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RENEWING WORKERS' EDUCATION – SYMPOSIUM

RESEARCHING WORK AND LEARNING CONFERENCE RWL 10

7 DECEMBER 2017

RHODES UNIVERSITY

# Presentation Outline

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- Case study of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU's) university based certificate programme for women unionists with an overtly transformative objective.
- Women's experience of the 3 year programme and subsequent 'plough back' to strengthen the union.
- Contrast and comparison to the meaning and application of workers' education for workers in the informal economy.

# Higher Certificate in Economic Development University of the Western Cape

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## Union's Objectives

- To enable women to understand gender theory and apply it to their economic, political and social experiences in order to change it.
- Building women's leadership to address women's issues at the workplace.
- To develop a second layer of women leaders and sustain it through mentorship.
- Building organizational capacity for decentralized paralegal membership service. (Regional Paralegal Teams)

## University's Objectives

- Building unionist's competence for good workplace relations.
- Adaptation of curriculum to union's needs
- Supporting unionists to meet assessment requirements.
  - Recognition of Prior Learning
  - Regional Tutorials
  - Workplace Learning Journal

Original CED Modules	Adapted Modules for NEHAWU
1. Communication and Information Management	Adapted content to focus on shopstewards' communication needs in their practice
2. Gender and Development	Gender and Development
3. Organisational Development. Looking at participants' organizations of origin.	OD in the trade union
4. Local Government ,Advocacy and Lobbying	Labour Practice A –Theory and Practice of Labour Law.
5. Development Economics1	Development Economics
6. Development Economics 2	Labour Practice B – Dispute Resolution
7. Training Design and Facilitation of Community Development Interventions	Training Design and Facilitation of union/ workplace based interventions
8. Workplace Learning through the structured application of learning from the course in their community and organizational context.	Workplace Learning
9. Research Project	Research Project on HIV/Aids or Sexual Harassment in the workplace.

# Conclusions

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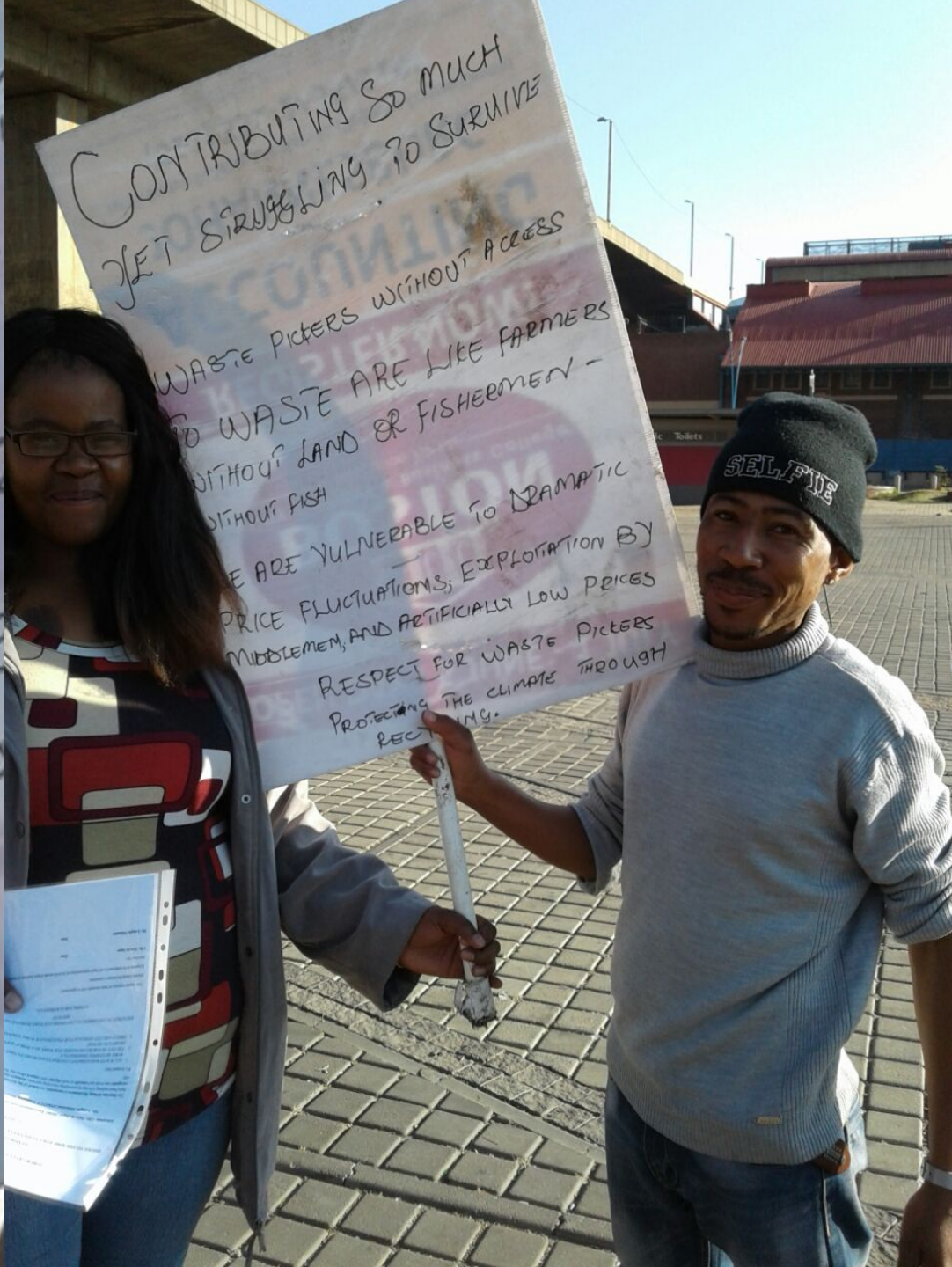
- Despite the adaptation of the curriculum to address the union's objectives; the university's commitment of time and resources and women's hard work to succeed – plough back to build union organisation was almost impossible.
- Academic success was paramount to the women as a validation of their potential.
- Agency to plough back/apply their learning was dependent on the context & their union positions.
- The combination of a lack of political will , poor union coordination and gendered inequalities led to the end of this historic trade union supported programme. First of its kind union inspired leadership programme for women on a large scale fully funded by the union, ended after the first group of 291 students completed the course.
- All of the above factors could not shift the patriarchal organizational practices that hinder effective women's participation in the trade union.



Workers in the informal economy  
Learning through struggle – protecting their livelihood to change their lives.



17-12-08



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Waste picker leaders: Steven Leeuw & Eva Mokoena  
Represented workers' voices on SAFM Workers on Wednesday Show  
Wednesday 5 July 2017. Blog on [www.wiego.org](http://www.wiego.org)







Thank you.

Vanessa Pillay

WIEGO: Organization & Representation Programme