ADULT EDUCATION : DELINEATING THE FIELD

A discussion paper prepared for the
NEPI research group on adult education

C J Millar
Department of Adult Education & Extra-Mural Studies
University of Cape Town

March 1991

ADULT EDUCATION : DELINEATING THE FIELD

OUTLINE

1. Introduction : the purpose and structure of the paper:
2. The Conceptual Field:
    * adult education
    * non-formal education
    * continuing education
    * lifelong enducation
3. The Practice Field:
    3.1 Ways of describing the field of practice: learners, programmes, providers, levels, social purposes, traditions.
    3.2 Adult education in South Africa by social purpose, form of provision and provider.
4. Some observations on the field of practice and the development of policy
5. Concluding comment
6. References
7. Appendix

ADULT EDUCATION : DELINEATING THE FIELD

> "The concepts and theories of adult education therefore reflect its institutional and legislative basis. They are directed towards the establishment of its professional identity and the advocacy of its significance for individuals and society at large. There have been no ongoing ideological struggles over the allocation of massive public funds as there have been in the case of the school system, and so adult education has not been much conceptualised or theorised in terms of its socialising functions, or its functions in respect of social control or social mobility, the production of the workforce, the domestication and reproduction of labour, and so on. These are familiar enough themes, however, in the concepts and theories of schooling."
>
> (Griffin, 1987:136)

1. INTRODUCTION : THE PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

The brief for this paper is to delineate the field of adult education. Fields are delineated for many purposes: claiming ownership of territory, disclaiming ownership of territory, advancing the interests of particular groups of people, planning allocation of responsibility, and so on. It is therefore important to clarify the purpose of this exercise in delineation. Its purpose, in terms of the brief from the Convenor of the Adult Education research group, is to provide the NEPI research groups on adult education and on literacy with a map of the field that will:

(i) assist them to make decisions on those areas or issues that require the commissioning of policy-directed research, i.e. to draw up adequate research plans,

(ii) and, ultimately, provide the basis of an introductory section to the final report of these research groups.

This means that the delineation of the field of adult education, including literacy, is seen as a first step in a fairly lengthy process leading to policy formulation or, at least to the clarification of policy options. This may seem an obvious way of proceeding - it certainly travels from the (dimly) known to the unknown - but the difficulty of this approach is clear: we do not know how to move from a discourse of practice to a discourse of policy. That much became clear at the first meeting of the relevant research groups in February. This is not simply a local historical phenomenon: our situation simply exacerbates a condition that has something of the scale of an international incapacity as Griffin (1987) has pointed out: the inability of practitioners and theorists of adult education to translate their commitments into social policy terms that actually work. Our discourse is moral and organisational (and this characterises both radical and liberal traditions of practice) and, added to this in South Africa it is critical, small-groupish, rhetorical and utopian. How do we get from here to the political world of national resource allocation in response to competing interests and policy lobbies?

It could be argued that to begin with the field of practice is to begin at the wrong end. If we are interested in the construction of social policy we must begin in the social policy field, then work back from this to the field of practice we want to advance. This would mean describing the political economy of post-apartheid South Africa, clarifying its major social and economic development goals, and then asking where adult education might fit in and thus receive the status of a policy option. But there is an equally clear problem with this approach: we do not have this description of our future policy priorities. This is precisely what is being negotiated at present and there is little contribution adult educators are likely to make to the process.

So we begin with a delineation of practice because this is what we know something about but with the awareness that as we proceed to try to translate the discourse of practice into that of social policy we are not embarking on a journey bright with promise.

The paper reflects this movement from practice to policy by attempting to delineate not one field of adult education but two:

* a conceptual field

* a practice field

The first deals with the question "What is adult education?" by an analysis of the key concepts that structure professional and academic discussion and, more importantly, organisation and delivery of educational resources. The second answers the same question in a different way by moving from educational concepts to the forms and organisation of practice. It attempts to clarify the major sites, forms and goals of current adult education practice. A final section attempts to comment on the implications of this account of the field for policy development. And this will be, necessarily, the most tentative of the sections, its work properly being developed within the various research commissions and through debate within the research groups themselves.

In moving through these stages of analysis I will try to avoid being simply descriptive and classificatory and, where possible, give some tentative assessment of the capacities or limitations of different formulations - theoretical or organisational - for the furtherance of policy debate.

It must be stressed that this exercise has been carried out under severe time constraints: the commission required the work to be completed and a brief report submitted within two weeks. One of the severe casualties of this constraint has been the extent of literature surveys and background reading, another has been the absence of critical discussion. I would like the paper to be seen, therefore, as a working document designed to facilitate the task of the relevant research groups. It is much in need of their critique and reinterpretation.

2. THE CONCEPTUAL FIELD:

A great deal of time and effort has been put into devising names for adult education. There are probably some 30 closely related terms in or out of vogue (see Kallen (1979) for a discussion of some of these). This conceptual productivity is a revealing phenomenon. It shows a degree of desperation to "fix" the field, to secure some firmness and coherence that will provide both professional security and public resources. For the devising of terms is a professional obsession: a profession talking to itself in the first instance but at the same time talking to power and hoping at last to catch its ear and win its resources. As seriously, this manufacture of words derives from the peculiar internationalism of adult education development in the 70s in particular: it was a phenomenon of conferences, mainly those of UNESCO, which encouraged an almost competitive rhetoric of manifesto building, declarations and conceptual schemes that bore little resemblance to realities of provision on the ground in a context of growing third world poverty and international debt. It was also a strange cultural/political phenomenon of affluent first-world theorists mediating their own conceptual schemes to a newly constructed legion of third-world recipients - a peculiar form of cultural colonialism.

However, the concepts that frame professional action in any field are of crucial importance and disputes over them are a characteristic of development. Furthermore, the way in which a professional practice is described may close or open access to resources and to power. In Britain, for example, the long-established term "adult education" is yielding official status to "continuing education" for the most pragmatic of reasons: "continuing education" speaks the language of the dominant ideology - investment in productivity through the development of skilled manpower - while "adult education" speaks to an older welfare model of Fabian socialism.

To take another example of changing concepts, in Australia and New Zealand the main term in our field is "continuing education" for similar reasons to the above - it fits the requirements of a user-pay market economy. But Australian adult educators want to expand their professional and economic interests into South East Asia and this has required them to use increasingly the language of "non-formal" education. (Duke, 1989:35).

What are the major terms that make up our conceptual field and how useful or otherwise might they be in our present context?

Four major terms have been selected for discussion and others will be dealt with during their discussion. They are the following:

* Adult education
* Non-formal education
* Continuing education

* Lifelong education

"Adult Education":

The classic definition of adult education is that adopted at UNESCO's Nairobi conference in 1976. It reads as follows:

> "The entire body of organised educational processes, whatever the content, level, or method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools or colleges, and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced independent, social, economic, and cultural development." (UNESCO 1976) (Jarvis, 1990:6).

Adult education is the term we start with in our NEPI investigation. It is the term given to us by our initial terms of reference, it is a term that has slowly grown in salience in the South African context and it is the term we most easily take for granted as a general and neutral description of our field. These are good reasons for staying with it. But there is a problem with this term and it is one that it is difficult for us as practitioners and academics to grip. It is that because of its inclusiveness that adult education has come very close to meaning "adult learning". In other words, certain approaches to the education of adults have come to count as adult education, and we as practitioners are the main shapers of these approaches. It is our own professional commitments and endorsements that have had the most powerful effects in giving content to the term "adult education" whether from so-called liberal or so-called radical positions. "Community education" counts as adult education, as does "literacy", and in particular work that is critical and emancipatory in direction. Industrial training does not quite count as adult education. Certainly military service does not.

The point about the centrality of professional discourse in the defining of adult education is that such a definition becomes very difficult to transpose into social policy terms. What it is saying, in effect, is that the field of adult education is already professionalised in our terms and that a policy commitment to adult education is one to commission us to supply our chosen forms of service. This is welfarism of a particularly privileged kind - and no basis from which to develop any real policy debate around our field.

To release the term "adult education" from our own practitioner "regime of truth" we would have to settle for some such dilution as "education of adults". (This was, in fact, proposed by John Lowe in the British context in 1970). This formulation offers a much more likely bridge into social policy development in portraying adult education as a "service" or series of services in many contexts of adult life - rather

than movements or ways of life valued by initiates. There seems some case therefore to give attention to Lowe's argument that "education of adults" may hold more political interest than "adult education". However, the concept remains diffuse and boundary-less and lacks any indication of focus or function.

"Non-formal education":

Non-formal education (NFE) has a well-established place in professional discourse especially in "third-world development" contexts. In the South African situation it is the concept that achieves public currency through the De Lange Report in 1981. It is not difficult to see the appeal of the concept. First, in recognising a continuum of educational processes from informal, through non-formal to formal education, it advances the concept of NFE as complementary to formal education. It is seen as those educational activities planned for and with adults that take place outside the formal frames of schools, schooling or tertiary education and do not lead to formal certification. NFE does things that formal education cannot do and may do so more flexibly, efficiently and cheaply. In some classic statements it comes to be a collection of positive features to be seen against a collection of negative features, which constitute formal education (Simkins, 1976). This has had the effect of romanticising NFE at the expense of formal education and once again asserting the importance of the normative world of the professional adult educator.

What this systematic and positive account of non-formal education does, too, is underpin and encourage the idea of the development of an NFE "system", that may solve or ameliorate some of the problems of the formal system, particularly in a situation where any extended formal system is far beyond the resources of the local economy. The NFE discourse has therefore tended to thrive in situations where the prospect of delivering formal education on any scale is bleak. What this means is that NFE becomes a form of parallel education for those who don't make the grade in or gain access to the formal system. According to Ulzen (1989) this can be seen as the general situation in Africa:

> "After nearly 20 years of independence, African governments have realized that the heavy financial investments they have made, and continue to make, in providing facilities for primary and secondary education, are being outstripped by rapid population growth; that the renovation of the formal education system has failed to equip its outputs with appropriate knowledge, relevant skills and the right attitudes for productive work or self-employment; and finally, that the high rates of illiteracy and low rate of skills available for socioeconomic development ought to be countered by forms of education and training other than the formal system. They have now accepted, therefore, not only in principle but in fact, that nonformal education may offer a parallel system of education for children and adolescents who are not catered for by the formal education system, as well as a means for providing remedial or upgrading of skills to its teeming unemployed and unemployable youth and adults." (Ulzen, 1989:29).

Although the De Lange Report portrayed NFE as essentially complementary to formal education, i.e. as part of a total system of educational provision that included both, the feature of complementariness has not been as important in the South African educational discourse as that of opposition. In our situation non-formal education of certain kinds has been seen as synonymous with education oppositional to the apartheid state. With the formal schooling system discredited and in chronic crisis, non-formal education in South Africa has had the capacity to identify with and express the interests of social movements. Forms of location outside the formal frame have been principled and deliberate. This factor adds an important dimension to the concept of NFE in our immediate historical context - that of being anti-formal. As such, non-formal education and "community education" come to share the same identity of mission: engagement in socially transformative work outside the constraints of a state-controlled ideological apparatus.

The concept of NFE therefore reflects capacities important in organisational and political terms, and the term may hold mileage in future national policy discourse. But the limitations of NFE are implicit in the term itself: such education cannot deliver the benefits of the formal system in the form that society recognises as having exchange value - formal certification. For this reason NFE cannot be regarded as an alternative "system" in any way equivalent to formal education. Furthermore, non-formal education as a concept can actually work against any assumption of state responsibility for adult education provision. This was in fact evident in the De Lange Report. Although counselled to give commitment to the term "continuing education", the constructors of the report chose to regard the master concept as "non-formal education". A major benefit in this move, from the point of view of the State, was that it became easy to equate non-formal education with private sector education, i.e. that education that it would not be the state's responsibility to finance or deliver.

Nonetheless the concept of NFE recognises a very important feature of adult education practice - its capacity to construct educational interventions quickly and its flexibility in a great variety of contexts in response to specific social problems.

"Continuing education":

The concept "continuing education" signals a relationship to formal education different from that of non-formal education. The relationship of NFE is categorical; that of continuing education is functional. NFE is adult education that functions to continue the educational process of people into or throughout adult life. "Continuing" contrasts not with formal but with "initial" education. It has been defined as follows:

> "Continuing education is taken to mean planned educational programmes for adults (both formal and non-formal) who wish to continue their education beyond the point reached through the system of formal initial education during their youth, whatever level was reached, or to pursue education in new areas of knowledge or skill whilst maintaining the commitments of adulthood." (Millar, 1984).

The notion of building on initial education avoids any sense that adult education is alternative to formal education as it removes from prominence any distinction between formal and non-formal education. Continuing education may be formal or non-formal.

This is the concept that seems to be winning the contest with "adult education" for the dominant descriptive term in Britain and Australasia. Whether it is becoming the master term in all "developed" countries or in those in a stage of "post-welfare" capitalism, is difficult to say. Certainly, the concept is demonstrating more capacity for policy impact than those considered previously. Indeed, it makes sense to see the recent development of the concept of continuing education as itself a strategic intervention into policy discourse.

This has been true, too, in the South African context. An implicit notion of continuing education has mobilised the DET's extensive night school system as well as teacher upgrading programmes; it has impacted industrial education and training to the detriment of general educational programmes and literacy; and in the field of university adult education it was judged by the Committee for University Principals the best formulation of practice to win an extension of state subsidy (as "voortgesetteonderwys"). (it failed, but it was nonetheless the only move that might have succeeded.)

The above account of the mobilisation of the concept of continuing education reveals something of its problematic nature: its implementation favours those whose initial education is relatively advanced or who have secured a niche in the economy that justifies investment in their skills. It is a case of personal development <u>for</u> social and economic development. It is a concept, therefore that may be seen as cutting loose from two major traditions of adult education - compensatory education with a redistributive mission and education for and in social movements. The social movement tradition is indeed marginalised by the concept of continuing education but the compensatory tradition need not be so if the notion of building on initial education at <u>whatever point was reached</u> can be taken seriously in policy terms. And this will depend on the relative pressures for resources exerted on the state by sectors and interest groups, including the underschooled and the unemployed. If we select continuing education as our master concept the following stipulation will have to receive more than rhetorical blessing from our profession:

> "Continuing education relates as directly to the adult who has received no formal education at all as it does to the person who has attained a standard of postgraduate professional education" (Morphet and Millar 1981:4).

The value of this formulation is that it preserves the strengths of both non-formal and formal education, including certification; resists the weakness of becoming a

poor substitute for formal education; addresses a functional need in the adult population in developmental terms that are both personal and social; and provides scope for the targeting of areas and groups where continuing education is seen to have maximum developmental impact.

"Lifelong education":

In the early 70s the concept of "lifelong education" was articulated as the "master concept" in international UNESCO-based adult education discourse. Despite attempts at operationalisation (Dave, 1976: Skager, 1978) the concept has operated at a visionary level, providing a goal of social redemption that held strong inspirational quality for the international adult education movement. Lengrand's *An Introduction to Lifelong Education* (1970) and Faure's *Learning To Be* (1972) were essentially inspirational texts. Lengrand put it like this:

> "Lifelong education is still at the conceptual stage. As with other principles such as freedom, justice and equality, it will doubtless retain indefinitely that certain distance in relation to concrete achievements which is in the nature of concepts." (Lengrand, 1970:98).

The Faure Report defined lifelong education in terms of 21 eclectic and inclusive principles, which together constituted an idealised "learning society" - "a society in which individuals engage in personally and socially meaningful living throughout their lives and in which the means of learning are distributed by various institutions and made equally available to all." (Skager, 1978:5). Dave, in perhaps the most widely quoted statement, defined lifelong education as:

> "A comprehensive concept which includes formal, non-formal and informal learning extended throughout the lifespan of an individual to attain the fullest possible development in personal, social and professional life. It seeks to view education in its totality and includes learning that occurs in the home, school, community, and workplace, and through mass media and other situations and structures for acquiring and enhancing enlightenment." (Dave, 1975:43).

Clearly, the concept is attractive to any adult educator at the level of principle: it portrays education as stretching over the entire lifespan of the individual, delivered communally by hosts of co-operating agencies, and serving the widest range of personal and social goals. And it subsumes both initial and continuing education, presaging the obsolescence of schooling. Unfortunately, it remains a concept of rarified international development aid discourse. Its capacity to impact the world of harsh policy choices of national economies has yet to be demonstrated.

In summary:

In summary, the major descriptive terms of our adult education project have the following characteristics. They are strongly normative, universalistic and utopian; they are diffuse and inclusive; and they are concepts produced largely by intellectuals to advance professional practice rather than the politics of social policy. Of the major terms reviewed the term "continuing education" would seem to have the best chance of securing some role in policy debate. The more politically salient concepts at present are probably those referring to relatively specific forms of practice: literacy (not adult basic education); skills training (not worker education); professional continuing education (not general liberal or civic education). It will be our task as professional adult educators to secure a wider state commitment to adult education than such isolated and specific forms of practice.

3. THE PRACTICE FIELD:

3.1 Ways of describing the field of practice:

How are we to classify the field of adult education practice? A huge taxonomy of every conceivable form of education for adults would seem the least profitable approach, though it is precisely this that the classic UNESCO definition of the field quoted on page three calls for.

To convert this kind of description into all known varieties of adult education practice would produce an almost infinite list of educational activities. How then can the field of practice be ordered or structured?

There seem to be at least six ways, each giving priority to one of the following features of practice:

* Who the learners are
* The form and content of programmes
* Who the providers are
* What the level of the programme is
* What social purposes or social functions are being addressed?
* What tradition of adult education practice is represented?

Each of these forms of classification will be discussed briefly.

1. Classification by learner or target group produces such broad categories as minority groups, women, professions, unemployed young adults, the elderly, skilled workers, the rural poor, the terminally ill, and so on. The notion of "target group" achieves prominence among professional adult educators under conditions where their services have to be marketed, but it is a feature, too, of an interventionist welfare policy of a compensatory and redistributive kind. What would mobilise the latter form of adult education provision would be the "need" of the target group assessed in terms of political priority. Clearly, any adult education project or policy involves a choice of relevant (and irrelevant) target groups.

2. Classification by form and content of programmes produces broad categories of practice familiar to all practitioners. These include industrial training, management training, worker education, professional continuing education, liberal studies, leadership training, community adult education, adult basic education, health education, university extra-mural programmes, compensatory schooling for adults, and so on.

   Some of these forms of practice are long-established and sustained by substantial investments by providers and by adult educators; others are fragile.

3. Classification by providers identifies institutions or associations that take responsibility for the provision or management of adult education. In Canada, for example, the providers of adult education have been classified as follows (the percentage indicates the size of their provision in relation to the estimated adult learner population):

   Providers of adult education in Canada

Provider	Percentage
Employers	18
Community colleges	18
Voluntary organisations	17
School boards	14
Private schools	13
Universities	12
Unions and professional associations	8

   (Morrison, 1989:40).

   A cruder provider classification than the above, applicable in most contexts, would be the threefold one of state, private sector and voluntary associations. What such classifications highlight are issues of power, control and diversity in the field.

4. Classification by programme level takes the formal system of schooling and tertiary education as its reference point and tries to relate adult education practice (roughly) to levels in the formal system. The following classification, for example, was submitted to the De Lange Committee in 1981 in support of an argument that "continuing education" should provide the organising concept for adult education in South Africa:

Continuing Education by level:

(a) Education at the first level (primary schooling):

* Literacy programmes,

* General primary education for adults (compensatory schooling),

* Adult Basic Education (life skills and vocational skills, possibly including community education and development),

(b) Education at the secondary level (secondary and high school education):

* General secondary education for adults: compensatory schooling at junior secondary and senior secondary level,

* Vocational programmes at semi-skilled and skilled levels.

(c) Education at the third level (non-degree and degree tertiary education):

* Advanced vocational programmes,

* Professional continuing education,

* University degree-level courses.

(Morphet and Millar, 1981:29)

Such a classification stresses the "compensatory" role of adult education as post-initial education at any level as well as its functional integration with the core system.

5. Classification by social purpose or social function reflects a sociological perspective on adult education practice. Two examples of such classification follow, the first from an international perspective and the second a local analysis. Both demonstrate the wide and conflicting nature of social purposes served. In doing so they counter consensual notions of social interests and the associated idea of adult eduction as benign social engineering.

Social functions of adult education
(International)

1. Maintenance of the social system and reproduction of existing social relations
2. Transmission of knowledge and the reproduction of culture
3. Individual advancement and selection
4. Second chance and legitimation (of the status quo)
5. Leisure time pursuit and institutional expansion
6. Development and liberation

(Jarvis, 1985 : chapter 9)

Social functions of adult education
(South Africa)

1. Cultural control and indoctrination
2. Military effectiveness
3. Manpower provision and economic development
4. Professional adaptation to change
5. Community, civic and organisational development
6. Fuller entry of un- and under-educated adults into economic roles
7. Personal enrichment, intellectual growth, social awareness, grasp of one's life.

(Millar, 1984:13).

Analysis of practice by social purpose or function (and the terms are blurred in the above examples) is important for revealing the political nature of all educational initiatives: each advances certain interests and gives a particular form of impetus to social control, development or reconstruction.

6. Classification by traditions of adult education practice draws on historical and philosophical forms of analysis, seeing forms of practice as involving something like membership of moral and discursive communities. There is no shortage of labels for such traditions of practice, both in introductory academic texts on adult education and in our own professional programmes for educators of adults. Elias and Merriam's (1980) classic typology of such traditions is as follows, while Apps (1979) and Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) have constructed similar ones:

Traditions of adult education practice:

(a) liberal
(b) progressive
(c) behaviourist
(d) humanistic
(e) radical

(Elias and Merriam, 1980)

Perhaps given the absence of Dewey as a direct influence on practice in this country, our own typology at its simplest, would include most recognisably the following four traditions:

(a) technological
(b) humanist
(c) liberal
(d) radical

Both the distinctness and the static nature of these perspectives on practice can be exaggerated, but they do have use in analysing the very different discourses and social locations of adult education practice operating in South Africa at present, and emphasising deep-rooted differences in our understandings of our mission.

3.2 Adult Education in South Africa by Social Purpose, Form of Provision and Provider

It would be tedious and unproductive to take any of the above frameworks and proceed to a detailed taxonomy of all current forms of practice. The value of these different forms of classification is that each highlights features of practice that need to be attended to in any policy development in or reconstruction of the field. Nonetheless, it may be useful to use aspects of the framework to consolidate the description by means of a highly simplified (and tentative) map of current adult education practice in South Africa. This gives prominence to three broad social purposes of adult eduction and indicates forms of provision and major providers at present.

ADULT EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA BY SOCIAL PURPOSE, FORM OF PROVISION AND PROVIDER *

SOCIAL PURPOSE	FORM OF PROVISION	PROVIDER
1. *Compensatory education* Compensatory education for adults, seen as the replacement in some form of incomplete or missing initial education, finds its justification in the huge disparities in educational provision and experience across class and racial lines that persist in South Africa today.	* Adult Basic Education, including literacy	* NGO's, Private Sector, State
	* Night Schools and alternative forms of schooling	* State, NGO's
	* Academic support, development and admission programmes at tertiary level	* Mainly certain universities
2. *Education for upgrading* Upgrading refers to continuing education that has as its function the development of knowledge and competence that leads to increased effectiveness in specific contexts, usually the workplace. Whereas compensatory education is school-related and general, upgrading is work-related and specific. In all sectors of commerce and industry there remains a gross imbalance in Black as opposed to White penetration into skilled and managerial occupational categories, with the formal system of technical education doing little to alter this situation.	* Skill training in commerce and industry	* Private Sector
	* Management training	* Private Sector
	* Professional continuing education	* NGO's, Universities
	* Teacher upgrading	* State, NGO's

3. *Cultural/Political Nonformal Education* The present moves towards constructing a national system of continuing education, the general provision of adult equivalents of schooling and the administration of various forms of work-related upgrading programmes have lodged firmly in the hands of state departments or the private sector in co-operation with state departments. This is by no means the case in the broad field of cultural and political education in South Africa. What characterises this field is the very wide range of participants, the extent to which a segment of these opposes state hegemony in education and the contest in cultural production manifested in this sector of non-formal education. At one extreme of this ideological contest are two powerful non-formal educational apparatuses of the state - military service and media control. At the other extreme are networks of community, worker, and student organisations, with goals of social reconstruction and conscientising agendas.	* Compulsory military service * Media Control * Community organisation and development * Worker education * Religious education * Public cultural and civic education	* State * State * NGO's * Unions * Various religious institutions * Universities, NGO's

* Based on Millar (1989) The full paper is included as an Appendix.

4. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE FIELD OF PRACTICE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY

The preceding description of the field of practice, including the "map" that serves to summarise this description, calls for a number of comments that may have a bearing on policy formulation.

1. Adult education practice is grossly underdeveloped in South Africa

The underdevelopment of adult education in South Africa is due both to deliberate state policy and, more recently, to insufficient resources to finance the demographically driven expansion of schooling and tertiary education. This underdevelopment is manifested not in only in financial allocation but in the lack of legislative framework, organisational and administrative structures, delivery systems, national and regional advisory bodies, research and development, and the development of an adult educator profession. It is most manifest in the absence not only of any national policy on adult education but of any policy debate on the subject.

There is a danger that this condition of underdevelopment may be seen not only as "normal" for our society but normal for us as practitioners. The difficult and underresourced conditions under which innovative work has taken place - as well as the intensity and risk of some of this work - has meant that we have not been able to attend to the issue of scale of need. And it is scale of innovative provision as much as quality that policy development must address. At present, the only large-scale adult education provision is to be found in private sector industrial training and in the public sector night school system.

2. Our main traditions of innovative practice lie outside and against state provision and control

This relates not only to the issue of scale but to our capacity as practitioners to engage in "system thinking", and to the controversial issues involved in "professionalising" adult education practice. The following questions serve simply to open the debate:

* Do we want a national system of adult education provision, on the lines of the system of schooling or tertiary education? Is this what the flowering of national adult education policy means?

* What should the role of NGO's be in adult education in a future, possibly representative, political dispensation? How can the critical and innovative capacity of the NGO and project world be sustained under such conditions? Where would resources for such innovative and counter-hegemonic work come from?

* Should we encourage the professionalisation of adult education practice? There is evidence (Duke, 1989:38) that adult education provision becomes institutionalised at the expense of polarisation between "movement" and "profession"; and, more important, that the best traditions of adult education practice may be emasculated by the process of state incorporation and professionalisation (Welton, 1987; Prinsloo, 1989). What kind of professionalisation do we want? And what role do we want for professionals in the determination of adult education policy? (see Griffin, 1987:49 for a discussion of this issue in the American context).

3. Adult education practice engages with an established formal, initial system of schooling and tertiary education

This is simply to record the fact that educational deficit in relation to "white" formal education is the condition of life for the majority of South Africans. Such a condition is addressed primarily in political and economic terms but such compensatory programmes as are developed - in adult basic education or night school systems or vocational training - will have to take seriously issues of articulation and equivalency with the formal system. Not to do this is to drift in the direction of dual or alternative systems of educational provision.

4. Adult education practice engages with the established system of commercial and industrial production

This is the second major system with which present adult education provision engages and this on a relatively large scale in the South African context. Work is probably the major site for adult education development, this as a key factor in the process of restructuring relations of production. Workplace adult education will be developed on a substantial scale in the wider context of accelerated "affirmative action" programmes and changing contractual relationships between management and workers. It is important here that the traditions of industrial training and of worker education interact productively with each other.

5. The expansion and development of adult education provision requires particular forms of intervention by universities

One kind of university intervention is in the project of professionalising adult education practice. Another is in research both critical and developmental. The third is in developing specific forms of university-based adult education programmes. The fourth is creating forums for political-intellectual work. Clarity is needed on policy options and priorities for universities in this development process.

6. Cultural and political education has been of key importance in the local development of adult education practice

This is to make a point closely related to 2. above. It is the question of what happens to counter-hegemonic cultural action when a position of political settlement appears to be reached or when a "popular" government assumes power. The questions of policy relate to the role of adult education in the sustaining and development of democratic culture; of traditions of political critique and dissent; of traditions of education of creative and aesthetic kinds, and so on. It is the vast field of the role of adult education in cultural critique and development - including the intellectual range, styles and tolerances of civil society. If adult education policy ducks these issues it will have collapsed entirely into social engineering.

7. Adult education operates on a multiplicity of sites and within a multiplicity of institutions and social processes

This has been recognised as one of the more impressive features of our practice but it is one that raises difficult questions for policy development and for the notion of an adult education profession. The issue is whether adult education is so context-specific - so implicated in agricultural development, health care, political mobilisation, community development or economic production (or some combination of these) - that any general conception of service, delivery, system or profession is simply pretentious and mystificatory. Ultimately, it is the question raised in 2. above of whether the formal educational system can or should provide any model at all for adult education.

This policy question will need to take into account the advantages, as well as the disadvantages of a form of adult education practice that has secured a place - or different places - in each of the key sectors of society: the market, the state bureaucracy and civil society - of the conditions for the advancement of the adult education enterprise in these different sectors and the value for social reconstruction of mixed social goals and this inherited form of pluralism. It raises the question, in particular, of what priority should be given to the assimilation of adult education to the category of social welfare provision.

8. Adult education sponsorship is as diffuse as its social location

The distribution of adult education practice across social sectors and institutions means that it operates under conditions of production to which it is helpful but peripheral. In none of these will the key stakeholders give it priority in resource allocation or power to impact core institutional processes. Nor will these stakeholders recognise or advance any identity or community of interest of adult education practice, practitioners or learners across boundaries of institutions, whether these be of the private sector or of state bureaucracies. Adult education will remain a sub-set, for example, of staff productivity control in industry or of agricultural development in a state department. It has no profession or institution of

its own to protect it from such instrumentalism and there is no reason why its host systems should encourage this.

The policy question this raises is the following: Can adult education operate in multiple sites yet develop a unified sense of professional mission? How?

9. Because of range of forms and diffuse location of adult education practice there must be varied routes to salience in social policy terms

It seems important to consider a strategy of sectoral advance and consider the plurality of advancement routes. Comparative studies will be of particular assistance here. The following are simply some of the more obvious advancement routes: through target group; through crises in specific social sectors; through campaigns; through national associations; through labour legislation; through bureaucratic positions and restructurings; through fiscal or tax formulae; through expansion of schooling provision; and through reconstructive policy in fields other than education: the environment, health care, social welfare, cultural development, for example. The orchestration of a complex strategy of sectoral advance would require the resources of a highly developed professional association.

10. Adult education has failed on two previous occasions to make the national policy stakes

How problematic adult education is for policy is clear even from the language of the NEPI document that constructed our present initiative - "what is the priority status of adult education?" (Badat, et al, 1990) - and this is to be expected, given the political pressure directed at the state through the institution of schooling, the nature of the adult education field outlined above and the historical record, underresearched though it is. Adult education has on two occasions in South Africa missed incorporation into national state provision: immediately after World War II, following the submission in 1945 of the majority report of the Committee of Enquiry into Adult Education (the Eybers Committee) which included a remarkable critique of the impact of capitalism on the black population and was strongly supported by Z K Matthews (Malherbe, 1977:405-415; Wilson, 1988:66-72); and in the early 1980's when the De Lange Committee's proposals on Non-Formal Education failed to be developed despite a range of initiatives and the intervention of the Urban Foundation in the field. (The most comprehensive account of these developments in NFE in the early eighties is that of Hofmeyr and Swart, 1984).

The dates are significant: they signal times of national response of a reconstructive kind to social and political crisis - precisely our present situation. The analysis of the above "failures" may be instructive for our own task of doing better in round three.

5. CONCLUDING COMMENT

The paper has stressed the difficulty our research task faces in moving from a discourse of practice to a discourse of policy. However, given our condition of marginal location in multiple sites, the demand of scale and the growing bureaucratisation of practice, there is one key advantage in starting this way round: we retain the priority of educational work. Under the above conditions nothing could be easier than for adult education to serve a handmaidenly role in state bureaucracy, private sector industry or market place, this despite a professional rhetoric of awareness-raising or reconstruction, or whatever. Because adult education - and the adult educator - is fundamentally bound up in social and institutional processes this does not mean that the practice of education collapses into such processes: education is not socialisation. Welton, in his excellent paper on the state of the adult education profession in Canada, makes the point in emphatic terms:

> "And we must see adult education as both a thing-apart from fundamental social processes and inherent in these processes."
>
> "Children have less freedom to resist institutional constraints than adults do. As adults we have more freedom to resist. But the stakes are higher, let us say, within work places. For it is within work sites, located within a historically determined social relations of production and presupposing the collective organisation of knowledge and skill, that profits are made and society plummeted ahead. It is in these sites that the struggle over the definition and control of knowledge and skills is particularly fierce."
>
> (Welton, 1987:58,59).

It is in this view of adult education that the most demanding form of professionalisation lies - one required to take social reconstruction and education seriously. They intersect in the "definition and control of knowledge and skills"..

6. REFERENCES

Apps, J W (1979) *Problems in Continuing Education*, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Badat, S, Muller, J, Nzimande, B and Taylor, N (1990) Towards national education policy reconstruction in South Africa. Paper presented at the Kenton-at-Port St John's Conference, October 1990.

Darkenwald, G and Merriam, S (1982) *Adult Education : Foundations of Practice*, New York: Harper and Row.

Dave, R H (ed) (1975) *Foundations of Lifelong Education*. UNESCO Institute for Education and Pergamon Press.

Dave, R H (ed) (1975) *Reflections on Lifelong Education and the School*, UIE Monographs 3: Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.

Duke, C (1989) Adult education : provision in Australasia, In Husen, T, and Postlethwaite, T N, *The International Encyclopedia of Education : Research and Studies: Supplementary Volume One*, Pergamon Press, 35-39.

Elias, J L and Merriam, S (1980) *Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education*, Malabar Florida: Robert E Krieger.

Faure E (1972) *Learning To Be*, Paris: UNESCO, London: Harrap.

Griffin, C (1987) *Adult Education as Social Policy*, London: Croom Helm.

Hofmeyr J M and Swart L T (1984) *The Urban Foundation Education Report*, Johannesburg: Urban Foundation.

Jarvis, P (1985) *The Sociology of Adult and Continuing Education*, London: Croom Helm.

Jarvis, P (1990) *An International Dictionary of Adult and Continuing Education*. London and New York: Routledge.

Kallen, D (1979) Recurrent education and lifelong learning: definitions and distinctions. In Schuller, T and Megarry, J (eds) World Yearbook of Education 1979: *Recurrent Education and Lifelong Learning*, London: Kogan Page, 45-54.

Lengrand, P (1970) *An Introduction to Lifelong Education*. UNESCO.

Lowe, J (1970) *Adult Education in England and Wales : A Critical Survey*, London: Michael Joseph.

Malherbe, E G (1977) *Education in South Africa Volume 2: 1923-75*, Cape Town: Juta.

Millar, C J (1984) The university and continuing education : an analysis of institutional context and policy, *South African Journal of Education*, 4 (1), 12-18.

Millar, C J (1989) Provision in South Africa. In Titmus, C (ed) *Lifelong Education for Adults : an International Handbook*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 433-436.

Morphet, A R and Millar, C J (1981) *Continuing Education throughout Adulthood*, Submission to the Work Committee on Educational System Planning of the Human Science Research Council's investigation into education, Dept of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, University of Cape Town.

Morrison, I (1989) Adult education : provision in Canada, In Husen, T, and Postlethwaite, T N, *The International Encyclopedia of Education : Research and Studies: Supplementary Volume One*, Pergamon Press, 39-42.

Prinsloo, M (1989) Adult basic education and other matters: What skunks behind the rose? *Critical Arts* 4 (4) and 5 (1), 154-162.

Simkins, T (1976) *Non Formal Education and Development*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Skager, R (1978) *Lifelong Education and Evaluation Practice*. UNESCO Institute for Education and Pergamon Press.

Ulzen, E A (1989) Adult education : provision in Africa. In Husen, T, and Postlethwaite, T N, *The International Encyclopedia of Education : Research and Studies: Supplementary Volume One*, Pergamon Press, 28-35.

Welton, M R (1987) Vivisecting the nightingale: reflections on adult education as an object of study, *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 19, 46-68.

Wilson, D (1988) *The Adult Education Movement in the Western Cape from 1945 to 1967 in the Context of Socio-Economic and Political Background*. Unpublished M Phil dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Cape Town.

7. APPENDIX

Provision in South Africa

C. Millar

It is misleading to talk of a "system" of nonformal continuing education in South Africa. In the first place the provision of nonformal education is rudimentary and underdeveloped in contrast to the formal system of initial education. In the second, such provision is characterized by fragmentation of control and policy. However, 1981 marked a striking shift in official thinking. Following two Government reports, which stressed the need for the development of various forms of job-related and industrial relations training (Riekert 1979, Wiehahn 1979, 1980), for the first time nonformal adult education was identified by a state-appointed education commission as an area for development (De Lange 1981). The explanation for this changed perspective is to be found in the period of political and economic crisis, the explosive moments of which were 1976 and 1980, that brought the Black schooling system to a halt, established the formal system of Black education as a chronically vulnerable site of conflict and resistance, and propelled a period of active political reform on a wide front. What characterized this reform initiative was the active partnership of state and private sector, with the twin agendas of social stability and economic growth.

A major factor in this reformative response was public government commitment, for the first time, to equality in educational provision as a social goal. This goal was addressed predominantly in terms of improved school systems, with finance, structure, and control as major issues. However, the issue of a possible alternative or nonformal "system" was introduced both as a corrective device and as one containing the possibility of a substantial reconstruction of the core system itself. In pursuit of this latter possibility a government-sponsored research team was established with active support of private sector reform theorists to provide the conceptual foundation for the possible national provision of nonformal education in South Africa, and to research such matters as coordination, structure, finance, accreditation, and the linkages between formal and nonformal systems.

In the mid-1980s continuing education as a system remained at the blueprint stage, to be contrasted with the untidy reality of continuing education provision of various forms and under various auspices. It is helpful in overviewing such practice to use three broad classifications of nonformal education, seeing it as serving "compensatory", "upgrading", and "cultural/political" functions. All official publications use the apartheid classification of "Black", "Coloured", "Asian", and "White", and these terms have been used in this article to illuminate various aspects of inequality. However, for "Black" I have substituted "African", preferring to use "Black" as the term to describe all people in South Africa not classified "White" and thus subject to legislated discrimination.

1. Compensatory Education

Compensatory education for adults, seen as the replacement in some form of incomplete or missing initial education, finds its justification in the huge disparities in educational provision and experience across class and racial lines that persist in South Africa today. The following figures are crude indices of this disparity. Over half the African pupils who left school in 1982 did so after four or fewer years of schooling. They were illiterate or semiliterate (Verwey et al. 1983). The percentage of pupils who started school in 1963 and completed a full 12 years of schooling was as follows: White pupils 58.4 percent; Asian pupils 22.3 percent; Coloured pupils 4.4 percent; African pupils 1.96 percent (De Lange 1981).

A longstanding small-scale response to this situation has been networks of privately established literacy classes and night schools, started in the 1920s and 1930s mainly by radical and liberal political groupings, developing in urban centres and catering mainly for workers engaged in the broad processes of urbanization and industrialization. By 1955 there were about 10,000 African night-school students in the cities of Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and Pietermaritzburg (Bird 1984).

The forced closure of such night schools took place during the 1960s when the apartheid policies of the Afrikaner government that had achieved power in 1948 finally took effect. This policy called for total government control of Black education, an end to any assimilative or integrative tradition, whatever its scale, and a prevention of any educational enterprise by church, cultural, or political organizations that could be seen as "subversive".

It has taken nearly 20 years for a night-school system to be reconstructed, this time under strict state control within the separate state departments concerned with

In Titmus, C (ed) *Lifelong Education for Adults : an International Handbook*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 433-436.

African, Coloured, and Asian education and within the industrial sector itself. The expansion of the African night-school system has been particularly rapid. The Department of Education and Training, the state department that controls African education outside of the "national states", has 386 registered adult education centres throughout the country (including those within industrial companies) at which 35,467 adult students are engaged in part-time school-level study (Republic of South Africa 1985).

The late 1970s and early 1980s also saw a thaw in state restrictions on private initiatives in Black education and a number of community organizations initiated compensatory programmes for adults, particularly at the levels of literacy and postliteracy training. There was an expansion too of the scope of adult basic education within industrial contexts.

2. *Education for Upgrading*

Upgrading refers to continuing education that has as its function the development of knowledge and competence that leads to increased effectiveness in specific contexts, usually the workplace. Whereas compensatory education is school related and general, upgrading is work related and specific.

In all sectors of commerce and industry there remains a gross imbalance in Black as opposed to White penetration into skilled and managerial occupational categories, with the formal system of technical education doing little to alter this situation. In 1979, for example, 99 percent of the engineers, 78 percent of the natural scientists, 91 percent of the technicians and 72 percent of the artisans and apprentices were White (De Lange 1981). It is this untenable situation that propels current attempts to upgrade worker skills. The industrial training effort has as a major goal the incorporation of Black workers at rising levels in the industrial sector.

By South African standards, investment in upgrading in the form of private sector industrial training is substantial, with annual operating and capital expenditures estimated at 840 million Rand and 2,810 million Rand respectively (Republic of South Africa 1984). Such training programmes are a form of government–private enterprise partnership, funded by tax concession and subsidy, and controlled by a National Training Board within the Department of Manpower. During 1980/81 an estimated 1.25 to 1.75 million workers were engaged in this form of continuing education. More advanced forms of technical education include courses in technical tertiary institutions. Current expansion in this upgrading programme is at the operative level, though traditionally a major investment in workplace upgrading has been in the area of management itself.

Professional continuing education, in contrast to industrial training, is the responsibility of professional associations, universities, and *technikons*. The correspondence University of South Africa, with a total enrolment in 1985 of 76,000, plays a major role in providing opportunities across the spectrum of the population for advanced professional and general education that has major implications for career mobility.

Massive disparities in the quality of schooling are paralleled by sharp contrasts in teacher supply and qualification. Eighty-five percent of African teachers are underqualified for the posts they hold (De Lange 1981). For equality in educational provision by 2020 at a pupil–teacher ratio of 30:1 it has been estimated that 300,000 teachers will need to be trained. This situation has prompted the development of intensive upgrading programmes for Black teachers. These are administered by the employing education departments, sometimes with the assistance of tertiary institutions and private sector funding. The number of teachers thus engaged is large and increasing. In the Department of Education and Training the number of underqualified teachers in upgrading programmes rose from 300 in 1974 to 7,000 in 1984 (Republic of South Africa 1985).

A final form of upgrading—not strictly speaking a form of continuing education—is that taking place within those open universities opposed to racial admission criteria. Here again, the impulse is acceleration of progress in institutional terms, Black school systems being unsuccessful in preparing Black matriculants for academic competition with White students. Academic upgrading is thus interventionist—a selective form of positive discrimination. Such programmes within, and to a more limited extent outside, the open universities are new and experimental and their effectiveness has yet to be determined.

3. *Cultural/Political Nonformal Education*

The present moves towards constructing a national system of continuing education, the general provision of adult equivalents of schooling and the administration of various forms of work-related upgrading programmes—described above—have lodged firmly in the hands of state departments or the private sector in cooperation with state departments. This is by no means the case in the broad field of cultural and political education in South Africa. What characterizes this field is the very wide range of participants, the extent to which a segment of these opposes state hegemony in education and the contest in cultural production manifested in this sector of nonformal education.

At one extreme of this ideological contest are two powerful nonformal educational apparatuses of the state—military service and media control. The first is a compulsory two-year period of military training for White males following schooling or tertiary education—a coercive programme of continuing education on a vast scale aimed at securing the internal and external stability of the state. The second is a programme of media control and censorship designed to shape and safeguard the formation of national culture. At the other extreme

are networks of community, worker, and student organizations, with goals of social reconstruction and conscientizing agendas. These associations maintain and develop the traditions of opposition among exploited groups, both populist and sectarian. At times of overt political crisis they face the severest of sanctions.

Between the above positions lies a great range of continuing education provision, for the most part small-scale, loosely structured and uncoordinated local initiative. This includes the educational programmes of various religious denominations, sporting associations, cultural associations, and the extramural programmes of certain South African universities.

4. Nonformal Continuing Education as a Reform Agenda

There are two levels at which current moves towards state-sponsored development of a system of nonformal continuing education can be analysed as a reform agenda. The first sees nonformal education as an effective solution to problems implicit in formal education: nonformal education as a cooperative enterprise in education provision represents the recruitment of the private sector in financial partnership and thus addresses the scale of needed educational reform; nonformal education meets instrumental criteria of educational relevance, especially in relation to labour force development and employability; nonformal education is "efficient" in being organized in response to specific needs or objectives in specific contexts; nonformal education represents a second chance or educational rescue capacity: it offers immediate educational intervention into adult lives where formal education has failed to deliver its promise. Furthermore, nonformal education offers a space for social development free from the restrictions of bureaucratized and possibly ritualistic educational practice: it is a territory for pragmatic, project-like social and educational development.

However, the development of a system of nonformal education entails more than this. Beyond effective management lies a response to crisis of a more substantial kind and a recognition that in South Africa Black education has failed in its structural tasks. It can be seen as a structuring of new forms of cooperation and consent.

The consent of Black students to meet the normative claims of schooling is of the greatest fragility. Their school system is an isolated target of hostility. It lacks both the ideological support of its community and the utilitarian rewards of a developing economy. Soaring enrolments, massive unemployment and heritage of barriers to Black advancement in industry and commerce increase the contradiction between educational achievement and economic participation. By contrast, nonformal education is a form of educational engagement embedded in and subservient to the logic and institutionalized forms of major social processes, in the case of Black workers, urbanization, social mobility, or simply survival in the labour market; and this very embeddedness gives it a degree of protection denied the formal system.

Furthermore, the development of a national system of nonformal education holds the possibility of drawing into strategic cooperation—through sponsorship, accreditation, and coordinating structures—a wide range of community agencies with development goals, some of whose agendas would run counter to those of the present state/capital reform alliance. Given the state and status of Black formal education, such a development would represent for the state a recruitment of community support for educational reform as well as a diffusion of responsibility and accountability for education provision. But it would also mean a significant weakening of the state's hegemonic hold on its own untidily expanding system and therefore on the process of the reform agenda itself.

5. The "State of Emergency"

The above account of nonformal education in South Africa represents the situation up to 1985, when in response to widespread and sustained popular revolt the government declared a "state of emergency" that has been in force ever since. The reform impulse of the early 80s yielded to a stage of repression that included the banning or restriction of anti-government initiatives in both formal and nonformal education, in particular that of a community-based movement aimed at changing both the system of control and the curriculum of Black schooling, known as "People's Education". While the possibility of any state system of nonformal education has receded, nonformal education remains the site for a multiplicity of small-scale, innovative, educational programmes and projects, working under great difficulty, that are concerned with developing the educational resources for a post-apartheid South Africa.

See also: Nonformal Education

Bibliography

Bird A 1984 The adult night school movement for blacks on the Witwatersrand 1920–1980. In: Kallaway P (ed.) 1984 *Apartheid and Education*. Ravan Press, Johannesburg, pp. 192–221

De Lange J P 1981 *Report of the Main Committee of the Human Sciences Research Council Investigation*. Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), Pretoria

Republic of South Africa 1984 *Report of the National Manpower Commission on Inservice Training in the Republic of South Africa, 1980–91*. RP 24, Government Printers, Republic of South Africa, Pretoria

Republic of South Africa 1985 *Annual Report for 1984*. Department of Education and Training, Pretoria

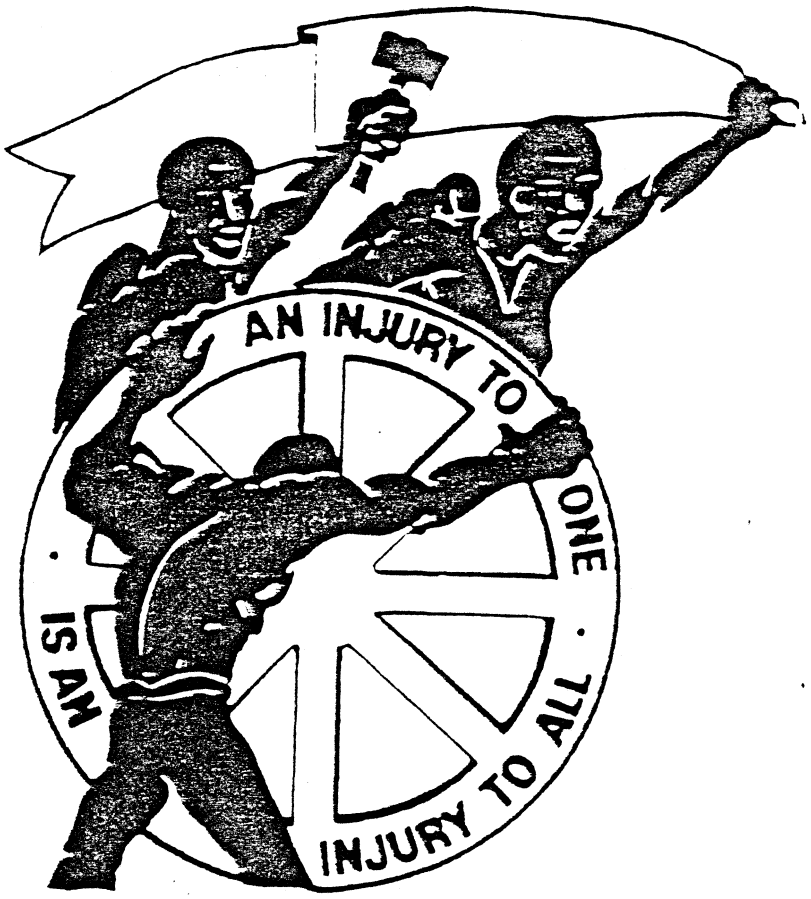
Riekert P J 1979 *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Legislation Affecting the Utilisation of Manpower (Excluding the Legislation Administered by the Department of Labour and Mines)*. RP 32, Republic of South Africa, Pretoria

Verwey C T, Carstens P D, Plessis A du 1983 *Education and Manpower Production (Blacks)*. No. 3, 1982, Research Institute for Education Planning, University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein

Wiehahn N E 1979, 1980, 1981 *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Labour Legislation*. RP 47, RP 48. Department of Manpower Utilisation, Pretoria

CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN

TRADE UNIONS



Discussion Paper on
Human Resource Development
for the Commonwealth Expert Group Meeting,
April 1991.

Prepared by the COSATU Human Resources Committee

Contents

1. Introduction: The South African Economic Crisis

The South African economy is in a serious crisis. This economic crisis has underpinned the massive political upheavals of the last two decades, culminating in the present negotiation process. There is massive unemployment and poverty. To create jobs and improve the standard of living for the majority of South Africans, there needs to be massive economic growth.

COSATU believes the required growth can be kick-started through the rapid provision of basic necessities such as housing, water- systems and electricity on a very wide scale. However, to sustain growth over a longer period, industry will need to expand and be restructured in order to meet the demands of new markets and new conditions.

Both in the short and in the longer-term, skilled workers will be needed to plan, implement and maintain these projects. However, as has been fully described elsewhere, South Africa faces a crisis in the availability of skilled workers at a number of levels.

A new approach to human resource development is therefore needed as a central part of a larger programme for economic growth. Such an approach needs to include a strategy to end the highly racially-and sexually-segmented South African labour market inherited from Apartheid.

This much is common cause for many groups involved in the human resources development debate inside the country at present. See Appendix 1 for a summary of recent initiatives taken to address the crisis. However most groups fail to systematically address the constituency that COSATU represents, namely those people already in employment, or who have been recently retrenched but who have had extensive work experience. COSATU believes that this constituency represents a major human resource for short and medium term economic planning.

As the most powerful trade union federation representing this critical constituency, COSATU believes that it has a major role to play in determining future policies on human resource development. This role is to be played both in alliance with other progressive forces such as the ANC and NECC as well as in its own right as the voice of the majority of organised workers in the country.

In order to make this contribution, it has been necessary for COSATU to assemble an overview of the experiences of its members and use these to inform discussion on possible human resource development policies.

Before these problems can be considered, a brief description of the present training framework is necessary, against which the problems can be measured.

2. Present Legislative Framework for the Provision of Training

Before 1981 training for different race groups in South Africa was covered by a range of racist legislation. In most sectors, African workers were barred from training as artisans. Artisan training in particular was controlled by government training committees for the various industries on which employer and white workers' interests were represented. Closed shop arrangements with conservative white craft unions compounded the problem in many sectors. (Statutory job reservation was only removed from labour legislation in 1979.)

In 1981, the Labour Relations Act which gave legal recognition to black trade unions for the first time, was introduced. In the same year the Manpower Training Act was passed. This Act removed all reference to race - and officially ended the prohibition on blacks training as artisans.

The Manpower Training Act covered the training of apprentices, group training centres, private training centres, in-service training and training of the unemployed. It also established, within the Department of Manpower, the National Training Board (NTB) - a tri-partite body with powers to advise the Minister on training matters.

Before amendments made to the Manpower Training Act in 1990, the National Training Board appointed training committees to administer training in particular areas and industries. These committees had equal numbers of employer and union representatives.

The present NTB is composed of eight state, seven employer and seven trade union representatives. A full-time chairperson and vice-chairperson are appointed by the Minister. All the trade union representatives came from the conservative white unions. Falling under the NTB are a number of standing committees:

* Committee for Research and Development
* Committee for Artisan Training
* Committee for In-Service Training
* Co-ordinating Committee for Industry Training Boards

plus a number of specialist committees:

* Manpower Training Committees
* Trade Test Liaison Committees
* Regional Training Committees
* Project Committees

The NTB, together with the Human Sciences Research Council, undertook an investigation into the training of artisans in the mid-80s which resulted in extensive amendments to the Manpower Training Act in 1990. The central changes were:

* The training of apprentices was changed to modular performance based institutional training with controlled on- the-job training and experience.

* Apprentices are no longer able to qualify by the effluxion of time. They have to pass a trade test.

* Provision was made for the establishment of industry training boards. This represents a state commitment to a devolution of power from itself to industries, particularly in regards to all aspects of the control of artisan training.

These industry training boards replaced the earlier training committees. An important change in the law is that it is no longer a requirement that employers and unions have equal representation. Employers can have more under the new Act.

The Act also provides for the funding of training. It creates the Manpower Development Fund which grants loans to training centres and industrial council schemes for capital expenditure. In addition, the Act allows industrial councils or groups of employers to impose levies on employers to raise funds for training schemes. Up to 1990, employers who ran training schemes received tax advantages, but this has now been abolished by the Receiver of Revenue.

In terms of the new Act a number of Industry Training Boards have been registered by the Minister of Manpower. These include:

* Building Industries Training Board
* Mining Industry Engineering Trades Training Board
* Motor Industry Training Board
* Furniture Industry Training Board
* Metal and Engineering Industries Artisan Training Board
* Clothing Industry Training Board

There are a large and growing number of such boards, many of which, however, do not cover complete industries - such as the Chemical and Allied Industry Training Board which appears to cover AECI plants only. Many more boards are in the process of being set up, in such sectors as the leather and printing industry.

At present, the only COSATU affiliate actively participating on any board is NUMSA in the metal industry. However, a number of other affiliates are being approached to join in their sectors, such as SACTWU (clothing) and PPWAWU (paper).

In the mining industry, the training board only covers artisans in the engineering trades. Training for blasting certificates, onsetters and locomotive drivers is undertaken directly by each mining house.

In the agricultural sector there is a severe lack of co- ordination, with training being provided by a wide range of institutions, including the Timber Industries Manpower Service and the South African Sugar Association.

For local government there is a special Act, the Local Government Training Act (1985), which establishes special training boards for local government personnel. Certain sectors have no training at all, such as the domestic sector.

Problems with the present legislative framework

The central problems with the present framework are:

* Lack of representation from progressive unions which represent the interests of the majority of workers.

* Where there is presently no central bargaining forum or industrial council in an industry, as is the case in many industries (for example the chemical industry), it is extremely difficult to establish fully representative industry training boards. Employers tend to resist ALL national forums - seeing these as first steps towards national bargaining on wages and working conditions.

  This has resulted in the proliferation of sub-industry training boards which makes co-ordination and standard setting extremely difficult.

* The failure of the legislation to compel industry training boards to address training other than artisan training - most of the boards only address questions relating to apprenticeships. The building industry is an important exception. In general the training of workers below the level of artisan is a company matter only - with the result that there is no industry recognition or portability for this level.

* The state is abdicating its responsibility to ensure national coherence by giving such independence to the industry training boards. The result has been a growing resistance of many industry training boards to co-operate with one another. This has led to a situation where a single trade can be taught in a number of different industries and cross recognition is not provided for.

* There is strong resistance of employers to consider questions of general education within the scope of industry training boards. They argue this is simply a state responsibility.

* There is no obligation for industry training boards to be half employer/half trade union in structure, with the result that in certain industries, employers have set up boards on their own or, as in the case of the metal industry, have insisted on controlling the training funds.

* Historically the training of unemployed people is very inadequate (see below).

* There is a lack of any coherent framework to link training with questions of economic restructuring.

* There is a lack of co-ordination between education and training structures.

3. Problems with present training programmes as viewed by COSATU members

COSATU has about one and a half million members. These members help keep the wheels of production going in all key sectors of the economy. Apartheid policies in the fields of education, training, employment and industrial relations, together with the short-sighted failure of South African employers to invest in human resources, has combined to restrict the access of most of our members to skills.

COSATU members are therefore clustered in what are called the "unskilled and semi-skilled bands" in industry. Although there is growth of membership among more highly skilled workers, they remain a tiny minority of total membership. Our members are also overwhelmingly black, and hence have suffered directly from Apartheid.

Below are summarised the many problems experienced by COSATU members with the present provision of training:

3.1 Discrimination

Race and sex discrimination is still found in nearly every workplace in every detail of skill formation. Below is listed some of the common ways in which members experience this discrimination:

* Women workers are systematically denied training opportunities on the basis of sexist assumptions about their interests and capabilities. Many company training centres do not even have the capacity to train women as they lack changerooms and toilets for women.

* Public training facilities, such as technical colleges, are still racially segregated in spite of pressure on employer bodies to use their influence to end this practice. The facilities available to black people are inferior, too few, understaffed, far from workplaces, accommodation is inadequate (eg trainees stay in single sex hostels where evening study is impossible) and they are inadequately resourced with updated equipment.

* Although many companies no longer have racially segregated training facilities, they still have segregated amenities - most importantly accommodation.

* Recruitment practices often favour white workers. Word of mouth recruiting favours white artisans as does advertising in English or Afrikaans newspapers and establishing relationships with white technical high schools.

* Selection procedures are effectively discriminatory even when the same procedures are used for black and white applicants. For example, psychometric tests developed for white applicants with a background of compulsory formal schooling are used for black applicants.

  These tests are given in English or afrikaans, with no provision given even in relation to time allocation for second-language usage.

  Selection for inservice training is often based on performance assessments done by first line foremen who are invariably white, male and racist. No attempt is made to validate these assessments or provide for appeals if workers are dissatisfied.

* Different opportunities are given to different groups during training. Black apprentices complain that they are given routine maintenance tasks to perform while white apprentices are given the full range of work experience.

* Different educational entry requirements are asked from black and white candidates in a number of cases - on the basis that Bantu Education is inferior.

The combined effect of these factors, and the factors resulting from the heritage of Bantu Education (point 4 below) has resulted in a falling number of black apprentices indentured since the change of legislation in 1981 provided for blacks to enter artisan training.

The HSRC/NTB Investigation in Skills Training in the RSA noted: "Of the new contracts entered into in 1987 those for whites accounted for 81%, coloureds 8,1%, asians 4% and blacks 6,8%. This figure of 557 contracts for black apprentices is

disappointingly low especially when it is seen to have dropped from 741 in 1982." (2.5.1)

3.2 Victimisation of Union Members

Members very frequently complain that union activists in workplaces are victimised in one of two ways : either union leadership is offered training, normally denied to other workers, to get them out of the bargaining unit and thereby effectively end their union involvement or by denying the majority of union members access to training at all.

This has led certain members to believe that all training is bad because its intention is to undermine the union.

3.3 Lack of training opportunities

Workers complain that there are very few training opportunities at all.

Training is viewed by South African managements as a COST, not as an investment in human resources. This is widely acknowledged and even the recent NTB/HSRC "Investigation into Skills Training in the RSA" notes: "It seems that employers give a low priority to training and particularly skills training in their total budgets. In the RSA on average less than 2% of expenditure is allocated to training, while the average allocation in other countries is 5%. The level of expenditure on training is also largely influenced by the state of the economy and tends to vary considerably." (1989, 8.2.2)

The limited number of training opportunities is exacerbated by the highly traditional forms of work organisation found in most companies in South Africa. Taylorist practices have tended to fragment more highly skilled jobs into simpler component parts. Such fragmented tasks have been widely taught by the "sitting next to Nelly" approach. This is an extremely common experience of COSATU members.

The fact that managements reserve the right to select people onto training courses, often without the use of clear selection criteria, has the effect of restricting access to training for many workers.

Training opportunities are actually lost when managements choose to import foreign skilled workers to do work on South African projects, like the Mossgass Project, rather than employ and train South Africans. They do not even require of foreign skilled workers that they train their own replacement.

The problem of lack of training opportunities is most acute in the non-manufacturing sectors of the economy. The worst affected are domestic and farm workers whose skills are informally acquired - skills which are then neither recognized nor paid. Women constitute a majority in these sectors.

3.4 Heritage of Bantu Education

Black workers are unable to compete equally for jobs because of the heritage of Bantu Education.

This problem has been compounded by the growing tendency of managements to set higher and higher formal educational entry requirements for training and promotion. This trend, referred to as "education inflation", has increased with the growing number of black matriculants on the job market.

Ironically, as more people have matriculation certificates, so managements have been able to stipulate maths and science at higher level as a necessary entry requirement for apprenticeships for example. Management have not as yet been widely challenged to substantiate these higher levels.
An important exception has been the NUM challenge to the Chamber of Mines. The Chamber set a Std 8 entry requirement for trainee miners after the job reservation legislation was lifted in 1987. The union is still fighting this level of education as it was never required when only whites were trained. NUM research has shown that 15% of qualified white miners do not have Std. 8.

Access to company funding for tertiary education (usually own time study through correspondence) is extremely limited, and totally a matter of management prerogative. A small number of bursaries are available for which there is considerable competition. Most workers do not have the educational background to compete for these bursaries.

Access to assistance for secondary school studies is more widely available for workers in manufacturing, but on a "pass or pay-back" basis. Since studying in one's own time is difficult, many workers are reluctant to enter these schemes. The very high failure and drop-out rates for these courses confirms their fears.

The same applies to distance learning at both secondary and tertiary level. There is generally no extra remuneration for extra qualifications to encourage workers to study.

The heritage of Bantu Education is most visible in the appallingly high levels of illiteracy and inumeracy among adult South Africans - calculated to be in excess of 50%. The effect of this is that more than one in two workers do not have the basic general educational skills needed to benefit from training programmes, beyond a very basic level.

3.5 Inadequate provision of literacy and Adult Basic Education Courses

As indicated under point 4 above, the levels of illiteracy and inumeracy are extremely high. At present only a tiny proportion of the illiterate population is participating in literacy programmes of any sort. Some of the larger companies have realised that illiteracy is acting to block their plans to promote "black advancement".

These companies have, often unilaterally, introduced literacy courses. But many have been plagued with problems of irregular attendance, high drop-out rates and the like.

In a recent survey of these courses, the COSATU affiliated metal union, NUMSA, found the following weaknesses to exist in these courses:

* Management selects people to take part in literacy courses.

* There is no trade union involvement in planning, implementing, developing and monitoring courses.

* There are no links with training and no progression in terms of clear career paths.

* Links between the courses and the workplace do exist,but only from a management point of view. For example,workers are taught sentences like: "I must work hard".

* No modular approach to literacy exists so there is no clear possibility for advancement.

* Courses are not recognized and do not give credits towards or give equivalencies to formal school standards. It is therefore often not possible for a worker completing the course to enter formal education with any advanced standing.

* There is often no clear agreement on paid time off for study.

The same NUMSA study found however that there are also substantial weaknesses in the courses offered by progressive literacy organisations. These weaknesses include:

* No courses are clearly defined in terms of levels, with each level covering clear skills and competencies.
Therefore there is no clear route for progression.

* No clear direction and real involvement from unions.

* No linkages to work-based skills.

* No ongoing assessment of progress and no possibility of incentives to gain recognition (certification) for progression.

* Not geared for large-scale work because of reliance on sophisticated teachers and a needs-based approach to learning.

* Not widely known.

3.6 Informally acquired skills not recognized

The reality in South Africa is that large numbers of workers classified as unskilled and semi-skilled have acquired high level skills through years of on the job experience.

Most "artisan aides" for example, are graded as labourers (they used to be called "tool boys"). However these people often stand in for the artisan and learn a considerable range of trade skills.

Workers complain that even highly skilled technicians and engineers, first have to go through a process of education given by workers in a particular work station before they are able to become productive themselves. Workers are extremely resentful of this, as there is no pay or recognition for these skills they share.

3.7 Limitations of present training provided

There are major problems with the present provision of training. Below are listed some of the most stark:

* Training given to workers below the level of artisan is job specific. It is normally of the "sitting next to Nelly" variety, but even where it involves on- or off- the job structured training, it is very limited.

  Although many companies provide in-company certificates for courses passed, these are irrelevant in the broader job market as they are not recognized outside of specific workplaces. Training therefore benefits the company but not the worker.

* What passes for training is often nothing other than ideology.The course most widely experienced by all workers in South Africa is the 6M Course - which basically explains capitalism in outline to workers.

  Companies often provide 3 days paid training leave for all workers to attend these during working hours.

* There are no benchmark rates of pay across industries, so identical jobs in different industries can be paid at very different levels. At artisan level this compounds the problem of skills poaching and very high labour turn-over about which employers complain.

* Training courses do not make special provision for second language learners or workers who are products of a highly inferior education system.

Problems with present artisan training

Although artisan training is nationally controlled, there are many problems with its present form and content:

* It is possible for youngsters to study, as private fee- paying students at technical college, the theoretical components of an apprenticeship without gaining access to practical training.

  The result is that these youngsters often fail to get employment after training - hence wasting what they have learnt and the money spent.

* This is related to a less widespread, but still common problem of young artisans who once they pass their trade tests are no longer employed. Companies use apprentices instead of artisans as a way of lowering their wage bill.

* The trade classifications are based on old English craft demarcations, and often fail to take account of changes in technology and work organisation.

  Multi- skilling of artisans is taking place on an add-hoc basis at plant level - often on the basis of sending artisans to other companies for special product training. Workers who undergo this training are not given systematic improvements in pay and career opportunities.

* Trade training is widely accepted to be weak in the areas of critical thinking -often associated with diagnostic skills.
  Apprentices are taught by old "do as I tell you" methods. This effectively means that artisans are ill-equipped to adapt to changing technology.

  A central demand of traditional craft union members in South Africa is for courses to up-date their skills, as they fear their skills are becoming redundant.

* Employers often complain that they train artisans who subsequently leave their companies for higher wages in small establishments which do not train themselves.

  This problem has led to "wage inflation" - where artisans move from company to company to improve their wages - since there is no career path provided for them at any one company.

As indicated above the acquisition of additional skills and experience is not rewarded or particularly encouraged. Higher wages can be earned, not by getting more skills, but by market mobility.

This has been easier for white workers than for black given the Apartheid restrictions on black movement and residence.

* Controlling "the standards of training" is central to the white union's strategy to maintain scarcity to keep wage levels high. In the Metal and Engineering Industry Artisan Training Board, white unions are arguing for the necessity to increase the general education entry level from Std 7 to Std 8.

* Under the 1990 Amendment to the Manpower Training Act (1981), it is possible for a mechanic to train under at least two different Industry Training Boards (Motor and Auto) - and at present there is no mechanism for cross- industry recognition of the training given.

3.8 No planning for future skill needs

"..expenditure on training is one of the first sectors to be cut back (during a downswing in the economy) because such economies in expenditure are seen to have a positive influence on the profits in the short term but at potentially considerable cost in the long term.

"During the upswing in the economy, however, re-employment takes place and there is little time to be spared for training. This leads to a shortage of trained labour which sets off the inflationary cycle of wage increases." (HSRC/NTB, 7.2.4)

The present funding arrangement for training builds this short-sightedness into the system, The Industry Training Boards mostly function on the basis of providing cash grants to individual employers who can prove that they have trained an apprentice. The companies have to put up the money for training first. The onus to train is left on employers - there is no compulsion or incentive. There is no mechanism for industry training.

The situation has become worse since July 1990 when the state withdrew the tax rebate system for training because the system had been widely abused by employers. In place of the rebate system, cash grants were to be given by the state to Industry Training Boards to control.

However no cash grants have been given and instead the state has redirected these funds to secondary schools.

3.9 Training of unemployed hopelessly inadequate

The Manpower Training Act, 1981, (section 36), was the first formal recognition by the state of the need to train the unemployed.

The intention was to increase the "employability" of unemployed workers through training. An elaborate framework was put in place, which essentially provides for state funding for certain recognised courses (between one and three weeks long) for semi-skilled work. These courses are supposed to prepare people for further training once they are employed.

The state pays the course fees in full and pays the trainee an allowance of R12 per week. The training is provided at accredited training centres - which can be based at company training sites or at regional training centres.

Although by 1987 some 719 677 unemployed people had received training (HSRC/NTB, 2,6), even official research showed that by 1987 the number of people who found work following the training was only 25% (HSRC/NTB, 5.9). This figure includes all race groups.

Independent NUMSA research found that there was no mechanism to monitor whether or not people found work after they had been trained, and that the general impression is that after training people simply re-joined the ranks of the unemployed.

The NUMSA research found that the courses being offered to unemployed people were too short to affect a person's employment prospects. The training was not recognized by any of the companies spoken to. They said that trainees would require extensive additional training before they would qualify for more skilled work. As unskilled people, the trainees would simply stand in the queues with others.

The central problem would appear to be the failure to systematically link the courses provided with any other accredited training or employment creation schemes. The obviously necessary link with industry training boards does not exist.

There is also no systematic framework to relate training opportunities to employment opportunities - whether or not welders are needed, welders are trained - usually in the hope that they will set themselves up in the informal sector.

Many unemployed people do not have the educational background to benefit from training. General education courses are not within the scope of the Act. The state does not pay teachers at Regional Training Centres to provide general education courses.

Some of the training courses include training in skills such as house-building. Trainees actually build houses for local government as part of their training.

However, once the course is over they too simply disappear into the ranks of the unemployed. Often trainees come from communities different to the one where the houses are being built. There is no attempt to negotiate these initiatives with community organisations and ensure a follow-up programme so that these skills can be developed within a framework of community development programmes. The need for such a framework would appear to be critical in both urban and rural contexts if development work is to follow training.

Another major failing of the system, is the loss to industry of the skills of retrenched workers. The experience and knowledge of these workers are not upgraded during periods of cyclical unemployment.

Industry Training Boards at present take absolutely no interest in the re-training of retrenched workers. The same argument applies to redundant workers.

It cannot be argued that there is a passive labour market policy as Unemployment Insurance benefits are grossly inadequate. There is simply no coherent labour market policy at all.

The lack of any coherent link between industry training boards and the national training board underline this point.

3.10 Lack of COSATU's involvement in training issues in the past

COSATU and its affiliated unions have not, until very recently, been involved in this issue of human resources development. Most training boards have been controlled by different combinations of interests representing employers, the Nationalist Party and the white traditional craft-oriented trade unions. The interests of black workers have been systematically excluded.

Since COSATU's focus was on basic rights, such as the right to organise and negotiate for its members, it did not demand representation on these structures.

4. Policy Discussion Areas

NUMSA, COSATU's metal affiliate conducted a major Vocational Training Project during the last three months of 1990. Arising out of the work of this Project, a number of detailed policy proposals were formulated.

These proposals were tabled for discussion in NUMSA and adopted in principle by the Central Executive Committee. They have also been tabled in a slightly modified form, to other COSATU affiliates. It is envisaged that firm policy will be adopted at the COSATU National Congress in July 1991.

4.1 Basic Principles to underlv a COSATU policv on Human Resource Development

* Human resource development to be linked to planned economic restructuring and active labour market policies.

* Trade unions have a central role to play in human resource development. This role needs to be acknowledged in all forums reflecting on present and future human resource policy.

* Trade unions have a duty to address the effects of past discrimination on human resource development, including where poor general education acts an obstacle to skill development.

  Both overt and covert discrimination has to be identified and affirmative action strategies developed. NUMSA has proposed a Code of Conduct to End Unfair Discrimination to be negotiated with national employer federations.

* Education and training initiatives must be linked to economic transformation and industrial restructuring. Employers and the state have the duty to train as an investment in human resources. Both have a role to play in financing such training.

* Workers have a right to paid leave for training. Unemployed people, including retrenched and redundant workers, have a right to training as a stepping stone to secure employment.

* Training must be continually updated to meet the needs of a changing economy.

* Formal education should be free and compulsory to the highest possible level. There must be clear articulation between formal education, an industrial training system and other education and training systems.

* A future national training policy needs to include the following:

  * All workers to be included in the system.
  * Training opportunities should be continuous for all workers ie. throughout their working lives.
  * Training should ensure employment security.
  * Training should be linked to broad skills bands determined at industry

level, and the acquisition of skills must be linked to pay increases. Most probably these linkages could be best given effect through industry skill-based grading systems

* Training should provide all workers with a career path moving from broad general skills to specialisation.
* Training should be modular and competency based within a national, integrated framework.
* Training modules should allow workers to progress to national standards whilst obtaining particular workplace skills.
* There must be provision for recognition of prior learning of skills, whether these were gained formally or informally.
* Paid time off should apply to both training and general education where this will allow advancement to higher levels of skill.
* The training of trainers must be a central part of the system and must allow a career path for trainers.
* Strategies will need to be developed to ensure that the special problems that women workers face are adequately addressed. These will need to include:

    * Methods to ensure equal wages for skills of equal value across the economy measured in terms of training time and experience.
    * Women's skills acquired formally or informally are recognised and paid for.
    * Strategies to expose and encourage women to take up training opportunities in non-traditional areas of skilled work.
    * The trade unions and other progressive organisations will have a central role to play in regard to education of all members in this regard.
    * Full parental and childcare rights for all trainees will have to be negotiated.
    * Quotas might have to be adopted to ensure that women are included in trainee intakes in certain areas.
    * All documentation advertising training will have to be carefully controlled for sexism.
    * All facilities to be demonstrably equal for men and women.

4.2 The Institutional Framework

If the critical economic problems of South Africa are to be addressed coherently will be essential for the major political and economic actors in the future to formulate a future human resource development strategy which clearly links to its economic reconstruction programme.

It is therefore necessary to discuss the institutional framework needed to build an integrated employment, education and training system based on the above principles.

This framework will be essential to negotiate and direct changes in the short term which are consistent with our longer term vision. Such a framework must give adequate recognition of the central role of the trade union movement.

The discussion below is divided under four main headings:

* Broad national economic and human resource development.
* National training framework
* National training and adult basic education articulation.
* Industry training boards - their form and function.

4.2.1 Broad national economic and human resource development

COSATU is beginning to discuss active labour market strategies in the short and long term which would best serve the interests of our members.

In the short term, COSATU has agreed to sit on the National Manpower Commission and on the National Training Board, prior to its being restructured.

We have stipulated conditions for this participation such as the right to nominate our own representatives, the right to report back all information to our constituency, the guarantee that any opposing position adopted by COSATU should be recorded in all documents and the right to maintain and defend independent views wherever necessary.

In the longer term, COSATU is discussing the form of an appropriate negotiating forum within which to implement the principles listed above.

In a document discussed at the COSATU Campaigns Conference on 9th/10th March 1991,the question of how we would like to see the NMC in the longer term is raised:

"In the longer term, we would like to see a national manpower commission or council established which would play an active role in addressing all employment matters (actively intervene in the labour market).

"For example it would try actively to address issues of wages, unemployment, tariffs and customs and training. It would play a role in the programme to restructure the economy.

"* The NMC should be able to control and supervise the administration of funds and programmes e.g. for training, unemployment insurance etc.

* The NMC should be independent of the Department of Manpower.

* The NMC would have powers to intervene in employment matters (the labour market) e.g. by establishing training schemes, a wage policy etc."

The view is that training schemes and human resource development programmes would need to be ongoing and dynamically linked to economic development projects. To ensure for example that training provided to the youth or unemployed for projects such as house building would be given according to agreed national standards and would articulate with other education and training systems.

In practice this would mean that people who have undergone such training and worked on such projects could later get advanced standing when entering other areas of work or training.

Scientific and social research will be needed. Certain of the research will need to be commissioned and funded, other research will be independently initiated.

The central role of the trade union movement in such a forum can be illustrated by considering schemes for placement and work experience of people trained abroad, or in fulltime educational institutions. These would need to be developed in such a way as not to undercut gains won through struggle by organised workers, but rather to extend these gains to other groups.

Some initial ideas on funding include a compulsory tax on the wage bill of all employers, such as has been introduced in Australia. Both the state and employers would need to have a funding role in regard to the training of unemployed people.

4.2.2 A national training framework

Within a restructured National Manpower Commission (Labour Market Council) there would have to be the equivalent of the National Training Board.

Debate in COSATU on the form and function of such a body has barely begun. Initial ideas include proportional representation for trade unions so that the interests of progressive trade unions representing largely black workers can hold appropriate influence.

Centralised national bargaining forums for each industry would also be necessary for the effective functioning of industry training boards able to feed into a restructured national training board.

Considering the problems identified by COSATU, a number of necessary functions for such a body are clearly suggested:

* Setting broad guidelines on what would constitute a training standard. For example highly task specific descriptions should be excluded, and more generic skills which underly a range of tasks should be included.

  A common framework could be determined to encourage this. One could lay down, for example, that there should be no more than five levels up to the level of a tradesperson in any one industry. This would also allow for cross industry comparisons.

* Setting criteria on who can set what national standards within the education and training system. For example, one could lay down that only Industry Training Boards could set training standards for their industry (with careful control on what constitutes an industry subject to compatibility with other industries).

* Ensuring articulation between industries so that where common skills exist across a number of industries, these can be trained in any one industry and then recognized by the others.

* Ensuring articulation with the education system. This would include addressing flexible entry and exit possibilities between different education and training institutions - for example, from industry to technical college, back to industry, on to technikon, back to industry and finally on to university.

  Formal general educational courses would also need to be built into the system to ensure no person, capable of advancement, is prevented by lack of educational qualifications where needed.

  This idea of alternative routes to acquiring technical skills is central to COSATU initiative because for many years to come, the formal tertiary sector will exclude the majority of people. The cost of lengthy periods of formal full-time study is prohibitively expensive.

  It will also exclude the majority of people who leave formal education after an initial compulsory period, unless mechanisms for flexible entry and exit are built into the system.

Ensuring that national training provision is meeting macro- economic needs. A complementary function would need to be performed by each industry, and these industry initiatives would have to be monitored and supported nationally.

* Determining criteria for accrediting training institutions.

* Ensuring that the training provided for the young and unemployed articulates clearly with other training provisions.

* Controlling the importation of foreign labour to those areas of agreed skill shortage within the country and ensuring that such importation contracts include a training component for local people within an agreed time scale.

4.2.3 National training and adult basic education articulation

In addition to clear links between training and economic restructuring, it will be necessary to ensure clear links between training and adult basic education.

The COSATU Central Executive Committee has adopted the following principles in this regard.

"General Approach:
COSATU recognises the massive problem of illiteracy that exists in the country and therefore recognises the need to cooperate with organisations such as the NECC and with a future democratic state to address this problem.

COSATU has an immediate responsibility to address the needs of its members and to respond to affiliate demands for a coordinated response to management initiatives and in particular to adult basic education and training. COSATU needs therefore to develop policy proposals for adult basic education programmes (especially literacy programmes) and skills training programmes to be negotiated with management."

Underlying principles for an effective literacy programme:

1. The programmes which COSATU negotiates should be recognised by both management and the state to ensure that opportunities for further training and/or study are accessible to workers. The courses need to be designed in such a way as to:

   a. Ensure that these courses allow access to other training programmes in the industry and in the economy more broadly.
   b. Link these courses into the state system of adult education so that the courses will also be recognised in the state system and allow workers to enrol for other courses of study in the state system.

2. Literacy programmes and the principles that underlie them must be developed through negotiations with COSATU and its affiliates.

3. A modular system of literacy courses must be developed which would allow flexibility and clear possibilities for progression.

4. Literacy courses must be developed on a modular competency basis with recognition and credits being given in terms of national core standards at various levels within a unified system of qualifications.

5. There should be paid time off for literacy courses and an agreed target date for all workers to have the opportunity to start the first two literacy levels be set: level one - mother tongue literacy and level two - beginners English and basic numeracy.

6. Employers must provide facilities for literacy classes and negotiate both the paying and training of literacy teachers as well as the development of suitable literacy materials."

The COSATU Central Executive Committee in February 1991 agreed that a full-time person should be seconded to assist COSATU with the development of this Project.

It also agreed that these general propositions should be negotiated between COSATU and SACCOLA (the national employers' organisation) in order to ensure national co-ordination.

4.2.4 Industry training boards, their form and function

Discussion on this level has just begun in COSATU. Only one COSATU affiliate, NUMSA, is presently represented on a industry training boards, but a number of others, including SARHWU, SACTWU, PPAWU, have been approached by employers to participate in the setting up of new boards under the 1990 Amendments to the Manpower Training Act (1981).

In order to address the problems with the present industry training systems and the problems of our membership, COSATU's affiliated unions will need to focus on the following areas:

1 The criteria to be applied for the establishment of industry training boards must be tightened, to ensure that the definition of an industry is sufficiently clear to exclude a proliferation of sub-industry training boards.

2 Industry training boards should work within the guidelines of the National Training Board.

3 Industry training boards must cover all workers, not just artisan training as at the present.

4 These boards must provide for the training and re- training of retrenched and redundant workers in the industry, again within national guidelines.

This training to be directed towards identified areas of shortage in the industries and to lay the basis for future skill requirements identified by industrial restructuring programmes. Industry specific research will need to back-up this work.

5 These boards to be negotiating forums consisting of equal representation of employers and trade unions. The trade union representation should be proportional to the proven, paid-up membership in the industry. The role of the state in these forums, if any, requires further debate.

6 These boards to be responsible for the provision of adult basic education programmes (within national guidelines) and for ensuring mechanisms for articulation with other levels of general education provision.

Such general education articulation to facilitate training progression in the industry.

7 Funding of the work of these boards to be on the basis of employer levies. A state contribution should be built in, particularly to cover the provision of general education.

8 The link between broad banded grades, the training required for those grades and an industrially set minimum wage for the grade is central to the system if the acquisition of skills is to be fairly rewarded.

9 Within each industry clear career paths need to be negotiated. For example, there could be five grades up to the level of tradesperson and a limited number of further grades linking an artisan, through agreed training modules, to the level of a technician and a professionally trained person such as an engineer. At each stage the person must progress with recognition for previous training and experience.

10 Training and general education will need to be modular and competency based to facilitate such career pathing.

Training courses will also need to be structured to include agreed combinations of core and specialist modules, to overcome the tendency towards highly task specific courses which do not allow for industry-wide recognition and portability.

11 New forms of work organisation and new technology will transform the nature of training needed over time. Continual evaluation of the applicability of training modules will need to be a central function of training boards.

12 These boards will also have to accredit training institutions, ensure that sufficient trainers are servicing the system, monitor the standard of training given and ensure that testing is according to industry requirements.

13 The boards must oversee programmes of affirmative action and provide an industry level dispute procedure to consider cases of alleged discrimination.

14 Issues of placement and work experience for young people and those trained in fulltime educational institutions will need to be co-ordinated, within national guidelines, at industry level.

15 Mechanisms to recognize skills acquired informally will need to be developed for each industry - in order that advanced standing or full recognition can be given to workers with relevant experience.

5. Initial steps taken

5.1 COSATU Human Resources Committee

The COSATU Central Executive Committee established this sub- committee in 1990. It is a working group that reports to the constitutional structures of COSATU.

After its establishment the first task it set itself was the convening of a COSATU Human Resources Workshop in November 1990. The workshop aimed to given affiliates an introduction to the issue.

Unfortunately the workshop was poorly attended and the outcome focused on getting more affiliate participation in future projects.

Monthly committee meetings have been held in 1991 and a detailed programme of action drawn up. The committee has set itself the task of ensuring initial discussion takes place within each affiliate by the end of April. It has planned another workshop to be held in May and a process of research and study visits for each sector. The

programme aims to facilitate discussion with a view to adopting policy at the July Congress.

In the area of literacy, a major project has been initiated, which has been described under the heading of policy.

5.2 NUMSA

NUMSA conducted a major research project in the area of human resources development in 1990. It involved 26 worker delegates for three three-week periods of policy investigation. The delegates visited the UK, Australia, Sweden, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Italy as part of their programme.

They also did extensive visits to training institutions inside of South Africa, and discussions with a number of employer and progressive groups on the issue. The NUMSA Training Project developed a number of detailed proposals, which were reported to the union, and to the COSATU Workshop on Human Resources in November 1990.

The proposals are still under discussion within the union's structures, but the Central Committee of the union has given them broad endorsement. The proposals have influenced the 1991 national core demands for annual bargaining. The training related demands are:

"Job grading : there shall be no more than 5 grades to the level of artisan

Job security/training :

a. Every metalworker shall be trained
b. Retrenched workers shall be entitled to paid training
c. Workers shall be compensated for extra skills acquired.
d. Employers to contribute to an industry training fund that would also cover the training of retrenched workers."

These demands will be negotiated nationally in the four major sectors of the union, namely engineering, motor, automobile and tyre.

Longer term negotiations will involve the development of career paths for all metal workers built on broad-banded industry level grading systems.

NUMSA is also demanding that a Code of Conduct to End Unfair Discrimination be negotiated nationally with national employer federations giving trade unions many more powers to intervene in the areas of discrimination identified earlier in this paper.

5.3 NTB representative

COSATU has agreed to sit on the National Training Board as indicated above under policy.

5.4 Ongoing work within the tripartite alliance

COSATU is committed to continuing to work within the framework of its alliance with the ANC and SACP on this issue.

6. Possible Areas of Co-operation between COSATU and the Commonwealth Expert Group on Human Resources

6.1 COSATU requests that if the Commonwealth is proposing to set up programmes inside South Africa then such programmes should be submitted to COSATU for comment prior to implementation.

6.2 COSATU further requests that should specific areas of expertise be required then the Commonwealth Expert Group could assist in finding appropriate experts and seconding them to South Africa, or alternatively, facilitating a COSATU representative to travel outside of South Africa to gain the necessary skills, or consult with experts.

One possible example might be to second a person from TAFE (Australia) to assist affiliates with building skill-based grading systems and training modules associated with them.

Specific requests would emerge over time as affiliates become more deeply involved in human resource development issues.

6.3 Other areas of co-operation to be identified over time.

Appendix 1

Responses to present education and skills crisis in South Africa

Human resources development is an area of intense interest to a number of powerful organised groups in South Africa, of which COSATU is only one. Below is a brief overview of other initiatives being undertaken which COSATU needs to consider when developing strategies for the future.

1. Private Sector initiatives

1.1 Private Sector Education Council (PRISEC)

All the major national employer organisations, except the South African Agricultural Union, have formed themselves into Prisec. This grouping therefore represents the:

* Afrikaner Handelsinstituut (AHI)
* The Chamber of Mines (which has itself formed an Education Advisory Committee consisting of representatives of all the main mining houses - AAC, Genmin, Rand Mines, JCI, Goldfields and Anglovaal)
* Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (SEIFSA)
* Building Industries Federation of South Africa (BIFSA) and
* South African Chamber of Business (SACOB).

This powerful grouping aims to represent the interests of the private sector to policy makers, particularly the state, in the area of education and training. It defines its ideology as that of "liberal pluralism". They are presently looking to countries like Thailand and Singapore for models.

They have stated their own objectives in the following way:

"There is a very real danger that education may again be subject to political manipulation in a new dispensation if provision is not made for ongoing inputs into the process by stakeholders other than the state at national, regional and local level.

In the new dispensation PRISEC believes that provision should be made for employers to:

i. inform the state of the existing and emerging needs of employers in respect of education
ii. monitor the suitability of the outputs of the school system to employers' needs and the 'need for economic growth and responsible citizenship in the new South Africa'."
(Prisec document : Priorities for Education in the Nineties)

1.2 Urban Foundation

The Urban Foundation was established by the private sector to develop specific policy proposals in a range of areas. They are involved in a number of projects, particularly in the area of housing. They get their funding from the private sector, but like to be seen as operating at arms length from direct employer interests.

They have commissioned work from such respected educationalists as Dr Hartshorne and others. They have developed a large infrastructure and research capacity.

Recently the Urban Foundation have become much more interested in the area of education and training. They seem to see their role as that of bringing together different interest groups to address specific and agreed policy questions on the relationship between education and work, such as how to set competency-based standards for modular training.

They have made informal approaches to COSATU to find out whether or not we would be prepared to cooperate with such an exercise. COSATU has not as yet responded.

1.3. Private Sector Initiative - PSI

Separate, but related to the Urban Foundation, is the recently launched Private Sector Initiative - which is basically the establishment of a fund (R500 million over five years) by major employers inside South Africa intended to address educational questions.

The Urban Foundation has been asked to co-ordinate the initiative. They are at present involved in speaking to a number of interested groups, such as the ANC, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, the NECC and COSATU.

Very senior members of each organisation are however being approached to "discuss" possible uses for the money that would maximize the multiplier effect of the funds for the future.

At the time of writing this paper no firm programme of action had yet been developed, but Urban Foundation representatives indicated that they anticipated that an initial programme would be implemented in July 1991.

1.4 The Education Foundation

The Education Foundation claims to be a completely independent trust, but it is funded by the private sector. The present director is also a regional director of the Urban Foundation.

It began its operations in April 1990, "with a wide-ranging plan of action based around the provision of strategic information for planning, the piloting of key activities

calculated to provide working models for replication and the development of a national network to facilitate this." (Education Foundation document: Update and review of background, strategy and progress 15/11/90).

With a relatively small fulltime staff they have set themselves four key objectives:

"The first is the provision of a central, comprehensive relevant education database to ALL those stakeholders involved in the design or negotiation of a future education system; to provide the strategic information required for the formulation of policy options and the rapid transformation of the education system in all its component parts.

"The second is the electrification of black schools, on a prioritised basis, throughout South Africa. Given that up to 90% of these currently have no power, the opportunity to double or even triple use of existing resources is negated, and distance learning, laboratory and computer facilities effectively precluded. ..

"The third objective is the development and introduction of Community Colleges. Conceived as a multi-faceted and flexible response to the need for literacy and numeracy, technical and vocational training, bridging programmes and "junior" or intermediate diplomas, these would be rooted in the community and utilise existing resources. The process of electrification would have a direct bearing on the feasibility of these colleges. ..

"The fourth objective is the development of a structured network of interactive education Task Groups in the nine development regions of South Africa. The role of this network is to provide a mechanism in which measurable progress towards the three objectives outlined above, and others which may be identified in the future, can be achieved.

"The development of this network would involve, on an open-ended basis, representatives from education, the private sector, community organisations and existing education departments, and could form the basis for a credible national forum for shared visioning and policy assessment." (same document)

It appears that the first objective has already been met it appears in so far as a fee-for-service databank is now open in Johannesburg. There has also been remarkable progress in regard to the setting up of the Task Groups.

It appears that the Natal Education Board, which is the most advanced, has on it representatives from four out of five Executive Directors of Education, principles from the universities and technikons, the chairperson of Prisec, Dr Engelbrecht of the

HSRC, representatives of the NECC and unnamed representatives of teachers organisations.

It has established 14 working groups in a range of areas. Discussions to set up task groups are underway in the Western Cape and in Area C which includes Bloemfontein, the OFS, Qwa-qwa and Boputhatswana.

Above are given the major private sector initiatives - excluded are the wide range of company initiatives that are proliferating daily.

2. Government initiatives

This is a subject for a paper in itself. Two important initiatives are simply noted here for consideration and further analysis.

2.1 Education Renewal Strategy

The state has completed its work on this and it is presently being published for circulation and comment. It is the product of deliberations of 22 sub-committees. It is interesting to note that Prisec played an influential role in its formulation.

A Prisec representative at a recent meeting reported they anticipate that a government convened "Education Indaba" would be called to debate the report within six months and possibly sooner.

2.2 The National Training Strategy

Following the publication of the HSRC/NTB Investigation into Skills Training in the RSA in 1989, the state decided not to move directly into preparing a White Paper.

Instead it commissioned the same group to extend its investigations into the total sphere of training and develop, for the state, a framework for a Total Training Strategy.

This work was done during 1990 and included a number of regional workshops at which employers and white unionists discussed some of the initial proposals being developed. The report is now complete. It is due to be publicly available for discussion and comment in April 1991.

A national symposium is planned, by the Department of Manpower, for 2 - 4 October 1991 in which the National Training Strategy will be debated. COSATU was invited to become a member of the planning group, and is invited to attend the symposium. No decision has yet been taken in this regard.

3. International community

3.1 Commonwealth Expert Group on Human Resource Development in Post-apartheid South Africa

This group was established at the suggestion of the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa. It is the aim of the Expert Group "to contribute towards the wide ranging debate on human resource development which is already underway in South Africa with a view to highlighting possible policy options."

Specifically, its terms of reference are:

* Provision of a concise overview of the current participation of blacks in the higher skill levels in the labour market and expected future requirements as progress is made toward a non- racial democracy;

* Identification of priority sectors for advanced education and high-level training, including work experience, and with due consideration given to the role and participation of women;

* Recommendations to the CFMSA on the policies of and possible actions by the Commonwealth in these areas;

* Ideas on how to mobilise greater support throughout the Commonwealth and the international community to meet the human resource needs of a post-apartheid society; and

* Examination of the role of appropriate institutions for human resource development inside South Africa and of priority ways of assisting such institutions."
(Correspondence to COSATU)

The Expert Group held its first meeting in London, 7 - 9 November 1990 and is to meet again in April 1991, before completing its final report for submission to Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Harare, October 1991.

The Expert Group includes Mr Papi Moloto (ANC Department of Manpower Development) and Professor Francis Wilson (University of Cape Town) from inside South Africa. COSATU has no representative.

3.2 South African Network

This is a network of support organisations based, at present, in Canada (the Southern Africa Education Trust Fund), the UK (the South African Advanced Education Project), New Zealand and Australia. It is anticipated that similar centres will be established in other Commonwealth countries in the future.

These groups offer scholarships and work experience programmes in areas of high level skills in practical fields for disadvantaged South Africans in their countries. They are also in a position to respond to requests for short issue-focused visits from organisations.

They are working closely with the Centre for the Development of Human Resources, but have also approached COSATU. This group has made special efforts to promote training for black women within its programme.

3.3 Other international initiatives

Other international initiatives exist, but mainly offer scholarships for overseas study on an individual basis.

There are many offers of assistance to COSATU in the area of human resource development by a range of international organisations, which COSATU is in the process of discussing.

4. Progressive initiatives within South Africa

What follows is a brief sketch of progressive organisations working in the area of human resource development. More detailed information is available in other documentation.

4.1. National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC)

This is a coordinating structure of progressive organisations on education (COSAS, COSATU, UDUSA, SANSCO, NUSAS, SADTU, SAYCO). It aims to be politically non-sectarian.

It has two broad areas of work - development and organisational campaigns. The development side of its work links to the Education Development Trust, under which falls its research function under the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI).

NEPI is a very new initiative to commission research under 12 broad headings which will generate policy options for the progressive movement as a whole, although it has a special relationship with the ANC. COSATU has representation on the NECC NEC and has indicated that it will cooperate with NEPI.

4.2 ANC Department of Manpower Development

Within the ANC a Department of Manpower Development has been established. It is working in close cooperation with the Centre for the Development of Human Resources.

4.3 Centre for Development of Human Resources (CDHR)

The CDHR was set up by the ANC as a progressive non- party political organisation to coordinate work in the area of human resource development.

It is run by a Board of Management on which COSATU is represented, but in practice we have not been active. Other organisations represented on the Board include NAFCOC, ABASA, Black Management Forum, and the NECC. Its work includes:

* Administration courses
* Local government courses
* Policy debate on human resource development
* Discussion on economic policy
* Other special issue courses eg 'black advancement', legal courts etc.
* Placement of exiles together with South African Student Internship Foundation
* Work experience programmes for students
* Co-ordination with a number of international bodies on scholarship programmes including the South African Network.

BACKGROUND TO LITERACY PROPOSAL

1 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY LITERACY?

In 1975, an International Conference for Literacy was held in Persepolis, Iran, to evaluate ten years of international work in the field of literacy. The conference was attended by people from all over the world. The conference adopted the "Declaration of Persepolis" which was a new approach to thinking about literacy.

The Declaration of Persepolis defined literacy as:

> *"... not just the process of learning the skills of reading and writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man (sic) and his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates the conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of society in which man lives and of its aims; it also stimulates initiatives and his participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it and of defining the aims of an authentic human development. It should open the way to a mastery of techniques and human actions. Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a fundamental human right."*

In terms of this Declaration, it is clear that being fully literate involves more than knowing how to read and write. To be fully literate, people must have an adequate general basic education.

Because of the enormous problems of the Bantu Education system, we can say that there are four broad categories of adults who have been affected by state policies towards black education and are therefore not fully literate in the sense of the Persepolis Declaration:

- those with less than one year of schooling, most of whom would be completely illiterate;
- those with between one and four years of schooling, most of whom would be semi-literate in their own language, have no, or very little, knowledge of English and be semi-numerate;
- those with between five and six years of schooling, most of whom might be literate in their own language, have basic numeracy and a basic knowledge of English - poor general basic education;
- those with between six and eight years of schooling, most of whom would be literate in their own language, have basic numeracy and a basic knowledge of English - questionable general basic education.

2 HOW MANY PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE ILLITERATE?

It is difficult to provide precise figures in the absence of a proper survey conducted by a democratic government. Also, many people have obviously used the basic literacy skills they got in the schools to further their own education outside the schools.

The Scale of Illiteracy

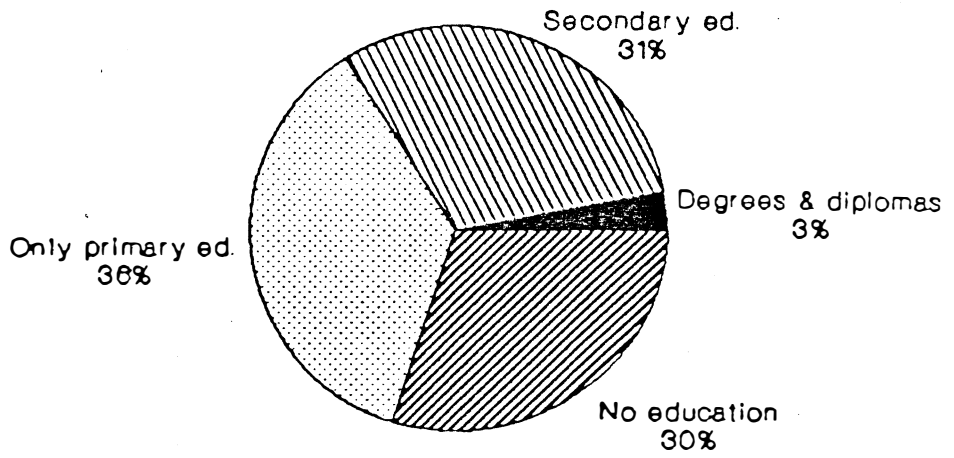
(drawn from a survey that identifies six years of schooling as the minimum standard needed for literacy)

5,7	million	- over 20 years of age, excluding TBVC countries
+ 1 - 2	million	- 10 to 19 years age group
+ 2	million	- TBVC countries
8 - 9	million	
+ 2	million	- no adequate platform of basic education
Total 11	**million**	(out of a total population of 35 million)

This high figure is reinforced by another government survey in 1985 which estimated that 66% of the total black population had a standard 3 or less.

In 1986, the National Manpower Commission report published the following educational profile of South Africa's total labour force:

SOUTH AFRICA: EDUCATIONAL PROFILE



Source: National Manpower Commission

3 PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY

In November 1990, the NUMSA Training Group discussed the problems that arise from illiteracy under five headings. This is a selection of a few of the answers:

Problems for the people themselves: - feeling inferior

Problems for building democracy in SA: - the leadership can manipulate people more easily; lack of participation in decision- making structures

Problems in building a strong economy: - no basic educational foundation for training; poor communication, reasoning and problem-solving skills (relative to people with higher levels of education); full potential not developed; upgrading chances limited; difficult to compete internationally because of a lack of understanding of technology in the workforce

Problems in addressing inequalities in the workplace: - blacks are stuck at the bottom of the hierarchy; the extent of illiteracy can retard programmes to eliminate racial equalities

Problems for unemployed: - no real incentive to join present literacy classes because they go nowhere; more difficult for illiterate people to get jobs.

4 SURVEY OF EXISTING LITERACY PROGRAMMES, 1990

We know that only a tiny proportion of the illiterate population is currently participating in literacy programmes of any description.

The main categories of people who provide literacy are:-

- **Progressive literacy organisations** who are part of an informal network called the National Literacy Co-operation
- The **Department of Education and Training** through the DET night schools
- **Capital** - which used the DET or a range of profit-making literacy organisations

The survey recommended the following: (a written summary of the findings is in preparation)

- ☐ Mother-tongue literacy could proceed now on the basis of Project Literacy's "Breakthrough to Literacy" course, with possible adaptations.
- ☐ Adaptation of the basic numeracy courses of Professor Human (Stellenbosch University) - now being developed for Eskom up to standard 1 level - as the basis for a union-supported numeracy course.
- ☐ Several beginners English courses should be ready by May 1991 - Project Literacy, Molteno, English Resource Unit. These could similarly be used as the basis for a union-supported course.

The survey noted:

- ☐ Gencor has approached Heinemann Publishers about the possibility of publishing re-worked versions of their English courses. (These start from a standard 2/3 level and go up to a matric level).

- ☐ Numeracy courses above standard 2 level and basic science courses do not yet exist for adults - except for the flawed programmes of the DET.
- ☐ Integrated Studies courses don't exist (except for a low-level programme being developed by USWE, Cape Town).

5 NUMSA TRAINING GROUP: MAIN CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SURVEY

Weaknesses of Progressive Literacy Organisations

— no courses are clearly defined in terms of levels, with each level covering clear skills and competencies. Therefore there is no clear route for progression.

— no clear direction and real involvement from unions

— no linkages to work-based skills

— no ongoing assessment of progress and no possibility of incentives to gain recognition (certification) for progression

— not geared for large-scale work because of reliance on sophisticated teachers and a needs-based approach to learning

— not known by people whom they want to "assist".

Weaknesses of Capital's Literacy Programmes

— management selection of people to take part during working hours

— no trade union involvement in planning, implementing, developing and monitoring of courses

— no links with training and progression in terms of clear career paths

— links to the workplace from management's perspective

— modular approach to literacy with clear recognition and possibility for accumulating credits towards school-equivalent certificates does not exist

— no clear agreement on paid time off for study

Principles underlying a Vision of Effective Literacy Programmes

"There shall be learning for all"

1 Literacy programmes should be planned with the trade unions.

2 Literacy programmes and the principles that underlie them must involve negotiations with COSATU.

3 A modular system of literacy courses must be developed which would allow for flexibility and clear possibilities for progression. These literacy modules must link with modules for training within a system of broad bands of skills and clear

career paths.

4 Literacy courses must be developed on a modular, competency basis with recognition and credits being given in terms of national core standards at various levels within a unified system of qualifications.

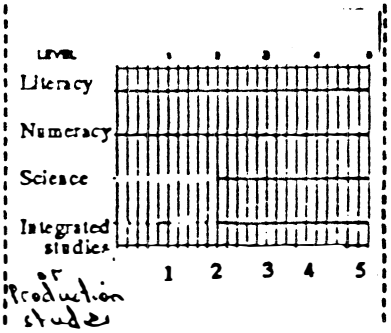
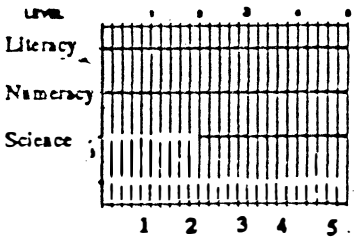
5 There should be paid time off for literacy and an agreed target date for all workers to achieve the first two levels of literacy:

Level One: mother tongue literacy and number recognition

Level Two: beginner's English and basic numeracy

6 The employers must provide facilities for literacy classes and negotiate both the paying and training of literacy teachers as well as the development of suitable literacy materials.

6 PROPOSED VISION OF A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF LITERACY

Formal Educational System	State Adult Education System	Capital and employed workers	Unemployed or Rural Sector
Grades 1-2 Standards 1-10 Period of compulsory education	4 to 5 levels*, linked with formal education and training system, divided into modules 	Modules linked to training at various levels with clear possibilities for credits under the state system 	Modules linked to training and state system plus modules on eg. marketing, managerial skills, organisational skills etc.
Financed by state	Financed by state	Financed by capital and state. In the long term, possible worker contributions * See note	Financed by state, capital and overseas donors

* The top level would be about Std 8.

* Subjects which the unions do not wish to negotiate with capital, such as Production Studies or Integrated Studies, could be done outside working hours. People who wish to get school equivalent certificates for all subjects at various levels, would need to do these additional modules in Integrated Studies or Production Studies to qualify for full certificates.

NUMSA PROPOSAL ON THE WAY FORWARD FOR LITERACY AND NUMERACY

A THE INDUSTRY LEVEL

1 Set up a union sub-committee (under the appropriate union structure) for literacy and numeracy.

2 Negotiate literacy principles and framework with employers in each industry (nationally where possible).

3 Set up a joint employer-union literacy sub-committee at the industry level.

4 Agree on the company or companies that will host pilots for level 1 and level 2 literacy courses and the starting dates.

Level One: mother tongue literacy and number recognition

Level Two: beginner's English and basic numeracy

The industry joint employer-union literacy sub-committees would have to discuss several issues before beginning the pilot programmes. These include:

- ☐ the assessment of literacy levels amongst workers and a needs analysis
- ☐ paid time off
- ☐ adaptation of materials. The most useful immediate starting points here are
  - — Breakthrough to Literacy - Project Literacy version
  - — Professor Human's numeracy course - it might be necessary to negotiate with Eskom about adapting these materials soon.
  - — Bridge to English - one or a combination of the Molteno, Project Literacy or English Resource Unit versions
- ☐ training of teachers
- ☐ funding
- ☐ evaluation
- ☐ agreed company-level structures for monitoring and implementing pilots.

B COSATU LEVEL

1 Set up a literacy / ABE (Adult Basic Education) sub-committee under Nedcom or the COSATU Human Resources Commission or create a joint Nedcom/Human resources sub-committee.

2 COSATU should second a person from a service organisation to assist in co-ordinating COSATU's work in the literacy area.

3 The sub-committee must meet with Heinemann Publishers on 4 December 1990 to discuss adapting the Genmin/Gencor English courses.

4 The sub-committee must draw up a detailed proposal including a set of principles and criteria underlying COSATU's vision. This will be the basis for negotiations with SACCOLA or PRISEC (the Private Sector Education Council) about literacy. These principles should be submitted to the first COSATU CEC meeting of 1991 and a decision taken then. The criteria should include proposals about the methodological approach to be used in materials development, as well as clear notions of levels and standards. COSATU's relationship with Heinemann also need attention here.

5 COSATU literacy sub-committee should negotiate with SACCOLA/PRISEC as soon after the CEC as possible. As a result of this negotiation,

6 A joint employer-COSATU literacy committee should be set up. The joint committee would be a negotiating forum to get agreement about funding of materials development and pilot literacy programmes. The joint employer-COSATU literacy committee would set up a materials development sub-committee that is accountable to it.

7 The materials sub-committee would identify people to work on the materials subject to agreed criteria and principles about literacy work, agreed funding arrangements and time tables.

8 The joint employer-COSATU literacy committee would agree on companies, starting dates and monitoring arrangements for pilots. The starting dates would obviously have to be discussed with the materials development sub-committee first. (See the industry level notes on pilot programmes, above, for other issues that need attention.)

9 It will be necessary in the longer term to discuss a range of other issues when extending pilots on a large scale.

C OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR COSATU

☐ The COSATU literacy sub-committee should be officially represented on the NECC National Education Policy Commission on literacy.

☐ COSATU should be officially represented in other levels of NEPI.

☐ The COSATU Human Resources Commission should consult with the ANC Department of Manpower Development about the problems with the Centre for the Development of Human Resources. The ANC Department of Manpower Development should change its name to the Department of Human Resources Development.