

Ruth Ledwaba

Facilitator: This is an interview with Ruth Ledwaba we are in Nelspruit the 7 August 2012, interview is done by Brown Maaba. Mama thanks very much for your time, let me just go back to the question and ask you how you ended up here? How you ended up in Nelspruit?

Respondent: Okay, I started working in Mpumalanga from Steelpoort, it was in Mpumalanga then, so when they moved to Limpopo I found a post at Graskop and then I worked there from 2005. I started participated in unions from 1994, with SADTU.

Facilitator: Really. How were you introduced to SADTU?

Respondent: I learned about SADTU from the college, I was part of the college leadership

Facilitator: You mean the SRC?

Respondent: And then ultimately I was recruited by SADTU in 1990, they came to the institutions, they first recruited those in leadership, that is how we were recruited. Because we were already in the system, it was easy for SADTU to absorb us. We participated at lower levels, first in school committees, then I went to .., at the branch I was not in the leadership I just participated but ..(unclear) as a delegate. When I moved to Graskop I became the education convenor. I then became the regional gender convenor. The second election I was given the position of education convenor because there was a vacancy in the education desk. Last

year I came here as the Provincial Education convenor. I was heading a school in Graskop. That is how I ended in this office.

Facilitator: Where is Graskop?

Respondent: It's between Sabi and Oristad, from here you go to White River, White River you go to Sabie, Sabie you go to Graskop, it's a beautiful areas in Mpumalanga, this is where God's Window is, you find the ..(unclear). So if you don't know those areas you don't know Mpumalanga

Facilitator: I want to see the God's Window

Respondent: There's no window there

Facilitator: What's there exactly?

Respondent: It's like a view. When you are that high, especially if you can go to the rain forest, it's the highest point, it is called God's Window, this is where you are able to see the scenery of Mpumalanga, it's like you're sitting on a window looking at the beauty of Mpumalanga. You can also see a little bit of Mozambique, you see the dam, I forgot the dam, the Bushbuckridge Dam. The place is always misty, but beautiful, the rain forest is always drizzling, even if it's not raining because of the mist, it's a nice place.

Facilitator: how many kilos from here?

Respondent: From here it's about 90 kms.

Facilitator: Which college did you study at?

Respondent: Mokopane College of Education in Potgietersrus

Facilitator: So you never taught, you went straight to be a convenor?

Respondent: No I taught from 1994 until last year, as I told you that when I came here I was a principal of a school. I was teaching. I taught 1994

Facilitator: And then you also had these responsibilities of SADTU?

Respondent: Yes, it was a double job because at regional level you don't have this portfolio/desk being full time being in the office, you're only full time when you are in the province. So when you are in the region you are full time at school, so you will be at school but you will have these other responsibilities of dealing with union things.

Facilitator: But then as a convenor at that level, before coming over here, what were you charged with? What were your direct responsibilities?

Respondent: The responsibilities are more or less the same. You have programmes, you need to have problems that deal with education issues especially as an education ..(unclear) always updating members on educational issues. Like the current thing, the interpretation of policies that are there, the training, you train them

on specific programmes that are there. You write reports, you attend meetings. So you are assigned with .., so it's a broader responsibility. You can't just have this is what I'm doing and that is all, you have different responsibilities, but mainly is to ensure that your members understand the policy because what you are implementing in the sector you are implementing policies, everything is about policies. Our members mainly need to understand the policies, either in the curriculum, in their conduct, they need to make sure that they understand the policy. Because before you become a union member you are guided by the policies.

Facilitator: But is there keen interest on these policies and so on which needed to be understood by the teachers?

Respondent: Ja. The only challenge is the implementation of these policies because understanding is one thing but how do you implement those policies. They can be like, let's take an example of the CAP document that we are having here. It is not about the words that are written there, it's how do you implement it. So having an interest of knowing the policies is another thing, as is the implementation of it, are we able to go down there and implement ..(unclear). That is what maybe we are struggling for right now to say let the sector as a whole be able to implement all these policies if they had the interest of understanding them and knowing them better.

Facilitator: But what are the obstacles of implementing these policies?

Respondent: The reservists, like our policies, they need a lot of resources, human and physical resources, ..(unclear) infrastructure and then also the gap in terms of understanding. When I talk about resources, you will talk about .., let's say in the foundation phase for example. If you have this type of learners, in order for you to implement this policy effectively you need to have two learners in a class. So if you

find that your class is crowded you won't be able to implement the assessment policies as stated in there, because you need to assess a learner in terms of his progress. If you have 50 learners in class how are you going to make sure that that learner knows whatever you were doing because you need to interact with that learner. So that one is a wall between us and the implementation of a policy. If a class can have limited learners in it, so that a teacher can be able to liaise with a learner from time to time and then on the other hand is the content gap. You will have this policy that is there but you will find that in terms of implementing it the teacher doesn't have sufficient information in terms of how do I deal with this learner. Remember in primary schools for example, you have these teachers that are old now, doesn't ..(unclear) the method of teaching, and then coming to implement the current thing that CAPS is requiring is a challenge. And sometimes it's a challenge for them to use the method that they had, and they don't want to go back to school because of their age in terms of retiring. So that hampers the implementation of the policy. Also our resources, our infrastructure in the school are not .., like you need a learner to do an experiment in secondary schools for example, but the facility is not there. How do you make learners to understand that because we say, we know that our outcomes based has been taken over by CAPS, but we still have that element in our CAPS outcomes based whereby they are able to understand what he's doing. So how can a learner do that? Physical Science is practical for example, where is the practicality if this poor child from Manyeleti down there. You don't know Mpumalanga I will give you examples of areas that are in the deep deep of Mpumalanga, the only thing that he knows is an elephant and a lion and you want this child to do an experiment. That learner can't visualise the experiment, he needs to see it to say this is what I'm going to do. He can't think about it, he needs to visualise it to say this is what .., if we talk about momentum this is what must happen. Then there must be a facility that is relevant to that area. So that is what hampers our nice policies which are in here and we are not equal, we are not on the same level. You can't take a learner from the Western Cape and compare with a learner from deep Limpopo in Bogom. Things are not the same. So those things are the sure things that are creating a gap between the understanding of the policy and it's implementation and they will need .., I don't know what to make sure that the system is overhauled and things are equal and that won't

happen in 10 years, it will need 50 to 100 years. I don't know if we will be able to do that.

Facilitator: Really, so you mean things should be left as they are?

Respondent: They cannot be left as they are, bit by bit needs to be done. Like now, if we're able to realise that this is where the problem is and try to solve it, even if you cannot be able to deal with it ..., like now you will have these programmes – there are NGO's now that are coming to the education system with good programmes. We have a problem with literacy. We say learners cannot read and write. There are people who are now coming and saying "how can we help you". As organisations that is the opportunity that we are using because we know that government has other processes to follow in order for them to use who ever. But with us as organisations it is easy to say let's see what you are having, maybe it can assist, let's pilot it. At least as time goes on these learners will be able to perform at their level, using the environmental things that are there. Because you cannot take something from Cape Town and want a learner in Manyeleti to use it. Let the learner use whatever that is there. And then as time goes on they will be able to integrate the knowledge that they have to the knowledge that is there. Because in grade 12 they are writing a common paper which is written nationally. But they need to understand their environment before they can be able to understand the national environment. But that platform is not created. We take the policy at a superficial ..., we take it there, we're not taking it down to ..., but it's because of the challenges that are there in the education, but bit by bit, as people are coming in, things will be done correctly as long as people are realising the gaps that need to be filled.

Facilitator: But is there no consensus about these gaps, to say meet us half way, a learner in a rural area is different from a learner from Cape Town and therefore we think 1,2,3?

Respondent: I think our Chapter 9 of the ..(unclear) is dealing with the curriculum differentiation, whereby it says that: Where you are, teach your learners according to their ability especially at a lower level. But the challenge is that even that thing is in the policy, as I said, do we have teachers that are able to deal with curriculum differentiation. Because you can come with this nice strategy, nice curriculum but you will find that the human resources down there they don't .., we are not on the same line. Curriculum differentiation is a nice thing, but you need people who will be able to deal with it down there. It's a nice thing because you will have this child, you will be able to differentiate the assessment programmes for this child and this other child, where is that time? You have 50 learners in that class. When are you going to do that thing, curriculum differentiation? So as I'm saying that the implementation of all our policies, they need to go back to the resources allocations, they need to go back to our ..(unclear) to say if our model is still saying that a learner .., the number of teachers will rely on the number of learners, then we are going nowhere. It doesn't assist us because it doesn't count learners per subject especially in the secondary school. So it contradicts with the policies that we are able .., but we are trying, our policies are trying to do that we are also trying because even the union has been ..(unclear) to train teachers. As we see this process, trying to use whatever that we have to bridge the gap. And we are doing it in collaboration with the laws, we are not alone. When I conduct a workshop I will call them to say guys we have ..(unclear) and by so doing it's like if we have an engineer presenting in our workshop, the official that is there will go and sell the idea to the principals and the department to say I've been attending this thing and I saw it being good. So in a way it's a way of saying that we can open other doors that we can use in order to solve this problem but it won't be an overnight time, it will need time.

Facilitator: Ja but as SADTU have you taken the government to task about the unimplementable of these programmes/projects?

Respondent: As I indicated, now we're having the MOU with the Department, in partnership, it is no more Department, it is no more such, we are altogether on that

..(unclear). We have a Memorandum of Understanding, how they operate so now we're working as one, as a province that deal with the ..(unclear) if we are having a programme we invite them to say this is what we want to do. So we're trying, remember the government is working under a specific budget and we are also given a budget by the national office to say this is for training. But we know that as SADTU we don't have a training institution for now, so it means that we don't have the capacity to train on our own. Obviously I'm going to use external people or service providers together with our officials that are there. So we will come up with this programme that we want to do as a union but we will use them to do it. So we're working together now. The partnership started in January so it is continuing. We are now dealing with .., I think there was a meeting last month, I was just reading their report whereby they are telling us how we should work together. We meet together, we have this one committee. So it wouldn't be rare now to find that the union is disagreeing with the employer in Mpumalanga specifically because we now plan together. At the Strategic Planning we discussed how to deal with this programme. Together we have the resolutions to say this is how we are going to .., so we share ideas and the strategies. So maybe by so doing we will try to meet each other half way. We share the same sentiments to say we have the challenges on this day how can we work together. The employer came to us to say how can he assist us to do this thing in a way of saying let your people in the schools participate in this programme, because as you know the union and the employer there's always conflict. So if the employer can issue a circular saying that there's a workshop and we issue a circular that you are not going there they won't go. So it was that thing. So now the employer is coming down to us from time to time to say guys help us we have this problem, come and help us and we know that going to our members, telling is easy. They listen and do it. So if the employer can continue to co-operate with us I think we can go somewhere. We are not sure but I think we can go somewhere.

Facilitator: So this new relationship between the employer that is SADTU and the government..

Respondent: Not SADTU only, all unions, the national office cascaded to the provinces.

Facilitator: Is it national or just provincial?

Respondent: It's national but it depends on the reception of the organisations in the province, isn't it it can be national, but coming down, you know most of the things are messed up at the provincial level, but before the partnership as Mpumalanga already we have this agreement that we need to work together on the issues. So that one is a national one coming out, specifically for teacher development, so that we can be able to bridge these gaps there and there. Because one other thing, remember in the union and also in the department. These people that were effective either at a certain level, from their participations in the union, they are absorbed in the department. So if you check down there you don't have a lot of people that are like strong, we have this leadership drainage down there. So it's a way of saying that because the organisation took their members out there who were effective and put them somewhere. The employer is saying that then take these people of yours that you put down there to come and workshop these people so that they can be able to develop, to build capacity in the schools. Because now if you check, even nationally. Like now if you check that if we say we don't need this president, what do we need, who will be suitable there, you don't know it's a national crisis to say. If you say you don't need this one whom are you going to put there, it's just like now everywhere to say we have this leadership drainage so we need to build capacity so guys some together let's build capacity. That is where the union needs to participate.

Facilitator: You mentioned that the ..(unclear) have moved over to the government? Are they a helping hand or they've become the enemy?

Respondent: In fact they are assisting a lot because this partnership is strengthened by them in fact, they can't do anything without consulting us, before any programme we will go to a briefing together before we go to the masses. So they engage us, they tell us the challenges they are facing in the department, the things they need us to assist with, so they are assisting. Even if they come in it cannot be 100% assistant from all of them isn't it.

Facilitator: They are government officials after all?

Respondent: Ja, but the majority of them they're always here, they are consulting. After work they will come and knock there guys how do we deal with this issue so that they do not take decisions that will contravene with whatever we are saying here, so they must always .., even our phones are ringing, "I'm going to this meeting there's this issue how must I respond there" (interruption – phone rang).

Facilitator: In terms of the curriculum what went wrong then because come 1994 there's OBE, 18 years later it's been cancelled, where to now?

Respondent: As I said neh, the curriculum doesn't have any problem, in fact this curriculum is the best curriculum. The only thing that hampers this curriculum is the resources. The curriculum initially, you know maybe in South Africa we become excited with a new thing, I personally believe that .., before the curriculum was supposed to be implemented, it was supposed to .., like the people responsible were supposed to check whether it will be effectively implemented in South Africa, checking the vastness of our country and also the demographics in the provinces. You can't compare Eastern Cape and Gauteng and we want them to implement it. You know the OBE needed a teacher who will be able to take the assessment standard as it is and then find an activity and in that assessment standard because it didn't have questions, it couldn't have topics. The teachers had to have a topic from the ..(unclear) statement which was a challenge with the current teachers that

we had, remember the teachers were trained during the B curriculum they ..(unclear) 550, ..(unclear) 550 you were supposed to use a text book to get a topic and then you teach learners and then we had high grade at standard grade. Now you bring the outcome based which means that when you teach the standard, a learner must be able to do that thing that you taught exactly, whereas if you taught the teacher to memorise, the teacher was taught to memorise in the school, not exactly to understand what was happening there. You were told to name the characteristics of a sole trader, you listed them, not exactly going inside to check the outcome of learning the sole trader, what are the sole traders. Now you take that person to the class to do something that she was never taught to do. So that created a havoc whereby teachers were using a scissor and a paper to cut and paste anything. Because initially they thought this curriculum is about for a learner to put a picture there and say nothing about it, whereas it was supposed to teach a learner to interpret that picture after cutting it. So that created a challenge because the teachers didn't have a lot of information, they were trained for three days to implement that .., it is a complicated curriculum, it is a good curriculum I still support it. If somebody can ask me if we should go to the OBE approach I will say yes because it assisted a learner to go deeper. A learner understood this broadly to say if this is a cellphone, what are the things that are in the cellphone, how many sectors are in the cellphone. The problem is we were not taught to do that. You needed a person who is a critical thinker to be able to deal with that curriculum whereas people were not trained for that. There's no problem with the Outcomes Based Education I'm still saying that even now, the only thing was that we were not ready as a system to implement the curriculum in terms of resources, in terms of teacher development, in fact in terms of everything we were not ready but it's a good curriculum. So now bringing the CAPS, the CAPS is not a new curriculum, it's just a new approach, adding together to the NCS. With CAPS all the subject statements are put in one and also changing just the wording and the teaching style. That is what has changed in there. It's only two things that have changed there, all the subject statements are put into one book and called CAPS. CAPS is nothing else, it's only the subject statements that are put in one book, no more a lot of those subject frameworks and all those thing, it's only one thing now that has a national protocol, guiding specifically and changing in terms of the promotion and profession. But there's not change in the curriculum. The curriculum is still the same.

It's just that now we are no more talking learning areas, we are talking subjects now, is subject specific, no more learning area. And then also the profession and the promotion are now specific to say a learner must get .., unlike during the OBE approach. But I still say that that approach was good, it just needed resources.

Facilitator: So is it a relief that you now have a new curriculum, CAPS instead of OBE, or teachers are more frustrated than ever before?

Respondent: I cannot say it's a relief as to say or another burden. To me, nothing has changed, the only thing that has changed is that CAPS has all these things in one book. But teaching is just the same as .., if you were teaching accounting that accounting, nothing changed. The only thing that has changed is that the policy, in terms of dealing with the assessment, how much activities are needed, that is the thing, but in terms of teaching the subject, accounting is still accounting, it didn't change. So it means that the curriculum is still the same, the only thing is the approach which to me an approach is nothing. An approach is that you go to the class because we say now, we need a learner to be an active participant, it happens in teaching and learning. So the only thing is that you teach and give learners more work, and use a textbook. And using a text book people were using it but the problem is that we were saying that we didn't have topics now. The difference now is that now we have topics, but nothing has changed. I cannot say it's a relief or it's an overload of work. The overload of work is just that we have only one book now, that's it, but the teaching is still the same, the content is still the same, nothing has changed.

Facilitator: But was SADTU consulted about this move from OBE to CAPS, or it was taken to alleviate the situation?

Respondent: At a national level, SADTU was consulted but lately, that is when they consulted the provinces and some of the SADTU people were part of the writing

teams in terms of changing. Like the change that was there was in terms of other topics in other subjects whereby you find that this topic was minimal and then maybe it was overlapping to another grade, all those processes, but they were consulted and some of them were part of the writing teams of this CAPS documents. So they were consulted and we were also taken on board after it was done to go through the documents to check all the things. As I'm saying that the only change is the packaging of the document and ..., and also some of the topics in the subjects you will find that ..., and the topic was in grade 11 now it's in grade 10, that shift. It is not a train smash if you were teaching this subject it's not a problem you will know how to deal with it, the only challenge is when a new topic is put in the grade which was not there at all in .., which means that in terms of content the teacher will be blank because he's never done that before. Like remember you were having high grades and standard grades, there were topics that are mainly for high grade, now there's no high or standard grade. The text book says teach everything. How will the teacher teach the subject, and remember the high grade approach is the application of knowledge approach, you don't take something as raw as it is, you do it and analyse it. You can't learn to analyse something at a certain, you need to start somewhere. That also is a challenge even if most of the time it is not addressed and people are not talking about it, but it's a real challenge. It is not easy to deal with the application of knowledge if you were not taught how to do it. Subjects like essay writing in economics. A person need to be analytical to be able to write an essay. You can't reproduce an essay, you need to think deeper. In accounting when you analyse the financial statements, you need to apply the knowledge, you can't just write figures as they are, you need to indicate how did this person arrive at this figure. So that is a gap, that one is a gap and it needs intensive training of educators. When are you going to do that thing because our policy is specific to say from this time to this time teachers must do this. They don't have annual leave, during holidays this is when they will have their leave. You can't always take them to training because it's only 3 weeks. You can't train a person on content for three weeks, you need time, especially changing a person's mindset to be able to apply knowledge, you need time.

Facilitator: How much time, 20 years or ..?

Respondent: No if it was possible for teachers to be taken for at least a year. One year training to deal with the content, depending on the content, the number of topics that need to be done, a year for me is fine especially where new topics have been included in the grade a year to me is enough. Other provinces they take their teachers to an institution and they will be able to teach them to do these things. One other challenge is .., what the universities are doing vs what the schools are doing, there's a lot of disjuncture there. You go to the university, you will write your things, your course is here, go into the class that thing doesn't help you. When you go to the class it's something else. There's no synergy, you ask yourself that those educators that are coming from the university, if they come to the school it's a new thing altogether. So maybe it's about time where universities need to be in line with the schools or vice versa, one way or another but they need to meet somewhere so that when you move from the university to the school there's no gap, you continue with whatever you were doing. Previously it was like that in the colleges, but it was somehow .., the standard was lower because remember when I was doing .., in Course I they will use the grade 10 text book and for you you were in grade 12. You will get total the whole year because that is what you have done. And in course II they will use grade 11 and some of grade 12 and then in Course III they will use the grade 12 text book. It was relevant but when I was doing third year, that is when they introduced the university text book level now. We started to use .., I can't remember the author but the standard was very high in Course III. They took you through all the levels and when you arrive in course III now you're dealing with the things that are done in the universities so that when you decide to go to the university at least you have that thing. So when you go to the class any challenge that is coming in the question paper you are able to answer it because you went through the whole process. I wish that thing can continue but they must leave the grade 10 because it's a lower standard, because you will find a person getting total total you think that he is intelligent but you find that the standard is very low. But that one there was synergy, you were able move on. So now you will go to the university they will tell you about the education policies, and you come to the class there's nowhere where they need policies they only need them when you are in management and that teacher is teaching the education policies, the philosophy of education, it is not applicable in class, people need content so maybe if they can

try to balance that one and leave this policy maybe for the third year and the whole two/three years, the whole three years they deal with content, deep in content maybe we can be able to solve that problem.

Facilitator: But in terms of SADTU, learner, SGB and government relationship. Is there a meeting space or is everybody doing their own thing?

Respondent: As SADTU with SGB we don't meet a lot and remember SGB's normally are in schools, SADTU meet only with SGB's during the SGB meetings in schools you will have a SADTU but at a provincial level. We only meet them when we meet with the employer the NSGB especially in the board meetings, you will have ..., like in the Examination board we do have the SGB's there, in the QLTC committee we do have SGB's there. But normally I think it's because of their jurisdiction where they operate, they are not too much in the professional, they are just there in the management thing, whereby they will just deal with the management of the school and other things. It's a minimum meeting with them for specific things that are really involving parents, that is when they can be taken on board. They mainly participate at district level, at provincial level very few participate.

Facilitator: In terms of teacher training, I mean there's some teaching needs as you said in the curriculum, OBE and CAPS, do people need new or further training ..., or is the training now enough?

Respondent: In service training. What was happening now was more on the overview. Like in the workshops they were telling them about the shift, what was the change and ..., but the real thing was not done, like the curriculum, like how do I make sure that when I go to the class and teach learners this topic, the learners will be able to understand it because I understand it, it starts with me. So the training was there but it was the curriculum overview, we are still waiting for the content

workshops. Content workshops is a challenge that who is going to do them, and when and how.

Facilitator: In terms of SADTU, COSAS relationship is there?

Respondent: Yes COSAS is always here

Facilitator: Do you always meet to cause strikes or you meet on other things?

Respondent: On other things, we advise them in fact, SADTU is not about strikes, we are no more, when you see us striking it means that somebody didn't want to listen to us, we are not there for striking. We are trying to hard that we agree with the employer and if you see us saying we are not taking it, it's like if somebody didn't want to listen to us, but if people open their ears and listen to us you will never see us striking. But if you don't want to listen, we have our own way of opening their ears. We will just leave their schools and go to the streets.

Facilitator: So what would you define as the main agenda of SADTU then, from yesterday to tomorrow and ..?

Respondent: We have our 2030 vision of SADTU, where is the vision I don't want to add or subtract. I want to give it to you raw as it is. We have our 2030 vision which amongst others is to .. (unclear) to ensure teacher development. (interruption – phone rang). I just want to check our 2030 Vision, we have this thing of membership service, servicing our members, making sure that we develop our teachers fully so, like building capacity. I will just give you, the computer is a bit slow. That is our vision.

Facilitator: Have the learners come to the party with these new changes, new curriculum post 1994 or are they left behind?

Respondent: I think learners are left behind a lot, remember they are like the test tubes, we are using them to test this thing, if they fail we say this curriculum is not working. And I think they are the most disadvantaged. When we check this youth of today, I used to say, when I read the Face Book pages, sometimes you will think it's an sms language, it is not, it is what we have created as a system. Like we created the community that cannot read and write and rely much on technology. They are behind, they don't see the importance of them reading. They think things are just easy because those that we started with during the introduction of the RNCS, that is when we introduced the scissor and the pasting thing. Learners lost it there, thinking that life is about pasting, education is about pasting pictures and submitting to my teacher, not really understanding why do I past this thing. So when they arrive at a secondary school you can see they can't read and write, this is not myth. They can't read or write, very few that had a good teacher who understand what she was doing in there, remember if a curriculum is introduced, you are trained by somebody isn't it. And it depends if I'm the facilitator I don't have knowledge, you won't have it where are you going to get it because I don't have it as a facilitator. So we relied a lot on people who were presenting, just like the poor learners here. If the person who presented to me the curriculum was bad, I'm going to take that bad thing to my learner, and it rests with the learner, and the learner is growing every year with that foundation given to her. At the end of the day whatever the learner lost will be for the rest of her life. That's why when they arrive at universities they fail, it's because of .., it's a systematic thing. The one that was trained didn't get it, she came to me, she gave me what she thought is right, I took it, I taught my learner what I thought is right, only to find that the learner is lost. We lost the learners. If you check I started teaching in 1994, the group that I taught in grade 12 I didn't teach them from where ever, I found the group in grade 12. You could see that these learners moved through real lines because I didn't struggle. I taught in that school, all the groups that I taught there were good. I never had a problem, maybe the environment, the set up and everything. Taking the learners that I taught that time, I left the school in 2005, and came to another side of

Mpumalanga, I found a different story altogether. Then it shows that the problem is not with the kids, the problem is with the people who are teaching us how to teach the learners. If I went to a college and found this lecturer who taught me in a certain way, that thing is going to affect everybody going down there. You will compare, I used to do this thing, which was bad. You compare the standard in different institutions, to say especially when you are in management, it's so bad because if this person his kids are failing, you take his qualifications and check, where did this person get his training .., it's because of whatever that you have observed, that you know what people from this were not well trained, something is missing which translates to the learners down there. So we left them long time ago, if we are confused as teachers, our learners are worst. So we left them very far, they will go to the university with that confusion which is bad, and then they will be teachers in future, they will be teaching that learner who is in her mother's stomach, she will come out and they are going to teach that learner. So the whole nation will be a mess because of what is happening, unless if something drastic is to happen to change the situation. Something needs to be done.

Facilitator: You also once a regional gender convenor?

Respondent: Yes

Facilitator: Is there an important aspect of this desk or is it not important?

Respondent: there's this desk, especially in the union, in fact the union relies a lot on the education desk. There's no information that they have except the information they get from this office. SADTU is for the educators, and educators are dealing with educational issues. So if this desk can be dormant the whole organisation will be dormant. The political side of our organisation is too minimal, it's just a few things, working conditions: working conditions are dealt with by the deputy secretary, but you will need information from the education desk. So this desk overlaps towards

everything. If you see people in the streets saying we need training, it was identified by this desk, to say according to the statistics, because we conduct research that is why I'm not always in the office, we conduct research and then we identify this thing and make recommendations and when you're invited to a meeting at the department you tell them what you experienced and they start working towards it. So it is very important ..., it needs a person who will be able to understand these things broadly and also work together. You need to work a good relation with all the people that you're working with. You can identify a problem here but you find that you cannot deal with it it is political, then you take it to the deputy secretary or the secretary to say here's an issue that is ..., it was during CAPS training, it's a training that is educational, but this CAPS training affected the political part of it, maybe the working conditions or whatever, then you take that thing, during the CAPS training this is what happened, take it to the ELRC with a recommendation. So in fact, even at the region I think convenors are supposed to be full time so that they assist. Because if you are full time alone like this, you end up overlapping down to the district. Like now there's a case I must attend to at Piet Retief, I must leave the office and go to Piet Retief and there are people at Piet Retief, but they are in class, you can't let them go there to do it. You need to drive there to Piet Retief and do the investigation and come back with a report. So it is very important, more especially that we want our union to focus much on ..., like provision of quality education, like we need to see education improving because we have the majority of members and who are in the schools. So if the education system is failing we are failing as an organisation. So our vision, our 2030 vision strives to say we need to make sure that the production of quality education and learners receive that quality education. And they can only receive that quality education if our members provide it, and how did they provide it through the teacher development strategies and all these things that are there and working together with the employer we can be able to achieve that.

Facilitator: Is there gender sensitivity within SADTU?

Respondent: Yes, it's there, it just needs the ideological change in terms of other positions but it is there, like we are 50/50 (50% women in leadership and 50% in men)

Facilitator: but is do you still experience chauvinism to SADTU women?

Respondent: Not exactly

Facilitator: Is there that mentality?

Respondent: No. In fact mainly we are (interruption)

Facilitator: And the government, are you taken seriously as SADTU, provincial government, national government?

Respondent: yes we are taken seriously. As I told you that you will find that this official thought that he can do things without us, but after some other things he will realise that no he can't do anything without us.

Facilitator: Any other challenges that are faced by SADTU in this province today?

Respondent: Many challenges. Let me leave that one and not answer it

Facilitator: In terms of the curriculum which is more or less your field, or you're an expert in the field. What should be the future of curriculum in South Africa? What would you like to see?

Respondent: Ja consistency which will be the first thing and full research before any curriculum can be ..(unclear) and consultation also, get views and explain why are we moving from one curriculum to the other and the impact study of the previous curriculum. You assess firstly .., what were the problems and what were we supposed to do and also the curriculum that you are going to bring will it be able to alleviate the problems whatever. It must not be like somebody went to India and learnt this curriculum and brought it back to South Africa. And when you do, the study check all the implications, for instance if I introduce this curriculum, what will I need, all the resources and everything that will be attached to that curriculum so that implementing that curriculum it must not bring .., like more challenges than solutions to our system. So the curriculum that we have now, it needs to be beefed up before it was implemented, not in terms of the policy, in terms of the resources, it must be tested before it is implemented. Research that can be done is to get the proper model, the provisioning model that will favour all the sectors to say if we have the new provision model, won't it be able to assist us in terms of ..(unclear) – thorough research needs to be done and consultation. And then also checking the impact of the other curriculum versus whatever you want to bring. This thing of changing curriculum because you need a title I don't like it, you just bring .., I need OBE, I need CAPS, maybe the next one that is coming will be SHOES??, we don't know, and you should check why – some of the things are political you will end up being arrested because of what you said.

Facilitator: Generally post 1994 has education achieved what it wanted to achieve or sought to achieve?

Respondent: On educational matters?

Facilitator: Ja on educational matters, curriculum, education transformation and so on. Have you achieved that?

Respondent: On paper yes. On paper we have this policies that are inclusive and when you talk inclusive is that there's no one who's using his own curriculum and the other one using the other curriculum, there's a lot of transformation on that one. And also the curriculum that it doesn't .., it doesn't discriminate anyone, like whether you are blind or whatever you are using the same curriculum with us, like or you are white or whatever it doesn't discriminate. In terms of the political overview on paper, we are fine, education has moved. In terms of our policies they are good, the only challenge as I said, I will repeat it, it's the implementation of these policies. We have done a lot of research in terms of what we have, what needs to be done, the thing is that we make the research to present, after presenting we shelve them we don't make sure that we do a follow up on that one. So in terms of everything, I think South Africa is the best in terms of transformation in education. The only thing that is remaining is for us to get out of the board rooms and go down there, and implement whatever we have done, whatever that we have written, that is the only thing that we can do. But in terms of solution, everything is fine. The only thing is to take this policy document and see what we need to do and do it. Then everything will be okay. That is what we are lacking as a country, that is my observation.

Facilitator: Anything else that you think is important maybe which should have been part of this interview?

Respondent: I don't know how far the research is, it will be important for the study to influence processes up there so that our provinces, you see you have the national office, the national BE??, and then you have the provinces which are the implementers of whatever is agreed at the national office. If we can see the integration, what is at the national office being done in the provincial offices. Like if you have this committee, or this directorate in the national office, let it be translated down to the provinces for the sake of continuity and sustainability of programmes, because you will find that national office have this .., let's say like myself I will go to the national office and attend a task team on a specific topic, when I come to the province I will just be here with that information because we don't have that

committee in the province. Because of this gap between the provinces and the national offices, that is why it creates a problem in the provinces, other programmes are just dying between the national office and the provinces because the provinces and the national office are not working together, there is no collaboration. You don't find the ..(unclear) department in the same structure as in the national office, so which means that if in the national office they do have this protocol of dealing with issues, it cannot be translated to the provinces, because in the provinces, for example, inclusive you find that it is somewhere in another directorate, which means that immediately it happens that way, the information will be lost, it won't be implemented in the same way. That is one other thing that needs to be balanced, to say let's have one common thing, as we are using one policy document, let it be implemented from national office until to the schools, so that you don't find there's a lot of paperwork in the schools. I issue a circular on this thing, you issue a circular on that thing because there's no synergy. At the national office we have this directorate that is alone, but when it arrives at the provincial office, they are five representing one. So that thing is .., it shows a lot of disjuncture in our system. So as I'm saying I don't know how far you are going to go with the research. Maybe your second step of research is to go to the DBE to check their structure, their organogram, how is it translated to the provinces, to say if we have the inclusive in the national, how does it .., where is it placed in the provincial offices, maybe it can assist also because organogram is very important, if it is lost a lot of information is lost along the way, and also implementation it will be confusing. It will land in the wrong hands, that is why at some stage we found schools having a circular that didn't have a letterhead but it talks educational issues, the schools implemented that thing.

Facilitator: It was just blank?

Respondent: Yes but it was talking policy but there was a lot of contradictions in there. At the end of the day, it had the DBE on top and the fax number at the end of the day, somebody issued it there. Take it straight to the schools or wherever it went to, or to any directorate in the department. That person faxed it to the schools

too, but no one knew who sent it. When we were asking who sent it no one took responsibility, there was no letterhead so no one was accountable for it. The challenge is that at the end of the day it ends with the poor learner at the school. It will affect, because everything that is printed, affects the learner, the meetings and everything, at the end of the day affects the learner down there. So whatever the person is missing down there, it affects the learner. So if that thing can be .., if there can be that smooth thing, I am telling you we will go somewhere, but if there are still these problems you end up saying let me go and stay in Zimbabwe and not expect anything good. This country of us has a lot of good things the only thing is that there is some little string somewhere that can be .., and it's because things are done by human beings, there's no machine. Before I thought people in the national office are like there's plenty intellectuals, I learnt that they are just people like you and me, they do mistakes, spelling mistakes etc., so you cannot expect miracles – I know that when we deal with this things, we bring all the ideas and then you talk to the document that is there because that is what is needed.

Facilitator: Thanks for your time.

END

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