

# Special Focus: Training

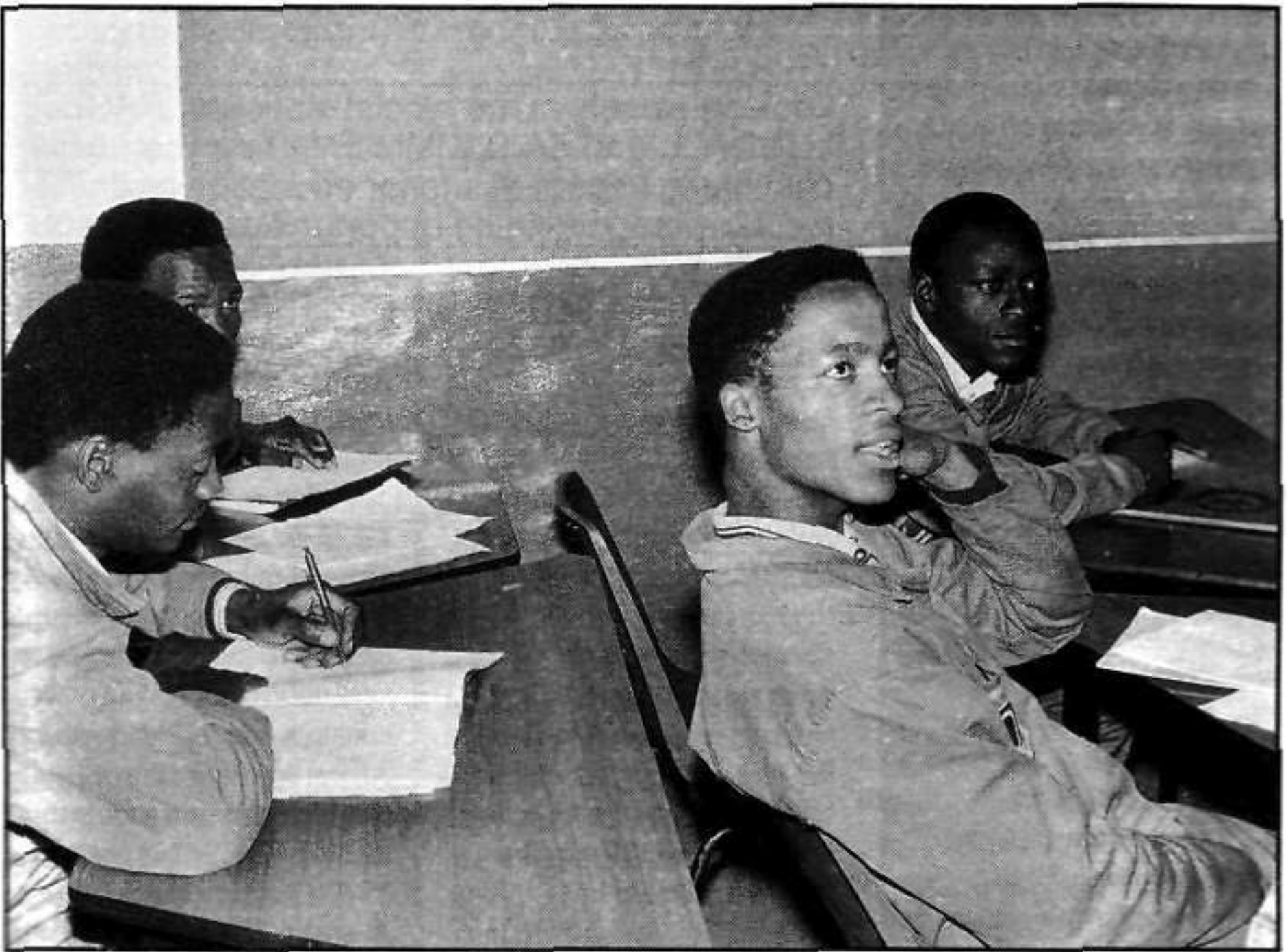


Photo: William Adkins

**Apprentice training and artisan employment:  
changing numbers, but maintaining job reservation**

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# Apprentice training and artisan employment: *changing numbers* – *but maintaining* *'job reservation'*

## Some definitions

We have used the following definitions in order to make some sense of the confusing terms which are normally used:

- The broadest category is that of *occupational group* which refers to broad groups – such as artisans, apprentices, labourers, managers etc.
- Within each occupational group there are *occupational sectors* – such as Metal and Engineering Trades, Building Trades, Motor Trades etc.
- Within each occupational sector there are *job categories* – for example, in Metal and Engineering there are welders, boilermakers etc. ❖

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Looking closely at the official statistics, PAUL LUNDALL\* and ZAID KIMMIE\*\* show the continuing impact of inferior education and racially-biased training opportunities for blacks.

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The challenges involved in planning a broad strategy of economic restructuring for South Africa must include the need for industrial training for the workforce of tomorrow. But the economic strategy adopted will have to balance the increasingly serious unemployment levels for the great mass of the unskilled workers of South Africa, with the pressing need for skilled labour. Without a well trained and skilled workforce, the required increase in productivity, and growth in the economy, will be unobtainable.

Currently, only 10% of South Africa's workforce is

being trained in technical fields, while it is estimated that 75% should be trained in these fields to meet economic requirements.\*\*\*

As late as 1983, just over 1% of the total economically active population in South Africa were registered for apprenticeship. This compares very unfavourably with other countries where, like South Africa, apprenticeship is considered the main route to training of skilled artisans. In 1977, Germany had 5,70%, Austria 6,15% and Switzerland 5,38% of their respective total economically active populations in the apprenticeship system.\*\*\*\*

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\*\* At SALDRU at the time of writing this article

\*\*\* South African Institute of Race Relations, Annual Review 1988/89, p411

\*\*\*\* Investigation into the Training of Artisans in the RSA, 1985, p 49

**TABLE 1 Distribution of Artisans and Apprentices by Occupational Sector 1989**

Occupational Sector	Artisans	Apprentices
Metal & Engineering	33%	40%
Electrical	16%	25%
Motor	15%	18%
Building	19%	12%
Printing	6%	3%
Furniture	3%	1%
Other	8%	1%
Total	100%	100%

Artisan employment and apprenticeship in South Africa are heavily focused on four occupational sectors – Metal and Engineering Trades, Electrical Trades, Motor Trades and Building Trades – which together account for approximately 90% of all apprentices and almost 85% of all artisans [see Table 1].\* This is not surprising, since the trades in these occupations provide the bulk of the skilled labour force in the more important manufacturing industries, as well as in mining.

### The statistics of racial discrimination

During the 1970s, Africans accounted for less than 2% of all apprentices and artisans. Although they are the overwhelming majority of the South African population, there were on average, during the 1970s, only 560 African apprentices and 4 600 African artisans in employment each

year. By contrast, there were 37 600 white apprentices and 174 000 white artisans in the same period [see Tables 2 and 3 on p 42].

The apprenticeship system was dominated by white apprentices, who accounted for more than 80% of all apprentices, and to a lesser extent by coloured apprentices, who accounted for about 15% of apprentices. A similar situation existed for artisans, where approximately 78% were white and 17% coloured.

There were also major imbalances in the distribution of apprentices across occupational sectors. The much greater number of white apprentices and artisans was reflected also in their domination of the four most important occupational sectors: Metal and Engineering, Motor Trades and Electrical Trades.

In only two occupational sectors did black apprentices form the majority, namely Building (about 58%) and Furniture (about 85%). Similarly, black artisans represented the majority only in the Furniture occupational sector.

Black apprentices and artisans were grossly under-represented in the Metal and Engineering, Motor and Electrical occupational sectors. General training opportunities for black apprentices were

## Sexual, as well as racial discrimination!

Women have largely been excluded from the apprenticeship training process and this has added yet another dimension to the skills shortage in South Africa.

Between 1975 and 1987, the number of female apprentices in South Africa remained relatively constant – at about 2 000 per annum! – comprising between 3% and 5% of total apprentices.

In addition to the miserable number of female apprentices, persistent racial and sexual discrimination has resulted in

- 75% of current female apprentices being white; and
- 80% of all female apprentices being trained as hairdressers.

Similarly, the denial of training opportunities to female apprentices has systematically shaped the structure of female artisans in employment:

- almost 85% are white; and
- more than 70% are employed as hairdressers. ♦

\* The statistics in this article are derived from the Manpower Surveys which were previously published every second year by the Department of Manpower but since 1987 have been produced annually by the Central Statistical Service

**TABLE 2 Distribution of Apprentices by Occupational Sector 1969-1979**

Occupational sector	Coloured	African	Asian	White
Building	55%	35%	45%	9%
Metal & Engineering	11%	7%	13%	40%
Furniture	11%	()	()	()
Motor	9%	28%	10%	20%
Electrical	()	14%	17%	18%
Other	14%	16%	15%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Average per annum	6 700	560	1 380	37 600

**TABLE 3 Distribution of Artisans by Occupational Sector 1969-1979**

Occupational Sector	Coloured	African	Asian	White
Building	63%	44%	48%	20%
Metal & Engineering	12%	11%	11%	42%
Furniture	10%	10%	11%	()
Motor	5%	15%	14%	14%
Other	10%	20%	16%	24%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Average per annum	38 000	4 600	7 000	174

**TABLE 4 Distribution of Artisans and Apprentices by Population Group 1981 - 1989**

	Coloured	African	Asian	White
Artisans	17.5%	5.8%	4.1%	72.6%
Apprentices	13.5%	13.8%	4.1%	68.6%

severely limited. They were channelled towards the Building occupational sector because it is subject to severe cyclical fluctuations, and it provides little room for career advancement or long term security.

Barriers which excluded black apprentices from the more technologically advanced trades included inferior education and racially exclusive craft unions.

### Changes and continuities

From 1980/81, after the relaxation of legal restrictions in the Manpower Training Act on apprentice training, there was a significant increase in the number of African apprentices. During the 1980s, approximately 7 200 African apprentices were registered per year, an increase of almost thirteen times the average during the 1970s. The number of

coloured and Asian apprentices remained relatively constant, at about 7 100 and 2 070 per year respectively. The number of white apprentices fell from 43 000 in 1985 to 31 000 in 1988, making an average of 36 000 white apprentices per annum.

A similar change was occurring with regard to artisan employment, but at a slower rate. The average number of artisans per year increased from 223 400 to 234 000 overall. The average number of white artisans per annum declined from 174 000 in the 1970s to 170 000 in the 1980s. The average number of African artisans increased from 4 600 to 13 500 per annum.

However, closer examination of the statistics [see Table 4 left] shows, that white apprentices still made up over 72% of all apprentices, and more than 68% of all artisans.

What is more, the increase in the number of African apprentices took a very specific form. In fact, a large proportion of the growth was actually absorbed by one occupational sector: Building [see Table 5 on p 43]. Furniture was the other sector where blacks continued to make up a majority of all apprentices.

Little real increase occurred in the more important occupational sectors such as Metal and Engineering, Electrical Trades and Motor Trades. In fact, apprenticeship in these and all the other sectors

continued to be dominated by whites, and these patterns were reproduced in the structure of artisan employment during most of the 1980s [see Table 6 right].

**Artisans and apprentices in the metal industry**

Doug Hindson and Owen Crankshaw noted in "New jobs, new skills, new divisions - the changing structure of SA's workforce"\* that within the metal industry, artisan employment grew relatively slowly.

However, by not adequately analysing the racial structure of this important occupational sector, Hindson and Crankshaw missed a very significant feature evident within the figures.

Most artisan employment in the metal and engineering trades is concentrated in a limited number of job categories. Table 7 (on page 44) lists 9 out of 27 job categories which can be found in the industry.

Our investigation of the artisan occupational sector within the metal industry shows that white artisans are spread over a wider range of job categories than black artisans. The same is true for apprentices.

Furthermore, jobs such as tool-making, jig-making, die-making, mill-wrighting and pattern-making, which require a more thorough

**TABLE 5 Distribution of Apprentices by Occupational Sector 1981-1989**

Occupational sector	Coloured	African	Asian	White
Building	35%	40%	14%	5%
Metal & Engineering	26%	24%	31%	42%
Motor	12%	17%	22%	20%
Electrical	12%	12%	21%	26%
Other	15%	7%	12%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Average per annum	7 100	7 200	2 070	36 000

**TABLE 6 Distribution of Artisans by Occupational Sector 1981-1987**

Occupational sector	Coloured	African	Asian	White
Building	56%	42%	35%	12%
Metal & Engineering	17%	21%	18%	43%
Motor	7%	11%	16%	16%
Electrical	5%	9%	9%	12%
Other	15%	17%	22%	17%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Average per annum	41 000	13 500	9 600	170 000

training and greater level of skills than boiler-making or fitting and turning, still remain almost exclusively dominated by white artisans and apprentices.

It appears that black artisan employment and apprenticeship training is heavily concentrated in occupations where operating skills and knowledge are acquired more quickly - such as boilermaking, fitting-and-turning and welding.

Table 7 shows the distribution of the different 'races' in artisan job

categories in the metal and engineering trades in 1987. While there is a large number of whites in the more skilled fitter-and-turner category, they are also spread over all the job categories.

Black artisans are very differently distributed. They are located in a much more limited number of job categories:

- **Coloureds artisans** – 83% are employed in only five job categories. The majority work as welders (31%), boilermakers (27%) and fitter and turners (13%).

\* SA Labour Bulletin, Vol 15, No 1, June 1990

**FEATURE**

**TABLE 7 Distribution of artisans according to occupation in the metal and engineering trades in 1987**

Occupational types	White	Coloured	Asian	African
Welder	7%	31%	8%	29%
Plater (Boilermaker)	14%	27%	11%	13%
Construction Steelworker	32%		16%	5%
Fitter and Turner	16%	13%	15%	8%
Fitter (including machining)	16%	7%	8%	9%
Instrument Maker and Repairer	4%		12%	
Sheet Metalworker	2%	6%	15%	8%
Turner (including machining)	7%			
Toolmaker**	5%			
Other	13%	16%	15%	28%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total no. of Artisans	67 367	6 418	2 079	4 460

\* includes Architectural Metalworker

\*\* includes Tool & Jigmaker, Machine & Tool Setter.

**Table 8 Distribution of apprentices in training in 1987 according to occupation**

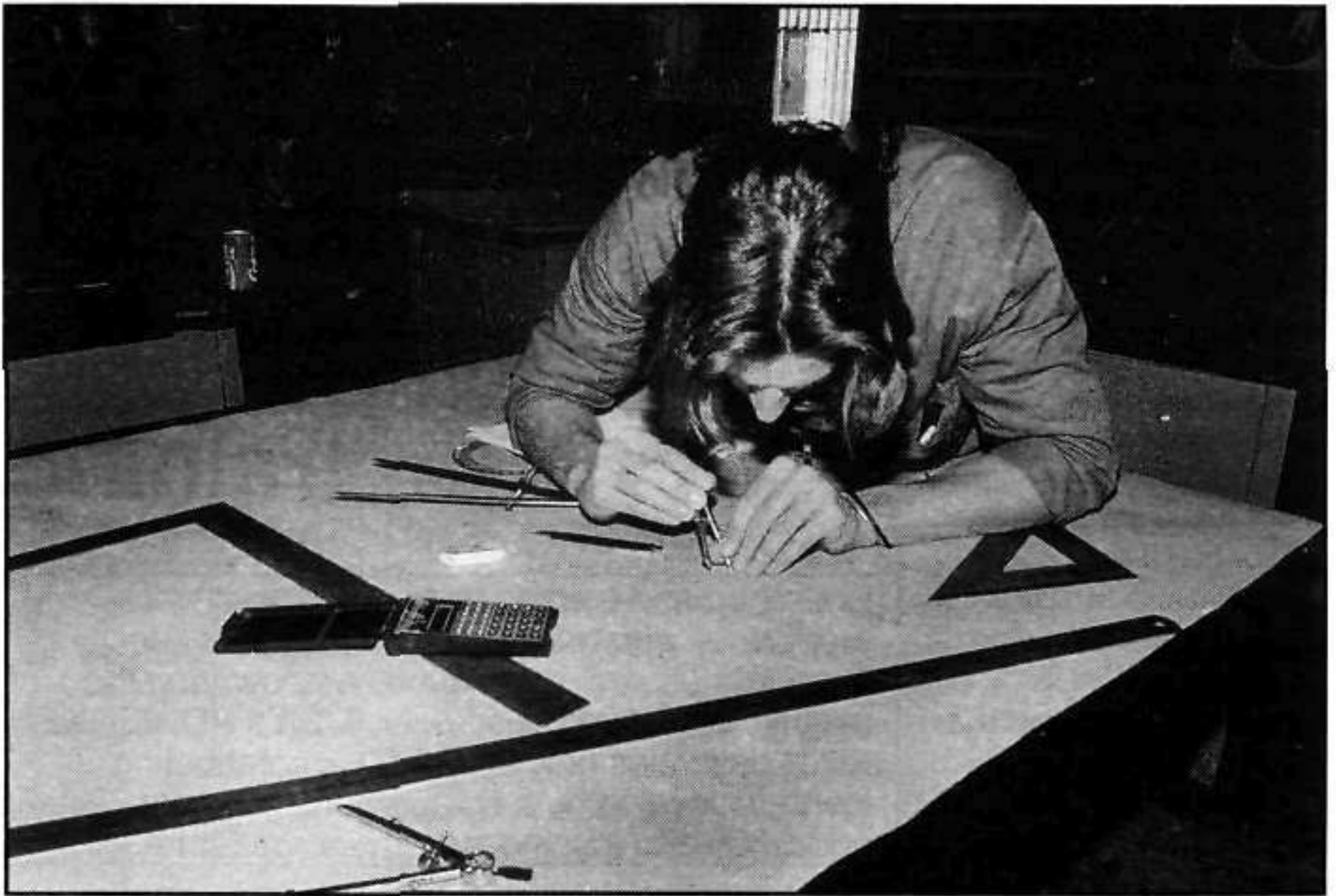
Occupational Types	White	Coloured	Asian	African
Fitter and Turner	32%	25%	27%	28%
Plater (Boilermaker)	12%	25%	20%	22%
Fitter (including machining)	10%	18%	25%	29%
Welder	5%	9%	7%	6%
Instrument Maker and Repairer	4%		8%	
Toolmaker*	6%	11%		
Millwright (Electro Mechanical)	10%			
Aircraft Maintenance Mechanic	5%			
Other	16%	12%	13%	15%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total no. of Apprentices	12 426	858	411	1 771

\* includes Tool & Jigmaker, Machine & Tool Setter

● **Asians artisans** – 90% are employed in eight job categories. A higher proportion than other black artisans hold more skilled positions but they are still mainly employed as

construction steel/architectural metalworkers (16%), fitter and turners (15%), sheet metalworkers (15%), instrument maker and repairers/mechanics (12%)

and boilermakers (11%).  
● **African artisans** – 72% are in only six job categories. The majority of African artisans are employed as welders (29%), boilermakers



*Why are there not more black artisans?*

*Photo: William Matlala*

(13%), fitters (9%), fitter-and-turners (8%) and sheet metalworkers (8%).

This distorted racial distribution among artisans is strongly carried over onto apprenticeship training, as Table 8 above clearly shows.

The majority of white apprentices in 1987 were being trained over the whole spread of occupations covering the entire range of job categories.

It was the opposite for black apprentices. They were confined within particular job categories. For instance:

- The majority of **coloured apprentices** were being trained as boilermakers (25%), fitter and turners (25%), fitters (18%) and as toolmakers, tool and

jigmakers and toolsetters (11%).

- The majority of **Asian apprentices** were being trained as fitter and turners (27%), fitters (25%) and boilermakers (20%).
- The majority of **African apprentices** were being trained in only three job categories. These were: fitting (29%), fitting and turning (28%), boilermaking (22%).

### Conclusions

What we have attempted to show is that while the 'racial composition' of artisanal and apprenticeship employment is changing, breaking down the available statistics reveals that this has been a very uneven process.

The mere removal of discriminatory legislation allows for a certain growth in the number of African apprentices and artisans, but has not fundamentally challenged the limited access which black, and particularly African, workers have to the more skilled occupational sectors.

- While further investigation is needed into this phenomenon, it is clear that there has been a tendency for the Building occupational sector to become a 'black' area of specialisation. At the same time, the dominant position of whites within most other sectors has remained relatively unchallenged.

● Even where there has been a movement of black artisans and apprentices into a more skilled occupational sector this is again an uneven process. The limited number of black artisans and apprentices in the more technologically advanced Metal and Engineering occupational sector shows that blacks are facing a clear bias in their placement in particular job categories – in fact those of lower skill levels.

From a policy perspective, details such as these are important because it is the intricacies and focus of the current apprenticeship training system which will determine the future growth pattern of black, and particularly African, apprentices and artisans.

It is clear that the potential for addressing the skills shortage in the South African economy does exist amongst the under-utilised and under-trained black workforce. Serious initiatives will have to be pursued to increase the level of technical skills generally, and also to correct the current racial imbalances within skilled occupational groups.

It is imperative that, while recognising that shortages exist in each occupational sector, methods must be found by which to combat these new forms of 'job reservation'. ☆

# COSATU unions take initiatives in training

Education and training must move from "traditional" approaches, benefitting a few, to "transformational" approaches empowering the majority of working people. NUMSA's ADRIENNE BIRD describes how COSATU is contributing towards developing a comprehensive integrated education and training system for the future.

**C**OSATU believes that a massive increase in both the quality and quantity of skills training is needed in South Africa as a necessary complement to the provision of general education to both school-goers and adults. Skills training, the federation believes, is also a fundamentally important part of a larger political and economic programme because:

- those with high level skills tend to wield greater influence in society - both on the political as well as on the economic terrain;
- skills training has an important part to play in ending labour market segmentation and in ending discrimination based on race, gender and class;
- without more and better

- skills, various opportunities for growth will not be born;
- the development of skills has redistributive effects as higher skills, especially in areas where shortages have been identified, brings access to higher income. COSATU accepts, however, that skills training can be approached either in:
  - a traditional way (that is, benefitting the few, which leaves structural inequality unchallenged); or
  - a transformative way (that is, benefitting the majority, and changing power in favour of working people.
 This article explores some fundamental principles guiding COSATU's interventions in this arena of struggle and gives an assessment of progress thus far.
- In 1981, the Manpower





*More black apprentices, but into less skilled trades*

*Photo: William Matlala*

Training act (MTA) was introduced. It ended the era of racist training legislation by bringing training for all workers under a single act. Its central focus was, however, still artisan training.

The act also established the National Training Board (NTB) – a tripartite body to advise the Minister of Manpower on training questions. However, it was white conservative craft unions that were appointed by the Minister to occupy a number of seats on the board. The progressive unions were, at that time, still fighting for more

fundamental rights in the political and economic arena. Training was simply not on the agenda for the predecessors of COSATU and NACTU. Education battles were being fought around schooling and were led by students and political groups.

### **The National Training Board**

Following experiences on the National Manpower Commission, as well as the adoption of a comprehensive resolution on Education and

Training at COSATU's 1991 Congress (see box on pp 48-49), the federation agreed to be represented on the National Training Board (NTB). The basis of its participation was the same as that for the NMC. The first meeting its delegate attended was in August 1991.

Since then there have been ongoing problems about the nature of its democratic representation. This is because COSATU has clearly stated its principled right to operate in an open and democratic fashion and for its delegate to carry mandates and report back fully

to the federation.

Since COSATU participation began, there have been two central issues of contestation.

### National Training Strategy (NTS)

In 1991 the HSRC reported its findings concerning a future national training strategy. The report had been commissioned by the NTB and was formally adopted by the NTB in April 1991. The recommendations of the report were then published for comment in the Government Gazette.

However, before the responses were received, the Minister of Manpower approved the establishment of a Task Team whose function was to prepare for the implementation of the NTS. In the November NTB meeting, COSATU tabled a detailed response to the NTS, proposing an altogether new process to allow for the fundamental principles of the report to be revisited and negotiated by a more representative and well structured forum. The NTB endorsed the COSATU position. In April 1992, the Minister of Manpower broadly endorsed the COSATU proposals and it is now anticipated that a new process will be established to negotiate a new National Training Strategy. COSATU will negotiate for a National Training Strategy that provides a national framework for the implementation of its adopted policy.

COSATU has openly

## COSATU unions take the initiative

As they gained in power and confidence, trade unions such as the affiliates of COSATU began to identify training as a key site of the struggle. The amendment to the MTA, in 1991, ironically accelerated this process by establishing industry training boards. These provided a forum which forced unions to address the questions of institutional restructuring as well as of training content and scope. Following discussions in NUMSA and other affiliates around these issues, in 1991 COSATU adopted an important comprehensive resolution on Education and Training at its Fourth Congress. Included were the following:

### COSATU's education and training resolution

3.1 We re-affirm our commitment to work for a single, non-racial and non-sexist educational system geared to meet the needs and aspirations of society as a whole. Apartheid education is an instrument of domination. We are committed to:

- destroying all forms of apartheid, open and disguised, in the current educational system;
- free and compulsory basic schooling for all children;
- curricula which develop literacy, numeracy, and the ability to think critically;
- a formal education system which is not purely academic but is geared to providing scientific and technological skills which can contribute to the development of our country.

3.2 We acknowledge the role of the NECC and will continue to assist them in their struggle to overcome the education crisis

in this country. We support their efforts to expose corruption in the administration of education, their demands for proper distribution of textbooks, utilisation of empty or under-used 'white' schools, their advocacy of a culture of learning amongst students and their in-depth investigation of education policy.

3.3 A new education system requires the full participation of all those affected. We encourage the development of democratic and representative structures amongst students, parents and teachers, as well as Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSAs).

Teachers are workers too. We welcome the formation of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU).

3.4 COSATU should continue to play a role in restructuring the country's educational system.

3.5 Our economy needs massive growth to provide jobs and improve standards of living. But there is a serious shortage of skilled workers. Large numbers of adults, victims of the government's policies, lack proper basic education. Many lack literacy and numeracy skills and are unable to benefit from training programmes. Urgent steps are needed to provide extensive basic adult education and training. We need the skills to run industries, to shape and develop economic policies, to build a democratic society and enhance job creation.

#### 3.5.1 Training

We will fight for the total restructuring of the training system along the following lines:

- Training should be linked to

economic planning and form an integral part of our attempts to restructure the economy.

- Unions should play a central role in planning, implementing and monitoring training, with agreed procedures for selection and testing. COSATU, and its affiliates, should involve themselves in restructuring existing training boards.
- The effects of past class, race and sex discrimination should be fought.
- Employers and the state have a duty to train and to help finance training.
- All workers have a right to paid education and training leave. Retrenched or unemployed workers have a right to re-training to help them secure employment.
- Education and training should continue throughout a worker's life to enable him/her to keep pace with technological change, and develop his/her abilities.
- There must be clear links between formal schooling, adult education, industrial training and other education and training systems (eg for youth and unemployed).
- Training must link to grading and pay. Increased skills must mean increased pay. Workers must be able to advance along a career path through training.
- Training must lead to national or industry certificates.
- There must be provision for recognition (and pay) for skills which workers already have.
- Training of trainers must be a central part of the system.

### 3.5.2 Women workers

Women workers face particular problems which need to be

addressed. We want:

- Women's skills to be recognised and paid for - "equal pay for skills of equal value".
- Women trained for skilled jobs normally performed by men.
- Career paths for areas of traditional women's work.
- To make it easier for women to receive training - by the provision of childcare for all trainees, equal facilities for men and women and non-sexist documentation.

### 3.5.3 Adult Basic Education

We need to negotiate with employers and the state for a nationwide adult basic education programme open to workers and the wider community and based on the following guidelines:

- Courses must provide a general basic education and must be based on clear standards allowing advancement from one course to the next.
  - All courses must lead to nationally recognised certificates, to formal education certificates, and must enable entry into training programmes.
  - Employers and the state must provide facilities for classes, paid time-off for workers attending, and must assist in paying for teachers and the costs of development of teaching materials.
  - Recognition of existing skills.
  - Use of existing training centres and state colleges to promote adult basic education.
- Agreed principles for evaluation, the selection of teachers, and the development of programmes. ♦

stated its commitment to the restructuring of the National Training Board as one of its objectives in these negotiations. But it is strongly of the view that development of an NTS must be closely integrated with transformations in a number of other areas - such as education, adult basic education, labour markets and economic restructuring - before finality is reached.

COSATU therefore proposed that the Task Team become a forum in which areas of agreement between the parties are explored. Recommendations based on these agreements would have to be tabled at a more representative forum.

### Industry Training Boards

A number of COSATU affiliates have experienced fundamental problems with the establishment of industry training boards in their sectors. The problems may be summarised as follows:

- Unions are not notified when boards are established.
- Unions are not given the opportunity to negotiate industry training board constitutions.
- Unions are not given equal representation to employers on the boards.
- Unions are not represented in proportion to their membership (ie they are dominated by small craft unions).
- Boards are established for artisans only (ie not for all workers in the industry).

- Boards are established for sub-industries.

COSATU proposed interim guidelines, drafted within the frame work of the existing Manpower Training Act, to the Minister of Manpower to solve these problems. (Fundamental changes to the Manpower Training Act are clearly needed as a part of a new training strategy).

- Unions must be notified well in advance.
- Unions must have full rights to negotiate ITB constitutions.
- Unions must have equal representation to employers on boards.
- Unions must be represented in proportion to their membership.
- Boards must cover all workers and not only artisans.
- Boards must be for full industries and not for sub-industries.

The guidelines included proposals to change existing boards where these criteria are not met. The guidelines were referred by the Minister of Manpower to the NTB to consider. After a number of false starts, the NTB has begun to address the guidelines.

Should agreement be reached on them, they should guide the registrar, pending the complete re-writing of the Manpower Training Act itself. In the interim, the registrar is to ensure that only constitutions that have been negotiated with the relevant trade unions are considered for registration.

## **COSATU policy development**

**C**OSATU is working with its allies, both political organisations, and the other relevant organisations of civil society active in the following areas:

### **□ Adult Basic Education**

There is now wide support for the central propositions that COSATU has put forward - namely the need for national standards of Adult Basic Education which relate both to the formal schooling system and the training system. There is also broad agreement that these levels should be nationally certificated within a unified certification system. Debate continues as to the details and practical meaning of these propositions.

### **□ Training**

COSATU is developing its capacity to intervene more decisively in industry training boards - both in the private sector as well as in the public sector. COSATU is also exploring the possibility of drawing in other sectors of civil society onto the industry boards to encourage the boards to address the skill needs in the rural areas, and for the unemployed more generally.

The Building Industry Board is an obvious place to start as it already accredits courses for the unemployed within the Department of Manpower's unemployed training programme.

The Civil Engineering

Board is another area of interest. As labour intensive forms of work organisation look extremely attractive for employment creation especially with certain major public works programmes, COSATU is asking why training for such programmes should not be accredited by the Industry Board.

Civics too are beginning to look to these boards to accredit courses of training within development programmes more widely - so that trainees get access to courses which are properly monitored and give national or industry certification.

COSATU is presently conducting a number of strategic pilot projects in both of the above areas. In addition, the federation is planning a major eight month project in which to further develop policy both in regard to adult basic education and in regard to skills training. The two projects will run in parallel, as the federation believes that an integrated education and training system is what is necessary to address the needs of the majority in South Africa.

### **□ Education**

COSATU actively participated in the recent Education Policy Conference and has played a central part in the NECC's National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI). It has also been involved in the Joint Education Trust - which developed out of the Private Sector Initiative. In this whole

arena COSATU has seen itself as a player within a broader alliance.

## Conclusion

**A** multi-pronged approach is being adopted by COSATU and its affiliates in regard to education and training:

1 On the national level, COSATU views the restructuring of the National Training Board as an important part of establishing a nationally coherent system. At this level it is also working with its alliance partners to ensure coherence across a wide front.

2 On the industry level, negotiations to achieve parity of representation, as a basis for constructing paths for all workers, is well under way.

3 Adult Basic Education is being addressed in general education forums.

4 Ending racial and gender discrimination and redressing past discrimination is central to the initiatives at every level.

5 Company and plant specific initiatives are seen as pilot projects to achieve the larger objectives.

The need to move towards an integrated education and training system in a democratic South Africa is a fundamental goal for progressive trade unions. Life-long training must underpin a redistributive economic growth strategy aimed to redress the imbalances and injustices of the past and meet the needs of all South Africans. ☆

# Union-employer training agreements: uneven efforts and effects

**SNUKI ZIKALALA** investigated the progress in training agreements with employers made by all the COSATU affiliates, and some NACTU unions that responded. He found that – with the exception of NUMSA – issues of representation and scope are blocking progress in most sectors.

**N**ational cross-industry initiatives in training have been complemented by initiatives at industry level. However, investigation of agreements aimed at, and actually secured, by the different trade unions show very uneven efforts and results.

## NUMSA leads the way

**I**n 1990 NUMSA carried out its first Training Project (see *SA Labour Bulletin* Vol 15 No 1). The Project involved 26 workers and two officials in an intensive three month research programme into the needs of NUMSA members in regard to training.

The recommendations were formulated into a resolution which was adopted

at the NUMSA National Congress in May 1991. NUMSA then forwarded the resolution to the COSATU Congress in July 1991 where – with amendments from other affiliates – it was adopted.

NUMSA submitted its set of principles to employers in the Automobile, Engineering, Tyre and Motor sectors in the 1991 round of national bargaining. In all sectors this required that work be done in the area of grading – as NUMSA has argued that grading is the ladder for a training based career-pathing and should be negotiated to reflect this.

It should be noted that 50% trade union representation has started in all sectors covered by

NUMSA. The progress varies in the different sectors.

### **Engineering Industry**

The principles the parties agreed to were the need for training and career pathing for all workers and that "such training should aim to impart broad-based skills that are transferable and provide flexibility within the industry and the economy as a whole." The parties also agreed that "apartheid education policies have had a damaging effect on workers. Consequently the industry accepts that it has a responsibility, after the state, to undertake and contribute to uplifting standards of education, including, in particular, literacy and numeracy."

#### ● **Industry training board**

In this industry there was already an artisan board which had been functioning for some time. NUMSA joined this board in 1989 in an attempt to restructure it from within - but without success. So in 1991 NUMSA proposed, and the parties agreed, to "work towards the integration of the training in the industry by the establishment of one Co-ordinating Industry Training Board within two years" - that is a single board for all workers, including both artisans and operators.

#### ● **Grading**

NUMSA demanded that the present 14 grading levels in the industry should be reduced to five. What was finally agreed was "that the

number of job grades in the Main Agreement should be reduced in a systematic and objective way to accommodate a broader band of skills."

### **Progress since reaching agreement:**

A training sub-committee was established to implement the agreement. Employers and unions both agreed to start with the industry grading system. In an important departure from the past, NUMSA has worked closely with other unions, including the craft unions, to put forward joint proposals. Negotiations are still under way.

### **Automobile Industry**

#### ● **All of the NUMSA**

principles were agreed to in this industry, including that "Employees who attend IETB approved training and education programmes will receive their normal rate of pay for the duration of such training taking place during normal working hours."

In addition: "It is accepted that Adult Basic Education needs to be accommodated in the industry's future training dispensation according to the following guidelines:

- Trade Union involvement in all aspects of literacy
- Courses must take learners to nationally recognised standards (note: national not industry based).

The only restraining clause was "Training and education

should at all times be arranged within the operational constraints and requirements of companies/industry".

#### ● **Industry training board**

The employers agreed to NUMSA's demand for an Industry Education and Training Board (IETB). Detailed functions for the IETB were also agreed. Finalisation of the IETB is being held back by a difference between the union and employers on the upper limit of training to be provided.

#### ● **Grading**

Prior to the 1991 negotiations, there had already been substantial agreement about the reduction of grading in the industry. Wages are presently being negotiated for hourly paid workers on six grades - where grade six relates to technicians. There are therefore five levels to artisan as proposed by NUMSA.

### **Tyre industry**

As with the Auto industry, the employers in the Tyre industry have accepted the principles put forward by NUMSA.

#### ● **Industry training board**

There has been considerable progress in negotiations about the constitution of an Industry Education and Training Board.

#### ● **Grading**

Employers have been reluctant to finalise the details of a five level industry

grading system – even though they have agreed in principle to do this. The main reason appears to be reluctance on the part of employers to allow one another to know details of their production processes because of the highly competitive nature of tyre building. There are, therefore, a number of problems in this area which have yet to be resolved.

### **The way forward**

In all of the sectors which NUMSA covers, there is now an urgent need to conclude this first phase of implementation - which includes the finalisation of Industry Education and Training Board constitutions, as well as the reduction in the number of grades. The central principles have been fought and won.

Phase Two will involve revisiting the grading systems in each industry and re-writing these in terms which can be meaningful for training and career progression. In order to prepare for Phase Two NUMSA has invited international experts from Germany, Sweden and Australia to come to South Africa in August to assist with this difficult task.

During the 1992 negotiation round, there have also been detailed discussions about the training and retraining of retrenched and redundant workers. There are likely to be agreements in this regard.



*Artisan - their employers must contribute more to training*

*Photo: William Matlala*

### **CWIU**

**T**he Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) is involved in a tussle with major chemical employers – SASOL, AECI, SENTRACHEM AND SAPREF. These employers want to establish an artisan only ITB. The union is arguing that the board must provide education and training for all workers.

The major chemical employers are resisting demands to extend the scope of training beyond artisans. According to the national education officer, Chris Bonner, employers have been resisting the COSATU principles – for

- discrimination and affirmative action;
- industry career paths which would allow all workers to acquire skills recognised throughout the industry; and
- provision of basic adult education.

One of the biggest problems that CWIU has is that negotiations in the chemical industry are decentralised. There are no industry bargaining forums and very few employer federations or associations.

In this sector, all education and training for semi-skilled workers has so far been done at plant or company level. Artisan training has been done at a company level or

## FEATURE

through the metal industry.

Chris Bonner says that the employers are intent on forming a training board which will perpetuate the current racial divisions and informal job reservation. "Employers have refused our demand for proportional representation. They have also refused to put into the constitution any principled acceptance of education and training for all workers in the industry and any principled acceptance of non-discrimination and affirmative action."

COSATU approached the Minister of Manpower on behalf of the CWIU and won an undertaking from the Minister to convene a meeting of the parties to discuss the problem. In the interim, the board has not been registered. Following this move, CWIU and the employers have met in an attempt to reach agreement. However, at the time of writing no settlement has been reached.

### SACWU

The NACTU affiliated South African Chemical Workers Union (SACWU) is committed to the establishment of an ITB for the chemical industry. General secretary, Henry Molefe, said that his union is disappointed by the attitude of the employers in the board who are refusing to cover illiteracy programmes. SACWU sees this as a

strategy by employers not to facilitate the formation of a training board.

"SACWU, having covered illiteracy programmes at plant level, saw the importance of ITBs as a first important occurrence in the country, even if at this stage it is limited. However, the union feels this does not preclude relevant parties from campaigning for literacy and developmental skills for the workers within the ITBs," said Molefe.

### PPWAWU

The Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union (PPWAWU) has begun to take up issues of education and training. The union is presently involved in negotiations with NAMPAK and Kohler (a Gencor subsidiary) on these questions. The union has also become involved in the Printing Industry Training Board where considerable progress has been made towards establishing industry wide training and career paths.

### SACCAWU

The South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) is presently involved in a struggle with employers in the hospitality sector. According to the national education officer, Alan Horwitz, the employers in this sector have converted a training council into a

training board. The employers registered the Hospitality Industry Training Board's constitution without consulting the union. There are 18 seats on the board, but only two were allocated to the union.

"We have put up a vigorous fight and demanded that we should have equal representation and that the scope of the board be widened and not cover only technical training. It should include literacy and adult education. Employers have so far agreed that literacy be included. Adult education is still under discussion.

On 29 July we are going to give a final presentation on equal representation to the board. If they do not agree to parity, we will declare a dispute," said Horwitz.

SACCAWU's spokesperson said management has recognised that training is grossly deficient, especially in the hotel sector. The standard of service and productivity is very low, and this may result in the employers agreeing to union demands. Employers may argue however that workers make a financial contribution to training.

### SACTWU

In the textile industry, the employers have established a training board. They have allocated few seats for the union. The South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (SACTWU) is fighting



for equal representation.

According to the media officer of SACTWU, Shahied Teladia, the union put up strong opposition to this unilateral act. "We have made substantial progress and are about to secure equal representation on the ITB. At plant level, the union has also secured commitment from some of the employers to join the board and support the union."

A training board has long been established in the clothing industry. Presently, the union is engaged in a battle for equal representation.

## CAWU

The Construction and Allied Workers Union (CAWU) has become involved in the Building Industry Training Board. Although, at this stage, the unions do not constitute 50% of the Board, there is commitment from all parties to move to this situation in the near future. The industry has pioneered career-pathing and is addressing the incorporation of education within its scope.

In addition, CAWU is considering establishing its own training centre in co-operation with the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen (a USA union). CAWU has extended an invitation to the NACTU affiliated Building Construction and Allied Workers Union (BICAWU) to participate.

## NUM

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has begun to take up the issue of human resources development. In the Mining Summit convened last year the Chamber of Mines agreed to establish a special working group on education and training. NUM submitted a proposal on training and education which was rejected by the steering committee.

In addition NUM has initiated a number of co-operative ventures for retrenched and dismissed mineworkers. These projects include a training component.

At this stage NUM is not involved in the mining engineering industry training board which addresses only artisan training. At present this board is controlled by the employers and white craft unions.

## Federated Miners Union

The NACTU affiliated Federated Miners Union (FMU) says that they have not been approached by the Chamber of Mines to participate in the training programme. According to the president of the union, Lazarus Mfulane, the union has been negotiating with employers at plant level.

"We believe in negotiating for workers at plant level and that is why we have not been approached by the Chamber of Mines. However, as a

union we will not reject a training programme that will give skills to our members."

## Challenges to the trade unions – and management

Education and training are essential ingredients for economic development. In taking the lead, trade unions need to combine recruitment with education for their memberships. Their own human resources will have to be developed to lead in the areas of education and training at industry level.

A change of attitude from the employers is also imperative. The involvement of workers in the ITBs will benefit both the employers and the employees. With workers represented on the ITBs the parties will be better able to identify the actual training needs in their companies. Programmes for training can then be planned in ways acceptable to both workers and employers.

Training is essential to productivity and growth in South African industry. It is the responsibility of both the state and employers to educate and train the work force in terms that have been agreed through negotiations with trade unions. Employers need to commit themselves to training and retraining of workers at all levels of skill. Negotiating channels have been opened. They have to be utilised by the employers as well as the unions. ☆