

LABOUR RESEARCH SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Community House
41 Salt River Road, Salt River
Cape Town

0214681100
lrs@lrs.org.za
www.lrs.org.za

The Vision of the Labour Research Service

A labour movement that is part of a vibrant civil society that promotes egalitarianism

The Mission of the Labour Research Service

Conduct research, provide information and facilitate participatory education for trade union development.

The Labour Research Service is a non-profit membership-based labour support organisation with fifteen, member trade unions in South Africa.

The Labour Research Service works with trade unions across industries and federations. The Labour Research Service partners with global union federations, solidarity support organisations, the International Labour Organisation, government departments, academic institutions, community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations.

The Chairperson's Report



The global pandemic (Covid-19) has brought decisive changes to the context. Very few among us anticipated these changes.

The 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Labour Research Service, held in 2020, reflected on these changes and what it meant for trade union organisation of workers and trade union representation of workers.

An important idea in the Report of the 2020 AGM is that we must advance our thinking about the ability of trade unions to communicate and organise in new ways under new conditions. The global pandemic showed us what it is like to be locked out of

the workplace all at once. The global pandemic showed us how difficult it is to reach workers when our traditional ways of communicating are taken away.

There has been an uneven uptake of online communication tools by the trade union movement in South Africa. There is an opportunity to build the skills we need to use information and communications for bargaining and organising.

The Labour Research Service held its first ever virtual board meetings in 2020. On 01 September 2020, The Labour Research Service held its first online Annual General Meeting in its history. Four members were elected from member unions to serve on the board of directors of the Labour Research Service.

There was some continuity for the Labour Research Service as two directors were re-elected, Funeka Klaas (SACCAWU) and Nyaniso Siyana (NUMSA). The two new directors were Clement Marule (NEHAWU) and Bongani Matana (SATAWU).

The report to the 34th annual general meeting of the Labour Research Service will show how the Labour Research Service is working to create practical online resources for trade unions. These are resources for trade unionists that can be accessed anywhere and at any time.

The majority of workers are only able to access online information, resources and activities through a mobile phone. We must take this into account when developing and implementing our bargaining and organising strategies.

Nothing can replace a tradition of workers meeting in person to organise for a better future. At the same time, a trade union movement that can mobilise different methods for organising, can only be stronger.

Nyaniso Siyana (NUMSA)

The Executive Director's Report



The work of the Labour Research Service is research, support and learning for trade union development.

The Labour Research Service in 2020

- (01) Supporting collective bargaining and organising
- (02) Creating online resources for worker leaders
- (03) Building cultures of gender equality in the workplace, in the union and in the community
- (04) Transforming Corporate Governance
- (05) Understanding a Just Transition and what it means for trade unions
- (06) Working with Trade Unions in Africa on the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement
- (07) Building national, regional and international networks and alliances for the working class
- (08) Cultivating a community of worker activism, locally and globally

The Labour Research Service measures its influence in three ways

1. We ask if our partners have increased knowledge of their rights.
2. We ask if our partners have an increased capacity to mobilise to claim those rights.
3. We ask if our partners have increased their influence in the context within which they work.

Highlights of our programme work in 2020/2021

We have taken our **online resources for trade unions** to the next level. Unions and workers have easy access to information and resources that help them to do their work.

The National Skills Fund for worker education and research supported the Labour Research Service to create **a unique set of resources for trade unions**. Stronger bargaining partners make for better outcomes to social dialogue.

The Negotiator's Guide is for working class leaders - the shop steward, the organiser, and the negotiator that wish to organise and represent workers in a world of work that has changed profoundly over time and which continues to change.

This guide is for negotiators looking to renew their strategy and approach in the face of the ongoing reorganization of work, retrenchments and restructuring, and the increasing precariousness of being a worker.

This guide is for negotiators looking for ways to inspire workers to believe in and exercise their individual and collective power in the struggle for social and economic justice.

What is in the Negotiator's Guide?

1. An Introduction to Collective Bargaining
2. Using the Labour Laws to Support Bargaining Strategies
3. A Framework for Collective Agreements
4. An Introduction to Wage Bargaining
5. Bargaining for Gender Equity
6. Negotiating for Inclusivity and against Discrimination
7. Negotiating Restructuring and Retrenchment
8. Organising and Bargaining in Value Chains

9. Negotiating the Future of Work
10. Thinking about Recruitment and Organising
11. Thinking about Coalitions and Solidarity

Bargaining Indicators Online

The Labour Research Service created a suite of resources for trade unions that includes articles and applications for bargaining and organising.

The Labour Research Service Wage Calculator tells a negotiator how much a percentage increase is as an amount of money and helps a negotiator understand the effect of inflation on a wage increase. This web-based application symbolises our commitment to co-authoring worker friendly online technologies with trade unions.

An Online Library of Collective Agreements

Trade unions can use collective agreements for education, research and strategy development.

Minimum Wages in South Africa

The Labour Research Service tracks wage bargaining outcomes and minimum wages in particular in South Africa.

South African Multinational Companies (MNCs)

The Labour Research Service tracks a shortlist of trends at about 80 multinational companies.

The LRS consistently published **articles** on important topics in bargaining and organising.

Resource and strategy support for collective bargaining & organising

The Labour Research Service provides collective bargaining resource and strategy support to more than 50 trade unions nationally and regionally.

The Labour Research Service tracks bargaining outcome in South Africa and feeds this back to its member unions.

The Executive Director of the Labour Research Service, Trenton Elsley, is a Commissioner for organised labour on the National Minimum Wage Commission.

The Labour Research Service provides bargaining support to many unions and to many different role-players within trade unions. We provided bargaining strategy inputs to our 15 trade union members and the Collective Bargaining Conferences of COSATU and FEDUSA.

A prominent trade union in South Africa adopted a new 'Rand value' approach to wage negotiations (instead of a percentage approach) for the benefit of members.

We worked with trade union affiliates of the Building and Woodworkers International in the construction sector in Africa to renew their shop floor approaches to organising and representing workers in multinational companies.

We have seen an increase in requests to participate in trade union, government, civil society and media spaces.

The Labour Research Service continued to partner with the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute and the Southern African Social Policy Research Unit to develop a measure of a decent standard of living in South Africa. This work holds great potential for trade unions in social dialogue.



The Labour Research Service provided insights through various media outlets in 2020.

The Labour Research Service works to strengthen women's leadership in trade unions

The Labour Research Service partnered with the International Labour Organisation (Southern Africa) to develop a policy brief that provides a clearer understanding of a feminist perspective on women's economic empowerment in Africa.

In partnership with Oxfam South Africa, we developed a curriculum for the Feminist Political Activist School, which launches in 2021. The Feminist Political Activist School will strengthen the economic autonomy of women and gender non-binary people through improving their capacity for engagement in political, social and economic life toward a sustainable and equitable world.

Women trade unionists in the trade union affiliates of the Building and Wood Workers International (BWI), the International Trade

Union Confederation (ITUC) and National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) developed a greater understanding of feminist leadership in a trade union context and an appreciation of online education participatory methods.

We co-developed an online women's leadership survey tool in partnership with Rutgers University's Center for Innovation in Worker Organization, Education International (EI) and ITUC. The new online tool, which will be tested and validated by trade unions in 2021, offers a more participatory research approach for renewing women's transformative leadership

Responding to gender-based violence in educational settings

We view school-related gender-based violence as a threat to achieving inclusive and quality education for all.

Nine participating trade unions in the SRGBV initiative in Africa continue to profile their roles in addressing gender-based violence in schools through union processes. The unions include the South African Democratic Trade Union (SADTU), National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa, Gambia Teachers' Union, Sierra Leone Teachers' Union and Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia.

We offered online mentoring support to the union activists to continue building on their accomplishments so far.

Our community response to gender-based violence

We have established a sustainable activist network of individuals and organisations in the Vaal in Gauteng Province through our collective impact initiative called Letsema.

The Labour Research Service supports this activist network to act independently and in a coordinated way to shift norms around gender-based violence in their communities. In 2020, they experimented with new platforms - including online – to provide emotional and psychological support during the Covid-19 health crisis, and to maintain the norm-shifting work for ending gender-based violence in communities in the Vaal.

Our response to gender-based violence in the health sector

Learnings from our pilot collective impact initiative for reducing GBV in the health sector are a topic of discussion among union officials and worker leaders and activists.

During the novel coronavirus pandemic, we supported nurses at the Meadowlands Clinic to maintain the gains made in a recent partnership with HOSPERSA and Gender at Work which improved conditions for clinic staff and helped improve the relationship between the clinic and the local community members.



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We'd seen less violence in the clinic due to the social action project, which helped us manage the potentially volatile environment in our community at the start of the Covid-19 crisis.

Baby Moipane, HOSPERSA shop steward at Meadowlands Clinic.

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion in workplace

A core group of trade union gender activists from COSATU, FEDUSA and NACTU recognise and challenge their heteronormative behaviours and practices and are sensitised and committed to advocating for LGBT rights in the workplace.

We are seeing more inclusive trade union gender programmes that include LGBT rights.



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We learned more about the actions required to bring accountability in workplaces. FEDUSA must relentlessly pursue workplace inclusion to inspire and spur our affiliates to act.

Brenda Modise, Social Policy Officer at FEDUSA.

Gender coordinators in COSATU and FEDUSA affiliates are advocating for the inclusion of workers, compliance by companies and agency for workers. They are evaluating LGBT provisions in the union Constitution and Gender Policy and collective bargaining agreements. They are using social media and ILO conventions in their advocacy work.



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The Other Foundation is excited to support LRS in creating spaces for trade unions and their LGBTI members to discuss diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Promoting the rights of LGBTI+ people must be a priority issue in our society.

Virginia Magwaza, Movement Building Officer, The Other Foundation

We piloted a social justice transformation online course for Wits University Transformation and Employment Equity Office in its efforts to transform gender equity at the university.

The Labour Research Service is affiliated to the **International Federation of Workers' Education Associations** (IFWEA), which is an important pillar of our strategy of building dialogue between unions and NGOs in Africa and globally. We continue to collaborate with IFWEA and hosted an online women's leadership course for the Building and Wood Workers International.

Our expertise and methodologies for addressing gender equality issues in the world of work are recognised through various established networks, including United Nations Women.

Keeping South African multinational companies accountable

Labour Research Service continued to support the capacity of UNI Global Union affiliates in Africa to monitor and influence the activities of South African multinational companies. Unions are increasingly working to ensure that MNCs comply with existing Global Framework Agreements and the Decent Work Agenda.

UNI Global union affiliates are engaging large multinational retail companies in a more coordinated way and pushing for better conditions of work in the African countries in which they operate.

Retail trade unions in seven African countries participating in the UNI Shop Stewards Alliance are better equipped with information about how the retail sector is changing in Africa, and how this will affect the workers they represent. We've seen increased information and advice sharing via WhatsApp platforms and this has solidified solidarity values across borders.

SINECOSSE, the Mozambique retail union, has practical information to draw on in their own language (Portuguese). We translated and made accessible the information to ensure that all unions can benefit from having the right tools to engage with MNCs.

Labour Research Service is lead work in the area of automation and technology in the African retail sector and the impact on trade unions and workers.

Retail unions in Swaziland (SCAWU) and Tanzania (TUICO) are reviewing their constitutions and policies to expand the definition of sectors to be inclusive of workers they perceived to be outside their coverage in the past.

We continue to promote and facilitate trade union engagement with our financial literacy resource to assist them in understanding basic company reporting terms. This important resource helps develop the internal capacity of unions to use the financial information of companies in bargaining and advocacy activities.

The new negotiator, the new collective and a new bargain

A core group of worker activists and leaders in both the formal and informal sectors continued to share their experiences of organising and representing workers in the present and future contexts. Over the past three years, the Labour Research Service has collaborated with trade unions and formations confronting precarious work to delve into the everyday experiences of workers, the experience of alienation in precarious workplaces and the actions we can take as individuals in collectives to bring change.





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After attending the LRS workshops, I dealt with the backlog of workers' cases quickly. I learned more about labour laws and specifically how to apply the sectoral determinations.

Aphaeus Seema, NUMSA



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We got new ideas on organising workers in the informal sector from being in the same space with negotiators and organisers in some of the biggest trade unions in the country. We are first connected as workers and we can use these connections to build solidarity across the economy.

Eva Mokoena (African Reclaimers Organisation) and Joyce Zodumo (Johannesburg Informal Traders Platform)

Negotiating International Trade

The Labour Research Service is working with the ITUC Africa to build capacity for the trade union movement in Africa to engage with and influence the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). Our work seeks to strengthen the capacity of the trade union movement to engage on matters relating to the AfCFTA and is initially focused on five African countries, while firmly rooted in an Africa-wide development perspective.

Just Transition

The Labour Research Service partnered with IndustriALL global union to develop a trade union perspective on Just Transition for affiliates in the energy sector in sub-Saharan Africa.

Labour Research Service - Selected Resources and Publications (2020)

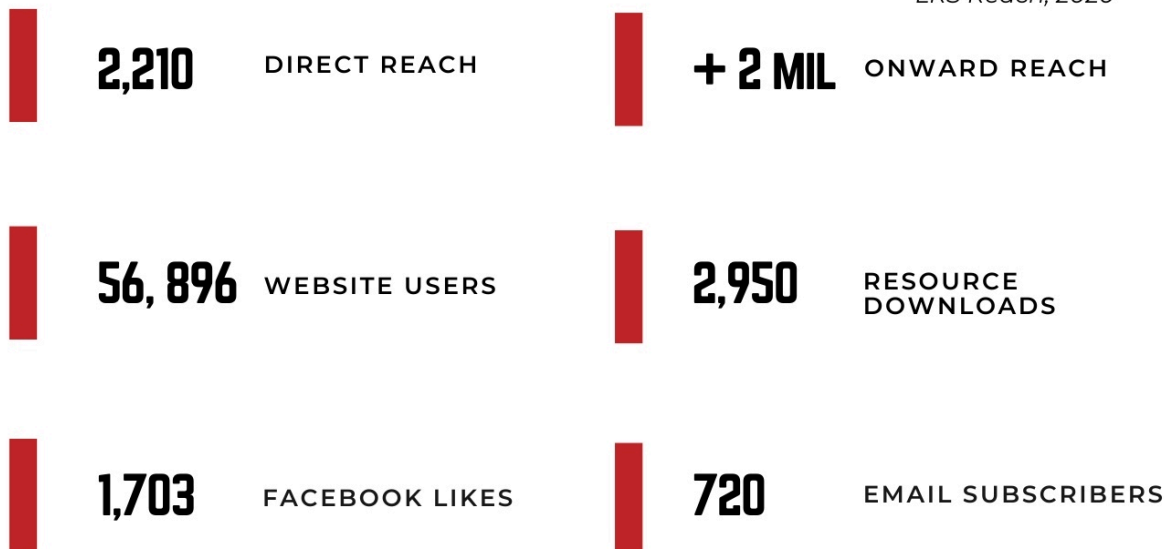
- Inflation Monitor: A guide for trade union negotiators (Monthly)
- Bargaining Benchmarks: A resource for trade union negotiators (Quarterly)
- Bargaining Benchmarks: Directors' Fees Report (Annual)
- MNC Trends Report: Provides key information concerning the performance, operations and governance of JSE-listed South African multinational companies operating in Africa
- Negotiators' Handbook: A guide to negotiating in a changing workplace
- The Future of Retail in Africa: A study on the future of Africa's retail sector that provides a way forward for workers and their trade union representatives
- Bargaining for Gender Equity: A step-by-step approach to bargaining for gender equity in the workplace
- Strategies to End School-Related Gender-Based Violence: The experience of education unions in Africa
- The South African Minimum Wage Database (AWARD): A unique repository of collective agreements that tracks minimum wages, providing unions with empirical evidence to inform collective bargaining. There are 1687 wage agreements on the database located at www.LabourResearchService.org.za/award
- The online library of collective bargaining agreements (AGREED); online repository of collective agreements suitable for research and education. There are currently 963 agreements on the database located at www.LabourResearchService.org.za/agreed

- The South African Multinational Company Database (MNC); at a click of a button users can access the financial information for over 80 JSE-listed companies, including executive pay.
- Defining a just transition for sub-Saharan energy workers

The Reach of Labour Research Service



LRS Reach, 2020



Direct reach: 2,210

This is an estimate of the reach of the Labour Research Service through direct means such as workshops and presentations.

Onward reach: 15 member trade unions with a combined membership of over 2 million. The Labour Research Service

reaches another 30 unions in South Africa and the rest of Africa across all its projects and programmes.

Email subscribers: 720 trade union officials and worker representatives receive Labour Research Service resources through email. The Labour Research Service actively manages this list and it is limited to active subscribers.

Website stats 2020

Users: 56, 896

Page views: 92,270

Resource downloads: 2,950

Social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook)

We have an increasing number of fans, followers and engagement. Social media has helped us to; reach a broader audience and distribute Labour Research Service resources and information more widely; maintain Labour Research Service credibility as a resource for trade unions and workers; raise the profile and visibility of Labour Research Service among other related organisations, including the media, research outfits and the general public.

Financial Management & Sustainability

The board of directors notes that the independent audit of the Labour Research Service is unqualified and provides a picture of a financially accountable and financially sustainable non-profit organisation.

Total revenue for the year was significantly down on the previous year, but so too was expenditure. This can be attributed to the end of cycle of one large project.

The organisation continued to aggressively manage costs, while acknowledging that income remains the decisive indicator of sustainability.

The Labour Research Service remained true to its core mandate while exploring new ways of partnering and opening up new areas of work.

The Labour Research Service continued to build networks for action with its member unions, Gender at Work, community-based organisations (like Letsema in the Vaal), unions and workers in the health sector, unions and workers in the education sector, unions and workers in the retail sector in Africa, Oxfam, the Solidarity Centre, UNICEF, Solidar, IFWEA, ITUC Africa, research partners in five countries around Africa, Community House in Cape Town, Third World Network, Trade Union Federation LO Sweden, COSATU, FEDUSA, Rutgers University, University of the Witwatersrand and global union federations such as UNI, the Building and Woodworkers International, Education International and the International Labour Organisation.

The Labour Research Service recognises its governance structure, its staff and its networks as its greatest assets in a challenging international funding environment.

Staff & Associates

Trenton Elsley (Executive Director), Nina Benjamin (Organisational Development); George Mthethwa (Collective Bargaining Support); Nosipho Twala (Gender Equality); Salomé Teuteberg (Transforming Corporate Governance); Nelly Nyagah (Communications). Nancy Castro-Leal; Marie Daniel (Associates)

Contracting Partners

Michael Hands Accountancy (Financial Management); Tenacious Digital (Website development); Gap Design (Design & Layout), Southern Hemisphere (Monitoring and Evaluation); The Coding Ground (Database development); DVT (Database development); C2M Chartered Accountants (Auditors); Community House (Premises); Resolve ITS (Information Technology).

Interns

Ifedotun Aina (PhD in Economics); Simon Rakei (Masters in Tax Sociology); Nkululeko Tsoketsi (Bachelor of Commerce – Economics and Finance).

Funders and Partners

The fifteen member unions of the Labour Research Service
The Building and Woodworkers International
The Department of Higher Education and the National Skills Fund
The Fredrich Ebert Stiftung – Trade Union Competency Centre for Southern Africa
Gender at Work
The International Labour Organisation
The International Trade Union Confederation
The National Union of Mineworkers
The Olof Palme Centre
The Other Foundation
Rutgers University
The South African Municipal Workers Union
The Trade Union Solidarity Centre of Finland (SASK - Suomen Ammattiliittojen Solidaarisuuskeskus)
The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)

The Labour Research Service in 2021

An underlying concern of the Labour Research Service remains supporting the trade union movement to respond to the ongoing informalisation of work and the challenge of organising and representing workers under these conditions.

The Labour Research Service will provide unique resources for trade union negotiators in South Africa and beyond.

The Labour Research Service will work against discrimination and for inclusive workplaces and unions.

The Labour Research Service will provide research and strategy support for trade unions organising at multinational companies in Africa.

The Labour Research Service will provide research and strategy support for the trade union movement in Africa to engage the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement.

The Labour Research Service will contribute to an understanding of the implications of the future of work for the future of trade unions.

The Labour Research Service will amplify its online resource offerings and approaches to servicing the trade union movement.

The LRS will experiment with information technology and data science as tools for the trade union movement.

The Labour Research Service frames its work - whether in the form of research, resource or education - as an effort to build and renew leadership at different levels within trade unions. The Labour Research Service views democratic trade unions that lead

themselves from within as fundamental to a movement that is able to meet the challenges of the day.

Trenton Elsley, Executive Director, Labour Research Service