

2017 | Annual Report | 2017



The Chairperson's Report

The LRS produces research and facilitates educational processes for trade union development in South Africa and on the continent. The LRS is privileged to work with unions and NGOs in South Africa, Africa and globally.

Going into 2017, the LRS board consisted of four members and the executive director as an ex officio member.

S Duffy (SACCAWU)
 T Elsley (LRS)
 B Ngcobo (NUM)
 N Siyana (NUMSA)

Following the 2017 annual general meeting of the LRS, the board was restored to six trade union directors plus the executive director.

The board met four times in 2017 in fulfilment of its oversight function of the organisation, in addition to the annual general meeting.

	23 March 2017	31 March 2017	10 August 2017	22 August 2017 (AGM)	5 December 2017
S Duffy (SACAWU)	x	√	x	x	n/a
Trenton Elsley (LRS)	√	√	√	√	√
E Kweleta (NEHAWU)	n/a	n/a	n/a	√	x
M Lemekaya (SATAWU)	n/a	n/a	n/a	√	x
Bhekani Ngcobo (NUM)	√	√	√	√	√
Danver Roman (DENOSA)	n/a	n/a	n/a	√	√
Nyaniso Siyana (NUMSA).	√	√	√	x	√
Z Tebekeana (SACCAWU)	n/a	n/a	n/a	√	√

Knowledge is too important to leave in the hands of the bosses

The board of directors of the LRS are not remunerated. I wish to thank the board for their excellent service to the organisation in providing an oversight role and grounding the organisation in service to the trade union movement.

Allow me to remind us of our own criteria for elected directors to the LRS board of directors;

As far as possible, Directors as a team should be cross-representative of the member organisations of LRS – different federations, different sectors (or at least some private sector, some public sector) and different size unions.

As far as possible, the Board as a whole should have a gender balance.

The LRS also tries to keep a balance between elected worker leaders and officials of trade unions on the board of directors.

These values, gender equality, participation, representation and democracy, never go out of fashion.

I thank the board of the LRS, the staff of the LRS, the member unions of the LRS and the many friends of the LRS within trade unions, for their continued dedication to the cause of workers and for ensuring that this labour support organisation, one of very few in South Africa, can make a contribution to the trade union movement now and in the time to come.

Nyaniso Siyana (NUMSA)
Cape Town, July 2018

Executive Director's Message

In 2017, we had the privilege of providing support and vital resources to almost 5000 individuals in the trade union movement. We worked with over half of that number (2700 individuals) directly through workshops and similar activities. The programmes of the Labour Research Service provide access to quality information and education that trade unions need to best renew their bargaining and organising strategies and to strengthen, diversify and sustain their organisations.



This Annual Report is our opportunity to express our gratitude for your generosity. It is a chance for you to read about your impact on our 15 member unions who represent over 2 million workers in South Africa.

The Labour Research Service is supporting the core functions of trade unions such as collective bargaining and organising and helping to link unions with other role-players and constituencies. Our work is influencing policies that will enable workers to fully claim their rights. We are working with global union federations in building trade unions and trade union networks around multinational companies in Africa. We are influencing approaches to gender equality and gender-based violence within communities along with unions in the health and education sectors in South Africa and Africa. We are working to develop new layers of worker leaders within trade unions and in so doing to support the reproduction of these important organs of civil society.

We value the trust you have placed in us as we stand together in service of the labour movement and its effort to deepen democracy in its structures and the society. We thank all who have supported our mission, whether that contribution was financial, political or simply a willingness to engage. Your contributions enable us to reach thousands of workers and their representatives and to build their power to meet the challenges of the day. On behalf of our constituencies and to workers around the world, we express our gratitude.

Yours in solidarity

Trenton Elsley | Executive Director | Labour Research Service

WHAT THEY SAID

"The Union is impressed by this relationship and commitment to a common course - that of being at the service of the workers. The STRATCOM very much appreciated your work which we've used to inform the outcomes of our reflections, debates and deliberations. Thank you very much!." (Official)

"The LRS provides very useful information and ideas for bargaining and organising that we can't find anywhere else. The LRS has helped us negotiate better outcomes." (Trade Union Negotiator)

"Because of the work of the LRS, I now understand a lot of issues that management says, and I know how to respond going forward. We need to organise further and to continue learning." (Trade union negotiator)



"The LRS is helping us learn and engage with workers in the workplace. They support us in what we do and are building our confidence." (Shop Steward)

"The LRS has been an important contributor to building company networks and alliances in Africa and allow us to succeed from a solid empirical base." (Shop Steward)

"The LRS has not departed from its vision and mission. It's an asset to the trade union movement." (LRS Board Chairperson)

"The LRS helps us work with women and women's issues inside the union and in the workplace, the LRS has helped cultivate new layers of women leaders of tomorrow." (Worker leader, Gender Coordinator)

"LRS produces useful resources that can't be found anywhere else." (Union Organiser)

"Our visit to the LRS was fruitful. We have learned much about how to build a similar organisation in Albania. Your experience around collective bargaining and MNCs is particularly interesting." (International LSO)

Knowledge is too important to leave in the hands of the bosses

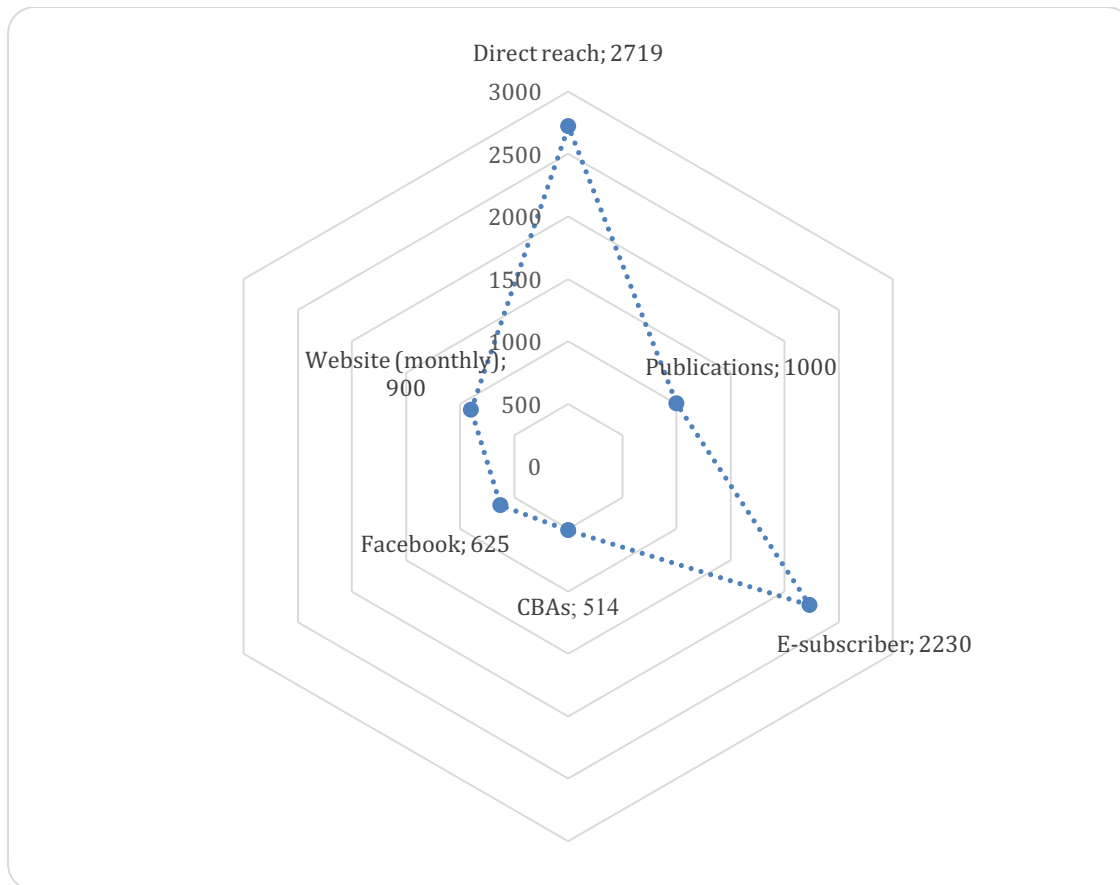
OUR IMPACT

The LRS seeks to support the trade union movement in developing leadership and new layers of worker leaders with the skills, consciousness and confidence required to effectively participate in deepening democracy in their workplaces, organisations and society. We engaged trade unions across federation lines to highlight the shared interests and experiences within the labour movement. We create spaces for reflection and learning and provide a range of support resources related to bargaining, organising and gender equality. Our resources support trade union processes of organisation and representation, helping to shape the present and the future labour movement.



The figure below shows that the dominant form of engagement of the LRS is through “direct” activities such as workshops and other forums where we engage directly with our constituency. This is arguably the most powerful form of engagement allowing for a deeper exchange that holds greater possibilities for influence and change than do more indirect methods such as the distribution of information and research.





Our e-subscriber list of over 2200 people is the next largest platform for connecting with our constituency and subscribers receive regular resource mailings over email. These resources include inflation and wage settlement updates along with substantive articles on the subject of bargaining and organising.

We estimate that we circulated publications to over 1000 individuals. The web statistics quoted here are historical monthly figures and will be updated once we are able to gather data from our newly revamped website. Our revitalized Facebook platform has over 600 followers. We were able to collect over 500 collective agreements for 2017 from trade unions and other sources. This last is an important outcome and one which contributes to our unique database of minimum wages in South Africa.

We use a framework for impact analysis that interrogates three key indicators of influence on our target groups.

- 1) Our target groups have increased knowledge (of their rights and their context)
- 2) Our target groups have increased capacity to mobilise to claim rights and make gains
- 3) Our target groups have increased influence in the context within which they work

Knowledge is too important to leave in the hands of the bosses

Our target groups have increased knowledge of their rights in context

We supported trade unions to deepen engagement with several legislative and policy mechanisms for improving working conditions, particularly for vulnerable workers.

LRS worked to popularise the national minimum wage, its form and its implications for workers and their organisations. The LRS produces and circulates a range of information resources, including its annual Bargaining Indicators, monthly Inflation Monitor and a suite of online tools to support trade union negotiators and other roleplayers.

LRS ONLINE TOOLS FOR WORKERS

For wages	www.lrs.org.za/award
For multinational companies	www.lrs.org.za/mnc
For agreements	www.lrs.org.za/agreed

Our target groups have an increased capacity to mobilise for the purposes of claiming their rights

It is our belief that our broad strategic goal of developing new layers of leadership in and around trade unions contributes to the ability of trade unions to mobilise for worker rights now and in the future.

Much of our programme work, whether it be in the field of gender, collective bargaining or organising is geared towards empowering worker leaders to map their constituencies, identify and understand the needs of their constituency and to consider ways of facilitating the realisation of those needs.

We worked with trade unions, NGOs, communities and activists with an emphasis on gender-based violence (Letsema). Our work with a multi-community forum in the Vaal that focuses on eliminating gender-based violence in the area has evolved to the point where the main role-players are in the process of forming an organisation that can take the work forward in future. This is an important indicator of success and is an example of another strategic goal of the LRS – to empower those that face the challenge to respond to the challenge.

We provide support to several trade union networks in different economic sectors lead by global union federations, including UNI Global Union, the International Transport Federation and IndustriAll.

Increased influence in context

The LRS presented its collective bargaining research to a gathering of almost 400 commissioners and feedback from participants indicated that this was immensely useful information on a topic which they have to deal with regularly, but on which they have few if any resources to draw on. These commissioners of the CCMA have a better understanding of collective bargaining in the context of processes of conciliation, mediation and arbitration of industrial disputes.

The LRS entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation & Arbitration (CCMA) to share research. We see these developments as a stepping stone to an increasingly strategic partnership with this important institution of industrial relations in South Africa.

The LRS was commissioned by the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) to partner in their roadshow in 2017, which reached hundreds of public service representatives. The PSCBC accounts for over a million trade union members in total. Several hundred representatives to the PSCBC in 6 different provinces have a better understanding of collective bargaining benchmarks and dynamics in the current period.

The LRS is partnering with the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII) and the Southern African Social Policy Research Institute (SASPRI) along with the Department of Social Development and Wits University to develop a decent standard of living index. This innovative work seeks to produce a measureable benchmark of what constitutes a decent standard of living. This work could have profound implications for industrial relations and social policy development alike.



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We partnered with local, regional and international organisations who share our goal of encouraging solidarity, a broader political economy among worker leaders, and research on issues that strengthen the influence of labour and civil society. These partners include, but are not limited to, UNI Global Union (UNI), the International Transport Federation (ITF), Education International (EI), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

The summary of the programmes and projects of the LRS which follows provides further insight into our work and our influence.



OUR PROGRAMMES

CREATING CULTURES OF GENDER EQUALITY

Our gender programme consolidated its work with trade unions, government departments, NGOs, community-based organisations and activists. We've successfully experimented with multi-stakeholder forums as a way of facilitating more dynamic discussions, learning, inclusiveness and building linkages.

Promoting gender equality in Southern Africa –

With our support, the Labour Rights for Women Campaign (LRW), has established functional campaign teams in three provinces in South Africa. We continue to facilitate supportive spaces where trade union activists share their learning, challenges and experiment with feminist education and organising methodologies, and can access networking support. Our work has given activists more confidence, authority and power to create cultures of gender equality in the trade union and workplace. The activists we're engaging with are taking up actions to address gender-based violence, improve maternity protection in the workplace, ensure decent work for vulnerable workers and defend the rights of LGBTI workers. Gender equality and LGBTI rights have been integrated into the decent work programmes in nine provinces in South Africa. Young women are a core target group for us, and we've worked hard to attract them to participate in campaign activities in order to start a conversation with the next generation.

Working together with communities to end gender-based violence

Our work around ways of ending gender-based violence in the Vaal in Gauteng Province brought the perspectives of many stakeholders. The results are promising – there are notable shifts in gender-related attitudes, norms and behaviour that frustrate better empowerment and conditions for women and girls. Our work is beginning to transform deeply rooted social norms on a small scale in the Vaal Triangle. Going forward, we are excited to support the piloting community to take forward the lessons to a different community.

Working with teacher unions to end school-related Gender Based Violence

We've successfully supported seven teacher trade unions in southern and East Africa to include School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) as a focus in union gender policies and to develop local safe schools policies. We continue to mentor these unions as they try to sustain the policies. This work will extend to West Africa in 2018.

Ending gender-based violence in the health sector

Through our support to the Health Sector Trade Unions and community formations, workers in the sector are claiming the right to have a health system free of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Participants in our pilot project at Meadowlands Clinic are now sharing what they learnt in a way that inspires and supports efforts to address GBV in the health system more broadly. We continue to engage the Health Department around a sustainable health sector policy on GBV.

TRANSFORMING CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Our work included company research, presentations to shop steward networks, financial and online information via the Multinational Company (MNC) and AGREED databases.

We served as a resource to a number of global union networks including Shoprite Checkers Alliance, Massmart Walmart Alliance, Pick n Pay Alliance, AngloGold Ashanti Alliance and the Southern African Energy Network (SAEN).

We share our information and research, and methods of creating, accessing and sharing information with the networks.

Our publications in 2017 included the MNC Trends Report and Directors' Fees 2016, a summary of executive pay at about 90 listed companies on the JSE.

Our work saw unions increase knowledge on bargaining, organising and company operations globally. Unions within GUFs are reporting that they have confidence to confront management and claim their rights.

Our work expanded cooperation between GUF affiliates through mobilising resources and bringing representatives of different affiliates together to share experiences.

We deepened work on wages and related policy.

Together with selected company networks, we've started exploring concepts of global value chains and how trade unions can renew their organising and bargaining strategies to tackle inequalities within and along value chains.

SUPPORTING TRADE UNION COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND ORGANISING

Collective Bargaining Support has been a focus of LRS since its inception in 1986. We continue to create and facilitate new spaces for a broad layer of union representatives to reflect, share and learn about topics of bargaining and organising.

Demand for our support and resources by trade unions has remained strong. We provided a great deal of ad hoc information and research support for collective bargaining to trade unions. We provided resources including trade union-specific bargaining reports, Inflation Monitor and maintained our open access online database of wage bargaining, the Actual Wage Rates Database (AWARD).

We presented Wage Trends to the Public Sector Collective Bargaining Council Round Table Discussion under the theme *Collective Bargaining and Dispute resolutions*. About 688 (officials, shop stewards, directors and government officials) delegates attended the round table discussion.

We presented Wage Trends and Collective Bargaining Strategy and Tactics at the inaugural 2017 Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) Shop Stewards and Officials Conference. An estimated 400 delegates attended the workshop. We've signed a memorandum of understanding with the CCMA.

We presented wage trends, conditions of employment and performance of companies in the construction sector to about 60 participants.

Our work around the national minimum wage is one of the few efforts to stimulate discussion on the subject within trade unions

The programme continues to elevate the level of participation of women in its activities and to work closely with the Gender Programme

We are collaborating with SPII and SASPRI to quantify a decent standard of living in South Africa and to bring a fresh perspective to the living wage debate and a new benchmark for socio-economic policy making.

COOPERATION & PARTNERSHIPS

We are building strong links in various networks, including Government Departments and Commissions, International Solidarity Support Organisations, Community-Based Organisations, Non-governmental Organisations, Global Union Federations, academic institutions and the International Labour Organisation. We continued to cultivate new relationships with partners working in our thematic areas. We engage with a network of individuals who are able to contribute to LRS programme delivery and bolster our capacity.



FINANCE

We are pleased to report that the LRS had an unqualified independent financial audit for the year under review, 2017.

The LRS received financial support from multiple sources in the form of grant income, contract or commissioned income, membership fees and other cost recovery agreements.

DGB Bildungswerk Bund
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Trade Union Competence Centre
Gender at Work
IndustriAll
International Federation of Workers Education Associations
Joint Gender Fund
Olof Palme Centre
Oxfam South Africa
Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council
Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung
UNI Global Union

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

The LRS is union-controlled, with 15 member trade unions representing over two million workers in South Africa. We work across federation lines, creating and supporting spaces that are inclusive and which emphasise commonality.

Our board is elected at an annual general meeting. Our board members are a mix of trade union worker leaders and officials. There were 6 elected directors of the LRS as at the end of 2017 and the executive director as ex-officio director.

Board Chair – Siyana, N (NUMSA); Members - Tebekweana, Z. (SACCAWU); Roman D. L. (DENOSA); Ngcobo, B. (NUM); Elsley T. H. (LRS); Kweleta, E. (NEHAWU); Lemekaya, D. M. (SATAWU).

The table below describes member attendance at board meetings in the year under review.

		Meeting Dates			
		23-Mar-17	31-Mar-17	10-Aug-17	05-Dec-17
Trenton Elsley (M)	LRS	YES	YES	YES	YES
Bhekani Paulos Ngcobo (M)	NUM	YES	YES	YES	YES
Nyaniso Siyana (M)	NUMSA	YES	YES	YES	NO
Stephanie Duffy (F)	SACCAWU	NO	YES	NO	N/A
Danver Leonard Roman (M)	DENOSA	N/A	N/A	N/A	YES
Zukiswa Tebekweana (F)	SACCAWU	N/A	N/A	N/A	YES
Eric Kweleta (M)	NEHAWU	N/A	N/A	N/A	NO
David Madoda Lemekaya (M)	SATAWU	N/A	N/A	N/A	NO

We are immensely grateful to our board of directors, who serve without remuneration, and their organisations. The board provide the LRS with a grounding in the trade union movement and of course a critical oversight role.

OUR PEOPLE

The LRS has a core staff of seven individuals, including two new staff members whom we welcomed in 2017. We include Gloria and Michael of Michael Hands Accountancy (MHA), who we consider part of the family, although they are not employed by the LRS.



From left to right starting at top left: Nina Benjamin, George Mthethwa, Marie Daniel, Nosipho Twala, Trenton Elsley, Nelly Nyagah, Gloria Maritasi (MHA), Nomonde Bhunguza, Michael Hands (MHA).