

# National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa

(Registered under the Labour Relations Act 1956, as amended)

## WORCESTER LOCAL:

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## BARBARA LOMAX TRADE UNION SCHOOL FOR WOMEN 25 - 30 OCTOBER 1998 AT FRANSHOOEK MOUNTAIN MANOR

This was the first time I attended any Gender workshop or seminar. I can truly say that this was a real eyeopener to me. I would recommend this course or any other similar course to all women and not only to trade unionist , because we must empower ourselves.

### DISCUSSION PIONTS

The following aspects were dealt with at this course : -

Overall Introduction of School

### Uncovering Gender

1. Aims
2. Expectations
3. Positive Affirmation
4. Gender Roles - work , home , concerns
5. Understanding how gender works in society
6. Pulling the issues together
7. Organogram (picture of your structure) of your Union
8. Link issues from understanding how gender works to framework
9. Practical skills
10. Draw link between work/trade union and personal life

### Advocacy & Lobbying

1. The definitions of words
2. Important steps to have a effective advocacy and lobbying campaign
3. Advantages and Disadvantages of networks
4. Developing a Budget and Plan of Action

## Health & Safety at the Workplace

### Challenges & Opportunities for Women workers in South Africa

1. Introduction
2. Where do women find themselves as workers in South Africa
3. Laws which impact on Health & Safety at work
4. Occupational Health problems
5. Participation in Health & Safety structures
6. Additional problems identified by Women workers
7. Strategies and Solution
8. Conclusion
9. HIV & AIDS - Discussion

**The special point of interest to me was the discussion on Uncovering Gender.**

We discussed the Aims : -

- \* That is to strengthen the capacity of Trade Union women.
- \* To strengthen their ability to access the structures.
- \* Access the wealth of info currently available.
- \* Lobbying , Advocate and inform Policies & Decision.

### Expectations

- @ Be able to handle all situations.
- @ Handling workplace/union discrimination.
- @ Understanding the meaning of Gender.
- @ Building our confidence.
- @ Implementing what we've learnt.
- @ Empowering ourselves.

It was pointed out that we need to look at our own ideas about Gender. Therefore to be sure that we do not pass on our own **fixed** thinking about the differences between male and female. To understand Gender we need to recognise that female as a group have been subordinated to male. Understanding the issue of women **oppression** better we need to know what the term Gender means.

**Gender** : - refers to the expectations people have from someone , because that ~~are~~ male or female (This means it is socially constructed).

**Sex** : - is the physical and biological difference between male and female.

Learning that Gender identity is a learned behaviour that is opposed to sexual identity. Just as any learned behaviour has the potential to change , gender identity also has the potential to change. To realise this potential the initiative (first step) has to come through our own awareness and determination to change. Male and female will become aware of different form of oppression that effect them in the various roles they play. gender exposes the power relations that exists between male and female. These do get influenced by various other factors such as class , race , culture tradition , religion etc.

Also as workers we need to organise ourselves in Trade Unions to overcome/fight class oppression. This does not mean that women want to rule over man in a Matriarchal society , but that they want the power relations between male and female to be equal. This could happen when we have a society/trade union which practise democracy and does not exclude women from any place.

**Some interesting info given to us : -**

- £ Women make up more than 50% of the population.
- £ 56.4% of women are estimated to be without an income.
- £ 70% of the Worlds poorest are women.
- £ About 1000 women are raped every day in South Africa.

This course motivated me to change my ways of thinking , acting and to enspire other women on a variety of Gender issues. It is off utmost importance that all women become LIBERATED !!!!!!

**NB.**

**Find handouts attached that touch my heart , because the message it send across is very clear.**

**COMPLIED BY : JO-ANNE JONKERS (BOLAND LOCAL ADMINISTRATOR)**

**Wathinta bafazi  
Wathinta imbokotho**

**You struck a women you struck a rock !!!!!**