

2001 Updated Edition



Recruiters Guidelines



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1. Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to touch in number of areas, which are important at this point for the recruitment campaign of the federation. It is not meant even by implication to provide details of how to handle the campaign what it does is to highlight issues and areas that we must think in the preparation for this campaign.

More importantly is the fact that COSATU remains the biggest federation in South Africa and fastest growing international. Beside a loss of membership from + 2 million to + 1.8 million members. The decrease in membership is mostly because of retrenchments. The well known fact is that only about 40% of the workforce that is unionized. The aim of the recruitment drive is to access this 60% that is not unionized. The mistake must not be committed to think that the 40%, which is unionized, belong to COSATU. There are two other federations plus number of non-affiliated unions. Our commitment to One Country One Federation does not stop us to recruit from other unions as long as we remain under different bodies.

This October campaign coincides with Red October campaign of the SACP and Health and Safety month of the federation this must be seen as strength than lack of co-ordination. One area that is link to recruitment is the servicing of membership. It is useless to recruit and fail to service membership because every campaign that we will take around recruitment we may find ourselves had to fight with disgruntled members and obviously it will be difficult to attract new members. This must say to us that members come first.

1. Preparation

- Collect all the information you will need before you start
- Establish contacts in the workplaces where you plan to recruit
- Develop a list of non-members - get this from members in the same workplace
- Build teams that will work in each industrial area and identify tasks for each team
- Set goals for each week - how many people you will speak to per day, per week etc. or how many workplaces you will visit
- Know your union and have your material ready
- Formulate your strategy - who to approach and when (approach easiest people first)
- Arrange for access to the workplace before your visit.

Planning

Before the campaign starts, you should have established recruiting teams for each area, cluster or industrial area. You may divide up the tasks amongst team members so that one or two comrades collect information, others distribute media and make initial contacts, and the rest do the follow up visits with the membership forms and stop-orders.

The mass recruitment campaign is a four week programme. Your teams should plan each week which workplaces they will visit. Included in the plan should be a first visit to each workplace, followed by at least one follow-up visit.

Know your union

In order to promote your union or federation, you should know all about it.
know:

- The achievements/ victories of your union in improving wages and conditions
- The history of the union - how and when it was formed, important events in the life of the union
- In which industries and companies it is organised
- Some well-known stalwarts of the union



- How many members it has
- How your union is structured - this is important because your new recruit must know which structure they will be part of and how it relates to the rest of the union
- The constitution and principles of your union
- Where your union offices are located
- What your union offers its members

Some important things to know about COSATU

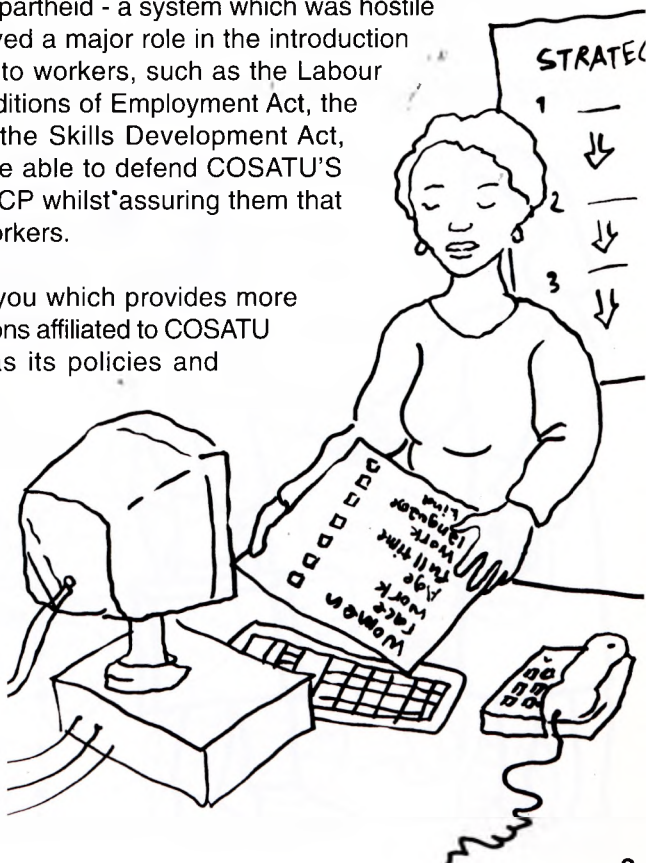
While you are recruiting workers to affiliates, you are at the same time recruiting them to the federation COSATU. You will probably find that most workers will know something about COSATU already (although it may not be all positive).

Workers should be attracted by the fact that COSATU is the biggest trade union federation in South Africa, with 1.8 million paid up members, and by its history of struggle against apartheid - a system which was hostile to workers. COSATU has played a major role in the introduction of laws which are favourable to workers, such as the Labour Relations Act, The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Employment Equity Act and the Skills Development Act, amongst others. You should be able to defend COSATU'S alliance with the ANC and SACP whilst assuring them that COSATU is the home to all workers.

You should have media with you which provides more detail on things such as the unions affiliated to COSATU and its leadership, as well as its policies and principles.

Collecting information

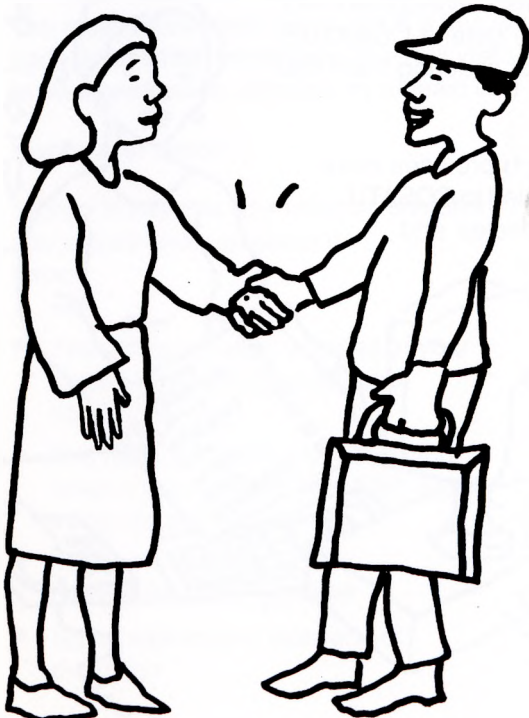
For the COSATU mass recruitment campaign it may be difficult to collect very detailed information on each workplace where you intend recruiting. However, it is important to at least have a list of the workplaces and the number of potential recruits in each.



As a general rule, before you start recruiting in any workplace you should collect all information possible which will assist you. Some examples of what you should find out about the workers:

- Number of women
- Whether they are white, african , indian or coloured workers
- Type of work
- Ages of the workers
- Full-time, part-time or casual work
- If they are shift workers, what shifts do they work
- Languages spoken by the workers
- What kind of family responsibilities do they have
- Any workers with disabilities
- Workers who cannot read or write
- Level of education
- Names of non-members

Some of the information will be difficult to collect if it is a new company and you have no existing members who can assist you. The information you collect will help you to formulate your strategy. If there are many women, for example, you may decide to use issues such as childcare or sexual harassment, which affect women directly, to stimulate interest in the union. Knowing the shifts and hours of work will simply tell you the best times to visit and speak to workers.



What problems are the workers facing which the union could address?

Examples:

- Lots of disciplinary actions
- A supervisor everybody hates
- Safety hazards
- Health hazards

- Retrenchments
- Upcoming negotiations
- Violations of agreements
- Harassment of members
- Racism
- Sexism
- New rules or regulations
- Problems with pay
- Favouritism, unfair management etc.

If you know that workers are having this type of problem, raise this when trying to recruit new members, and explain how the union can help to solve it.

2. Approach

- If you have established contacts in the workplace, ask them to arrange a meeting with workers
- Make contact individually - be personal, confident and be sure to state your credentials
- If possible, a co-worker is often the best person to approach potential new members
- Provide reasons for joining such as protection, services and the future
- Give your recruit opportunities to ask questions and clarify
- Sign them up - the membership forms have stop-orders attached
- Provide card and information

Tactics

It is a good idea to distribute your publicity in the workplaces where you intend recruiting one or two days before you make your initial visit. Workers will then be aware of the recruitment campaign,



and will have possibly thought a bit about joining the union. This should make your task a little easier.

If you have contacts in the workplace they may be able to arrange for you to meet workers all together in the canteen, for example. If this is impossible you will have to approach workers individually. In this case, you should plan the most appropriate time and place to approach workers - during lunch or as they are arriving or leaving.

Even when you have approached workers individually, you should try to follow this up with a meeting of all your new members or potential members - preferably the following week.

Communication

Key communication skills are listening, speaking clearly and simply and questioning. Listening is a skill which few people have, and which is the most undervalued.

To speak clearly and simply:

- think before speaking
- know your audience
- use short words
- use short sentences
- avoid jargon
- speak slowly

To listen better, think about the following:

- hearing isn't listening - you hear with your ears but you listen with your mind
- stop talking - you can't listen while you are talking
- listen actively
 - paraphrase what the speaker has said
 - show empathy and put yourself in the speaker's place
 - nod/encourage the speaker
- look at the speaker - watch their body language



- give feedback
- recognise your prejudice - towards the speaker, the subject, the occasion etc; don't make assumptions or jump to conclusions

Remember that unions serve the purpose of increasing the power of workers in relation to the employer, yet many workers resist participating in unions. As trade unionists we must understand and find strategies to overcome this resistance.

Some common questions asked by workers

You will meet many people who do not wish to join the union. You should be aware of their arguments and objections so that you can prepare your approach. Here are some common reasons given by people who do not wish to join:

- I do not believe in unions - they have too much power
- I have never had any problems with this company
- I will be victimised if I join the union
- I do not believe in strikes
- The union never does anything for its members
- The union is run by communists
- Cosatu is in an alliance with the ANC and SACP
- The subs are too high
- I am just not interested
- The union is only for black people



Think about how you will answer these arguments.

Remember that workers are treated unequally at work and in society and that we frequently see ourselves as different from or in conflict with each other based on our race, gender, nationality, job classification etc. You need to emphasise that collectively workers have a lot more power than as individuals.

It is also important to stress that we now have new legislation that prevents

employers from victimising, punishing or discriminating against workers for belonging to a union. It is every worker's right to be a member of a union of their choice.

White workers

When you are recruiting workers who are white, you also need to plan your approach carefully. COSATU's membership is mostly african and it is presented in the media as a blue-collar federation of black workers. White workers often say that they cannot join COSATU because it is only for black people. Obviously, you will explain the non-racial principles held by COSATU, and point to the existing white members in unions such as SASBO, NEHAWU, SATAWU, NUMSA, etc.

Often in factories, the white workers are administrative staff, and they earn less than the workers on the shopfloor. They mostly only get increases based on merit, which is open to favouritism and abuse by employers.

Also, white workers often cite their dislike of strikes as a reason for not joining a union. You will need to convince them that strikes are a last resort - no worker wishes to lose money by striking at the slightest opportunity. Workers themselves decide when to strike - the decision is not made by union officials.

Skilled and white - collar workers.

We had not been able to attract within our ranks skilled and white-collar workers. SASBO and SADTU are the only two unions that represent this category of workers. SACCAWU, NEHAWU, SAMWU and POPCRU combine white and blue collar workers.

There is an expansion of this category at most levels including both public and private sectors. The affirmative action created conditions of rapid promotion of our members into lower and middle management. This group strategically allocated to enhance the unions ability to engage effectively in workplace restructuring. LRA also put pressure on unions to recruit more members in the workplace - "Representivity".

The interests of white collar workers tend to be opposed to wage solidarity. Furthermore higher level of white - collar workers often have more individualistic culture or professional ethos and less willing to engage the employer. In our country this category is formed mostly by whites, this is because of past racial inequalities. They tend to resist or reject industrial unionism because of benefit increase to them and hence feel part of management or ownership.

Gender as integral part of the campaign

The recruitment campaign that is general in most cases it leaves out what is close to the hearts of women workers. The failure to prepare thoroughly for special

engagement with women workers will sabotage the campaign as a whole.

Possible questions will be: Why should I be organised by a man? Leadership positions are only for men. Union meetings/activities are always during unsuitable times for women.

What must be raised with women workers whom we are recruiting: Child care, sexual harassment, traditional jobs reserved, higher rate of HIV-Aids amongst women and other diseases, women not being promoted, double shift participation, maternity and paternal leave, internalised oppression, women's rights, the present leadership and role of women within COSATU.

There are also practical barriers to women's participation in the unions. Amongst other things it involves the nature of shopsteward work, sexual harassment and under representation at a leadership level starting from the shop floor.

Health and Safety

Core to the recruitment campaign is the delivery to the membership (service). There is no reason for the member to maintain his/her membership if conditions a workplace are not challenged by the union or there is no improvement to the surrounding environment. Health and Safety is therefore a priority area.

As unions we need to train comprehensively our educators, organizers and shopstewards around health and safety regulations in different areas. Certain sectors are obviously compelled to tackle such issues on daily basis due to type of workplace they are working in. When we pronounce member first, health and safety must be a priority and defend gains of workers won over years.

We must be able to target workplaces where Occupational Health and Safety Act is being violated by the employers. Campaign around these areas is crucial and must be emphasised. This year our recruitment campaign coincides with health and safety month this must be a blessing rather than a lack of co-ordination.

3. Follow up and service

Submission of stop-orders and recognition of union

On the bottom of each membership form is a stop-order. You should file copies of these in your office, and submit all the stop-orders from workers in one company to the management and ensure that the union is recognised.

Election of shopstewards

Depending on how many members there are in each workplace, you must decide how many shopstewards they need to elect. You will also need to decide whether there should be one shopsteward per department or whether departments will be combined. Section 14(1) of the LRA stipulates the number of members per shopsteward.

Then you must ensure that shopstewards are elected in terms of the union constitution. Once they have been elected, you must give their names to the management. As soon as possible thereafter you should arrange training for the newly elected shopstewards on their role and duties, on handling grievances and other issues.

Keep members informed

Once you have recruited new members for the union, it is important that you do not just abandon them. This creates a bad reputation for the union, and it will become difficult to recruit in the same workplace again. Make sure that recruits participate in their structures and that they have all the information they need such as the union constitution, the address of their branch office etc.

Involve members in activities

If there are no union structures in a workplace, you must explain to your new members how to go about meeting and electing a shopsteward. You must also explain what the shopstewards role is, and if possible provide her with a manual or booklet.

If you personally are unable to visit those workers again, try to ensure that they are visited and that their concerns are handled, and that they participate in all union activities. The more active your members are, the more the union will address their needs and consequently the easier it will be to recruit new members.

Informal Sector and Atypical Workers

Increasingly informal work is rising in every part of the economy. There should be no separation between the formal and informal sector workers. The last congress mandated us to increasingly focus on informal and atypical workers. The Reasons being:

- This sector is the most exploited and vulnerable.
- No compliance with health and safety regulations.
- No legal protection offered to this category of workers.
- Level of unionisation very low.
- Low cost involved for employer.

- Greater flexibility and control.
- Productivity and job insecurity.
- Women and youth are the most victims.
- Migrants workers.
- Definition of employee still limited.

N.B. There is a need to focus our recruitment drive in three categories of workers viz. taxi, home-care and farm workers. This is a result of sectors they are operating in. The nature of work environment on which they find themselves in, makes it very difficult to recruit. Unions organizing these workers need to put more efforts and assistance should be offered where possible by COSATU and its affiliates. Campaign work should be based on issues raised under Informal sector and Atypical Workers (What needs to be done).

Who are these workers?

- Casual/standby workers.
- Temporary employees.
- Part-time employees.

What is involved here?

- Labour brokers.
- Subcontractors.

What needs to be done?

- COSATU affiliates must lead the process of organising informal sector workers in their sectors.
- Find out their pay, conditions and publicise results.
- Cases should be taken forward as new regulation on informal work could be established through legal precedents.
- The union should be trying to win new legal rights for informal workers and be working closely with tripartite working party made of union, government and employers.
- The last phase the emphasis should be on ensuring that the new provisions were implemented. Claims should be taken up by the union on behalf of informal workers as a way to recruit them into the union.

NOTES:

