

## TRADE UNION EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The following bodies responded to a SALB survey on educational provision: CCAWUSA (Transvaal Branch), NUM, JUEP (Joint Union Education Project which serves: GAWU, MGWUSA, MACWUSA/GWUSA (Pretoria), OVGWU, SASDU, SADWA, SAMWU, and SARMWU), CUSA, Boilermakers Society (SABS), Industrial Relations Unit/Univ of P.E. (IRU), Cape Town Municipal Workers Association (CTMWA), General Workers Union, FOSATU and A/FCWU. Further contributions from other programmes and trade union bodies would be welcomed.

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Provision:.....  
All the union bodies interviewed provide some basic education on the role of the trade union for rank and file members, although there is virtually no literacy training offered. GWU often uses general meetings for education. The most intensive provision is in the area of shop steward or shaft steward training. In addition union bodies usually provide specialist courses for organisers and officials, and ad hoc courses on specific topics, e.g. health and safety or legislation.

Participants:.....  
Most participants attend by virtue of their elected positions e.g. as shop stewards or officials. Otherwise general members are largely recommended for particular courses through the structures of the union. NUM, CCAWUSA and FOSATU made the point that selected members are expected to report back and share what they have learnt.

Attendance:.....  
Most courses especially for general membership are run in workers' free time. Exceptions include particularly the Boilermakers which pays out for time lost by members who attend residential courses. Despite being a large union this imposes a high financial burden on the education programmes. Many

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of the newer unions have gained some success in negotiating with employers for time off with pay for trade union education.

Numbers:.....  
Attempting to give statistics on those receiving trade union education is difficult given the varying length of courses, the differences in level and the ad hoc nature of some programmes:

JUEP: 20-30 people attend courses which are run on average twice a month.

NUM: 420 shaft stewards go through the course in 5 months.

CCAWUSA: +/- 70 attend weekend seminars at a time. Seminars are held monthly.

CUSA: In 1983 in joint courses with UTP 2747 attended 71 weekend seminars and 1191 attended 53 day courses (although not all these were CUSA members). Approximately 250 went through CUSA's own courses.

SABS: 1300 members p.a. go through union's education.

FOSATU: Last year 10 residential national courses involving 200 people. At regional level 20-100 people attend weekend seminars at least once per month. Within a region 4-500 shop stewards go through an educational programme each year (5 regions). In addition the member unions run their own parallel courses.

GWU: shop stewards education every 2-4 weeks.

Demand:.....  
CCAWUSA and GWU stressed the difficulty in keeping up with demand for education. CUSA highlighted the demand for literacy and is investigating the possibilities. SABS however mentioned the difficulty of maintaining enthusiasm for education. CTMWA uses questionnaires to find out what members want as topics and demands are expected to change. NUM, FOSATU, and A/FCWU mentioned that training must be relevant to everyday needs in the work situation.

Organisation:.....  
Few of the programmes surveyed are financially self-sufficient at this stage although there is usually an input from union funds. GWU and A/FCWU particularly are self-financing. Most unions now have separate education committees. SABS said this was necessary since when education was under the direct control of the executive it was the first thing to be cut to save funds and in fact education all but collapsed as a result in the early 1970's. SABS now has an education department backed by a separate education committee. JUEP is run by a committee made up of reps from each member union. CUSA unions have their own education committees which liaise with CUSA and UTP. FOSATU's educational priorities are set through a process of interaction between regional committees which sit on the national education committee and the central committee; in addition regions and member unions run their own educational activities. CCAWUSA's education committee consists of 2 organisers and 3 shopstewards and this committee reports to the executive of the union. NUM is planning a national education committee consisting of two members from each region, together with education reps in each branch or mine. CTMWA's education committee is chosen from among shop stewards - with only one official - and is responsible for planning projects and conferences.

Obviously structures vary according to whether education is union or federation based, national or regional, jointly or individually provided.

Teachers:.....  
Most use outside "specialists" to some degree, e.g. CUSA uses UTP and Sached Trust, and is also represented on the Wits Certificate Programme in Industrial Relations (although this programme has yet to be assessed and as a joint management course is felt by CUSA to be considerably watered down). IRU has provided courses to MACWUSA/GWUSA and SABS. The latter which also uses the Institute of Indus-

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trial Relations points out that members have to go through the union's own programme to prepare them for exposure to joint management courses. Other unions have used worker oriented service groups: eg. Industrial Health Research Group has assisted GWU in training shop stewards on health issues.

In most unions organisers and officials play a role in education work as well as the specialist educationalists. CTMWA placed stress on the need to develop more worker speakers by giving background help to prepare. Indeed there is increasing stress on the need to "train trainers" from within the structures of the unions.

### Methods:.....

In general, unions were moving towards structured or modular courses combined with a variety of participatory (e.g. discussion, role-play) techniques backed by media aids - obviously where resources allowed. GWU builds its education around current issues. SABS is toying with the idea of "mass" education along the lines of I G Metal's video training. Some unions see their newspapers/newsletters as a way of extending education to a wider base.

### Aims:.....

All unions stressed the need to impart specific information and particular skills - particularly for negotiating. This was felt to promote self-sufficiency and confident and assertive shop stewards. CTMWA added the need to inculcate a spirit of cooperation and discipline. The need to build a leadership in the workplace was stressed by many unions. Beyond this some unions argued the need to take up broader social, economic and political issues within the education programmes.

### In general:.....

CTMWA'S philosophy was one of "learning through doing". Participation is part of the educative

process. Education is vital to democratic organisation to avoid domination by leadership. A/FCWU made a similar point; that education must not be seen as separate from organisation. CUSA argued the need to move from "reactive training" towards "pro-active training" to prepare workers to take the lead. For SABS education is decisive if the union is to develop and not stagnate. As a multi-racial union, the education programme provides an opportunity to promote understanding and challenge prejudices. FOSATU sees the education programme as contributing to the development of a labour movement and workers' consciousness of their own distinct class interests. Not surprisingly the IRU define their objectives rather differently: to promote constructive collective bargaining between employers and unions by providing both parties with access to information and skills. They were aware that this non-allied position was not an easy one to maintain.

Evaluation:.....  
Success is difficult to measure. The development of a modular, stepping-stone approach to education was mentioned as one practical way of measuring progress. Many unions saw the education programme as one way of identifying promising candidates for trade union office. Above and beyond this it was felt that education pays dividends on the shopfloor - even if only a fraction is absorbed. Most unions mentioned education's contribution in building organisational self-sufficiency and assertiveness at branch and local level. NUM use study circles, initiated by trained stewards, to evaluate progress made. CTMWA use follow-up questionnaires but find that the real "proof of the pudding is in the eating" - the degree to which involvement is increased and workers speak more at meetings.

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