



ANNUAL REPORT
LABOUR RESEARCH SERVICE
MARCH 2008 TO FEBRUARY 2009

to be presented at the
Annual General Meeting
26th November 2009
Cape Town



*Knowledge is too important to be
left in the hands of the bosses*

Labour Research Service
P.O. Box 376, Woodstock, 7915
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Tel: +27 21 447 1677
Email: lrs@lrs.org.za

Fax: +27 21 447 9244
Web Page: www.lrs.org.za

Table of Contents:

<i>CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION</i>	1
<i>BOARD MEMBERS 2008-9</i>	2
<i>MEMBER UNIONS OF THE LABOUR RESEARCH SERVICE</i>	3
<i>OPERATIONAL REVIEW: March 2008 – February 2009</i>	4
<i>Collective Bargaining Support:</i>	4
<i>Gender in the Workplace</i>	5
<i>HIV and AIDS in the Workplace</i>	6
<i>2010 and Beyond: Decent Work in the Construction Sector</i>	6
<i>Global and Regional Networking</i>	7
<i>Trade Union Development Indicators</i>	7
<i>Trade Union Library</i>	8
<i>HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY</i>	9
<i>FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION</i>	10
<i>FUNDERS</i>	11
<i>The Year Ahead: 2009 and Beyond</i>	11



CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

The 2008 AGM elected a Board of whom 5 were previous Board members and 1 new. It also confirmed the Board decision to appointment Saliem Patel as the Director of the LRS and for Sahra Ryklief, the previous Director, to remain as an advisor on the Board. The Board met consistently throughout the year to review the operational plan and financial situation of the organisation. This included adopting a new staff structure, addressing human resource matters and reviewing salaries and benefits.

This AGM occurs in the context of the Global Economic Crisis and the horrendous impact it is having in South Africa, Africa and the entire world. Poverty is on the rise and jobs have been and continue to be lost in the thousands. The AGM provides an opportunity to reflect on this in a manner that provides direction for the LRS projects on Collective Bargaining, Decent Work, Gender in the Work Place and Multinational Companies.

A critical challenge for the LRS is to increase and develop its human resources given the increased demand for its services. This poses the challenge of ensuring that the full costs of these services are covered by grants or income generated from trade unions. Grant income has increased in the past year and so has income generated by the LRS through its services. This, however, remains time-bound and it is important that in the coming period the organisation plans and works with its trade union members to ensure that LRS provides the high quality research and information required.

In the mean time the LRS will continue to extend its services to a range of trade unions that were involved in "hard bargaining" throughout this year. This is in addition to the project work involving participants from member and non member unions. The board congratulates the staff of the LRS for being able to provide assistance required by unions at short notice recognizing that this was work done over and beyond what was planned for.

The board has acted consistently in the interest of all members of the LRS. This was a concern raised at the 2008 AGM after the election of board members who all came from unions belonging to one federation, Cosatu. The board members





discussed this in the first board meeting after the AGM and affirmed that board members need to ensure that the LRS services all members no matter which federation they belong to. It was good to see that the negotiators conference was attended by participants coming from members belonging to different federations and were also attended by a few non-members of the LRS. Board members participated actively in LRS events throughout the year.

Finally I am glad that we have an application for membership from a union belonging to Fedusa. It has been some time since there has been a membership application and it is proof that the LRS remains relevant to unions across the political spectrum in South Africa.

The LRS is driven by the needs of its member unions and it is our responsibility as delegates from trade union to the 22nd Annual General Meeting to provide critical and constructive direction for the coming period. The LRS has a culture of open, transparent and non-sectarian debate which is a strength it has held onto for 23 years and I trust this AGM will reflect this.

Michael Sinclair (Chairperson)

26 October 2009

BOARD MEMBERS 2008-9

- | | | |
|----|------------------|---|
| 1. | Michael Sinclair | Board Chairman; Shop steward, National Union of Metalworkers of SA (NUMSA) |
| 2. | Faiza Davids | Board member, Shop steward, South African Commercial and Catering Workers Union (SACCAWU) |
| 3. | Jerry Nkosi | Board Member, National Collective Bargaining Officer, Chemical Energy Paper Printing Wood and Allied Workers Union (CEPPWAWU) |
| 4. | Guy Slingsby | Board Member, National Educator, National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) |
| 5. | Bhekani Ngcobo | Board member; Kwazulu Natal Provincial Manager, National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) |
| 6. | Patricia Peters | Board member; Deputy Chairperson, Western Cape Region, South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) |
| 7. | Sahra Ryklief | Board Advisor, Secretary General of the International Federation of Workers Associations (IFWEA) |
| 8. | Saliem Patel | Executive Director |



MEMBER UNIONS OF THE LABOUR RESEARCH SERVICE

1. CEPPWAWU Chemical Energy Paper Printing Wood and Allied Workers Union
2. FAWU Food and Allied Workers Union
3. HOSPERSA Hospital Personnel Trade Union of South Africa
4. J&GU Jewelers and Goldsmiths Union
5. MEWUSA Metal and Electrical Workers Union of South Africa
6. NEHAWU National Education Health and Allied Workers Union
7. NUM National Union of Mineworkers
8. NUMSA National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
9. SACCAWU South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union
10. SADTU South African Democratic Teachers Union
11. SAMWU South African Municipal Workers Union
12. SATAWU South African Transport and Allied Workers Union
13. TOWU Transport and Omnibus Workers Union

The Board decided to take the South African Woodworkers Union (SAWU) off our membership register after communication that the union disbanded.



OPERATIONAL REVIEW: March 2008 – February 2009

The period under review appears so distant given the busy period since February. The growing number of strikes followed the pattern of the last two years but occurred in more sectors, even affecting the medical profession and the armed forces. The national elections in April resulted in a new head of state and new ministers with key positions going to people who rose through the labour movement. Sporadic community protests for service delivery continue and the labour movement is trying hard to push back electricity and food price increases, job losses and labour brokers. Needless to say the LRS has faced increasing demand to support trade unions in collective bargaining since the beginning of 2009 at the same time that it took on bigger projects with more demanding project outputs. The highlights of the LRS projects follow.



Trenton Elsley of the LRS presenting at the Satawu Collective Bargaining Conference.

Collective Bargaining Support:

The **Bargaining Indicators** was launched in Johannesburg during the month of September 2008. It was the first time the LRS publicly launched this annual publication. The **Bargaining Monitor** produced earlier in April 2008 focused on the problem of inflation-bargaining in a context of declining inflation. The **Negotiators Conference** held in Johannesburg during April 2008 was tremendously successful in regards to attendance by LRS member unions, the relevance of the topics and the level of discussion.



The LRS also participated in and presented at the Satawu and Fedusa Collective Bargaining Conferences and prepared information packs to assist unions in their collective bargaining processes.



The Negotiators Conference: Is an inflation increase a real increase?

There has been engagement with Global Union Federations (GUFs) and the ITUC-Africa on the applicability of the LRS Actual Wage Rates Database as a tool for building collective bargaining capacity in Africa and for building cooperation and solidarity between unions in the same sector and in the same multinational companies across the continent. This project contributed specifically to the BWI campaign for Decent Work in the Construction sector. In 2009, work has been planned together with LRS partners in African countries to develop an African Bargaining Monitor.

Gender in the Workplace

This project drew on a number of participants coming from member unions. It has been able to draw women from different unions to share their experiences and to develop activities based on their experience to create new experiences within their unions. This action research method has resulted in broadening the focus of the project. It was started mainly to elaborate and highlight women's demands in collective bargaining but has been deepened to examining the organisational culture necessary for sustained struggles for women's emancipation.





The LRS Negotiators Conference: Why do gender demands fall off the table?

HIV and AIDS in the Workplace

The workshops held and the research conducted during 2008 identified the need for unions to first and foremost tackle the perception of HIV and AIDS among their members. The work done during 2008 laid the basis for assisting unions to engage with the National Strategic Plan (NSP). This will be monitored consistently throughout 2009.

2010 and Beyond: Decent Work in the Construction Sector



The campaign coordinator, based at the LRS, developed and managed a plan for the Building Workers International (BWI), who leads the campaign with its affiliates in South Africa. The aim of the campaign is to organise, recruit and educate workers at the stadiums and construction sites preparing for the 2010 Soccer World Cup. With 10 000 workers being recruited in this highly unorganized sector and several education and campaign programmes held for shop stewards, this project has continue to gain momentum in 2009.





Juan Carlos Vargas, Latin American Coordinator of the Global Network at the European Parliament, Round Table on the challenges of Chinese Investment on Decent Work

Global and Regional Networking

The LRS coordinates the Global Network in Africa which comprises of labour support organisations and trade unions from 10 African countries. The LRS is also a member of the African Labour Research Network. In both these Networks the LRS participates to enhance its capacity to facilitate stronger continental and global links between trade unions to promote and defend Decent Work and Human Rights. In 2008 the LRS was commissioned to be part of the ALRN research on Chinese Investments in Africa and also coordinated the research on African Civil Society Responses to the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). The LRS also participated in European events on Decent Work hosted by Solidar at the European Parliament. The LRS itself hosted one conference on

Decent Work. In 2009 the focus will be on the impact of international trade and investment trends and agreements on Decent Work and the ILO Jobs Pact.

Trade Union Development Indicators

This project yielded a world class matrix of indicators to be used as a tool for reviewing progress and identifying strategic priorities for trade union organisations. It was applied and tested in various contexts over two years – with national unions, with trade union centres at a provincial level and with unions in Namibia. It was also used to assist the Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Council develop a strategic plan. Presentations at the Negotiators Conference as well as at continental partner meetings assisted with refining the indicators. This project came to an end in February 2009; however, the indicators from this project will be incorporated into the collective bargaining support project, which will continue to apply the indicators developed for collective bargaining.





Delegates to the LRS conference on Trade Union Development Indicators

Trade Union Library

The trade union library continued to provide workers, students and unions with information however this service has declined dramatically with fewer users and even fewer members. The plan to revive the library to attract trade union activists in 2008 was unsuccessful after the librarian resigned in October 2008. The library was kept open with the employment of a previous volunteer on a part-time basis. Our hope for the library currently lies in the Community House Heritage Proposal to the national lotteries which will provide funds for sustaining and building the library through a bigger project of turning Community House into a living heritage site.





HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY

The increased demand for services by unions and the ability to raise grants for projects allowed the LRS to increase project staff on two projects, viz., the mainstreaming gender project and the collective bargaining support project. Two junior researchers were employed to collect information and produce resources for these projects. The challenge to recruit researchers remains for other projects. There is also a need to evaluate and streamline the responsibilities of project leaders. Project leaders hold responsibilities for project outputs, trade union research support, participating in partner meetings, liaising with funders to report on projects and develop funding proposals, and carry management roles in the organisation. In 2009 there has been a review of job descriptions and a performance evaluation process is in place which will assist in developing a plan by the end of the year to improve the long term human resource capacity of the organisation.

Interns:

During 2008 the LRS benefited from the work of three interns from the Färnebo Folk High School – Christian Forsman, Elsa Häkkinen and Maja Magnusson. The interns spent two months at the LRS working respectively on the 2010 Campaign, the Gender project and assisting with Ifwea events.

Consultants and Service Providers

The LRS must express thanks to the following consultants for their professional and comradely assistance during 2008:

- ÷ Jan Theron and Shane Godfrey of the **Labour Enterprise Policy Research Group** for research
- ÷ Nana Davies and Wilma Wessels of **Southern Hemisphere** for PME
- ÷ Karen Rutter for editing and writing
- ÷ **Fingerprint Co-op** for printing
- ÷ Lindia Trout of **Media Chilli** for layout and design
- ÷ Rita De Morney of **R&D Conference and Events Management** for event Coordination



*The LRS provides research support to the Shoprite Shopsteward Alliance Steering Committee
A continental alliance of trade unions organising in South Africa's multinational, Shoprite.*

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

The resignation of the finance manager in June 2008 and the librarian in October 2008 presented challenges in the finance and administration departments. The organisation initially lost its ability to deliver finance reports effectively and efficiently and there was a decline in organisational systems. These challenges were given immediate attention by staff and board and added assistance was provided by consultants since the end of 2008. These challenges have been addressed in 2009 with the employment of a qualified finance manager and bookkeeper and the LRS is on track with financial reporting and the administrative systems are back in place.



FUNDERS

The following organisations supported the LRS with funds for project work during 2008.

ACRONYM	NAME	COUNTRY
BWI	Building Workers International	Switzerland
DFID	Department for International Development	United Kingdom
EED	Evangelischer Entwicklungs Dienst	Germany
FNV	FNV-Mondial	Netherlands
LO-TCO	LO-TCO Bistandsnamnd	Sweden
OPIC	Olof Palme International Centre	Sweden
RLF	Rosa Luxemburg Foundation	Germany
SASK	Suomen Ammattiliittojen Solidaarisuuskeskus	Finland
SLA	Swiss Labour Assistance	Switzerland
SOLIDAR	SOLIDAR	Belgium
UNISON	UNISON	United Kingdom
WIF	Wage Indicator Foundation	Netherlands

The LRS board and staff wish to thank these partners for their grants or contracts during the period under review.

The Year Ahead: 2009 and Beyond

Much has already been said about what is intended for 2009 and the year is almost at an end. We are in a position to already look forward to 2010 with project plans and funding already in place. The big challenge ahead is testing and improving the organisation's systems and developing the human resource capacity of the organisation.

Saliem Patel

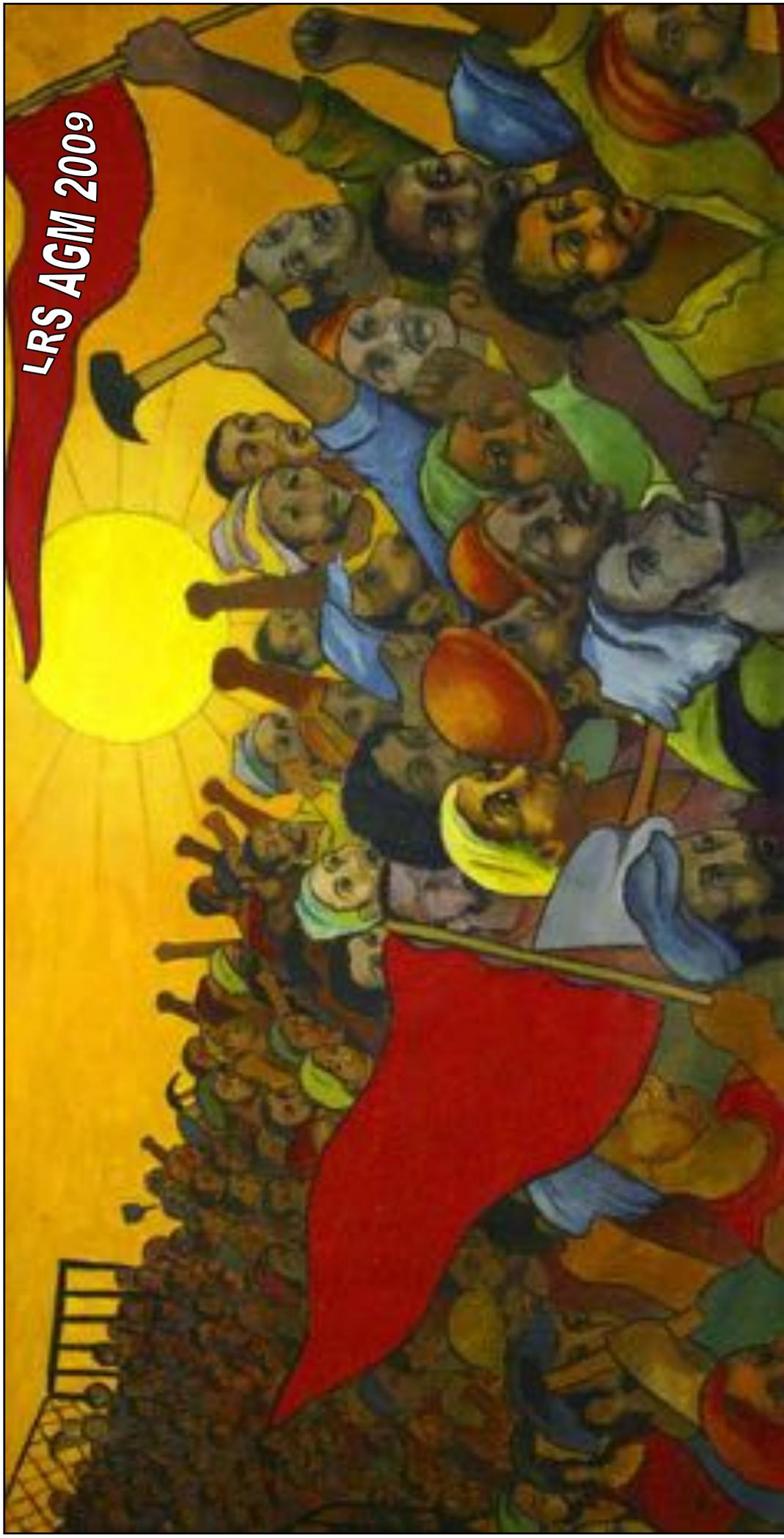
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LRS

Labour Research Service



41 Salt River Road, Community House, Salt River, 7925, Cape Town (South Africa)

P O Box 376, Woodstock, 7915, South Africa

Tel: +27 21 447 1677

Fax: +27 21 447 9244

Email: lrs@lrs.org.za

Website: www.lrs.org.za