

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

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

The 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

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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. ☆