



NATIONAL UNION OF METALWORKERS OF SOUTH AFRICA

153 Bree Street (cnr Becker),
Newtown,
Johannesburg,
2001.
E-mail: duduzilen@numsa.org.za
Organising Department

P.O. Box 260483
Excom 2023
Tel: 011-8322030/9
Fax 011-8336408
011-8336330

GENDER ACTIVITY REPORT TO THE NEC OF THE 12th - 14th NOVEMBER 1998.

As per our Congress Resolution on Women Empowerment, the main objective for this year (1998) was to implement some of these resolutions. It is obvious that not all the resolutions could be realized this year, however, this department managed to execute the following as per our year plan.

- ❖ Mechanisms to empower women in the union.
- ❖ Develop education and training programmes on women's needs
- ❖ Encourage male comrades to take part in gender activities/programmes to raise understanding of gender issues.

The above issues were going to be actualized in the following way :

- a) National Gender Schools.
- b) Gender workshops.

1. GENDER SCHOOLS

Gender schools were run in all regions. The main objective of these schools were among others, to do the following:

- ❖ Empower workers, especially women workers on South African Labour legislation and the impact it has on them.
- ❖ Empower women to be able to challenge any forms of discrimination in the workplace and within the organisation.
- ❖ Develop the capacity of women within the union to deal with organisational challenges.
(*Other course objectives are well listed in the report to the last NEC*)

ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOLS

- ❖ The attendance was generally good in all the regions despite the fact that there were strikes.
- ❖ The level of participation was also very good, taking into consideration the fact that for most of the participants it was for the first time they attended workshops dealing with economic issues in depth. (*Although this was not the case with all participants*)
- ❖ In most regions the number of male delegates was quite minimal (*due to a misunderstanding that these were women Schools*). However, it should be pointed out that it is different with regional workshops, their (males) attendance is very good. ~~—————~~ *! Natural gender School*
- ❖ Clustering regions played a very important role either that of cutting costs, but it also enhanced maximum participation and sharing of experiences among participants. (*some regions even discussed possibilities of having joint programmes*)
- ❖ There was a general agreement from all regions that the schools should continue because of the awareness and a lot of issues raised which affect them as workers and as women workers for that matter in the changing South Africa. (*I think I should mention that this request came from both men and women which in a way proved that the notion that is generally held that men know more about economic issues is not true!*)

N.B. A full assessment of the schools will be done in our National Gender Conference scheduled for the 20th - 22nd November 1998. (Programme attached).

2. GENDER SENSITIVITY WORKSHOP

→ REC

These workshops did not take place as planned at National level, but only took place in regions (*not all regions*). The main reason for this was because of the National strikes that the union was engaged in for the better part of this year. The programme is ready but will only be implemented in 1999.

3. COSATU

As per NUMSA and COSATU Congress Resolutions, an Alliance meeting was held in April to discuss the formation of the National Women's Movement. No final conclusions were reached in this meeting, but the alliance partners were mandated to go back and relook the issue. Some comrades from the COSATU Gender sub- committee were given this task in our last meeting. We were also involved with the SA Law Commission to deal with the following Bills:

- ❖ Maintenance
- ❖ Domestic Violence
- ❖ Customary Marriages

N.B. These Bills have been accepted by parliament 3 weeks ago.

(The Law Commission will be giving a presentation in our oncoming conference)

We were also invited as gender co-ordinators of affiliates by COSATU to attend a seminar on Gender Sensitivity of Unions in Brussels, Belgium on the 16th - 22nd October 1998. The latest also is that more affiliates are employing full time gender co-ordinators as per last year COSATU Congress Resolution.

4. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It will be recalled that there is an existing COSATU Code of Good Practice on Sexual Harassment in a form of a booklet which was also adopted at NEDLAC in August this year. This code is in use by all affiliates and the regions have had workshops on it. We are in a process of training Sexual Harassment Officers using the services of SHEP. There is also an AGM planned for sometime in December by the SHEP steering Committee of which I am a member to adopt the new constitution that we are still working on at the moment.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY.

As previously mentioned in my last report to the NEC, Health and Safety is still one the areas which is easily sacrificed by the union. It is with great regret that after the last CC decision to employ a full time person, nothing has been done to that effect.

The other problem is that after the National HSE workshop that was held in July, regions were prepared to implement the programme but unfortunately no funding was available to this effect. At the moment I am working on these areas amongst others:

- ❖ HIV/AIDS education in the workplace (*we are drafting a course with the SA Law Commission on this and they will be giving a presentation in our workshop also.*) We will be meeting also with them and NAMPAK i.e. myself and cde Osborn.
- ❖ There is a research project we are busy with on the effects of manganese on workers in SAMANCOR. (this has not yet taken off the ground, we are still finalizing some points of disagreements, hopefully it will kick off next year. This project was discussed with the secretariat last year.
- ❖ There are 5 compensation cases we are working on with the Department of Labour from JTA, a company in W. Cape. At the moment it is not easy working with the Workmen's Compensation Commission because of the inefficiencies in their offices.

Regional gender programmes also included issues on health and safety. (*just by the way, there is a new debate going on as to whether sexual harassment is a health and safety issue, therefore should be compensated*) There will be a debate on this in our coming workshop!

ISSUES FOR THE NEC TO DISCUSS

clb. Jervis.

1. Recommendations from the July Health and Safety Workshop made to the last NEC. (*copy attached*)
2. Clear union policy on HIV/AIDS for workplaces. — *National*
3. Gender co-ordination at regional level. The following were the recommendations from gender structures in the regions:
 - ❖ Regions be clustered according to their geographical location and a full time person be employed.
 - ❖ Regional/local administrators be tasked with the co-ordination.
 - ❖ REO's to co-ordinate gender as well (*as is the case in other regions*)
 - ❖ Utilize the services of the benefits administrators.

4. Establishment of gender structures be the responsibility of organisers (*resolution: integrating gender into mainstream union activities*) assisted by local/regional gender co-ordinators.
5. Collective Bargaining: negotiators be trained on gender.
6. Campaigns for 1999 shopstewards elections to encourage more women to stand in order to work towards gender equality in the union and break the stereotypes.
7. Numsa to develop a recruitment policy to challenge sexual division of labour.

1999 PROGRAMME

INDUCTION COURSE FOR SHOPSTEWARD

Gender has always been (and still is) seen as a separate entity from all other union activities. (*ref. NUMSA NEWS: no. 5 October issue page 13.*)

After discussions with the education department, it was agreed that part of the induction course for shopstewards and organisers will be a basic course on gender, which will be done by the National Gender Co-ordinator (*resolution: integrating gender into mainstream union activities.*) This will assist shopstewards and organisers to understand gender demands and concerns/needs.

NOTE. THIS REPORT DOES NOT CONTAIN THE FULL PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 1999 DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE NEC WAS PLANNED AFTER I HAVE SET UP DATES FOR THE LAST NATIONAL GENDER WORKSHOP (*and there was no way I could bring the dates forward*) WHICH ITS MAIN TASK IS TO PLAN FOR 1999. SO, THE FULL PROGRAMME FOR 1999 WILL FOLLOW AFTER THE WORKSHOP.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE 1998 PROGRAMME

- ❖ In the whole, the programme for 1998 was very successful because the desk was able to execute the core of its programme as per the year plan.
- ❖ Although there were serious problems in co-ordinating gender at regional level, most regions were able to execute their regional programmes as agreed in our 1997 year end National planning meeting. As already mentioned some regions were disturbed by the National strikes which were inevitable and crucial. In other regions its mostly because administrators are overloaded with their administrative work as a result they had to sacrifice gender work.
- ❖ I think I should also acknowledge the support from the structure received from the regional office bearers and also at national level.

**PREPARED BY
PATRICIA DLAMINI**

NUMSA NORTHERN & WESTERN CAPE REGION GENDER WORKSHOP 19 – 23 SEPTEMBER 1998

INTRODUCTION: -

27 participants [including the two regional gender co-ordinators] attended the above school of which 23 were female and 4 male comrades. The Western Cape delegation had numerous problems in terms of their travel arrangements, due to late bookings from head office side.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF WORKSHOP

- To develop an understanding of the current state of the world economy and its impact on women.
- To deepen the understanding of the South African economy in the context of globalisation.
- To highlight the strengths and weaknesses of labour legislation for the labour movement and women workers in particular.
- To show how legislation can be used to advance the gains won by the labour movement.
- To help build capacity of women within the union movement to deal with challenges of globalisation.

COURSE CONTENT

The workshop dealt with the following issues: -

➤ Women and the globalisation

“Globalisation is a process of restructuring the world economy. This restructuring process is a response to the crisis in the capitalist economic system, which began in the early 1970's. The main purpose of this restructuring is to find new ways for business to maximise profits”

What this mean for workers?

- Increasing inequalities between the rich and the poor, between and within countries.
- Increasing poverty worldwide
- Impact on international worker solidarity – workers in different countries are encouraged to compete against each other
- Provisions of and payment for services is individualized

What role do women play in the economy?

- Women's work is traditionally seen as:
- Caring
- Cooking
 - Cleaning
 - Looking after children

Women are mainly responsible for reproductive work in society

- ⇒ Unpaid work – but essential for the economy
- ⇒ Often involves double shift
- ⇒ Help capitalist keep wages down because male workers don't have to pay someone to do their cooking, cleaning, laundry etc.

Women end up in jobs doing the same kind of work that they do in the home:

- ⇒ Domestic work
- ⇒ Cleaning
- ⇒ Nursing
- ⇒ Teaching

This work is generally regarded as unskilled or with low skill content and low status.

Women in these jobs generally earn low wages and are the first to be retrenched.

Impact of Globalisation on women

- 70% of the world's poor are women
- 66% of the world's illiterate are women
- In the factories women's work are marginalised, casualised, outsourced, turned into part time jobs or pushed into homework.
- Women are often the first to be retrenched
- Women are concentrated in the jobs that are regarded as "women's jobs"; these jobs are often regarded as unskilled.
- Women often receive lower wages than men because of the type of work they do or because they are concentrated in the informal sector.
- Women often work longer hours than men.
- Unemployment affects women more than men because of the kinds of jobs that women are concentrated in.
- To survive many women are forced into the informal sector.

➤ Women and the South African economy

- This session dealt with the NP government since 1948-19994
- Positions of women in those years
- Crisis of the 70'
- Gear

➤ **Collective power – Union power and women**

This session looked at the broad aims behind the LRA:

- Economic Development
- Social Justice
- Labour Peace
- Democratisation of the Workplace

➤ **Gender – globalisation and labour legislation**

This section dealt with: -

- Purpose of Act
- Who is covered by the Act
- Main areas covered by the Act
- Idea behind BCEA
- Working Hours
- Averaging of Hours of work
- Pay for Sunday work
- Leave
- Payment for Maternity Leave
- Notice of termination
- Variations
- How does variation take place
- Enforcement of the Act
- How does the Act affect women workers
- How does the act promote globalisation
- Gains from the Act
- Main problems with the Act

➤ **The way forward for women workers in NUMSA**

The aim of this session was to identify successes and difficulties in implementing gender resolutions from both COSATU and NUMSA

The workshop concluded the following: -

⇒ **Successes**

- Women development schools were run
- Appointment of National gender co-ordinator
- Childcare facilities at union meetings
- Adoption of code of conduct on sexual harassment by COSATU and NEDLAC
- Training at company and industry level open for women
- National women's day recognised as a public holiday

⇒ **Challenges**

- Rejection of the quota system at NUMSA & COSATU congress
- End to sexual discrimination

- 6 months maternity leave
- Ten days childcare leave
- Development of female leadership
- Integration of gender in mainstream structures of the union
- Establishment of gender committees at factory level
- Childcare Facilities – state and employers responsibility
- Sensitivity of organising staff

⇒ **New Challenges**

- Averaging of working hours
- Compressed weeks

⇒ **Key problem areas**

- No links between gender reps and shop stewards at factory level
- Shop stewards withholding information from gender reps
- No paid time off for gender reps
- No recognition for gender reps – from management
- Shop stewards don't allow gender reps to give report backs to general membership must be done via shop stewards.
- Members don't attend general meetings
- Shop stewards don't attend LSSC [constitutional meetings]
- Gender reps are not allowed to attend monthly management meetings

⇒ **Solutions**

- General meetings to be held with the alliance partners to promote gender issues
- Local Office Bearers to attend all gender meetings and workshops
- Organisers and more shop stewards should be invited to gender meetings
- It should be the responsibility of organisers to establish factory gender committees
- Gender sensitivity workshops should be held for LOB's. Organisers, ROB's, Regional Team members and Administrators
- Gender should be a standing item on the agenda of all meetings [LSSC, REC]
- Shop stewards induction course should have a slot on gender
- Transport to be provided if union have meetings after hours to ensure the participation of female shop stewards and gender reps.

THE WAY FORWARD – PROCESSES

- ♠ Regions should discuss the above recommendations and report to the National meeting in November, the following areas should be covered: -
- ♠ Content of school – is it relevant for future schools or should we change the content and what should it be.
- ♠ Formulate recommendations in terms of organisational problems in proposals
- ♠ Demands should be assessed and proposals to be discussed in national meeting
- ♠ National meeting also to formulate regional positions for a possible composite resolution – national congress

WORKSHOP EVALUTION

- ♠ Gain confidence
- ♠ Better understanding of their rights – LRA & BCEA
- ♠ Tools to fight employers
- ♠ Gained knowledge in terms of organisational rights
- ♠ Venue to far out of town
- ♠ Overall co-ordination excellent
- ♠ Facilitators of ILRIG - excellent

Problems in Botshabelo – N/Cape

- ♠ Lack of service
- ♠ Workers don't have any organisational rights
- ♠ Mismanagement of Local Authority – basic needs such as water is a big problem
- ♠ Inefficiency of organising staff

Recommendation – the n/c region should follow these complaints up.

Prepared by Vanessa Jantjies

**WESTERN CAPE GENDER CO-ORDINATOR FOR AND ON BEHALF OF N/C
& W/C REGIONS**