

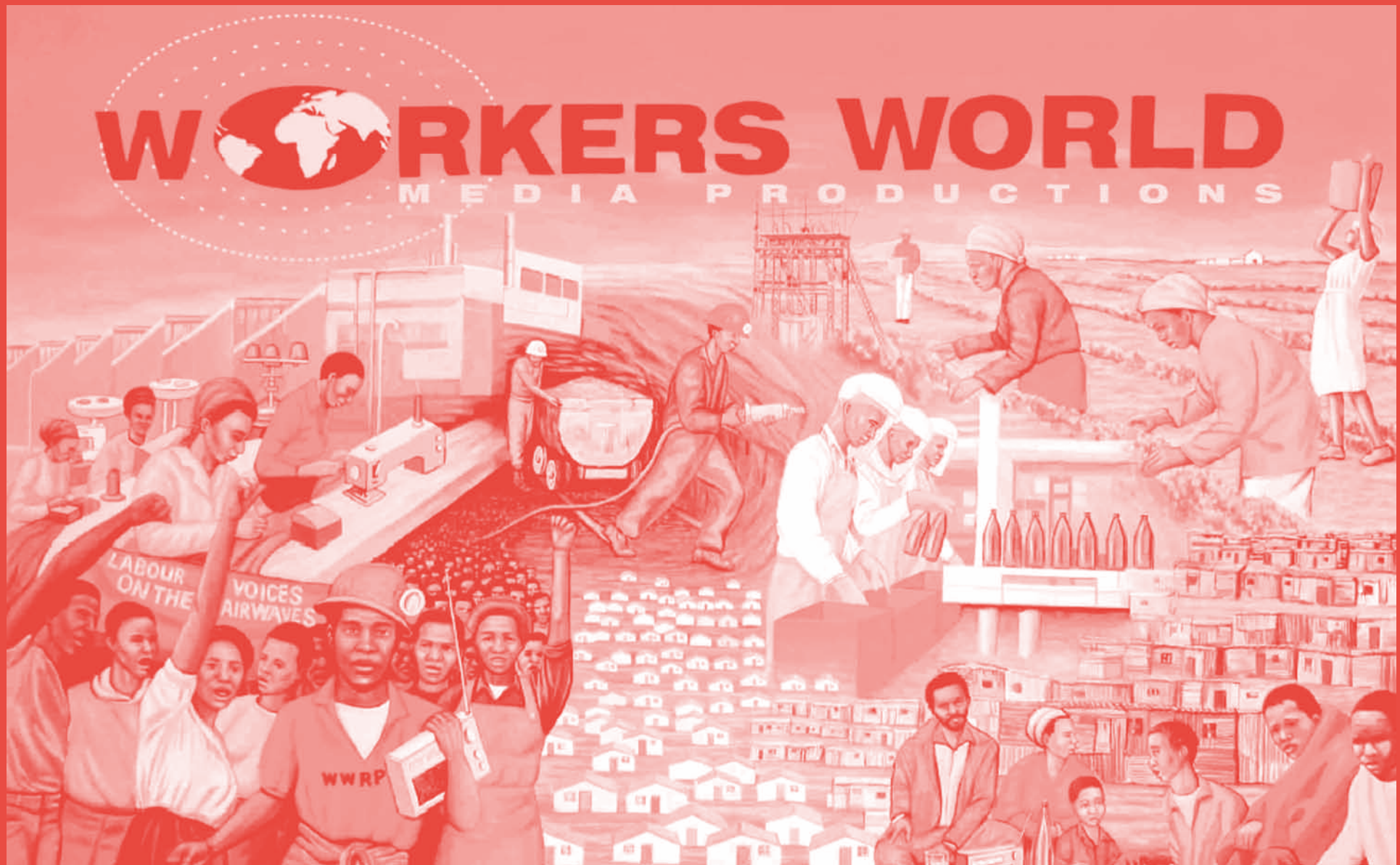


WWWMP



year report
1999 - 2014

15 years of labour voices on the air-waves



Vision

“To have an informed, organised and mobilised working class acting in its own interests.”

Mission

“To provide quality, relevant and informative media productions and access to the media for the labour movement and working class people.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The people and organisations who have helped make WWMP during 2009 – 2014

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Introduction

Workers' World Media Productions is an independent labour movement media project, with offices in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa, and an audience reach across the continent.

We have a vision for an informed, organised and mobilised working class acting in its own interests. To facilitate this, we produce, distribute and facilitate discussion groups, media training, film festivals, training manuals and television shows, but our primary focus is on radio productions and broadcasts. Radio is the internet of Africa, able to reach workers and poor people everywhere. We aim to provide working class people with a voice, their own platform in their language, as well as with the news and analysis they need to advance their interests.

Our project was founded in 1999, and we celebrate our 15th anniversary in difficult circumstances: the global economy is in crisis, the labour movement is divided, and tensions in South Africa are reaching boiling point as people lose patience in a government that has failed to end economic apartheid. Right wing populists are taking advantage of the vacuum, and there is a sense of political volatility in South Africa and all over the world.

The Marikana massacre of mine workers has in many ways been a watershed political moment in South Africa that brutally exposed the class character of the ANC government and the lengths it was prepared to go to protect the interests of white monopoly capital and their black capitalist cohorts in the ANC's leadership. It is the class pressure from below like the mineworkers' strikes and

*Wonderkop, Marikana
Pic: Greg Marinovich*



farmworkers' uprisings that have contributed towards the trade union leaders in Cosatu's political battles that could result in a split and realignment of the trade union movement with more divisions. Already Cosatu's biggest affiliate Numsa has broken politically from the ANC and the Tripartite Alliance, refusing to support the ruling party in the forthcoming elections. The union is leading a mass campaign against the youth wage subsidy legislated by government last year and towards a broad united front similar to the UDF of the 1980's to lead working class struggles. Numsa is also investigating the prospect of leading the formation of a mass workers' party and will decide on this during 2015.

These are major political developments within Cosatu and come on the back of the NUM losing thousands of members in the platinum sector to rival union, AMCU and its federation, Nactu.

Internationally too, there have been significant political developments in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) Region and Europe since 2010 with mass uprisings, protests and coups. These have at times resulted in worse situations against working class interests, such as in Egypt that is once again dominated by the military junta. Underpinning these uprisings internationally is increased poverty with worsening and widening inequality with the World Economic Forum expressing concern about this phenomenon – "impacting social stability within countries and threatening security on a global scale." We can see why even capitalist organisations are expressing concern about the situation when we consider the statistics such as the fact that:

- Almost half of world's wealth is now owned by just one percent of the population.
- The wealth of the one percent richest people in the world amounts to \$110 trillion. That is 65 times the total wealth of the bottom half of the world's population.
- The bottom half of the world's population owns the same as the richest 85 people in the world.



WWMP's role as a labour service organisation, owned and controlled by the labour movement is not to take sides in the political battles raging on within Cosatu and South African society but rather to support universal working class political and organisational principles as contained in our constitution of Unity, Independence and Democratic methods. This has been our mantra since our establishment in 1999 and remains so.

We have become accustomed to operating in conditions of crisis: we were formed in the wake of the end of apartheid, and celebrated our 10th anniversary as the world economy went into economic meltdown. Crisis and adversity has become business as usual at Workers' World. Despite this, and the many challenges we face, we have continued to provide a clear and independent voice for workers. We have also developed an organisational resilience in adversity, and an ability to function under pressure. Despite the challenges and set-backs, we will continue to provide a media service to the workers of South Africa and neighbouring countries.

Commitment to the labour movement

We are not just any media organisation – we are rooted in, and committed to the labour movement. We are non-partisan and democratic: we are governed by a Board that includes representatives from all three of South Africa's union federations, as well as three labour service organisations. We defend workers' interests, not those of any political party or faction.

We tell workers' stories, but we believe in accountability, balance and integrity. Workers need accurate news that provides them with the information they need to participate in society - not propaganda. We abide by journalistic ethics. We believe that for society to function – especially a society with the structural damage of South Africa – people need accurate information. We aim to provide that information in an accessible and relevant format.

We believe in:

- Unity of workers and working class people.
- Organisational and political independence.
- Democracy – both in society and within organisations.



The state of Media and Journalism

We are concerned with the state of journalism, both in South Africa and internationally. We have seen increased media monopolies, the corrosion of good investigative reporting and the downgrading of industrial and labour reporting.

In South Africa, we have seen pro-government media bias from the state broadcaster, as well as the establishment of new print media that pushes the government line. At the same time, press freedom is being eroded, with the proposed Protection of State Information Bill – the “Secrecy Bill”. This legislation would allow the state to prosecute journalists who publish information it would prefer to see covered up for reasons of “national security”. Given the fragile state of South African democracy, especially after the Marikana massacre, this is a worrying development indeed.

Similar increased hostility towards media and journalists are to be found in various parts of the world and reflects the fear of those in power towards the free-flow of information relating to injustice and inequality. At the time of writing this report, four Al Jazeera reporters were still being detained by the military junta in Egypt there and accused of supporting a terrorist organisation, presumably the toppled from power, Muslim Brotherhood party.

In addition to providing an alternative media source for working class people, we work to broaden access to politics and media. We provide training and support in media production, so that trade unionists and working class organisations can make their own media. Our Mass Education Campaign empowers people to question the narratives offered to them by the mainstream media.

Our education and media work is also aimed at building and strengthening much needed grassroots organisation and leadership – at workplaces and within local communities and to build political and organisational bridges between these two terrains of working class life and struggles.

To reach as wide an audience as possible, we work in partnership with community radio stations with accountable structures, trade unions and labour service organisations.

Our Aims

- To provide a wide range of media accessible and relevant to working class people in South Africa and internationally.
- To train trade unionists and community members in the use of the media.
- To improve the use of media and information for the building of working class organisation.

Where we come from

Apartheid and the Labour Movement in South Africa

The labour movement played a critical role in the end of apartheid. When black workers defied the apartheid regime in the docks of Durban and elsewhere in 1973 by taking wildcat strike action, they initiated a chain of events that led to the defeat of Apartheid. Crippled by uncontrollable industrial action, the apartheid regime legalised black trade unions, believing they could tie them down in the processes and bureaucracy of labour relations and co-opt them. Instead, the newly formed unions, united into the federations of COSATU and NACTU, went from strength to strength, organising and undermining the economic basis of the regime.

While official history highlights the role of negotiations, sanctions, and the importance of international sport to white voters as being crucial factors, the labour movement's ability to mobilise the mass of people was probably one of the biggest factors in the defeat of apartheid. By uniting workers, communities, students and



democrats from across society and with the United Democratic Front (UDF), the unions were able to articulate a positive and achievable struggle for political freedom and social justice, as well as an activist role for ordinary people.

This is in stark contrast to the tactics of the armed struggle: while heroic, this encouraged a culture of martyrdom and an elitism in some of the exiled leaders. Unions put ordinary working class people at the forefront of the struggle against apartheid, and it was these workers that prevailed. By striking at the economic heart of apartheid capitalism, organised workers were able to attack the profitability of the system, and play an important part in forcing the regime to negotiate a compromise political solution away from Apartheid.



The democratic era

The labour movement went into the democratic era in a seemingly powerful position: in alliance with the governing party, and with a strong reputation in the fight against oppression. The workers' movement seemed poised to play a central role in determining the new society, and to help bring about an end to economic as well as political apartheid. During the early 1990's Cosatu led the way with its Reconstruction and Development (RDP) programme that promoted welfarist social democracy but it was soon watered down to provide scope for the new government's neo-liberal economic policies that were to come later in the form of the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy in 1996. Nevertheless, fundamental workers' rights were enshrined in the Constitution and labour laws of the new democratic state.

While the labour movement in the West had been in decline since the late 1970s, South African unions bucked the trend, and were showing growth, dynamism and a shop-floor vibrancy that suggested the power to bring about a real democracy. In addition, South African workers helped develop and articulate a new model of industrial relations – social movement unionism – that seemed to provide answers to the organisational impasse reached by their colleagues in other countries. South African unions had reinforced their central role in society by developing themselves as the economic arm of a broad struggle for socialism, uniting diverse communities, rather than just fighting for the narrow terms and conditions of their members.

Challenges

From the start, however, there were stresses and contradictions that threatened workers' unity. Chief of these, perhaps, was the way the workers' movement reflected apartheid divisions, and that workers went into the democratic era with three rival federations reflecting different histories and traditions. In time, tensions between federations would ensure that workers were sometimes divided politically, and restrained from taking united collective action, or in identifying and fighting a common class enemy.

The other major contradiction was the alliance between the dominant federation, COSATU, and the governing party. This was always going to test the loyalties of activists, especially as the state was a major employer. When the post-apartheid ANC government embarked on a neo-liberal economic policy which resulted in, among other things, a raft of privatisations of state enterprises, excessive user fees for basic services, including education, this contradiction was thrown into even starker relief.

Another fault line was the shift in the nature of the South African economy itself. Jobs were shed in the traditional extractive

industries, as well as in the former state enterprises. Both the service sector and the informal economy grew in importance. Preoccupied as Cosatu was with political battles, the labour movement failed to respond adequately to this shift, and a large constituency of workers today remains unorganised and consequently extremely exploited and oppressed.

Finally, there was a shift in the country's labour relations model to the social dialogue of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) and a feeble attempt through workplace forums at company level. NEDLAC is a tripartite body consisting of representatives of labour, government and business. While it has brought about better nation-wide collective bargaining cover and material conditions for workers, albeit limited, its overall orientation has done so at the expense of an increased bureaucratisation of the labour relations process, with a consequent demobilisation and marginalisation of shop-floor activists. Today more union resources and time of trade union organisers are spent in mediation and dispute resolution between workers and employers than actual mobilisation and building workers' power.

Where we fit in

Workers' World was launched in 1999, by labour movement activists with a history in the struggle as a project of the Labour Research Service (LRS) and within its strategic plan that highlighted three areas of concern that posed a direct challenge to the labour movement, namely the;

- Rightward political shift of the labour movement, driven by the leadership to place faith in the ANC government and "social partnership" to deliver better living and working conditions. This had the effect of working class people abandoning their struggle orientation and self-organisation.

Our purpose was to develop an independent workers' voice and media platform that would contribute towards overcoming and challenging these weaknesses and contradictions, and allow workers to put aside superficial differences and unite in defending and fighting for their own interests. We believe in the power of organised labour, and we were concerned that South African workers – having organised and fought their way into the vanguard of political struggle – were being marginalised. South Africa's labour movement – one of the most powerful in the world – was at risk of being pushed to the side lines.

This was especially the case as the government increasingly adopted neo-liberal economic policies. South African labour law with its neo-liberal "regulated flexibility" paradigm - but still comparatively progressive when compared to countries like Britain – was increasingly being attacked as "inflexible", and an anti-union consensus was growing in the mainstream media.

We saw a need to challenge these developments by creating an impartial but working-class biased voice for workers.



*WWMP Public Launch
with guest speaker
Ebrahim Patel and
board members*



The situation today

The period since the end of apartheid has seen growing discontent among the working class and poor in South Africa. Most have seen no substantial improvement to their material circumstances, and yet are confronted with the conspicuous wealth and consumption of both the old, white ruling class, and the new black elite. South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world. Despite positive economic growth rates, the majority of black working class people still live in desperate poverty.

This inequality has led to the rise of new social movements and protests for service delivery. Increasingly, these protests and movements have been met by state violence. However, the

depth of the crisis – especially in the labour movement – came to shocking prominence with the Marikana massacre in late 2012. Scores of striking mine workers were shot dead – some executed at point blank range – by the police during a strike. The strike itself was a consequence of divisions in the mining unions, with workers protesting the failure of their unions to represent them adequately. Marikana was followed by a massive wave of workers' uprisings and protests, not just in mining, but also agriculture, where workers on wine farms set vineyards alight in protest at conditions. The boiling over of frustrations in these two sectors was no accident since they were at the heart of the brutal oppression and exploitation of Apartheid Capitalism and have experienced minimal improvements for workers in the new South Africa.

The consequences of Marikana and the resulting workers' uprisings have caused pressures and consequently political tensions and divisions within the South African labour movement, especially Cosatu. Cosatu unions are split, broadly, between those that believe they should be directly fighting for the working class and poor, and those that have chosen loyalty to the ANC government and an overreliance on it to eventually deliver "A Better Life for All".

An important survey carried out by the labour service organisation Naledi shows that ordinary members want their unions to defend their interests robustly, but some in the leadership have acted undemocratically in order to preserve their power and their close links to government. This has led to a deep dysfunction at a time when a powerful and united labour movement is needed more than ever in the face of ongoing economic, social and political crises.

South Africa faces a crucial general election this year. With no consistent voice speaking for workers, right wing populists masquerading as left-wingers are filling the vacuum.



South African workers face a crisis, and the house of labour is divided with a potential split looming in Cosatu. Stronger organisation and voices from the ground is important, now more than ever, to promote a principled political battle that will ensure a positive outcome of a stronger, united, democratic and independent labour movement.

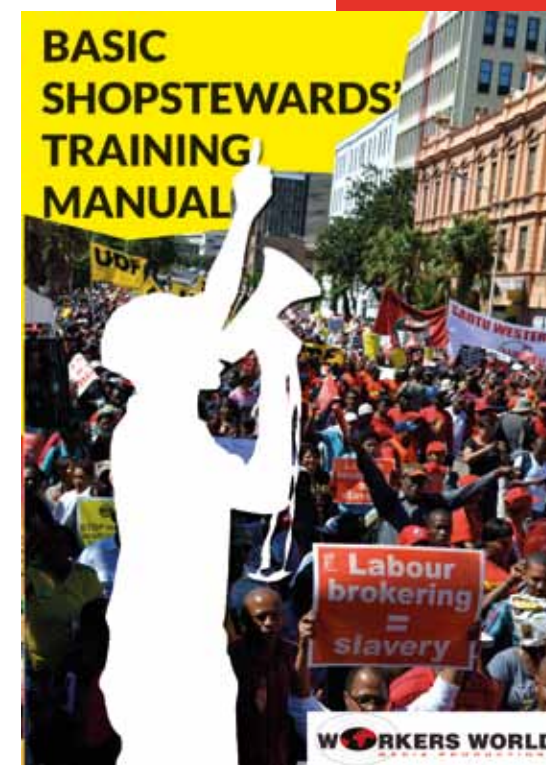
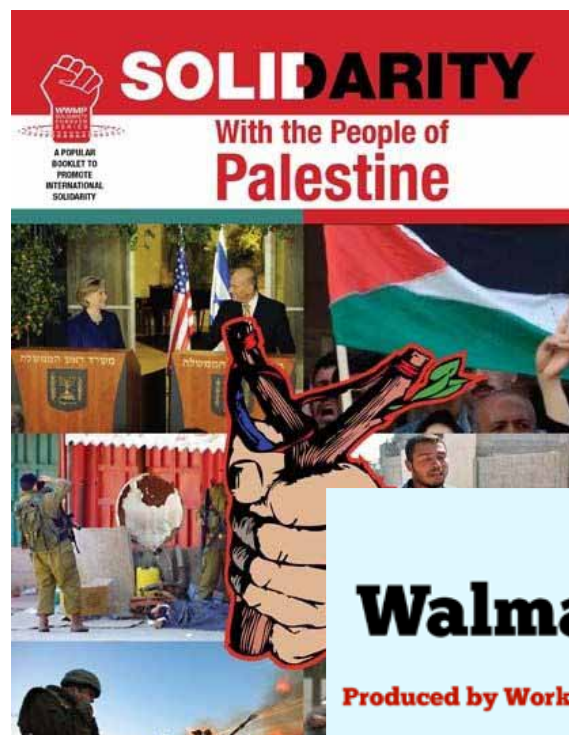
Our continued relevance

In this context, an independent, reliable voice for workers is needed more than ever. Marikana and the Naledi report highlighted how badly the labour movement has neglected rank and file activists – for instance, only between 5% and 10% of shop stewards have had any significant training over the past decade. This has been borne out by our own direct experience since 2010 when we started embarking on shop-stewards training in several townships in various parts of the country. This creates a serious issue of capacity, with the movement's most crucial activists ill-equipped for the tasks at hand. For this reason, we have made a strategic shift over the past two years to reach out to and directly support rank and file activists and shop-stewards. In line with this approach we have systematically shifted our resources to be physically located in areas where workers live and work.

We believe that in order to stand a chance of navigating this difficult and contradictory territory, South African labour activists need access to the best possible news, information and campaigning resources. We endeavour, as far as possible, to fill in the media and education gaps left by an official labour movement that is too embedded in its internal crisis to meet the needs of workers.

Our content themes for Media and Education work are:

- Marginalised Workers
- Democracy – Trade Unions and Politics
- Gender and Women's Oppression
- Discrimination – Racism, xenophobia and homophobia
- HIV & AIDS
- Occupational Health, Safety and the Environment



Walmart Watch

Produced by Workers World Media Productions



Our project work

Over the 15 years of our existence, Workers' World has been involved in a wide range of media and education project work, all aimed at empowering ordinary workers and trade union activists to participate in the media landscape and strengthen their organisations. Here is an overview of our most important projects.



The Importance of Radio and New Social Media

Since our inception, the main focus of our work has been on radio, because this is still the best way to reach working class people in Africa. While the internet has transformed labour movement communications in the developed world, internet penetration in Africa remains low.

This is changing with the increasing use of smart phones, and we have begun to provide training for trade unionists in using new technology, but radio is still by far the most accessible and democratic medium.

Our flagship project has been in labour and community media: we have developed relationships with community and public radio stations across South Africa (and more recently across the continent), and trained presenters in delivering labour shows. We produce and pre-record radio news and a documentary feature in five different languages. This is played on around forty community radio stations around South Africa, and is then followed by a trade union phone in talk show. This ensures that labour and working class issues are aired across the country, and that ordinary workers can take part in the debates and ensure that their voices are heard. By producing shows in English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho we are also able to ensure workers can participate in their own language. During 2006 we changed our name from Workers' World Radio Productions to Media productions to express the shift to multi-media work.

Labour-Community Media Project (LCMP)

This is the project that launched our organisation. In 1997, a collective of labour service organisations carried out a radio pilot project, called Workers' World. It consisted of 12 weekly

30-minute slots on Bush Radio, a Cape Town-based community radio station, focusing on issues relevant to workers and the labour movement.

The project was very successful, and Workers' World Radio Productions was launched in August 1999 to take it forward and turning this into a national project, broadcasting in five languages that involved:

- Building partnerships with community radio stations across the country
- Training radio presenters and union activists, in labour issues and radio presentation, to create a pool of people with the skills to host the labour shows on over 40 community radio stations nationally.
- Developing our own capacity, by employing and training multilingual staff in all aspects of radio production and working class politics.

The demanding schedule involved identifying issues of importance to trade unionists, and researching and producing news and documentary radio shows in five languages. We then planned for broadcast, by preparing presenters to host a phone in talk show on the issues raised by the documentary features and with local studio guests relevant to the topic.

This has been hugely successful, but also extremely demanding. Over the years, we have reached millions of ordinary working class people, and our radio shows have had excellent audience evaluations.

Since 2012 we trained our producers in investigative journalism so that they could produce more in depth and critical pieces. As a result they produced work on some of the flash points in the South African labour market, including Farm workers, Call centre workers, the conditions of rock-drillers in the mining industry, female mineworkers, cleaners, security guards and car guards.

More recently, due to the lack of capacity in shop stewards identified in the Naledi survey and serious political and organisational weaknesses within the working class relative to the issues confronting it in this period of crises, we have shifted the focus of our work somewhat. We have scaled back on radio production, and have spent more time doing field work and training and capacity building of trade union and community activists.

We are also widening the distribution of the radio shows by making them available as podcasts.



Africa Labour Media Project (ALMP)

This project is essentially the expansion of our project work into the rest of Africa as a solidarity effort and includes partnerships with trade union federations of 10 participating countries. So far, we have had our radio shows broadcast by SABC Channel Africa, as well as by public broadcasters in Uganda, Ghana, Zambia and Malawi. This has gone well, particularly in Uganda, where there has been a substantial buy-in at leadership level. However, it is difficult for us to support, due to our limited organisational and financial resources. We are working with ITUC-Africa to take over responsibility for running the project from their offices in Lome', Togo.



The aim of the project is to build the media capacity of the trade union movement on the continent and in each country, primarily through weekly labour radio shows for conscientising workers and the public and supporting their organising work.

In addition to the countries mentioned above, the project involves stakeholders in Nigeria, Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho.

Since the inception of the project we've had a good relationship with SABC Channel Africa consolidated with an annually renewed memorandum of understanding

for the production of a weekly Africa Labour Radio Show called Mshikamano (referring to unity and cohesion in Swahili). Since 2012 and we have been in contact with international broadcasters based in Britain, The Netherlands and Germany to broadcast the show but they are not interested.

Since 2012 we've broadcasted these shows on several South African community broadcasters and a monthly live show on the SAFM's Workers on Wednesday.

Some of the topics the radio shows have covered include:

- Multinationals in Africa
- Trade union investment companies
- The uprisings in North Africa
- Climate change and the trade union response
- Organising under oppressive governments, such as Swaziland and Zimbabwe
- Police brutality during strikes, and the role of police unions
- Deployment of trade unions into government: does this serve workers?
- Youth unemployment
- Economic crisis and the trade union response
- Unions and the mainstream media
- Women in trade unions
- Organising in the informal sector
- HIV & Aids and the role of unions

We believe this introduces a very important and rich dialogue to a diverse audience across the sub-continent. We have plans for a number of future shows as well. Since 2011 we have been focusing on broadening participation at country level by developing country project teams that include representatives from other working class organisations, global unions and labour service groups.

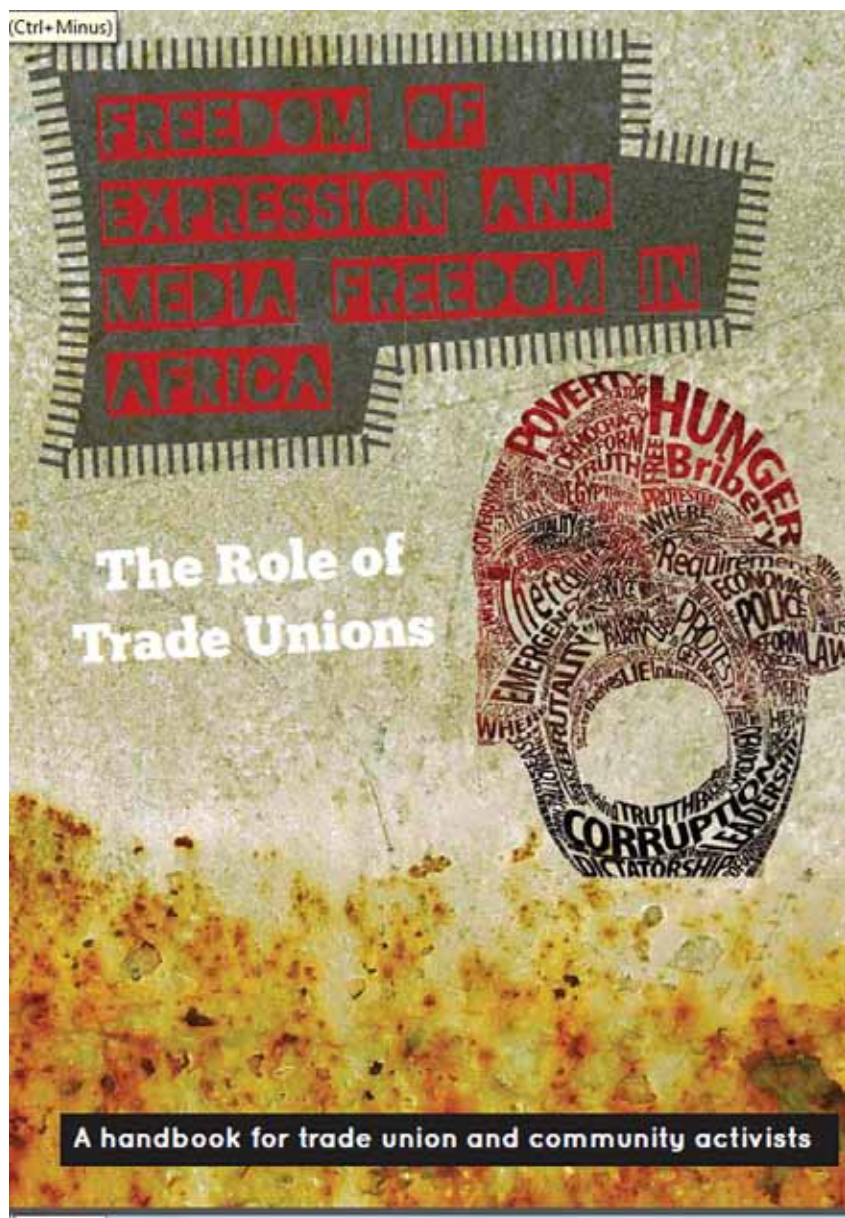
The project has also promoted campaigning for freedom of expression and media freedom in Africa supported by a related publication.

ALMP participants at international workshop in Johannesburg (April 2011)

Arab Labour Media Project

The Arab Spring inspired us to reach out to Arabic-speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa (the MENA region) to develop a similar project there. We have worked with the ITUC-Middle East office in Amman, Jordan, and developed a relationship with the powerful UGTT union confederation in Tunisia, as well as the labour service organisation for independent unions in Egypt, the CTUWS.

However the language barrier has made communication slow, and this project has not yielded results yet. We are planning ongoing development work to bring this to fruition. In the meanwhile we have produced an Arabic version of the *Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom* publication for the MENA Region.



Graphics from the Arab language version of Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom publication

WWMP together with other organisations played a leading role in the establishment of Cape Town TV.



Television – Cape Town TV and Labour TV Shows

In 2006, WWMP was part of a pioneering group that initiated the development and launch of Cape Town TV in 2008. Since then we have been an important stakeholder and was party to developing what is probably the first and only regular weekly labour TV show on the continent and probably the only regular weekly broadcasted labour TV show in the world. CTV now has an additional channel on digital TV as part of the DSTV network as Channel 263. This has increased its viewership to over 2 million monthly viewers. Potentially the labour TV show on the DSTV network makes the show available to six million people across sub-Saharan Africa.

Every year we produce and broadcast two 13-week seasons that started as a 30-minute show that has evolved into a full hour. The quality of the shows has been excellent: well-produced and professional. We are working hard to ensure that it continues to improve in quality and also in representation, by increasing the number of women participants.



In 2010, together with AIDC, we completed our first documentary film production, *False Profits*, that focused on the causes of the economic crisis and its effects on working class people. We hope to use our television production skills to create more documentaries, and we have several pertinent ideas in the pipeline. Funding limitations and other pressing priorities mean we have not realised this ambition yet.



Mass Education Campaign (MEC)

We identified serious capacity issues among trade union and community activists, and decided to embark on a mass education programme, covering everything from basic shop steward training, political education through to paralegal support and media development. During 2010 we partnered with Cosatu's national education desk and launched the campaign at a national conference attended by over 200 representatives (see conference declaration, Appendix 1).

The education campaign has many facets and is delivered in different ways as outlined below, primarily via Labour-Community Media Forums (LCMF's) and Cosatu Locals at community level. Unfortunately Cosatu's participation in the campaign has been inconsistent, weakening the achievement of our goals. Nevertheless we have persevered and have had good co-operation from unions at regional and local level.

Labour-Community Media Training Course

This project grew out of our community radio partnership. We realised that there was a real need to provide community and union activists with an understanding of the media landscape and training in using the media for campaigning. We developed a very well-received training course that was piloted and delivered for the first time in 2013 over three semesters and included weekly tutorials. Over six days, participants covered the following subjects:

- Media theory
- The Political Economy of the Media
- The South African Media landscape
- The decline of the Daily Mirror in the UK, and the nature of the mainstream media today
- Bias in the Media
- The Role of Community Media
- Ethics of Journalism
- An Introduction to Journalism
- Intensive training in media production in print, video and television, and audio and radio production.

Much has been learnt from this demanding programme that will require ongoing support and development, but we believe it is necessary.

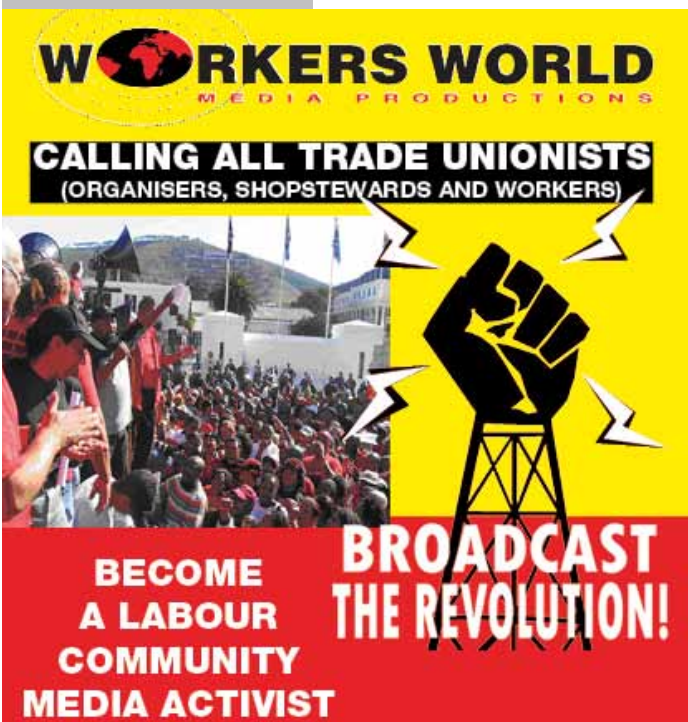


Far left: Training course in Beaufort West for farming community leaders (February 2014)

Labour Advice Media and Education Centres (LAMECs)

This is an outreach project of ours to address capacity and support problems in the labour movement and poor communities. As mentioned before in this report, many trade unions have neglected basic shop steward training and development. This has a real impact on our effectiveness, because it reduces the pool of empowered and capable activists we can engage with.

In addition, because of the lack of properly trained shop stewards, many trade unions are failing to adequately service their members, for instance with legal advice. Despite some misgivings, we felt it was necessary to provide structured institutional support where unions are failing to do so directly.



To address this deficit we developed two media, education and advice centres- LAMECs. These are physical hubs which act like social centres in the townships of Khayelitsha (outside Cape Town), and Alexandria (outside Johannesburg). We have worked with a very wide range of organisations to develop the capacity of the centres. These have included trade unions and labour service organisations, community organisations, environmental campaign groups, paralegal advice NGOs and others like unemployed youth who have gravitated to the centres.

The centres are run by full-time staff and volunteers from the community. The volunteers are trained by us

to be able to provide advice, support and organise educational activities. We use a Case Management System to ensure that we are able to provide consistent support. So far we have supported several hundred cases with much success in resolving many with unorganised, marginalised workers or underserved union members. In doing so, we have tried connecting these workers with relevant trade unions. We also ensure that they are kept on our database and informed of activities with the view towards them playing a more meaningful role in the life of the centres.

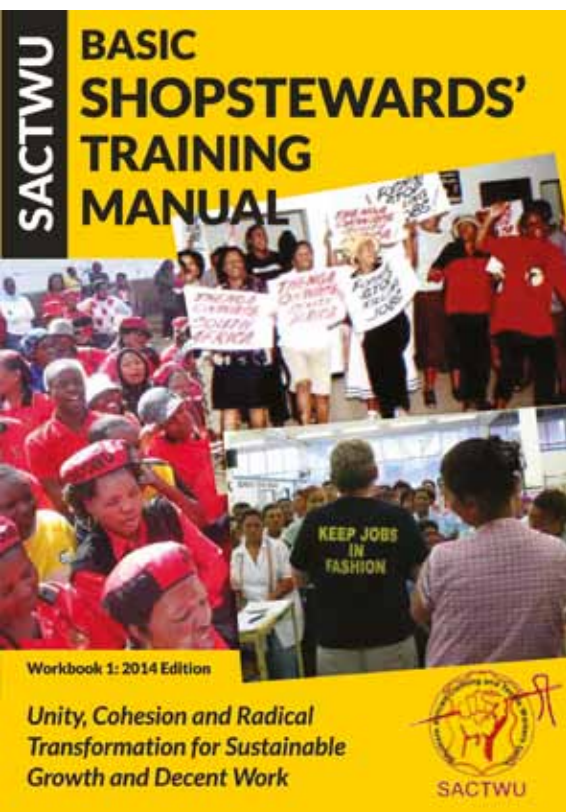
One of the most important aspects of the advice provided is paralegal support. This has been particularly effective, especially the support in labour law. However, this needs ongoing support and development, as some of the labour law cases are complex.

The hubs are also being used for study circles, and a young workers' forum. We are advertising the services of the hubs through community radio stations. However we are cautious about advertising too widely and raising expectations, as we would struggle to meet the need generated.

In the near future and as per our recent board meeting's decision, we intend to open three more centres, in Port Elizabeth, East London and Rustenburg.

Educational material

We have produced a wide range of educational and training material over the years, including some very well-regarded education manuals and publications. We were able to make a significant contribution to the trade union struggle for HIV prevention and treatment, by producing firstly an HIV-AIDS manual for trade unionists in South Africa, and then a manual for transport workers around the world, for the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).



Education and Training provision

We are in the process of registering with South Africa's sector skills council, the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) for media skills, the Media, Information and Communication Technology (MICT) Seta. This would make us an accredited media training provider, recognised by the sector, and also make us eligible for funding support for training. Trainees will also have accredited formal qualifications that could assist them in finding employment in the media industry. There are significant bureaucratic hurdles to overcome, but we feel that this is an important development.

We have also produced educational material and publications on Farm Workers' Right, 50 Years of the Freedom Charter, Solidarity for the People of Swaziland and Zimbabwe, and Palestine. These are in addition to the publications on *Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom – the Role of Trade Unions* – produced in English and Arabic. Other publications in production for launching in 2014 include a "Get Organised" series of booklets and a Marxist Manual that will be a primer, introducing activists to Marxist philosophy and theory.

Labour Film Festivals

We have organised a labour film festival every year since 2006. Films that focus on labour or issues of concern for the working class are taken on a roadshow and shown around the country, in cooperation with local unions, community organisations and NGO's. The film shows are public events that include discussions and education. Our film festival takes labour films deep into working class communities to reach people where they live.

Our most recent festival was hosted in 11 different townships and cities in South Africa. Over the years we have tried unsuccessfully to persuade our partners in neighbouring countries to similarly initiate labour film festivals there.

THE STORY OF STUFF

HOW OUR OBSESSION WITH STUFF IS TRASHING THE PLANET, OUR COMMUNITIES, AND OUR HEALTH – AND A VISION FOR CHANGE

THE STORY OF STUFF

Dir: Louis Fox; 2000; 20mins

The Story of Stuff is a 20 minute, fast-paced, fact-filled look at the underside of our production and consumption patterns. The Story of Stuff exposes the connections between a huge number of environmental and social issues, and calls us together to create a more sustainable and just world. It'll teach you something, it'll make you laugh, and it just may change the way you look at all the stuff in your life forever.

FALSE PROFITS

Produced and directed by: AIDC and WWMP; 2009; 48mins

The first documentary film for both organisations and it focuses on the current global economic crisis – its impact on the working class and the responses by trade unions, government and big business in South Africa. It includes interviews with leading trade unionists, workers, community members, NGO workers and academics. The film is decidedly leftwing and critical in its approach and attempts to explain the crisis in Marxist terms and poses serious questions about alternative responses to the crisis that constantly impacts negatively on the working class and the world's poor. Moreover, this current crisis is also ecological and renders capitalism unsustainable and a threat to life on Earth.

For enquiries
021 447 2727
011 403 1877

www.wwmp.org.za

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES! ALUTA CONTINUA!

VENEZUELA BOLIVARIANA

VICTIMS OF HOUSING EVICTIONS SPEAK OUT

Labour Film Festival 2013

FREE

THE CAPITALIST CRISIS

FALSE PROFITS

AIDC
Alternative Information Development Center
www.aidc.org.za

24 April SALT RIVER 6-9pm
25 April ALEXANDRA 6-9pm
25 April KHAYELITSHA 6-9pm
25-26 April BOTSHABELLO 3pm
27 April WITSBANK 10am
30 April DE DOORN 6-9pm
30 April BUSTENBURG 6-9pm
8 May EAST LONDON 6-9pm
9 May KING WILLIAMSTOWN 1-4pm
10 May PORT ELIZABETH 6-9pm
22 May DURBAN 6-9pm

021 447 2727 / 011 403 1877
www.wwmp.org.za

2012 LABOUR FILM FESTIVAL

18-19 April: Alexandra (Jhb)
4 May: Khayelitsha (CT)
9-10 May: Cape Town
22-23 May: Johannesburg

FREE

Women and Young Workers

Youth development

Young people are in crisis across the world, facing high levels of unemployment, precarious and exploitative work, and exploding costs of education. This is such a pronounced global trend that many political commentators have predicted that disenfranchised young people may form a new, international revolutionary sub-class that may initiate mass insurrection. Certainly, young people with nothing to lose have been at the vanguard of political uprisings across the planet: from Occupy in the West, to the Indignados in Spain, Yo Soy 132 in Mexico, the student uprising in Chile and the Arab Spring.

Below: Participants of the Call Centre Workers Summit (26-27 July 2013)



Young people in South Africa are equally disenfranchised, but have not yet had an adequate political outlet or mechanism to express and address their grievances. We believe it is important to work with them to help them get organised to develop and articulate a political voice, so that they can fight for their own interests as young workers.

For this reason during 2003 – 2009 we developed our DIGGZ Youth Leadership and Media Development Programme, which aims to develop young activists in the use of media and organising themselves. The content of this was similar to that covered by our other media training programmes, but it focused on issues faced by young people, and on the ongoing

development and support of young workers. During 2009 our Board decided that the project should focus more directly on young workers. Since then we partnered with and provided support to Cosatu in the Western Cape to develop its young workers' forum. We've also supported the Communication Workers Union (CWU) in Johannesburg and Cape Town in organising call centre workers at several large companies.

This organising drive culminated in a Call Centre Workers' Summit that we hosted in Cape Town during 26 – 27 July 2013. Since then, despite adopting a clear programme of action, it has been an uphill battle organising these workers due to the high staff turnover, management victimisation, our limited resources and weaknesses of the union.

Our Labour Community Advice, Media and Education Centres in Khayelitsha and Alexandra provide the call centre workers with an organising base and also host young workers' forums from time to time.

Gender

The position of women, particularly in working class communities, in South Africa is deeply disturbing. There are very high levels of gender-based violence, which includes the phenomenon of "corrective rape" of lesbians. The past few years have seen horrific attacks on women and an inadequate response from the police, the National Prosecuting Authority and politicians. Women are also under-represented and marginalised in the workplace.

We have worked tirelessly with women's organisations to improve the capacity of women activists. This includes, for example, our work with Sikhula Sonke, a women-run farmworkers' union that supports some of the most marginalised women in the country.

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CAMPAIGN



**Justice
for Pinky
Mosiane
and others!**

We have also run a high-profile campaign for justice for Pinky Mosiane, a female mineworker who was raped and murdered while at work. The South African Police failed to properly investigate the crime, and we see this as symptomatic of systemic failure to address violence against women. Hence the campaign uses the tragedy of Pinky Mosiane to symbolically draw attention to and mobilise around the oppressive conditions

of female mineworkers and the situation of black working class women in South Africa. Women in the South African labour movement need a voice so they can challenge the intersectional, systemic oppression they face.

By training women in the use of the media, and putting women's voices on air, we hope to challenge the dynamics that keep women in such a subordinate and abusive position in our society.

Our challenges

The tasks at hand are vast, and we have neither the resources nor capacity to meet the needs of workers. In many cases, it feels like we are fire-fighting, rather than building serious capacity and challenging power. Nonetheless, we believe we make a significant contribution to building towards the future health, vibrancy and democracy in the trade union movement and working class communities.

Our biggest challenges are capacity and funding. The appalling state of apartheid education left many workers with a limited ability to adequately challenge the status quo. Education has not improved much in the democratic era, and to a large extent, unions have failed to provide enough relevant education and training to their activists. This means that trade union activists – faced with crisis, increasing militancy and demands from members, and a sometimes unresponsive leadership – lack even the most basic shop steward training and knowledge required for their roles.

During the 15 years of our existence, funding has at times been at a crisis level. We have never had all the resources required to address the massive need we face, or to fully realise our ambitious plans for transforming workers' media in South Africa and across the continent. We have been forced by contingency to be strategic with resources, and despite limitations, we are very proud of what we have achieved.

Gratitude to all contributors

We are extremely grateful to all our donors, partner organisations and individuals that have contributed over the years, believing in us and our work, making it possible and sharing in our successes. In this regard we must make a special mention of the FNV Mondiaal, the international solidarity arm of the Dutch trade union federation, who supported us from the start and unfortunately has had to end its programme in South Africa.

Unfortunately funding from international solidarity sources is scarcer than ever before, and for our project to survive we urgently need to identify new, sustainable sources of funding. Local donors have been hard to find and rarely provide consistent, long-term support.



Board

Current Board members



Patrick Craven, Cosatu



Abduragmaan Frieslaar, Cosatu



Tuwani Gumani, Cosatu



Gretchen Humphries, Fedusa



Martin Jansen, Director



*Judy Kennedy, ILRIG
(Board chairperson)*



Ashraf Ryklief, IHRG



Dominique Swartz, Cosatu

Staff



Christina Fisa, Receptionist and administration assistant



Lunga Guza, Khayelitsha Lamec Co-ordinator and fieldworker



Martin Jansen, Director & Editor



Vincent Mpebe, Radio Producer and fieldworker



Muzi Mzoyi, Radio producer



Lindiwe Magija, Radio news producer and fieldworker



Sharon McKinnon, Labour TV show producer



Mzi Velapi, Africa Labour Radio producer



Lynn Thompson, Administrator and Communications officer



Molefe Pilane, LCMP Co-ordinator

The Future

Workers' World has done some exceptionally important work over the past 15 years. We hope to continue to do so. The deep crisis being experienced by the labour movement at the moment make our work more difficult than ever, but also more necessary than ever. If the South African labour movement and working class is to navigate the treacherous territory in front of it, and emerge as a powerful advocate of workers' rights and even socialism, it needs the best possible access to information. It also needs communications channels, and access to the airwaves, to put its case directly to the masses who are often swamped by destructive messages coming from reactionary forces.

We aim to continue to provide this voice, to service the labour movement and to build its strength and organisational capacity. The political economy of South Africa hasn't changed very much since the days of apartheid, and we need a strong, disciplined, organised and democratic labour movement to challenge this, and

to contribute to building a society based on dignity, fairness and social equality. For this historic task it will need to revive its democratic, independent and radical socialist traditions that were so strong during the 1980's.

We aim to develop and expand our existing successful projects, but also to branch out and make more use of new technologies, as the digital divide begins to narrow very slowly in South Africa, especially via cellular phones that has a nearly



80% penetration in South Africa. To this end we have begun to make our radio and TV programmes available as podcasts, and we intend to exploit social media and web technology more in the future that will be accessible via special applications on cellular phones.

Also, the global nature of the economic crisis being experienced right now means there is a need for a new internationalism, and we intend to forge closer links with organisations in other countries, so that we are telling the stories of the world's workers, and not just those in our own countries. Workers across the world are facing the same stark challenges. It is up to us to find the common thread in all their stories, and weave it into a compelling narrative that will inform and inspire the workers of the world to organise and take action in their own interests.

Here's to the next 15 years of "Labour Voices on the Airwaves!"



Appendix 1

Declaration of the Mass Education Conference held during

13 – 16 April 2010

During the week the week of 13 – 16 April 2010, we, over 200 delegates from trade unions, labour service organisations and community organisations met in Johannesburg to assess the momentum of class struggle in order to initiate and plan a strong mass education campaign whose primary aim is to raise class consciousness and develop alternative forms of knowledge and struggle in order to build working class power.

Our Conference Aims were:

- To develop and enskill local groups of labour and community media and education practitioners in approximately 40 communities to regularly produce and disseminate education.
- To provide organisational and resource support to local working class communities' mass education initiatives.
- To develop a dynamic and sustainable local organisational base for labour education and media activities.
- To develop a popular publication on mass education.

The campaign and the conference was a strategic response by COSATU and WWMP to the increasing levels of exploitation, widespread poverty and oppression evident in the harsh reality demonstrated by the following indicators:

- Over 50% of our people living in poverty
- Over 40% unemployed with 1 million jobs lost in just one year
- South Africa is the most unequal society in the world.
- Over 1 million farm-dwellers evicted (1994 – 2004)

These indicators are demonstrative of the fact that the fault lines of the apartheid political economy remain largely intact, with the current growth path reproducing these fault lines. In economic terms, workers and the poor have little to celebrate.

The apartheid economy was characterised by massive inequalities and uneven development across industries and regions. There are five basic fault-lines that this economy has created:

- Inequalities in education quality and access,
- Inequalities in health quality and access,
- Inequalities in the provision of housing,
- High, racial- and gender-structured unemployment, and
- Deepening income and wealth inequalities

The conference self-critically acknowledged that:

- While much has been done, we have not done near enough to confront the challenges resulting from capitalism and the legacy of apartheid, particularly as regards raising and deepening class consciousness.
- In serving the interests of working class communities we must deepen a profound and radical agenda for revolutionary transformation.
- We have been weakened politically and organisationally to resist attacks upon the working class resulting in a serious decline in working class living standards.
- We have not been able to effectively enhance the unity of the working class, including our organisational responses.

We are not only confronted by “*Organise or Starve*” but “*Organise or Die*” as our average life expectancy has declined to 47 years (from 62 years in 1990).

Our biggest obstacle is the capitalist system and those who uphold it in the interests of the rich minority. Despite the fact that our hard-won democracy has created possibilities for change in the living and working conditions of the majority, it is evident that in many respects it has failed the working class and the poor.

Our response, led and supported by COSATU and WWMP, is to develop **"A Mass Education Campaign"** to assist in re-building us politically and organisationally on the ground, in communities and workplaces. In this regard we acknowledge and accept that the content of our mass education must be agitational and that it must challenge the capitalist system, strengthen existing revolutionary and working class formations, build such organisations where there are none, in order to assert working class hegemony and build alternative working class power in the process of struggle. Our mass education campaign and struggle activities are

guided by our universal principles for the widest working class unity, political and class independence and the fullest possible democracy. This includes building international solidarity – in particular with our comrades from Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Palestine.

We therefore resolve to commit ourselves to vigorously, tirelessly and energetically implement our programme of action as agreed at this conference. We also agree to reconvene at a national mass education forum in 2012 to assess and further advance our campaign and struggle.

The powerful words of Haroon Aziz will be our inspiration moving forward:

When a scientific knowledge of revolution is placed, through the patient and painful process of conscious struggle, in the hands of the people it becomes a powerful weapon of the revolution – the primary weapon which is necessary for the creation of a just order out of a relative chaos of an unjust political and social system. Without that knowledge, the people are as helpless as soldiers are without weapons. With it the people become the skilful soldiers of the revolution.

Agreed and adopted unanimously on Friday 16 April 2010 at the conference held at the Birchwood Hotel, Boksburg.

