

SAMORA NENE

Facilitator: This is an interview with Samora Nene, we are in Durban, the date is the 19th of October 2012 and the interview is done by Brown Maaba. Comrade thanks for your time, lets start with your background, how did you end up in teaching, I am sure you became a teacher first before coming here to work as a secretary, as an organiser.

Respondent: In fact what happened I think it was in the early 80s, after completing matric? I first did not go to teaching directly, like all other young people you always want to explore. After completing matric I first worked in a textile industry, Abox textile in Hammisdale where I worked in the spinning section, but it was short lived because I worked there for six months due to big problems and challenges that were there. I had matric and in the section where I was working I was the only person who had matric, and this one guy who had standard 8 and my immediate supervisor had standard 2, so I would always be reminded that even if he had standard 2 but he was in charge and he was better paid. He was correct, that old man was called Igalagala, he a supervisor and had standard two education but he was the man who was in charge of us in the section. I worked there for six months and I felt I couldn't continue working there, it was then when I went for training, when Indumiso College opened in Pietermaritzburg around 1981. I was in the first group of students who enrolled there and then train as a teacher.

Facilitator: Why teaching?

Respondent: At that time, I must confess, that was the only field where I was that it was easy to get employment, because before going to do

teaching, as I said I worked for six months and the other six months I worked as an insurance rap, it was so difficult to move from house to house recruiting people to take up policies, then I decided I must just go train in a college where it was just opened, Indumiso College, then I enrolled there as a teacher trainee.

Facilitator: Did you have support from your family?

Respondent: I am from a very big family, at that time we were a family of ten, seven boys and three girls, at home the only person that was working was our father. One couldn't go to a university because other siblings had to go to primary and secondary education, therefore I was forced to go and do teaching because it we felt it was easy to become a teacher because there were not many years spent in training at that time.

Facilitator: So you more or less came from a poor family?

Respondent: Yes, because my father was just an ordinary painter working for a company that did painting of cars and tractors.

Facilitator: So you are the only one who went to tertiary or others followed.

Respondent: At home I was the only one who went straight, others after completing matric they employed somewhere else, they had to upgrade themselves, because one brother who was also after me worked as a security guard but now he had to go through programmes by himself and he ended up being an accountant, that's what happened.

Facilitator: The textile industry that you worked for, how long did you work there?

Respondent: I worked six months.

Facilitator: Only six months?

Respondent: Yes I worked there six months.

Facilitator: Was there a union there?

Respondent: In that factory where I was working there was no union, I never heard of any union, there was no organization that ever took place there, no one came not even a shopsteward came to speak to workers so that workers could understand the union. I never knew about the union when I was there especially for the textile industry, nothing took place there.

Facilitator: What kind of a place was it, were you respected, were you happy at work.

Respondent: There was a lot of exploitation, that is why I only worked for six months because one other thing, when I was employed at that factory I was not employed as a person with matric, I was employed as a person with standard seven. The company requirements were that they wanted someone with standard seven at the time, which is now grade 9, they only wanted people with that standard because they did not want to pay, we were not paid for matric but we were paid as people with standard seven at the time, so there was a lot of exploitation, and also we were working long hours, we were working from morning 7 to 7 and in the evenings as well 7 to 7

Facilitator: So as workers you never complained about the working conditions?

Respondent: No, at that time workers were happy, you could hear them singing, as they were working they would be singing, workers were happy about those conditions. But I was always saying to them, but guys what you being paid is too little, no one listens to you and the supervisor, Igalagala, every time he sees you speaking to white workers there, a specially the one who was our foreman, every time he sees you talking to him he would always think that you are speaking about him with the white man, he believed that you were either gossiping about him or maybe you also wanted to benefit something. Workers were happy about those conditions, that is why after six month I decided to leave because I couldn't continue.

Facilitator: And then you stayed for another six months and then went to teaching?

Respondent: Yes for another six months I worked in the insurance industry, but there I worked for only two months, and I was not paid for those two months, I worked without being paid and I left, I think the company no longer exists because it was one of these small insurance companies. So we worked and we were not paid, we moved around recruiting people from their homes and we were never paid for that. It was an ordinary contribution that one made to that company without being paid, and then I said I can't go on. The year was coming to an end and I had to go to college.

Facilitator: Then after you spent three years at college?

Respondent: It was actually two years initially, I initially had to do the (unclear) STC and then I had to upgrade afterwards.

Facilitator: Was there a necessary (unclear) at the college or was it just a normal college?

Respondent: It was a normal college, firstly in our college there was no SRC but there was a student body which was elected by students. Mainly the student body was responsible for looking after the accommodation and other sporting activities, there was a student body, and it was not an SRC per se. Even when elections were done it was not elections like the ones for electing SRC members, it was not that way.

Facilitator: You went to teaching after two years?

Respondent: Yes I went to teaching.

Facilitator: Which year?

Respondent: In fact I first went to the University of Turfloop, we went to Turfloop to continue studying, but we couldn't continue because when the year started, before we were admitted, there were strikes that took place, one campus was burnt. We felt we cannot waste time there, we had qualifications. There were some guys who we qualified together with as teachers but also wanted to further our studies at Turfloop. There's one guy Bheki Shange, who was working in a school in Newcastle, from Turfloop I went with him to Newcastle where I got a post to teach. When I arrived the school was running short of teachers, I was employed in that fashion, I arrived on Saturday and on Sunday

we visited the school Principal and he said I should come on Monday to start working, that's how I started working as a teacher.

Facilitator: Who was going to pay for your studies at Turfloop?

Respondent: I had received a bursary from Race relations, although it was not enough, there was that organization that had given me a bursary but it was not enough. But due to the strikes that took place, I said I cannot waste time, we rather go and do something and we would enroll somewhere some other time.

Facilitator: And your experience in teaching, how many years did you teach before coming here?

Respondent: Before coming here, I think it was about 18 years.

Facilitator: Which are?

Respondent: I was teaching in Newcastle at a school called Thubelihle High School.

Facilitator: In Madadeni?

Respondent: In Osizweni, that's where I taught.

Facilitator: So when you came in there back then, was there a union?

Respondent: When I arrived, in fact in terms of the history of unions here in KZN, at the time when I was employed as a teacher there was no SADTU, there was a union called NATU, Natal African Teacher's Union. When I arrived in the school there, my principal in the school was serving in the NATU executive committee, and the Deputy Principal

was serving as a treasurer. When I arrived and they gave me the assumption duty forms, they also had a NATU form at the end, as I was filling in and signing the forms, fortunately I grew up around Pietermaritzburg, and there was a youth organization that I used to attend which was at the ecumenical centre called DOCC, which was founded by Mr. Matiwane. I knew about NATU and I said I cannot join this union, they persuaded me to join and I declined. According to my understanding the union was associated with IFP; therefore I could not join it.

Facilitator: And the other teachers were they part of NATU?

Respondent: I think the entire staff in our school were NATU members, and the reason they joined was because at the time NATU was organizing music competitions for schools. So as a NATU member you were supposed to pay R12 a year, that is the amount that they were paying, it was R1 a member a month. What used to happen was that teachers were forced to pay R12 so that the school can be affiliated to the music competition of NATU, I refused to do that, I said no, if then you say I must pay R12 so that the learners can go sing, I refused to pay. That is how some people who were members at the time and who were afraid and had joined, the following year after seeing that I refused to join, the number of people who refused to pay R12 increased, as a result very few paid. What would happen if the school would pay affiliation fee for those who did not sign up the membership forms of NATU? I think at the time NATU was enjoying what was called a close shop agreement, because it was a time of KwaZulu Bantu Stan and the KwaZulu Education Department and Culture, so in many instances teachers were forced to join it except very few who refused.

Facilitator: So the fact that you didn't want to be part of NATU, didn't cause problems

Respondent: No, we were always engaging with that principal, he would always engage and ask us to join, he was an ANC member himself and sometimes while the ANC was still banned, we would have some discussions with him. But I indicated to him that I cannot join a union that has close links with IFP, in terms of my principles I cannot do that, because if our youth club as youth we understood that NATU works together with IFP.

Facilitator: Did you have problems then as staff members when you are not members of NATU and when you are not members of any other union because there was no other union, if you had problems then where do you go to, who represents you.

Respondent: What initially happened, while one had problems, I think at that time, I also remember where one had problems of none payment, because at times you would find that we were not paid in time, but at that time what we used to do we would just go directly to Ulundi, we would just organize transport and go to head office of the department in Ulundi, we would go to the class there, when we come back there we would return with our cheques. We would go and address some of these problems ourselves, that's what we always did. Even the union, in fact it was an association, it never helped teachers, it never helped them in terms of payments, it never helped them in terms of grievances and also to represent them in disciplinary cases. Instead what the leadership of NATU would always do, they would always tell teachers to comply and complain later, they would say just for the sake of the child do that thing, if you have a complaint complain inside there. In fact there was no union, even if members had

problems, members themselves would have to stand up and go directly to the offices of the department to demand their payment, that's what we used to do.

Facilitator: When was SADTU introduced in the province?

Respondent: What then happened later on, when NEUSA (National Education Union of South Africa) was formed, that was a union which was formed as a result of meetings, there was what we called NECC (National Education Crisis Committee) which used to come together especially in Durban, so one would travel from Newcastle to Durban to go to the meetings of NECC where some discussions would take place. When one was interacting in those meetings that was where one learned about the formation of NEUSA, I then became a member of that union.

Facilitator: Was NEUSA an independent union or was it affiliated to Cosatu.

Respondent: NEUSA at that time was not affiliated to SADTU, it was an independent union, and it was also MDM.

Facilitator: What is MDM?

Respondent: Mass Democratic Movement, the majority of comrades who were in NEUSA were also in the MDM structures, that is why during the time of NECC the majority of those were just comrades, and it was also during the time of UDF. Therefore when Cosatu was launched in the 1st December 1985 in Caris Fountain, by that time there was no SADTU, but the first union in Education which came after 1985, Nehawu, there was Nehawu and there was also NEUSA, but there was also discussions about this thing that all those who were in education

should join Nehawu, unfortunately I did not join Nehawu because in 1988 there were unity talks that had already started that were facilitated by Cosatu, and also they started to bring all teacher unions in South Africa, about 9 teacher unions at the time that were there including NEUSA had some talks that they had, and some of these talks were then convened in such a way that from 1988 there was a meeting which was convened in Harare, all these other teacher unions did participate, NEUSA also had a delegation there but unfortunately I was not part of the delegation because I was just an ordinary member. Around Newcastle we were only three members of NEUSA, we used to know each other, there were three of us, we did not have a branch, and we were just independent members. If a meeting was called in Pietermaritzburg or Durban, we would organize our own transport and go there, therefore in terms of the delegation that went to Harare we were not part of it, but we were happy that we had leaders who represented us there. The processes of the unity talks, started from 1988 up to 1990 when SADTU was launched. In those meetings, even if you look at the history of the formation of SADTU, it tells you that when they were in Harare because the meeting was convened by Cosatu, all unions agreed in principle to form one united union in South Africa which was going to represent all teachers, they also agreed on a Steering Committee which was called National Teacher Unity Forum which was going to be responsible for facilitating the processes of unity among all teachers.

Then because in KZN at that time NATU was a majority union, sometimes when they call their meetings, what one observed, NATU membership was not on board during these unity talks, very few members knew that their union was engaged in unity talks which were going to lead to one union being created, although some of their branches had called meetings, because I remember in Madadeni at

one stage they had a meeting where they had a report, because there were some delegates who have gone to meetings of the unity talks where it was reported, but members kicked dust. With us as NEUSA members, when it was reported that we were part and parcel of unity talks we just agreed, that is why it was easy when SADTU was launched in 6 October in Johannesburg, NEUSA dissolved and we became members of SADTU. In KZN there was a difficulty, what happened was that when SADTU was launched, NATU as part of the unions which were part of the unity processes did not participate, but their non-participation in the launch and election of leadership was purely on the basis of ideology, it was ideological thing because there was a feeling that SADTU meetings had been convened by Cosatu with the help of the ANC which was in exile, therefore this was a communist union. We also learnt that leadership of NATU that participated in the union talks were called and disciplined in Ulundi, they were called and were made to account, why they participated in this when it was for ANC, as a result what happened, NATU did not form part of the election of leadership but they participated on all processes except the process to elect leaders, they did not participate there. One it was the problem of the ideology and two it was a question of resource because at that time NATU had resources, they had money and property, this new union that was going to be formed had nothing except because here in KZN the majority of members that formed part of SADTU were coming from these departments that were called HOD and HOR, formerly Indian as well as Coloured members, they had a bulk of such membership, but NATU had more membership in KZN at that time, they felt that these other unions as they were coming to merge with them to form SADTU, they had not enough resources, as a result they had to protect their resources and their ideology.

When SADTU was formed it was very difficult those days, I also remember after it was launched in 1990, it took more than two years for SADTU to be recognised in KZN, as a result there was a march and a campaign where SADTU in KZN had to protest and demand recognition, I still have a t-shirt which said recognise don't victimize, because some members were part of SADTU, they were killed and some of them were sjamborked, it was difficult during those years. We also learnt from some leaders who were leading in SADTU, there was a union called ITASA, which was formerly made of Indian comrades, they were the ones who were majority, they then shouldered SADTU in KZN because it was those comrades who were coming from the townships and rural schools who had joined SADTU because those comrades came in at a time I remember we were paying a contribution of R3 a month, and the way we would pay that money, we would come to a meeting and that is when subscriptions would be collected by leadership at the time, it would be collected in that fashion, it would be collected and submitted, it was very difficult to operate.

The formerly Indian members, they then shouldered SADTU in KZN, as a result they donated their own building, there was a building Teacher's Centre, they donated with their offices and even money that was contributed by these comrades over the years. We were able to be sustained because one thing, when SADTU was formed in KZN there was SADTU KZN was known as SADTU Southern Natal, as a province. The majority of members, the bulk of them more than ten thousand to fourteen thousand came between Durban and Pietermaritzburg which was the midlands region of SADTU, midlands regions started from Pietermaritzburg and it went as far as Vryheid, when SADTU was also launched we also formed part of that midlands region of SADTU. It became very difficult even to operate because one other thing that we also learnt, one comrade who also indicated that there are two

principals who joined SADTU in the far North who were killed and as this province what we had said to our region in the far North, we had said to comrades they must assist the union and identify those schools because we didn't know those schools, we needed to know who those principals who were killed were, because they were killed because they were mobilizing for SADTU, we don't know who killed them. We are busy with that investigation so that we can be able to recognize them for the struggle they did. In other areas when SADTU started, bulk of the members was in Durban and there were also branches around Pietermaritzburg that were there, but in the far North there were only two branches that were there, the third branch was in Vryheid, there was a branch in Ladysmith, Newcastle and in Vryheid, around Madadeni and Osizweni there was no branch, this was where NATU was strong and it was also strong in Empangeni.

What we had to do, the few of us that were in NEUSA we then had to start to mobilize for SADTU so that within Madadeni and Osizweni there could be a branch there, but it was very difficult. What helped us, while we were still mobilizing for SADTU to be launched, it was difficult because at times we would call comrades like Thami Mseleku who was in the leadership of SADTU and people like Duncan Yindli who we were together with in NEUSA to come to Newcastle and then we would invite some comrades to sit together. What helped us to have SADTU launch, there was the then Minister of KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture Lenon Mtshali, he had attended a function at Madadeni, Siyamukela High School, where he insulted teachers, because at the time when he was there SADTU in the then Southern Natal had a campaign and marches that were organized to fight for the KZN government to recognise SADTU and also give unions stop order facilities. When he was there in Newcastle, there was a function at a school where he insulted teachers, where he said there were

teachers who were barking like dogs, it angered teachers even those that were not in SADTU. We made use of that insult to mobilize against Mtshali, we said all teachers have been insulted, we had all been referred to as barking dogs, we then asked all teachers to assemble at Madadeni Hall, that was around 1991 or 1992, between there, I can't remember correctly, where we convened at Madadeni (unclear). We wanted the Homeland Government Department of Education to come and address us, we then came together in that hall where the then Inspector because at the time these Circuit managers were called inspectors. There was one old man there by the name of Inspector Nyawuza, who was asked to come and address the forum, it was full, and give us a response why his department through the Minister of Education, to tell us why we were insulted. That old man was made to stand and address the packed hall for more than four hours without drinking water. His insults assisted us to do ground work and mobilize and establish a SADTU branch, because immediately afterwards as we were mobilizing to go to those meetings, we then called teachers together, there were also some NATU members there, we said all of us have been insulted, unfortunately NATU never said anything about it. What we then did we took up the opportunity to launch our first branch in Madadeni township, which was called Madadeni Branch, that's how we then belonged in Midlands region but SADTU Southern Region which was in the province of KZN helped a lot because through that mass action they were also able to come and mobilize that a branch is established. There was a comrade by the name of Mo Ali who was an organizer of SADTU at that time, used to come and interact with us, at the time SADTU in Northern Natal was established therefore it made it easier to mobilize and expand and be able to go to other far reaching areas.

One other thing, at the time SADTU regions in Midlands, Southern Natal up to Port Shepstone and also in the North Coast there were a few branches up to Stanger, but when you go to far North there were no branches, but through the campaigns that SADTU engaged around 1991 up to 1993, SADTU was recognized around 1993 by the KZN government where the leadership of SADTU had to go to Ulundi to demand that the union be recognized. It was after that recognition whereby the subscriptions that were paid by members were no longer paid in cash, all those years we were paying in cash and after the recognition there was a stop order facility which was also provided. It assisted the union to go faster, from there onwards it just grew, although there were many problems around the Msinga, Nkandla and Nongoma areas. What also happened was that around 1996 there was a new region which was also formed from Mnambithi, Bergville, Danhouse, Dundee, Newcastle up to Nongoma, Ulundi and Pongolo, it formed the Northern region of Sadtu. Another region which was also established when you go to the South Coast, which was called Lower South Cost Region, they have now named it after one comrade who was also killed called Mbuso Shabalala. In the North Coast there was also a region that was there, but around the North Coast region where those two principals were killed and Northern Natal which formed part of Ulundi, Nongoma, Newcastle and all those. Around Nongoma, Mahlabathini, Ulundi, Nkandla, there are also many of our comrades who were killed by the IFP aligned union, that's what we are suspecting.

Some of those comrades who were not killed were displace, even now we are still battling as a union to deal with those remnants because we ended up with about 420 members of SADTU who were displaced as a result of violence aimed at membership of the union, some of them, what would happen is that Principals who are NATU would then

organise governing bodies and communities to attack teachers who were seen to be bringing in SADTU within the area, to chase them away because they were said to be bringing in ANC in the area, so that is how comrades would be attacked and how they would be chased away. What we have done as a union after the coming into office of MEC Mchunu, we sat down with him and told him its high time that we deal with this backlog of people who have been displaced since 2000, many people who have been displaced have not be used effectively and we have been able to deal with that group of people, we are now left with only 50 who are still displaced, others have been absorbed. Some of the other cases have since been resolved because people either have resigned or they have left that area to go and work somewhere else. During that time in the early 1990s up to 2000 it was very difficult to operate as SADTU because a lot of our members where chased away from their schools, attacked, robbed and killed. Those were some of the challenges we faced, that's how the union has always been operating in all those years.

AT the beginning it became very difficult and as a result it was not easy at the time, only people who were brave, people who were brave and selfless, committed and understood what is it they were taking up when taking up positions in the union, because at the time IFP was there, people were attacked and killed. It was not easy for people to even contest for positions, you would find especially, I remember one time when a branch of SADTU was to be launched in Ulundi, what then we had to do for the leadership that was coming from the province, and also National, we had to organize intelligence and also security and VIP protection that will be escorting those leaders, to go and address people, so that when they finish they can also protect them. But those of us who were around the areas would not get that protection because we used to go and mobilize and move from school to school,

call meetings, after meetings we would stay with the comrades and leave very late. It was very difficult for top leadership and they were very scared to go to those places, but the union would provide VIP protection, but it was not easy for top leadership because they are on the limelight and it was very difficult.

Facilitator: What are the challenges faced by SADTU today, do we still have all those old problems, victimization and so on from IFP?

Respondent: No, we do have some challenges but they are no longer the same, because we branches now in all, in fact even the ANC before they establish a branch in an area they will be assisted by SADTU because SADTU has branches in all areas where there are teachers. We have branches in Ulundi, Nongoma, Pongolo, Ntambanana, Mbazwana, Ngwavuma, Jozini, we have branches all over. So now challenges that were faced by leadership earlier on are no longer the same, one, our leaders are no longer attacked now when they are in the schools, and you also find that our members are now able have meetings, marches within their same areas. Now we no longer have challenges of violence like in the past, it was very difficult to lead an organization then, now such challenges we don't experience such, because a lot of our comrades are in leadership positions, as a result the majority of comrades who are in SADTU are also leading branches of ANC, because you have a SADTU branch, it becomes easier for ANC to launch a branch because you have comrades that are already there, and comrades of SADTU are also leading in those branches.

We also have Cosatu locals in all these towns, we have Cosatu locals in Ulundi, Melmoth, Jozini, Bergville, we have Cosatu locals all over, and the majority of all those Cosatu locals are also led by SADTU. Therefore

the challenge of threats, intimidation and violence has died down. The challenge we now have as a union right now is challenge, we normally call it, there's this question comrades are talking tenderpreneurs, in Sadtu we talk about promotion-preneurs. There is no problem because in majority of schools SADTU is in the majority. When we started in the 1990s we had about 14000 members and NATU had 28000, but the scenario has changed, currently SADTU in KZN has 58000 paid up membership, but if you include those that are not paid we have about 60300 members of SADTU if we now include those who have signed up those forms we have to take to the department, and we have (unclear) the decision that by the end of December we need to have reached a target of 60 000, and out of the 39000 teachers that are here in the province and out of the 109000 public sector employees, so SADTU is commanding 60000, so we are running very short of them going beyond 60000. Therefore it is easy to join SADTU now there are no past challenges, but challenges have changed form, as I have said it's a question of promotions where you find what normally happens, we are taking up that as an organization all promotion posts must be SADTU posts within the Department of Education , all posts belong to SADTU members, there's a principle on that. But you will find that within structures comrades sometimes will change that decision and say it is for some, as a result we find that conflict is rising up as a result of those promotions.

I think also another challenge that faces us as a union is to change quantity membership to quality, so that are members are able to drive the programmes of the organization. In the past SADTU has been known as a toy toying union, now SADTU has grown, it is now walking on two legs, the first leg is to fight to improve the conditions service for membership, the second leg is for professional development, how then do we fight to improve the conditions of service for our members and

at the same time as a union in the education sector how then do we improve quality of education that members must deliver. You cant run away from the priorities of government that as a union we also need deliver public quality education, in fact we need to strive towards achieving people's education for people's power, that's our main dream, therefore this second leg now of the organization, how then do we change our members and beef them up for quality education making programmes of professional development and our members participating in terms of quality learning and teaching. The other challenge we have is how do we deliver all the decisions of the union because the union has a programme of quality learning and teaching, what we need to transform our schools to be the centres of excellence, our members must be there on time, come to school everyday and prepared, also teach effectively, how do we then make our members to do that. As a majority union if the education results, especially matric, if results are bad as a union we must admit its SADTU who has contributed in those negative results. As a result we have adopted a number of programmes in our province, like quality teaching and learning campaign, in 2009 we targeted as this province that we needed to achieve 60% of matric pass rate which we did, and in 2010 we must achieve 70% matric pass rate, we achieved 68%. This year we have targeted about 75% to 80% pass rate, how then do we make our members to reach that target. Its one of the biggest challenges.

One other thing that we must talk to is the question of servicing to membership, how do we service our members now, by having so many members means that there is no work that must be done to service them, unlike in the past where there were fifteen, thirty or forty thousand members, to service then becomes easier. Now membership has increased because we have further sectors within the organization,

we have school based educators, SADTU has even changed its constitution, we are no longer a union of teachers, but we are a union in the entire education sector, as a result we have taken up the Cosatu resolution of one sector one union, we are now a union in the education sector. We have a sector of mainstream educators, we have a sector of the public service act employees, class, security, cleaners, grounds man, all those that are employed within the department as support staff. We also have a sector of the office based members, there have now SADTU members who have been promoted to offices of the Department of Education, we have classified them as a sector because if we don't have them as a sector we are not going to be able to focus because they have been complaining that they are not being serviced.

We have FET as a sector, also have ECD as a sector, ABET as a sector which we call a vulnerable sector, and there's also another sector we call ICW (Indian, Coloured and Whites) , how do we service those members because in SADTU especially KZN the majority of members were Indian comrades, in membership and leadership, but because the union is growing and there's recruitment we have found that the ICW sector is diminishing in numbers, we have them identified them as a sector, how do we then best service them so that we keep them within the organization, we grow our organisation, we don't have these counter revolutionary unions increasing membership but as a union we have to have the sector and also service that sector, those are some of challenges as the union is growing, it's become so complex now, it's very complex. As a result what PEC did here in KZN, it had to appoint a full time shopsteward, as we grew in membership we got a full time shopsteward, we had to identify a comrade who was going to deal with vulnerable sectors, FET, PSA, Clerks employees, ABET and also ECD to look at those comrades and focus directly on them, unfortunately

that comrade cant be able to deal with that load. I as an organizer, I am the only organizer, that is also a challenge because in SADTU you find that there is only one organizer per province. It becomes very difficult to work, you also have seven regions and one full time shopsteward in a region, and it becomes a problem. You also find that the full time shopsteward in a region also happens to be the regional secretary, who must also represent members in cases, who must attend to meetings, administration, membership growth and servicing, its gives us a challenge. As the membership is growing you find that a lot of problems and grievances, a lot challenges taking place in schools is a challenge, and also a new challenge now is that a majority of schools are headed by SADTU principals, it's a challenge now because what the union must also do is to make it a point of how we make our comrades transform the education system and our schools while at the same time because some of these principals are in leadership positions, how do we then balance the two representing membership as a union and also professionalizing the industry and also delivering quality, those are some of the issues that the union is faced now.

What we have picked up as we have taken up new sectors, PSE, Clerks, Security and General workers, because one, conditions of service are appalling, those workers' qualifications are not recognized, they don't have substitutes, if a clerk at a school is going on maternity leave then there's no substitute for that person, if a security guard who is in the gate is sick no one can come in and be a substitute, if a grounds man, a person who has a variety of duties, has to be taken by an emergency its so difficult to have new people coming in, and their conditions are very bad. In KZN one challenge we are faced with is a question of Clerks, where they are employed at level 4 by the Department of Education, when they came to us in the union and told us that they are employed in level 4 whereas in other departments

Clerks are employed at level 6, it becomes a crisis of how do you have all these sectors satisfied, so it's a very complex issue. Therefore we will be going for an NGC, there are proposal that comrades said we need to come up with so that the union at national level can determine how we can balance all these sectors and make sure they are also represented in the structures of the union because you have only 8 leaders per branch, that they have their own people who are representing them or elected in those structures.

Other challenges we also have is the question of our members understanding the departmental policies, a lot of members who are also in charge of schools, they don't implement and they don't understand Educators Employment Act. The question of capacity, how do we then bring capacity so that our own members understand the contract of employment, through public service act, also other acts like financial act. The other challenges we have also is the question of corruption and mismanagement in schools, the Department of Education is not helping, principals don't understand that as they are in charge they have to implement public finance management act in terms of handling of finances. We have taken a lot resolutions around the question of political education, what we have also discovered, it's not easy to lead SADTU, as I have earlier on said that in the past you would find comrades after nominations declining because they were scared they were going to be attacked by Inkatha, now Inkatha is not doing anything. People come for personal interests, not interests to advance working class and workers themselves, what other comrades do when they come in they look up in the sky because they come today and they want to be promoted tomorrow, as a result what happens is that issues of capacity building, union education are also problems we are facing. The union at a national level, congress has taken a decision that the union must focus political and union

education, although it is being addressed because we normally have what we call politically committee sitting, but it doesn't help much that members must be politically aware while they have to lead the organisation, because a member of SADTU must be politically conscious, what does SADTU stand for, am I able to subscribe to the founding principles of SADTU and implement those principles, so that when a person is leading or a member of the union must first think about the children that are in the class, that these are the children of the working class, so therefore I can't dodge a class, I can't then not perform my duties because as part of government our members must be able to understanding that.

Then the question of capacity building, union education, how do we have our own leadership taking forward decisions of the union. Unlike in the past communication of the union was very quick, SADTU was known to be a union that was quick in distributing information, there would be a meeting here of PEC, by 6pm there would be a fax going through regional union offices, the following day branches would take those documents and distribute them to all structures, all sides. The union now has this new technology, during that time SADTU members had no cellphones but members were informed. Today the new challenge we have is the one of ITC, SADTU has now given gadgets to all its leaders from branch up to national level, they have a union cellphone, laptop, playbooks, in this province there's even a playbook, a tablet, but when you now compare, like ourselves who served in the union, where there were no such gadgets, if there was going to be a mass meeting in a branch, Sobonjeni, comrades would go to particular centres, they would stand where there's a crossroad, will stand there with letters to invite for a meeting and distribute the letters to buses for the different schools. Currently all our comrades have cellphones, shopstewards have cellphones, some of them have emails, you will find

that the union would email, fax the information, distribute the information to all gadgets, but you find that they are the worst informed members, they do not get information with all this technology. There is a problem, this technology was made to make communication easier, comrades and leadership have always been requesting these gadgets saying they are going to make it easy to work. One problem when it comes to membership data, like in our province we had about five thousand members that are paying members of SADTU but are not paying to their relevant branches, there is a mess up when it comes to paypoints of schools, as a result members are paying but are not paying to their relevant branches, what we have to do now is we have to get correct data from site stewards to give us correct schools and paypoints with a list of all comrades in their site, with their email addresses, cellphone numbers, it will take ages to get this information. We are having a challenge with this technology, we are wondering what it is that we need to do as the organisation so that we have administration that is well oiled, so that when you punch a message to members, you can get back information back from members same day or the next day. What national office has done, there's been an induction of site stewards, and they have been trained so that they are able to understand the constitution of the union.

SADTU has adopted a 2015 plan, there's a vision of what the union wants to achieve leading to 2030, through that programme we have also workshoped site stewards in the 2030 vision so that they can understand, in terms of trade unionism because what we have found is that leaders who are leading organizations don't know Fosatu, they don't know ICU, they don't know that Cosatu has more than twenty affiliates, so in order for this one part of the programme, we try to see how to achieve making comrades understand trade unionism itself, the

history of trade unions. Currently we have been invited by the office of the Premier, what they want SADTU and Nehawu to do is to develop a programme to train their HR managers about the history of trade unions and what unions do.

As unions we are also able to assist those officials so that when they implement policies of government they must implement them correctly. With our own leadership there's an area where I think there's a problem, if the union can improve its capacity building, administration of the organization, political consciousness, I think the majority of our problems would be resolved. When you call a meeting you would find that sometimes a decision would be taken but they don't implement it, the problem is that leadership at various levels don't see the urgency in implementing the decisions and there's a problem. When we met in our special PEC meeting today we said we don't want to find a Marikana within our schools, where members will rise up and say the union has not been servicing. When we go to a school, comrades would tell you that they haven't see a circular with logo of SADTU in four years, there's a crisis, we have to see how best do we work that one as well.

One challenge that we have is that now it is post 1994, in the pre 1994 SADTU as a revolutionary union, we were fighting Inkatha administration, we were fighting the apartheid government, now this government is a government that SADTU helped to install, like in KZN it took up to 2004 for ANC to lead and they were able to lead because of SADTU structures, leaders and members who went all out to observe and participate in the elections, some of them as presiding officers to make it a point that vote rigging doesn't take place. Now how do we as this union have an approach that says this government is part of us, how do we now work together, it is one area that we have a challenge

with. What we also find is that in other instances where because understand that ANC is in charge, comrades would think that everything would run smoothly just because ANC is in charge.

What we have been doing in our province, we said comrades if you understand trade union movement, you must understand that there is an employer and employee, the majority of employers in the province have been IFP especially on the eve of elections in 2004, they employed a lot of people in senior management. It has been a battle for the union to transform the Department of Education, the union has sat in strategic meetings and PGC and resolved that the Department of Education has to be transformed, where do you start then.

One thing that we have also done, (unclear) has changed, Cosatu as an alliance to the ANC we have to make it a point that ANC delivers. What we have done as a union to make sure that we improve the working relationship between the union and the ANC led Department of Education, one, it was this question of the MEC when the MEC was appointed; we had the PEC sitting down with the MEC for education and listening from him what his programme is, and informing as the union that this is the PEC programme in transforming education, we also had to sit down with the Head Of Department, where is your programme comrade because it comes from SADTU, we wanted as a union to make sure that our members benefit but at the same time our ANC government must deliver, because we can't be seen always going to the streets, fighting instead of sitting together and having a programme together.

We have a lot of meetings with the Department of Education Top Management, MEC and also the Head of Department, as a result as I have said, we also have an office based sector, those comrades of

SADTU who are office based. We also have strategic meetings with those comrades, call those comrades who are Senior Managers, Directors to find out if they have programmes and how far they are with their programmes. There's one challenge that have been leading SADTU, they think when they are in the Department they are controlling SADTU, they don't understand that they are no longer leading SADTU. The leadership of SADTU that is currently leading is the leadership that is in charge, as the leadership of the organization.

What we have done as a union is to convene meetings of the office based members, top management of the Department of Education, and clarify that comrades as SADTU we are a centre of power, yourselves as the department, you are a centre of delivery, yours is nothing else except to deliver, implement the policies of the ANC government, you implement all programmes, evaluate and monitor them. We as a centre of power we make sure that you deliver, we engage with political heads, that's what we do as union, if there are issues that needs to be dealt with, it's us who must deal with those political issues, you can't challenge the decisions of the organizations. It has been working well so far, we are working well with the comrades because from time to time, as a result we had a new organogram of the Department of Education, when the department wanted to implement the organogram we stopped them, we said as a union we must participate in this transformation because we also need to see the department transforming. We told the MEC that we want to see them succeeding because if as a union we are going to say it's your own baby, if government fails to deliver, our members are there failing to deliver, yourselves as the ANC, we are ANC as well, we are going to be handing over back the province. So there's a new role that the union is now playing, while we play it we make it a point that membership achieves in terms of living conditions and wages, but at

the same time we have to balance and see how best do we then support our own comrades who are office based, so from time to time we also encourage structures to have bilateral and also meetings at district level with District Directors so that programmes that were adopted in Polokwane are going to be adopted in Mangaung, with the programmes that are going to be implemented, those are some of the things that we make it a point that such programmes are taken through. So that is how the union is currently operating, as a result in our province we have a lot of programmes and a lot of campaigns because we felt that a union that doesn't campaign does not succeed, we have about 18 campaigns that we are running with, we have a Cosatu campaign and a living wage campaign, the living wage campaign of Cosatu is the oldest campaign since ICU, from ICU, Fosatu, Cosatu. We had that campaign to see to it that we improve the living conditions of our members through bargaining at a national level, but also at local level, as I was saying that we have these Clerks who are employed at level 4 without qualifications being recognised, we have been fighting for the qualifications to be recognised, we have been able to push through that demand through PSCDC, now their qualifications are going to be recognised. We also have a campaign of garnishee orders, we have a problem of our members being garnished, and you find that teachers in schools and public servants in general are being garnished.

As a union we have not been aware of all these small things, but these are the things that are biting, including the living wage campaign, because members would benefit from high percentage but that money would be taken away by the (unclear), away from them as well. What we have discovered through that campaign, we have discovered that even here in our province, there about fifteen companies that are working as a syndicate, we have also discovered

that when these workers are garnished, there are about three courts where these cases are sitting, its Kempton Park in Johannesburg, Kimberly and Bloemfontein, there is no court which deals with garnishee orders here in KZN, all the courts are far away. We have also discovered that there is a working relationship with the Sheriff in Pietermaritzburg, so as a result through that campaign we are winning, we have made use of the services of a particular lawyer who has gone as far as Kimberly, who has come back with this information. We also have another campaign of labour brokers, here in the education sector we have been able to deal with all outsourced services in the Department of Education, we have one which is left called Thandile which deals with leave, and we have a campaign against that because we are saying that outsourced service must be done away with. The (unclear) department is also employing workers who are dealing with lease of employment, that Thandile company, they call it Phila, they have refused people who are supposed to be medically boarded, they have deducted monies of up to R70 000 from people who are bed ridden, we have gone to some of those people who are bed ridden and we said you can't have workers victimized, harassed and traumatized, if a person is sick in this fashion in terms of the law, a person would have to apply for leave where a person would take a temporarily incapacity exit and if a person has recovered then they can come back.

Another campaign is that of corruption, we have taken up a corruption campaign, since 2009, we have been saying as a union about 80000 of public funds were embezzled by the department of education, as a result an audit firm was appointed by the MEC, we were proven correct because it was discovered that 67 million was misused by these top officials, that is why some of them were removed from the Department of Education, they went to higher offices in education,

they are there, but we must make it a point that they go away. We also have another campaign of (unclear), that in education we don't want to have casual workers, there's a group of teachers that is known as UTE (unprotected temporary teachers), we have been fighting this for years in such a way that we won that battle last year, we signed an agreement with Department of Education, that all educators who are employed as temporary teachers as long as they qualified must be made permanent on the spot, then those who are unqualified because there's one thing that you cannot run away from since colleges have been closed, supply of teachers is very low, even those that are in university cannot, in KZN alone, we have 40008 educators who are under-qualified, and 7000 who are unqualified. We said to the department let all those who are studying towards becoming educators in DUT and some of them have matric, but we said let all those who are studying towards being qualified, let them be in the system and be given bursaries so they can continue studying until they are then made permanent, so they will be protected they will not be terminated. The only group that we couldn't achieve victory for is the group that only has matric, but we had to put some breaks and say a matric person who got a bursary from Fuza Lushaka with a letter coming in the post, yes you can take that one out, and a person who is a surplus, but we have also protected them as well.

We have a problem with ECD practitioners, they have been paid R1500 stipend, we have been pushing the employer, as a result they are now being paid R4000, but in terms of the national norm they are supposed to be paid R5000 but we are saying R5000 is not a living wage so at least R6000 we can agree, we are still fighting for that R6000. We have also said the security and clerks, we also discovered that clerks in the public service act employees were robbed of notches because they were in the old bantu stand governments, they were paid at lower

notches, as a result they were robbed of their second and third notch, we have won that campaign, it is being paid out now.

We also have a campaign of HIV/AIDS, SADTU has a mobile clinic nationally where members are being tested, given free medication by the union, we also have added male circumcision, and we are encouraging our members to be circumcised to improve the life expectancy of our membership. What has been happening in the province you find that there are teachers who have been on leave for more than four years with HIV/AIDS related illnesses, but because of the stigma members have not been coming forward, but since the campaign started a lot of members are now walking on their two legs, woken up from their beds because of the campaign that the union has taken up.

Currently there is another campaign the union has taken up, quality learning and teaching campaign, as a result since 2009 we have spent more than 6 million on that campaign, when it started we spent 700000 producing learning material, I am going to show you when we finish this interview, what happened we paid 700000 to fund a programme of matric intervention in two districts, 2009 at Obonjeni in the far North, Kukhanyakude where you go to Jozini, Manguzi, Ngwanase, EManyiseni and also at Sisonke, what we discovered is that we had a problem there, the failure rate was too high there because teachers who were teaching there only had matric certificates only, teaching maths and science. So as a union we decided to have boot camps and winter schools, we took experienced teachers in Maths, Science, Accounting and English, and go to these areas and have learners during winter holidays come to class and organize meals for refreshments and also pay a stipend to comrades who were teaching there, results in the following year 2010 improved. In 2011 we produced

about 344000 copies to support matric learners in the whole province, that money came from the union budget but we were also helped buy companies like our partners, Shooter and Shooter assisting with machines to print the learning material, the campaign is still working well because even now we are still producing the material to help learners. On top of that SADTU has what we call now Curtis Nkondo Teacher Development Institute, it's sort of a college where union aims to do professional development work through that institute, so it's the one that is driving that programme of matrices and training of teachers, we have trained teachers in CAPS, we also want to train our management in financial management, assessment management and also curriculum management because we feel if we want to improve education our managers must be able to understand those things. We also aim at training of admin staff so that they are able to assist principals in schools, there are many programmes we are planning to do as an organization.

As a union we also have other programmes, your health lifestyle programmes where the union has sporting activities, our branches will play amongst themselves in terms of clusters, have a league which will culminate to a provincial sports day, those are some of the things so that now the union does not focus only in terms on our core things. What we have picked up now in terms of members, we have these young members now, the majority of unions have a problem and as a result have introduced youth desks, but as SADTU we don't feel that we need to introduce a youth desk, the majority of our young members are in leadership, they are site stewards, they lead branches, they come up with innovations, that is why through sporting activities, choral music competitions, and cultural activities, members will be participating. We also have other programmes, another programme that we have in terms of learning and teaching, we have launched

SADTU TV where through the board there's going to be a studio which is going to be built in where a teacher will be teaching a subject from the centre and have satellite stations in all districts where we are going to have big boards of that nature which will be all over the districts, where teachers will bring learners into a class and they will be learning there, they are going to be interacting with everyone who is there. The way the union used to operate has changed because we have seen that in education in order to resolve problems in the quality of our education the union must also be in the forefront of having such programmes, our members must see a need for being in SADTU and join a union. We can't run away from these things, there are members who enjoy going to meetings and some members don't enjoy going to meetings, they enjoy going to subject societies, as a result on the 25th September we launched about 29 subject societies in all subjects, so that our members wherever they are they come together in such activities.

We also aim to have a programme of adopt a school because when you go to the far north you find that some schools are in appalling conditions, where you find that our members are always subjected to very bad conditions, like if you go to a place like Entambanana, Obuka you find that there are teachers who are traumatized in such a way that they cannot take their cars to their schools, they have to leave their cars somewhere and take a bus, unfortunately when the bus reaches the last school, it comes there at 9am, at 11am it goes back again, we then have a problem in engaging the department of transport in the province and MEC for transport and security, where we was to engage them on how do we best address the situation of access to schools, that our members and learners are able to go there.

Another thing we are currently doing, we have a campaign where we are going to doing a march on the 3rd November where we are going to be dealing with a lot of issues, infrastructure, we feel that schools, like in 2010 education was declared a priority but we are not see that, instead the priority was the World Cup where we saw construction of roads to our stadiums, we saw stadiums being built, we saw a lot other related things there. We are saying education should be priority number 1, we are saying all schools must be resourced, all schools must be rebuilt, and there must be construction of schools. We also take up a campaign of health and safety, you find that in our schools teachers are being attacked by criminals, in one school in KwaMashu we were there addressing teachers in a staff room, criminals came into the school and attacked teachers, there is no safety, we are saying all schools must be fenced, they must have security, they must be drug free, when workers go to work they must be free and feel safe. There is one school in Ntuzuma, when teachers move from one class to the other, they get robbed in the corner of the before they reach another class, they are not safe.

The majority of schools in our province are still built with asbestos, there is a court ruling that declared asbestos as a health hazard, the asbestos must be removed, and we are saying all schools must be modern schools. We also have a campaign of having accommodation for rural teachers, but we also want to also extend that to public servants, we have engaged the Human Settlement MEC in our province, we said we want to see the construction of rural accommodation for teacher and we want it to also be extended to public servants, where teachers are teaching they must also stay there, and this will give them incentive not to run away. We also taken up a campaign for job creations, we are saying all those learners who have passed but don't have funds to go to universities, they must be given

bursaries to go and do degrees to become teachers or engineers, we have succeeded there because last week, this week and next week the Department of Education has invited all learners who have matric exemptions and who have bachelors certificates to enroll for a B Ed degree, they are going to be given bursaries, they will attend free of charge, that programme has also been running in our office, we have won in terms of that battle.

As a union we need not wait and fight employers only, we are no longer a craft union we are now a union that falls within a sector, we are also a social union, while we do improvement of conditions of service we also do professional development, we also look at politics but at the same time we don't forget about the society and community, as a union currently as we call ourselves a revolutionary union, we think that is what is being a socialist, you don't focus only on the narrow issues of workers but you have to broaden.

Facilitator: Just one more question? Do you have a rival union here in KZN?

Respondent: For teachers?

Facilitator: No, for SADTU, is there a rival union that is keeping you on your toes?

Respondent: Yes there is, we call them a rival union because we are sixty thousand members and they are nineteen thousand members but they are working together and when it comes to negotiations, when it comes to chamber, SADTU represents membership directly, but these rival unions there is NATU, NAPTOSA, SOU and PSA, the four unions have come together they call themselves CTU-ATU (Combined Trade Union –

Autonomous Trade Union), so that they can bargain for their members, their membership is shrinking. We have a recruitment strategy and programme, which is making them shrink. What we are doing through these programmes I have highlighted, we are no longer recruiting by going school to school, but what we do in order for us to deal with these rival unions, we develop a campaign, develop a programme, engage the employer, we go to members, for example if you want to target Clerks, we will call cluster meetings of Clerks together, we will go there and sit down with them and list all their issues and then go and engage the employer and negotiate, we call them all there and then report back as we are reporting back we make them fill in forms, it is working well that's why we have changed the strategy. The door to door, visiting a member, in 2009 I used to do that, I used to cover the whole province crisscrossing, we would go to about twenty schools but come back with four forms, so we felt best change the strategy. We now do targeting recruitment, we take a programme, we listen to those workers, we go to the department, we resolve those issues and we call them in and give a report and they sign the forms, that is how we work. They still have more members, all of them combined have close to 26000 membership, but we are saying we want to deal with them because we want to finish them once and for all so that now we have one union which is representing the interests of teachers and education workers in general, that is what we are aiming for.

Facilitator: Any closing words maybe?

Respondent: No, what one will see as we talk about challenges, the trade union movement is facing a challenge because now you have a crop of, especially starting with organizers and also going to union leadership, there are very few leaders who are now selfless, if comrades work for unions and they are also in unions, they are there

because they want to benefit, what is there for me, also these internal squabbles in unions are also retarding membership growth, we tend now to forget about focusing on membership service. Why are we here, that's the first question, why am I in a union, who is the person that I must service, there's a problem there. I think another one is a question of the representation of members when it comes to going to employers, what is now happening, when leaders represent members they forget one basic principle, to whose interest am I here, because whatever I do, our engagement with the employer, workers must benefit, for the interest of workers at all cost, that's the basic principle, if we can focus on that we will always grow. That is why in our province we are growing although we are not growing the way we want, especially if our site stewards, our shop leaders who are on the shop floor can always know that I represent members therefore the interest of the members must always be taken forward, it's still a problem, but if we can do that our members can be happy and they can also achieve through this. There can be growth of membership, because one thing at Cosatu we have a 2015 plan of having by 2014, 4 million members, we are far away from that, we are still 2 million. What has happened in terms of organizing, what one has learned in the process, within our own union as well, we have sat down with the top leadership, especially with the Provincial Secretary, Deputy Secretary and the Chairperson and other comrades in the PWC. We felt that no, seemingly lower level comrades need to be taught mobilization skills, how to mobilize, how to organize, if maybe we can also focus on that one as well, maybe there can be a change and an improvement in terms of servicing of membership and also representation of members in terms of membership growth. Those are some of the things I can say.

Facilitator: Thanks very much for your time.

Respondent: Thank you as well.

END OF TAPE.

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