

# **LESSONS FROM COVID & LOCKDOWN**

**Presentation by SACTWU to Nedlac**

**July 2022**

# SKETCHING THE CONTEXT

# Summary of SACTWU & Members



- SACTWU is a national union with over 125 000 members
  - overwhelmingly black working class women, low paid, breadwinners
  - Largely employed in manufacturing, mostly CTFL industry & integrated into domestic retail, industrial and State supply chains
- Long history of social partnership, collective bargaining practices and institutions, involvement in healthcare interventions and industrial policy

# COVID Impact on Members

- COVID and the lockdowns were not easy
  - Massive losses & distress for factories
  - Income supplement measures from UIF slow and unpredictable
  - Production and income opportunities re-emerged
  - Factories unable to operate at full capacity
  - Mar 2020 - Mar 2021, 15% of CTFL jobs lost
  - Growing poverty, social dis-ease, and severe job insecurity
- At same time, SACTWU was consistently at work trying to remediate challenges

# Matters Addressed in Presentation:

1. Anticipating the problem
2. Restructuring & repurposing trade union operations
3. Negotiating income support
4. Negotiating Jobs Protection opportunities
5. Dealing with vaccinations

**ANTICIPATING THE PROBLEMS**

# *“What is to be Done?”*

- Key principles:

- It is better to anticipate rather than react unprepared
- Industry must develop own solutions
- Action and outcomes need a driver and do not happen alone
- Union’s role was to rise above crisis and provide direction and leadership

- Early on SACTWU developed a rough plan to guide our work (*didn’t need to be 100%*)

Promote awareness	Undertake prevention	Play a role in treatment
Defend and promote jobs and industrialization	Create space for unresolved matters	Industrial relations implications

# Examples: Awareness and Prevention

- 90% of 2 800 stewards trained in COVID protocols by 20 March 2020
- Awareness briefings conducted at workplaces for most 125 000 members by 24 March 2020
- Extensive digital campaigns, phone resources
- Extensive press releases and media coverage to communicate to workers



# SACTWU SAYS:

Help to fight the spread of COVID-19



Wash your hands regularly with soap & water for at least 20 seconds

(Awareness Notice 1, for SACTWU members)

## SACTWU CARES

COVID-19 Humour Line

Send your COVID-19 funny stories here:

SACTWU Humour line:

Email: [humour@sactwu.org.za](mailto:humour@sactwu.org.za)

WhatsApp/SMS: 081 432 1089

This is a service provided by SACTWU to our members

# SACTWU CARES

Help to fight the spread of COVID-19



What is 'social distance'? Discuss with your fellow workers & family

(Awareness Notice 5, for SACTWU members)

## SACTWU CARES

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT COVID-19?

Ask the SACTWU team of 20 Doctors!

Ask our Healthline

Email: [Healthline@sactwu.org.za](mailto:Healthline@sactwu.org.za)

WhatsApp/SMS: 0814321089

This is a service provided by SACTWU to our members

## SACTWU CARES

Do you need advice on banking problems during the 'COVID-19 lockdown'?

Ask the SACTWU team of banking experts

Bank Helpline:

Email: [bankline@sactwu.org.za](mailto:bankline@sactwu.org.za)

WhatsApp/SMS: 081 432 1089

This is a service provided by SACTWU to our members

# SACTWU SAYS:

Help to fight the spread of COVID-19



Use safe ways to greet. Don't hug, kiss or shake hands.

(Awareness Notice 3, for SACTWU members)

## SACTWU CARES

Do you have a 'COVID-19 Lockdown' Labour Law question?

Ask the SACTWU team of labour lawyers

SACTWU Labour Law Helpline:

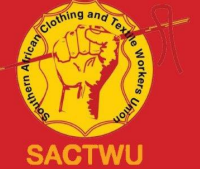
Email: [legalline@sactwu.org.za](mailto:legalline@sactwu.org.za)

WhatsApp/SMS: 081 432 1089

This is a service provided by SACTWU to our members

# SACTWU CARES

Help to fight the spread of COVID-19



What is a vaccine? Discuss with your fellow workers & family

(Awareness Notice 10, for SACTWU members)



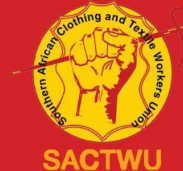
André Kriel, SACTWU General Secretary, says:

*"I have registered for the COVID-19 vaccine. I encourage all of you to do the same!"*

Together, let's fight the COVID-19 pandemic!

## SACTWU CARES

Help to fight the spread of COVID-19



How do you register to receive the COVID-19 vaccine? Discuss with your fellow workers & family

(Awareness Notice 11, for SACTWU members)



Paul Mashego, shop steward at Little Slipper, a footwear company in Gqeberha (Eastern Cape), says:

*"I have been vaccinated! I encourage you all to do the same!"*

Together, let's fight the COVID-19 pandemic!



COVID-19 VACCINE  
SACTWU'S COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT CAMPAIGN  
INDUSTRY FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

enCA

# RESTRUCTURING & REPURPOSING TRADE UNION OPERATIONS

# Restructuring Union Work

- Established a new management structure: “*SACTWU National Extended Secretariat*” (SNES)
  - Introduced Rapid Response mandating link
  - Shared information & created flexibility
  - Almost 200 daily & weekly meetings held
- Initiated “*COSATU General Secretaries’ Forum*”
- Developed a series of “10 Point Programmes”:
  - UIF funds; Membership growth; Early access to retirement funds; Vaccination Roll out campaign; Jobs; Collective bargaining; Member servicing

# Repurposing Tools

- Collective agreements
  - Vehicles to address insecurity (income/ markets/ health)
- Bargaining councils
  - COVID Rapid Response Team
  - Facilitate information & support to workers and factories
  - Generate data and insights
  - Act developmentally as value adding institution
- Primary health and HIV/ AIDS & TB infrastructure
  - Union and bargaining council healthcare clinics turned towards vaccine support
- Industrial policy advocacy and social partnership experience
  - Used to try and unlock opportunities (e.g. Local Manufacturing Partnership)

# NEGOTIATING INCOME SUPPORT

# Clothing COVID-19 Collective Agreement:

- Started exploring several weeks pre-lockdown
- By 26 Mar 2020: Agreement concluded
  - Mix of income support from companies and UIF
  - Covered about 80 000 workers with 6 weeks pay
  - Bargaining council was designated to act as intermediary to help pay workers (intended to avoid backlogs of UIF queues)

# Unblocking the Opportunity

- Increasingly clear that claiming from UIF not easy
- Therefore SACTWU developed UIF 10 Point Plan
  - E.g.: companies not paid; workers rejected at companies paid; workers underpaid; migration from NBC to UIF; companies with no UIF applications; foreign workers; etc
- To unblock UIF monies, daily & weekly contact with the UIF and almost 200 formal meetings
  - Results
    - + R1bn worth of UIF claims unblocked
    - Benefitted hundreds of companies
    - 10 000s of workers paid

# NEGOTIATING JOB PROTECTION OPPORTUNITIES



# PPE Collective Agreement:

- Concluded on 17 April 2020
- Purpose was to galvanize industry to save jobs + industrial capacity through PPE manufacturing
  - Restructured work organisation
  - Set targets (e.g 100 million facemasks)
  - Diversify products produced developmentally
  - Identified and promoted standards & labour compliance

# Industrialisation

- ±5 000 tenders monitored & reported (billions of Rands)
- Briefing to Parliament & Nedlac
- Work with Local Manufacturing Partnership for PPE manufacturing
- Promotion of local content with State
- Local mask portals with Proudly SA

# DEALING WITH VACCINATIONS

# Dealing with vaccination rollout:

- Concluded new collective agreement
  - 23 Feb 2021: Concept established
  - 6 April 2021: collective agreement concluded
  - Encourage industry leadership and employees to take the vaccine;
  - Help debunk myths about the COVID-19 vaccine;
  - Assist all shop stewards, human resource managers, wage clerks and other industry personnel are trained regarding the issues involved in the vaccine rollout campaign;
  - Built in non-discrimination facility
- 4 July 2021: certification received
- Extensive social and internal media encouraging vaccination








**Saziso Mvuna,**  
SACTWU Shop Steward from our  
Durban South Branch  
in KwaZulu Natal, says:

*"I have been vaccinated!  
I encourage you all to do the  
same!"*

Together, let's fight the COVID-19 pandemic!





**Susan Khumalo,**  
SACTWU 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy  
President, says:

*"I have registered for the  
COVID-19 vaccine.  
I encourage all of you  
to do the same!"*

Together, let's fight the COVID-19 pandemic!








**Albertina Lephafa,**  
Chairperson of SACTWU's Patrick Cokotheo  
Branch in Durban says:

*"I have registered for the  
COVID-19 vaccine.  
I encourage you all to do the  
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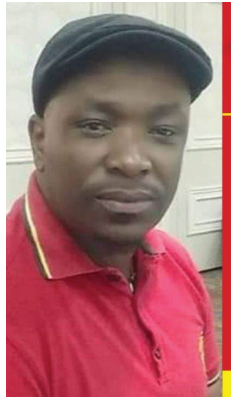




**Louisa Solomon, SACTWU**  
Western Cape Provincial Administrator, says:

*"I have been vaccinated.  
I encourage you all to do the  
same!"*

Together, let's fight the COVID-19 pandemic!





**Mkhuliseni Maduna,**  
SACTWU Gauteng Provincial  
Chairperson, says:

*"I have registered for the  
COVID-19 vaccine.  
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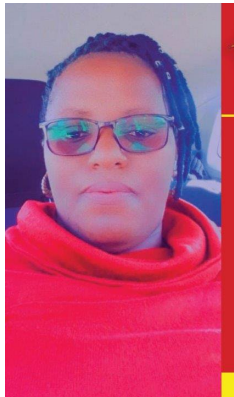




**Nolukholo Mtongana,**  
Branch Organiser of SACTWU's Nelson  
Mandela Bay Branch in Eastern Cape, says:

*"I have registered for the  
COVID-19 vaccine.  
I encourage you all to do the  
same!"*

Together, let's fight the COVID-19 pandemic!





**Londiwe Nsele,**  
SACTWU Ladysmith  
Branch Chairperson, says:

*"I have been vaccinated!  
I encourage you all to do the  
same!"*

Together, let's fight the COVID-19 pandemic!








**Thembi Masango,**  
Chairperson of SACTWU's Themba Khumalo  
Branch in Mpumalanga, says:

*"I have registered for the  
COVID-19 vaccine.  
I encourage you all to do the  
same!"*

Together, let's fight the COVID-19 pandemic!





**Frada Oosthuysen,**  
SACTWU & COSATU  
National Treasurer, says:

*"I have registered for the  
COVID-19 vaccine.  
I encourage all of you  
to do the same!"*

Together, let's fight the COVID-19 pandemic!

## Build on Existing Infrastructure

- Bargaining Council Clinics
  - Run since 1942
  - Primary medical, dental, optical health care, chronic medication provision
  - 10 primary healthcare clinics across W. Cape, KZN and Gauteng; 52 medical professionals employed;
- Also health infrastructure in SACTWU
- Essentially the vaccine was made accessible to workers using capable infrastructure they knew and trusted

## Outcomes

- In industry: 80% first jabs & 55% second jabs
- In the union: 75% staff/shop stewards fully vaccinated
- Industry health care facilities strengthened
- No cases on mandatory vaccination

**LEARNING LESSONS?**

- Anticipate and plan
- Claim one's agency
- Communicate clearly & regularly
- Action needs an implementer
- Build on current capacities
- Minimize uncertainty and deliver to maximize trust