The JISS Centre in Mayfair was officially opened by Thabo Mbeki, then deputy President.

Financing an organisation the size of JISS which deals with society's deep-seated and on-going problems is extremely costly. It has become increasingly difficult to raise funds when there are similar calls from other NGOs and at a time when state subsidies are inadequate and frequently delayed. This places a huge strain on JISS' resources.

JISS is, however, proud of its ability to innovate, respond to changing conditions, and rally the community's unfailing support for its work. In spite of numerous challenges presented by a society undergoing transformation, JISS continues to rise to the challenge of providing a range of quality services that cater for people of every race, creed and gender who will always need special help and care.