

# Labour Diploma Course

Building Labour's Capacity  
through Research and Education



A group of graduates, 2007 Labour Diploma Course

## Context/short summary:

The Labour Diploma Course has been developed by the Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI) of Namibia in collaboration with the Workers' College in Durban and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It was introduced in 2002 and has since then become so popular that it now constitutes a regular programme of the organising institutions. It serves to train community activists and unionists for leadership positions and covers modules on trade union history, political economy, labour law, collective bargaining, health and safety, gender, affirmative action and globalisation. The Programme aims to strengthen the participants' ability to contribute towards the strengthening of the labour movement and the civil society.

## Partners:

- Rosa Luxemburg Foundation
- Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI)

- Workers College Durban
- University of KwaZulu-Natal

## Objectives:

- To strengthen community and trade union organisations, workers' and activists' in their ability to contribute and influence policy making processes in favour of the poor and disadvantaged;
- To support unions and workers to build up a strong and vibrant labour movement;
- To educate trade unionists and civil society activists in order to increase their capability of promoting and defending the rights and interests of working people;
- To promote a critical analysis of socio-economic issues from a pro-labour perspective.

## Expected results:

In 2005 a study was commissioned to investigate the effectiveness of the Labour Diploma Course in terms of building trade unions' capacity. The study established that the course has enabled labour diploma students to improve their work performance, to share their knowledge and to become more responsible and accountable to their members. Trade union leaders acknowledged and confirmed that the former labour diploma students were making a significant and influential contribution to their organisations. Meanwhile more than 150 students have successfully completed the Labour Diploma Course and the future is promising. From 2010 the labour diploma graduates should be able to enrol for a part time degree in Labour and Employment at the University of

## AFRICA: Namibia (Windhoek), South Africa (Durban)

Namibia in Windhoek. This option is already in place in Durban/KwaZulu-Natal. In the coming years it is envisaged to spread the Labour Diploma Course among the some other African countries to build up a Regional Labour Diploma Programme with lecturers and participants from South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Ghana.

## Activities:

The Labour Diploma Course is structured along 6 Modules. Each module consists of 20 hours of tutorials which will be given in 'block classes' of one week. Exams as well as various assignments have to be written at the end of each tutorial. Tutors from various organisations, among them university lecturers, legal practitioners, trade unionists, etc., cover the topics of the course.

- Module 1: Trade Union History and Theory
- Module 2: Regional/national Political Economy
- Module 3: Occupational Health and Safety and HIV/AIDS
- Module 4: Affirmative Action and Gender
- Module 5: Labour Law and Collective Bargaining
- Module 6: Globalisation

The examinations are monitored by the University of KwaZulu-Natal which ensures that the participants will receive accredited university certificates once they have completed the course and passed the exams.

The training institution offer additional support programmes to improve the participants' computer and writing skills.

## Target group:

The course is attended by trade unionists that are active at various levels ranging from shop stewards to general secretaries. The number of participants from community based organisations has considerably increased over the last years. All attendants have to have at least completed a grade 10 or equivalent education. Each course accommodates 25-30 people. Equal gender representation is ensured.

