

● 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.

COSATU 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;

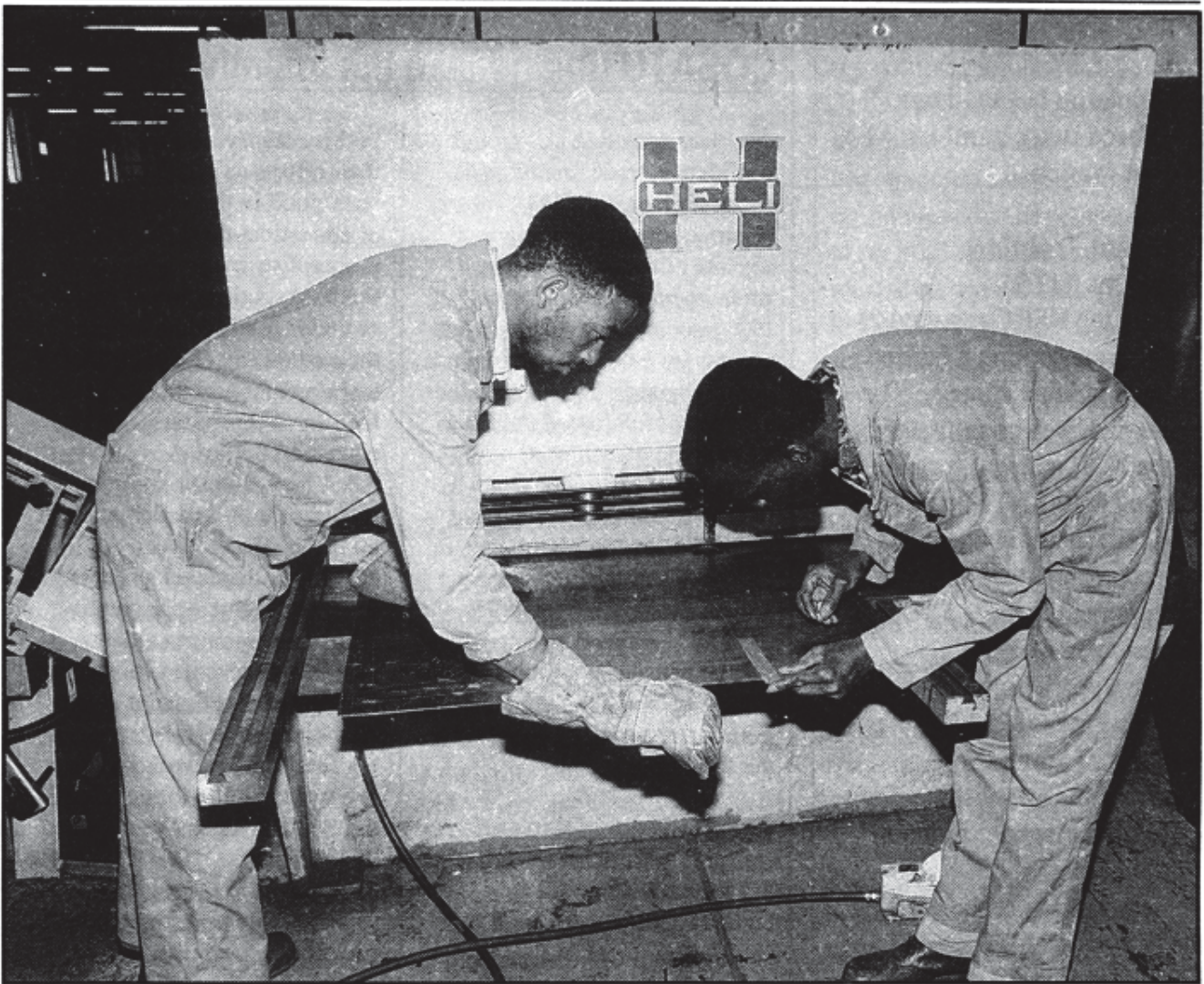
- the development of skills has redistributive effects as higher skills, especially in areas where shortages have been identified, brings access to higher income.

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

COSATU 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.

National 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

In 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