

# BARGAINING

**MONITOR**

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## Women's Organising Strategies

**INSIDE**

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This edition of the **Bargaining Monitor** focuses on **organising strategies women workers** are engaged in.

As part of the **LRS Gender Programme** work we are working with gender structures and *trade union women activists* to highlight and learn from existing strategies and create new strategies that encourage **gender equality** and organize women into the trade union movement.

In the past few years we have encountered **inspiring and innovative strategies** women are using in the workplace, in the union and in the community and home. The five short stories in this Bargaining Monitor is one attempt at sharing these strategies.

# SACCAWU's Mall Committees



## **An innovative Strategy for organising women**

Mall Committees, an innovative organising strategy! In this article we reflect on Faiza Davids from SACCAWU's presentation on the "Significance of Mall Committees for organising women" at the LRS 2009 Negotiators Conference and Nina Benjamin's engagement with SACCAWU gender activists involved in the organising of mall committees.

What do you see when you enter one of our many Shopping Malls? A few big stores like Pick n Pay and Checkers, many smaller shops and a number of restaurants. In most of these Malls the vast majority of cashiers, shop assistants, waitresses – service sector workers are women. We are also seeing more and more new Malls being built with the promise of employing young people from surrounding communities. One of the features of these newly established shopping malls is the number of young women being employed as part-time and casual workers.

With the establishment of Mall committees, SACCAWU has initiated a very interesting response to organising in Shopping Malls. The Mall Committee offers a space for building worker solidarity across companies but importantly can be a comfortable space for women workers who can pop out during lunch times to attend a meeting or activity at the workplace. For women workers, meetings after hours far away from home only adds to the many other responsibilities they have in both their public and private lives.

Inclusivity, solidarity and flexibility are some of the other features of the Mall Committee Strategy. Everyone is invited to the mall meetings not just union members or shop stewards. Committee members do not have to be shop stewards, opening the space for more women to take on some form of leadership role in the union. Workers from different companies meet building a sense of solidarity. In this space workers compare Collective Bargaining Agreements, assessing for example disparities between the maternity rights

in different companies. This can lay the basis for collective and solidarity actions. Faiza presented an interesting example where the Mall Committee entered into negotiations with the Mall Management on behalf of all workers as regards child care arrangements for workers involved in late trading. The Mall Committee conducted a survey with a particular focus on casual workers. The survey enquired about the number of children that needed childcare and what workers are prepared to pay for childcare. A compromise was reached and management offered a venue, meals for the children during the shift that the worker is on duty and entertainment like art. Workers were responsible for finding and funding a suitable child care worker.

*The Mall Committee offers a space for building worker solidarity across companies but importantly can be a comfortable space for women workers who can pop out during lunch times to attend a meeting or activity at the workplace.*

The Mall Committee also offers women working in different companies the space to share their experiences of common problems like the impact of late trading on personal safety and family lives. The very localized but at the same time diverse setting of the Mall with its many companies, small shops and restaurants can play an important role in appreciating both the different and similar challenges facing for e.g. a young women employed as a part-time waitress in a Wimpy restaurant with a permanently employed women in Pick n Pay. Both women are involved in late trading, both feel the insecurity of travelling by unreliable public transport to and from work, both are constantly concerned about childcare arrangements, both have irregular lunch times and are involved in shift work - but the young women at Wimpy is constantly being intimidated by her manager with the threat that she can easily be replaced, she knows that if she

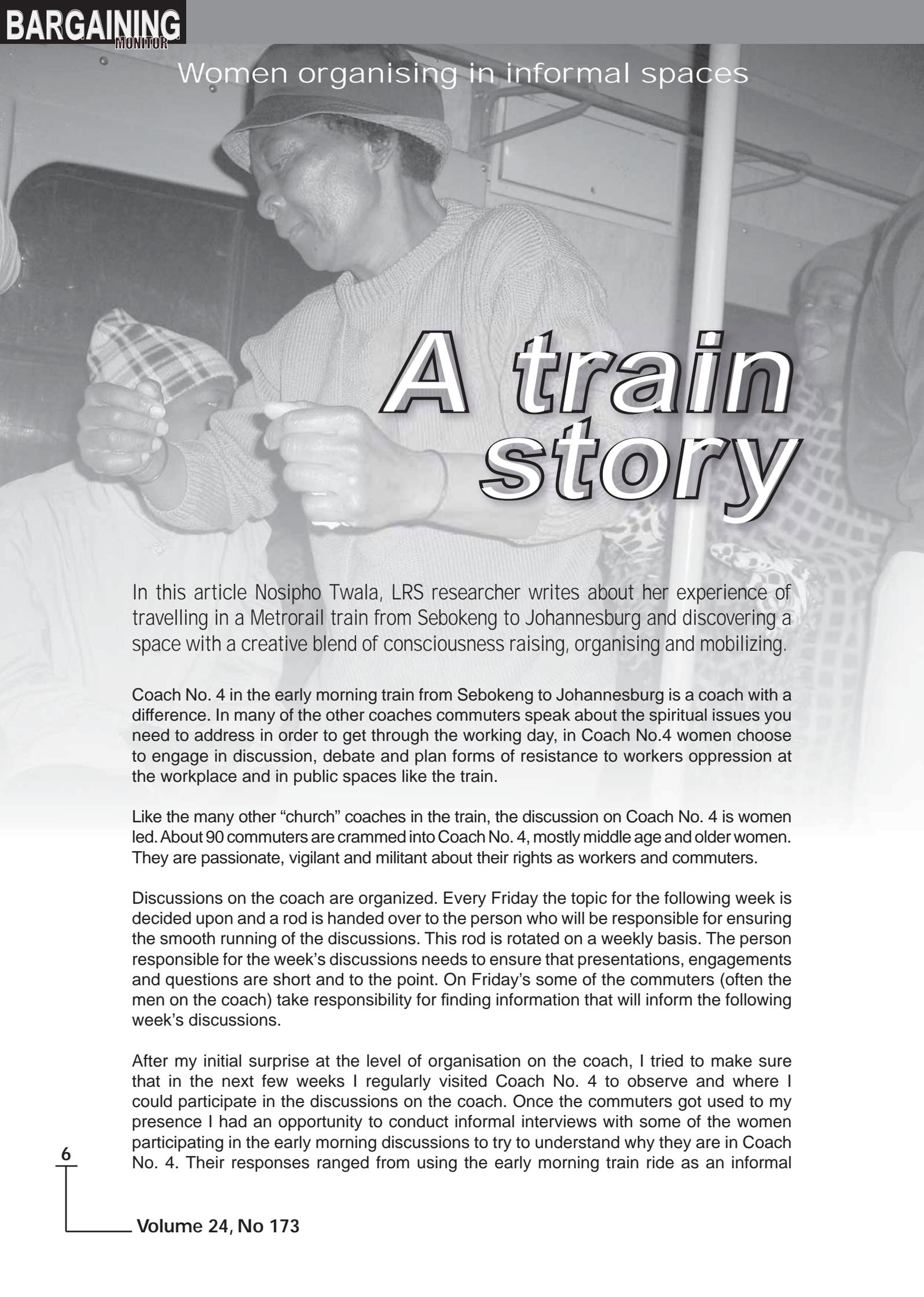
falls pregnant she will probably not get her part-time job back, she believes she has no labour rights as a part-time worker and she has had no exposure to a union. Imagine that in the Mall Pick n Pay and Wimpy are next to each other and the two women often see each other and travel in the same public transport. Having the Mall Committee gives two women from different companies an opportunity to really appreciate each other's frustrations and challenges, an important first step in building consciousness and solidarity. Creating this space is not without its challenges. Irregular lunch times and shift work makes meeting times a real challenge and this is where flexible processes are being used in some Malls for e.g. using different meeting times to accommodate the different lunch times.

Mall Committees are also important places for experimenting with organising young women. Straight from school, working as part-timers with little organisational experience, the young women feel both vulnerable but also excited at the possibility of being involved and learning new things. In the Malls, members of the SACCAWU Gender Structures have creatively inducted young women workers into the union through both formal as well as informal methods. Young women are encouraged to participate in the initial negotiations with Mall Management around accessing physical space to hold Mall Committee meetings. These initial negotiations are important for the young women to get a sense of the attitude of the Mall and property manager but also begin to feel comfortable seeing the Mall as their workplace. Formal induction processes is a combination of union reports and educational activities that could include issues like workplace related sexual harassment, collective bargaining issues like parental rights and broader societal issues like customary marriage and domestic violence. Careful attention is placed on the educational methodologies used in both union report backs as well as educational meetings. For many young women this is their first experience

of women led activities and the Gender Activists pay careful attention to role modeling and mentoring. One of the older Gender Activists assisting with the development of the Vaal Mall Committee identifies “having an internal vision of your own development as an activist” as important in being a role model and in mentoring young women. This she feels helps make conscious what assisted and what acted as a block in your own development – which if you show through your actions and not through “preaching” to the young women can be very effective in the mentoring process. All the Gender Activists speak about “empathy” as being essential to their gender work and that this sense of “empathy” plays an important role in their work with young women.

Connecting with broader social issues is an important element of the Mall Committee for e.g. in Daveyton Johannesburg the Mall Committee hosts a World Aids Day in December and TB awareness activities in March. These activities involve workers, customers as well the surrounding community and is hosted on the Mall premises. In other cases for e.g. when celebrating Mandela’s birthday union members from the Mall secured donations from the shops, donations that were then handed out to surrounding households in need. In Daveyton the Committee has initiated a stakeholder forum to deal with issues like HIV/Aids. Some members of the Stakeholder Forum include the Department of Health, local councilors and members of the Treatment Action Campaign. At a community level, the Mall Committee is helping to define the kind of social responsibility a mall should be playing towards the workers, customers and broader community.





# A train story

In this article Nosipho Twala, LRS researcher writes about her experience of travelling in a Metrorail train from Sebokeng to Johannesburg and discovering a space with a creative blend of consciousness raising, organising and mobilizing.

Coach No. 4 in the early morning train from Sebokeng to Johannesburg is a coach with a difference. In many of the other coaches commuters speak about the spiritual issues you need to address in order to get through the working day, in Coach No.4 women choose to engage in discussion, debate and plan forms of resistance to workers oppression at the workplace and in public spaces like the train.

Like the many other “church” coaches in the train, the discussion on Coach No. 4 is women led. About 90 commuters are crammed into Coach No. 4, mostly middle age and older women. They are passionate, vigilant and militant about their rights as workers and commuters.

Discussions on the coach are organized. Every Friday the topic for the following week is decided upon and a rod is handed over to the person who will be responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the discussions. This rod is rotated on a weekly basis. The person responsible for the week’s discussions needs to ensure that presentations, engagements and questions are short and to the point. On Friday’s some of the commuters (often the men on the coach) take responsibility for finding information that will inform the following week’s discussions.

After my initial surprise at the level of organisation on the coach, I tried to make sure that in the next few weeks I regularly visited Coach No. 4 to observe and where I could participate in the discussions on the coach. Once the commuters got used to my presence I had an opportunity to conduct informal interviews with some of the women participating in the early morning discussions to try to understand why they are in Coach No. 4. Their responses ranged from using the early morning train ride as an informal

space to discuss union activities to discussing conditions affecting commuters and more particularly women travelling with Metrorail trains.

***“I like this coach because I can discuss problems I encounter at work without fear or prejudice. I am able to get advice without feeling like a fool”.***

Elizabeth Makhanya – train commuter

***“I was drawn to this coach by the chanting and singing, as a young person I loved their singing. When I came here I was not a union member. Listening to stories of how people have been helped by unions I decided to join one. However I find this space more accessible than my union meetings”.***

Vusi Babina – train commuter

***“I came to the coach because I was accompanying my friend who was unfairly retrenched and did not have a union. She was able to find help and she was reinstated “.***

Mama Vusi – train commuter

***“I was drawn to this space because trains were always late and I faced the danger of being retrenched after receiving the final written warning. People in this coach always facilitate meetings between us and Metrorail.”***

Rorisang Mokonoto – train commuter

The lateness of trains is also linked to safety issues. Many of the women leave home as early as 4.00am and are exposed to the threat of theft, molestation and sexual violence. In the negotiations with Metrorail the women have requested Metrorail to coordinate a group of community youth to act as guards near all train stations from 4.00am to 10.00pm every day.

Most of the women interviewed felt that what makes women come back to this space is the knowledge they share with each other and the manner in which their problems are handled and addressed.

***“I like the coach because we need to ensure as workers that the struggle continues. We do not have to be complacent about our victories. As a young woman I was groomed and mentored by this coach to become the strong women that I am today. I was not a member of the union and had problems at work. They gave me support and coached me as I represented myself at the CCMA. They referred me to the department of labour which intervened on my behalf at the CCMA. I am grateful for knowing about this coach”.***

Bella Ngonyolo – train commuter

Perhaps like in many other spaces in the union, workplace and community - even though women are the majority in the coach, leading discussions and instrumental in facilitating the dialogue in the space, they do not see themselves as leaders. There is often a deferring to a group of men who are seen as more “knowledgeable” about labour issues because they are shop stewards. My guess is that many of the women have as much or even more knowledge about organising and workplace issues. This could mean that the women do not always recognise the invaluable and leading role they play in keeping alive the discussions in Coach No.4.



An important observation from one of the women participating in the discussions is that in this space the issues they raise are seen as important and not as just complaints. A number of women also raise what they see as the contradiction between having a “voice” on the train and not having the same “voice at home. It is interesting that at one level there is a valuing of the “voice” on the train while at the same time a devaluing of the same “voice” in relation to the male shop stewards in the Coach.

The men in turn recognize their power and while claiming to embrace women leadership urge the women not to go back home and disrespect their husbands: *“Being a leader does not mean you have to start dictating terms to your husband and you need to respect your husband”*.<sup>1</sup> When I introduced myself and what I do, one of the men asked me to teach other women to respect their husbands. While I did not experience any direct confrontation with perceived gender roles, I am not sure if the silence on the part of women when confronted with the “respect your husband” was an acceptance of the prescribed gender roles or a tacit acceptance that the time was not yet right.

It is interesting though to note that the men who are in the Coach seem to have an appreciation of the role that the women play in the discussions and one can see that they are both listening attentively as well as participating respectfully. Some of the men indicated that they participated because they benefitted from the discussions and the honest way women ask questions, questions they as men would be too embarrassed to ask.

Coach No. 4 is not unique. I have encountered 8 other trains in which similar spaces exist, trains from Vereeniging, Pretoria and Springs. These coaches similar to Coach No. 4 are playing an important role in the Commuters Forum that has been formed and in keeping Metrorail accountable to its passengers. Spaces like Coach No. 4 are important spaces for union organising and mobilizing but also importantly spaces where shifts can be made in gender consciousness and practices. Already you have women who are leading but who need to value their knowledge, skills and relationship building qualities. There are men who are practically respecting and acknowledging the role of women as leaders but who need to be challenged in their attempt at using gender roles to hold onto power.



# Young women bringing *new* *life* into the trade union movement!

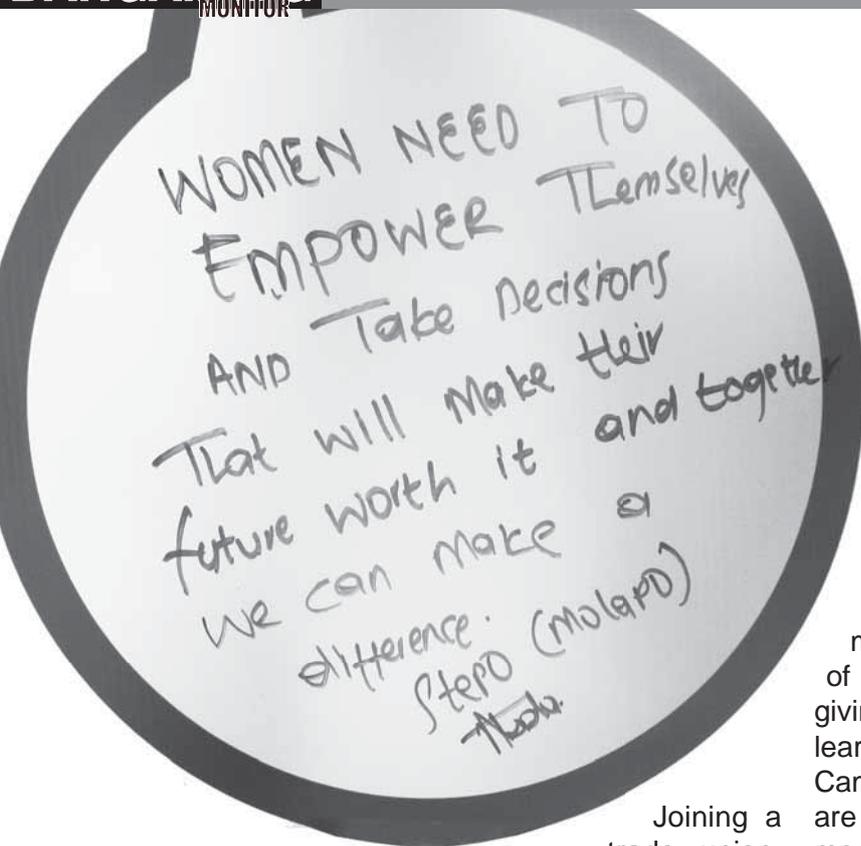
## The experience of the 'Decisions For Life' Trade Union Campaign

The 'Decisions for Life' Trade Union Campaign is an exciting campaign targeting young women in the service sector between the ages of 15-29 and is part of the Decent Work, Decent Life for Women Campaign. The Decisions for Life is coordinated by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in cooperation with UNI Global Union, the University of Amsterdam and the NGO Wage Indicator. The Campaign includes federations and service sector unions in South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

In this article we reflect on some of the highlights of the South African campaign.

The Decisions for Life Trade Union Campaign comes at a time when there is a growing focus internationally and in South Africa on unions recruiting and organising young workers. The Campaign is organising one section of these young workers - young women in the service sector. The goal of the Decisions for Life is to assist young women working as call centre operators; travel agency/ intermediaries in tourism; secretaries; bookkeepers, IT programmers, sales persons and cashiers in retail; front office workers/ receptionists and housekeepers, with making decisions about employment conditions, career opportunities, having a family, creating a work-life balance and importantly making a decision to be part of the collective strength of the trade union movement.

On the 29 August and 28 November 2009 representatives from COSATU, FEDUSA, NACTU, CONSAWU and related service sector unions launched the South African campaign in Johannesburg and Cape Town respectively. The campaign was launched under the banner: "Taking power as young women to make decisions for our lives". At the launch young women defined the Campaign as being about young women having the confidence, understanding and power to make decisions about all aspects of their lives.



of ensuring that unions assist young women in making their dreams a reality.

As part of the Campaign we have established coordinating teams made up of young women worker leaders and relatively older gender activists. The older activists have defined their role as mentors, mentors who can reflect on their own private and public challenges of being part of the trade union but mentors who listen and are respectful of the experiences of younger women – giving advice where necessary but also learning from the younger activists. The Campaign Coordinating team meetings are also important as spaces for “role-modeling” approaches to working together across federations, across age differences, across different life experiences – in a respectful and empowering way. Some of the important approaches of the team meetings are: Trying to ensure that all voices are treated equally regardless of the size of the federation or union, ensuring that all the meetings have a fair representation of young women workers who are encouraged to question and provide direction when developing campaign

Joining a trade union, choosing a career, accessing study opportunities, choosing a partner, having control over one’s body, choosing when to become a parent, being able to remain free from HIV, balancing personal/work and in some cases trade union involvement and being able to enjoy youth without all the pressures of having to take care of a range dependents e.g. siblings, parents etc.

With the campaign we aim to strengthen our trade union capacity to negotiate better pay and working conditions of young women workers and to increase trade union young women membership rates.

At the two launches more than 400 young women who work in call centers, retail stores, shopping malls, house-keepers from hotels, women who work as secretaries and administrators in large manufacturing companies, young women trade union administrators, young women involved in informal service related work and a small group hoping to start careers, came together to identify their common challenges, dreams and collective strength. The majority of these young women are part of the trade union movement. The young women participating in this Campaign are defining the Decisions for Life as a means





strategy, encouraging participants in the meetings to write short reflective pieces that can be used in the Decisions for Life website and publications and encouraging participating unions to develop strategies relevant to their specific contexts even when planning joint activities. These approaches we see as essential in breaking possible hierarchies between big and small, old and young, different experiences etc. – essential for developing a young women friendly environment. Part of developing a public profile showing unions as important spaces for young women workers - we have elected representatives from the 4 federations who are the “faces” of the Decisions for Life campaign. They act as our spokespeople.

“Knowing your rights” and improving legislation to protect young women workers in the workplace is central to our campaigning. The right to be protected from sexual harassment is particularly relevant to young women who are in all

kinds of vulnerable forms of employment exposing them to their risk of harassment. Workshops, drama, dialogues are some of the ways we are organising to confront the scourge of sexual harassment. Maternity protection is another important component of the Decisions for Life Campaign. Many of the young women we are targeting feel that they are most vulnerable when falling pregnant. As the Decisions for Life we are both popularizing the ILO’s Maternity Protection No.183 Convention and campaigning for it to be ratified by the South African Government.

Highlighting women worker leaders as role models in both their private and public lives, is another important methodology being used in the campaign. In discussions, meetings, workshops etc. Decisions for Life “ambassadors” have spoken about the decisions they have made, what allowed them to make these decisions and the challenges they needed to overcome to live by the decisions they made. This we hope will act as an inspiration to other workers who we then encourage to join union structures and where they are not yet ready to be part of a union – to be part of Decisions for Life forums that allow them to continue getting guidance and support for the decisions they would like to make.

One other exciting part of the Decisions for Life campaign is the use of electronic media and the [www.mywage.com](http://www.mywage.com) is informing and updating young women about both wages and working conditions in the service sector internationally. The website is an interactive one, allowing young women to access information, ask questions as well as make contributions.



Patricia Dyata Sikhula Sonke Deputy General Secretary



# My reflections on being a *women leader* in the trade union

In this article Patricia Dyata reflects on her role as a farm worker leader, what influenced her, the many challenges she has had to overcome, the victories she has fought and won and her dreams for the future.

## **A place to start**

I am a mother of a 14 year old boy and 4 year old girl. I live on the farm Delheim in Stellenbosch. In this article I intend sharing with you my journey to becoming a union leader. I hope that through telling my story other young women will see that if you believe in yourself, if you love yourself, no challenge is too great.

When I decided to tell my story, my first thought was, where do I start? I closed my eyes, breathed deeply and decided to free write. My free writing took me back to when I was a 5 year old huddled together with my mother and siblings on a train station, waiting for night so that we could return to Nyanga East and later Crossroads. Unlike the passengers boarding the trains, for us the station was our refuge a place where my mother could hide from those looking for “pass” books. For my mother being with my stepfather was a way to find security. He had a house on the farm Delheim and that is how my life on the wine farm began. I watched my mother work as a general worker in the cellar, then as a domestic worker in the cellar master’s house and later when she was older as a gardener in the owner’s house and through all these years she remained “straightforward” in her responses to the farm owner and to everyone else around her including me. It is only later in my life that I began to appreciate this “straight forwardness” as her resistance to apartheid and to the many abuses she suffered throughout her life.

I have studied, worked and lived in different places but my life as the daughter of a farm worker on Delheim has shaped who I am. Today I find myself living back on the farm organizing farm workers, committed to a struggle to free myself and all those around me.

## **Patricia the leader**

If anyone asks me to describe what I see as my most important leadership qualities, I would say love, honesty, respect, being straightforward and having no turns and curves. I am not afraid to stand up against what I see as wrong and I am prepared to deal with

the consequences especially as regards conditions of farm workers.

As a women leader I see myself as different to most male leaders. Men are quick to challenge. This is about ego. As a woman you are more likely to look at how all people are affected. You are always prepared to listen, to compromise when it is necessary, to think about how I want to be treated if I stand in someone else's shoes and to first begin with myself before I expect it from others.

### **Learning from being a mother**

My own mother has been an important influence on the kind of leader I am today. My mother was not frightened to stand up against the boere even during apartheid. I admired this and even though we did not have an easy relationship I respected my mother's courage and the fact that she always made sure we had food and school uniforms even during difficult times. My mother was both a role model as well as a victim.

Being a mother myself also helps me to be a leader. I am forced to practice what I preach. It is very important what I am teaching my children and what they are learning from me.

### **My challenge as a woman and farm worker leader!**

I grew up in a house where alcohol was used every day as part of the tot system. I arrived on the farm as a 7 year old and saw children my age smoking. Soon I learnt to smoke. We stole cans of wine and our parents did not notice. I drank from primary school and fortunately I still did well at school but week-ends we drank. It was not easy to give this up.

I did not escape the alcoholism. I drank when I joined Sikhule Sonke but when I saw that people had respect for me and that people loved me I knew that to be a leader I had to look at my alcohol abuse. I asked God to help me and for a while I was free from alcohol. But early this year I

went through a bad patch and drank again but my daughter reminded me of why I had stopped drinking

Alcohol can destroy your dreams. It breaks you as a person, your confidence and it takes a lot to get your self esteem back again. The public also plays an important role in destroying your self esteem as they are always reminding you of what you did when you were drunk.

### **Being part of SSONke**

I see it as a privilege to be part of people making a change. This is not just work but more of a calling. There are no words to describe what it means to be part of Sikhule Sonke. In Sikhule Sonke we have a chance to challenge inequality, to challenge the violation of human rights and a chance to break the silence against abuse.

We are breaking the oppression of farm people. It is not only about me, but what we have all struggled for. It is about the change we can bring – including change for me, my family and my children. All the oppression Sikhula Sonke struggles against is also part of my own experience, part of what I struggle with everyday. I am making my own history. What happens to my people happens to me. It is about us, me and my people. Every little achievement we make is big for me.

### **My life as the Deputy General Secretary**

I start my day at 5.00am with my children. I am part of an organizers forum, I assist with planning for the week, field reports, cases that exist, plan negotiations etc. I manage staff and assist the General Secretary. I assist as an organizer.

Plans do not and will not always run smoothly but I think I bring in certain qualities as a woman. The staff feels comfortable with me as I create space for free dialogue. I manage the staff and the staff manages me. There are open channels but when I discover lies I challenge it. I can apologise when it is necessary. This breaks the possibility of

groups forming because people recognize that as a leader you are prepared to admit when you are wrong. I learnt these qualities as I grew up and if you want people to respect you need to get this respect. As I grew up I began to understand – old people say if you show respect to others you can put your head up.

Initially one official did not feel he should account to me and undermined me in front of everyone. I dealt it with directly. He asked for forgiveness. I asserted myself and set the record straight and in this way I showed I can listen and respect staff but I expect the same from staff.

#### **My view on the union movement today**

The unions can be more progressive than what they are if they stop worrying about positions and power and focus on daily struggles of people working and unemployed including pensioners and the disabled. Unions are focusing on those working and forget the community. We will have more success if everyone becomes part of a global struggle because the global struggle affects us all if you work or do not work

As regards the position of women in the union – the unions need to be more open for women to lead. I am saying this because of the results I have seen. Women are more effective because they are not using fists and anger to resolve issues. Women have a feminine approach they will sit down and they will talk and if you do not listen they will try to find ways to make you listen. Women are also more prepared to listen and will be more interested in getting mandates from the membership. This helps the union to be more membership driven. In most unions this is not always very visible.

#### **Sikhule Sonke as a women led union**

As women led union we see ourselves as a social movement union. Many of the male led unions do not see us as a real union but we believe in ourselves and more organisations are taking us seriously now.

We have support for e.g. from unions in the Nordic countries. We are being seen as a new form of organisation. We organise in the agriculture sector where there is private property. A big challenge we face is illegal evictions mostly on unorganized farms and unfair dismissals.

If you look at the community we are not just focusing on people who are working but start from children through to the retired and disabled on the farm. The way I got involved in Sikhule Sonke was that I was living and looking after my mother on Delheim farm. The farmer wanted retired and retrenched people to apply for children over 18 to stay on the farms. This is to break up the home you lived in all your life. Parents are being forced to look for a place for their children to live. Farm management forced my mother to choose which child she preferred to live with. Many are long term occupants who are protected by ESTA and have a right to family life. I believe older people need to be recruited into Sikhule Sonke and they need to be unionized. They are a vulnerable group who are being evicted

When we have a Sikhule Sonke activity you can see respect amongst everyone. We do not classify anyone as young and old but as people who must treat each other with respect. For someone like me who worked as a nurse before I do not see this kind of caring work as fulfilling my gender roles because I see the value of how older people have contributed to my life. We see working with older people as a privilege.

I would like to end by giving thanks to the people who have and who still are playing an important role in my development as a women leader. To my Creator, my mom, Sikhule Sonke members, my General Secretary, National Executive Council and staff for their support and believing in me. I would also like to thank Women on Farms Project and the many soul searching questions posed by Gender @ Work facilitators.

*“In addition to the struggle for an equal and fair society, KWTU is searching for what makes women workers happier because the real happiness should be found in oneself”*

## A union for all *working women* The Korean Model

In November 2008 representatives from the Korean Women's Trade Union (KWTU) participated in the Association for Women in Development (AWID) Conference in Cape Town and presented strategies for organising women that we often take for granted but find ourselves forgetting.

The Korean Women's Trade Union (KWTU) was formed on 29 August 1999. The union was formed in response to the situation of women workers in Korea where 70% of women workers are employed in irregular forms of employment, where 64% of women work in companies with less than 5 employees and 88% work in companies with less than 100 employees. 6% of women workers are organized into unions and 3.8% of women workers in irregular forms of employment are unionised. Female permanent workers earn on average 68% of what male workers earn and female workers in irregular forms of employment earn on average 38% of what permanent male workers earn.

The overall aim of the KWTU is to extend labour rights to women workers and to respond to the low wages and bad working conditions that women workers in irregular forms of labour face. When KWTU started succeeding in organising “irregular workers”, existing trade unions which focused on organising permanent workers were inspired and followed.

With the vast majority of women workers, working in relatively small companies (less than 100 employees) as temporary workers a key challenge for KWTU is ensuring that workers are able to keep their union membership even when they change their place of employment. In response to this challenge KWTU has designed a “trans-company” union which is suitable for the lives of women and enables women workers to join the union and keep their membership regardless of where they live and what they doing – as long as they are working women.

Unlike most male dominated trade unions KWTU is giving priority to women worker's demands. The activities of the union have been organized around what is seen as the “life interests” and needs of women. “Life issues” like finding alternative ways of living in relation

to marriage, childcare, issues that can change the unequal power relations between men and women. Collective bargaining is seen as just one component for improving the status and quality of lives of women workers. Other activities include programmes with children, small group sessions for self-development and vocational training.

Central to KWTU's organising strategy is building better relationships to fight collectively – building the power of each individual as well as the power of the group. “The changes that happen through the struggles are as important as the visible fruits”. They see a central part of the struggle as building better relationships between colleagues – building sisterhood and in this way building self confidence. Like in most parts of the world, women workers live in fear and are not convinced that they can ever have a victory. There is an internalized passivity that we can challenge with a sense of sisterhood and an appreciation of every small victory – a sense of “we can do it”.

With a focus on building a sisterhood together with union education, KWTU is trying to develop alternative values to consumerism and competitiveness. Women come together in study groups to discuss what they see as really important in their lives. Educational materials focusing on the lives and hopes of women workers together with legal rights are produced and discussed in activities like Summer Camps.

The 9 year experience of KWTU is an important model to empower temporary women workers. Through the activities and struggles of KWTU women workers who are separate, scattered, easily replaced, have little confidence to change their horrible conditions – are raising their voices and exercising their collective influence to change their situation.



# LRS

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