

## SECTION 4

### Findings from questionnaire sent to panelists

#### 1. Did you receive any training in RBO facilitation?

These responses were drafted:

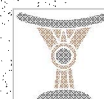
- No
- Yes
- No
- Yes
- No
- Yes, though not much and it was a long time ago.
- First RBO note- no formal training, trained on the job. Don Power and Ken Evans from the USA. They gave a sound briefing to the four South African attending.
- Yes

It is apparent on face value that the old system of acceptance into the panel did not allow for a structured training on the RBO. It is also obvious that there is not consistent, systematic evaluation of the performance of the panelists. Some panelists hardly remember what they learned if ever such training took place. It therefore is an area, an issue in which IMSSA needs to do a thorough introspection. The critical issue is whether the present system should be overhauled and a new more standardised, formalised training and evaluation system be put in place. Further, whether all presently existing panelists should reapply and be reconsidered after an evaluation. These issues will be the focal issue in this project.

#### 2. The value of the training

- Good, but too long an interval between training and "doing a job".
- Sound briefing I got back in the US, stuck to the basics, constant feedback as they went through the dynamics.
- A bit thin on flexibility of facilitation skills and how to manage as sole facilitator.
- Short, but provided me with the basics and frame of reference for these kind of interventions.
- The training was good although the impression I got was in the example used (Mercedes Benz) the parties were more sophisticated than those I experience.

Training of mediators is an area which requires some serious change. This challenge is more profound because of the dynamics of new situations which require better programmes.



### 3. Why did you become interested in conducting the RBO?

The following reasons were advanced:

- It was an extension of my mediation and labour work.
- Having been involved in mediations I realised that relationship building is an important component of industrial relations and underlay the mediation process.
- Were involved as labour mediator in management labour relations.
- Having been involved in mediations I realised that relationship building is an important component of industrial relations and underlay the mediation process.
- Were involved as labour mediator in management labour relations for years - can use my skills to facilitate an improved relationship.
- I was asked to do one.
- Awareness that underlying tension and behaviour is not adequately handled through wage mediation.
- On my first visit to the USA to pick up mediation insights, I spoke to John Popular. They went out and again in 1986 and spent weeks in East Landing with Don Power and four days with Ken Evans. They were then invited to come.
- I want to build a vibrant dynamic and efficient SA, starting at the workplace.

### 4. Pre-RBO Involvement and How

- Yes, with BCAWU shop stewards and national organiser (Marius Moloto), top management of Johnson Tiles and again Don and Ken came out.
- Yes, met with TV management in plenary session.
- No
- Yes, as facilitator.
- Yes, I discussed the basic issues with the parties in order to determine the course of the action.
- Yes, agreeing on agenda.

### 5. Value of Pre-RBO

- Invaluable.
- In general terms they are valuable because they enable all the parties to set the parameters, in addition they enable the facilitator to be acquainted with the basic issues.



- Extremely important - the ground work before the actual event is just as important as the RBO itself.
- In one RBI (KSM Milling/FAWU 1994) inadequate pre-RBI feedback was disempowering.
- Essential, time should be allowed for leaders to report back to constituents and formally reply - preferably in writing their commitment.

## 6. Description of each intervention

- Only done one. It had become apparent during a mediation that relations were strained between the parties. There were especially tensions. The mediator had suggested RBO after the matter had been settled and the parties agreed.
- Algins Phala came to me with his write up.
- In one intervention TV and Co needed to resolve a long standing dispute which threatened to undermine relationship building, some processes do not take sufficient account of mutual differences. In some cases union involvement unreliable.
- I have done two RBO exercises, one between SABC and MWASA, the other between SABC and a staff member. Both took place after bitter strikes - issues involved included discrimination.
- Two facilitated an exercise between two groups - management and all employees both unionised, non-unionised on the issue was discrimination practises and how to make up for the past and how to ensure fair non discrimination practises in the future.

RBI - Sasko Bakery - Vryheid. Problem between local manager and shop stewards. Communication lines were set up with ongoing reporting systems.

RBI - Sasko Bakery - Greytown. Unions demanded dismissal of manager. Attempt to foster relations between manager and shop stewards. The demand for dismissal had followed a strike during wage negotiations.

RBI - Sasko Bakery - Mkuze. Deteriorating of relations led to threats to shut down. During pre-RBI it was established that a real problem existed in regard to the manager. Suggested that the manager be transferred which resulted in immediate change of attitude of both parties. A comprehensive list of tasks to improve the relationship was agreed to and implemented.

RBI - Albany Bazana. Union rivalry. A member of one union insulted members of the other. Dismissal demanded but not agreed to by company. This led to strike by aggrieved union and matter resolved through RBI.

RBI - Robertsons/CWIU & FAWU. It is still on. Both recognised that a poor relationship exists and are looking for a "way forward".

## 7. Expectations

- More aggression.
- To achieve change in attitude and an improvement in the relationship.
- That it will improve or rather contribute to management and union worker co-operation.



- In general terms to see whether the relationship between the parties could be improved. Hoped parties would acknowledge the legitimacy of others credentials and interests and stop stewards undermining each other.
- To cleanse the past, to accept the need to work together in the "now" and to define critically limited responsibilities for future (Loet Douwes Dekker)
- That we would get the parties on the road to solving problems.

**8. Underlying causes of conflict exposed/not**

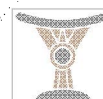
- Yes
- Yes, in particular the anti union personnel manager. In some cases yes, but where conflict arose within a career, there was a tendency to "close ranks" and avoid the issue. This would force the company and in TV to isolate individuals within their own careers.
- Yes, in some cases.
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes, although in some instances this only occurred quite far into the RBI - mainly due to communication problems.
- Yes, but probably more clearly to me than to the parties.

**9. Objectives achievable**

- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Not immediately. Also, there was often inadequate similarity of style and attitude to make parties work together. In other cases the union plans are too ambitious.
- Yes, some of the dates ambitious, some of the responsibilities on union side not clarified.
- Yes

**10. Describe your role during exercise**

- Supported by Dunstan Mlambo and Edwin Molahlehi. They led and I followed.
- Part of a team of facilitation, I continued to work with BCAWU as "advisor".



- In one case which worked but, I worked with the union team and the other facilitator worked with the company. This built links, as TV and management elected teams.
- Simply a role of clarifying issues structuring processes.
- Act as chairperson, mediator, filler of information and regulator of process.
- Facilitating and guiding.
- Mediator, facilitator but also assisting in tying up loose ends at the conclusion.
- "Redesigned procedure", neutral chairperson.

#### 11. Difficulties in role

- Lack of structure and experience.
- A lot of responsibility, effort and energy, especially when on one's own (1), also it is very difficult attempting to transform broad, general descriptions of problems (such as allegations of racism etc) into something specific and removable.
- No
- No
- No
- Yes, where I did not know the other facilitator and especially when working as a sole facilitator.
- We were fortunate to have Don and Ken. Note IMSSA did not understand significance at the time, when IMSSA did try RBO
- Degree of inflexibility by management.
- Yes, where I did not know the other facilitator and especially working as a sole facilitator.

#### 12. Any further meetings, follow-ups

- No
- Yes, not systematic enough.
- Not yet
- Yes
- Yes, also extremely important to monitor progress.
- No
- Yes
- No



### 13. **Successful or not**

- The one between SABC and MWASA was successful. The other one was not.
- In one case, both TV and management were able to be sensitised to supervisor, management, TV problems.
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes, partly although expectations were high and were very different from person to person not only between the groups.
- Yes
- Yes, the union and management had renegotiated the recognition procedures. This "revisiting" the rules of the "gorre" is imperative.
- Yes, but not as successful as the parties hoped for.

### 14. **Any specific changes after RBO**

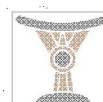
- We had negotiated a work stoppage procedure.
- There was a commitment to act down in steering committees to resolve particular problems.
- Too soon - at the meeting there were expressions of changed perceptions.

### 15. **Shortcoming of process**

- No real structure - no assertiveness - the parties need process certainty.
- Much better - RBO is needed.
- The RBI should be long term involvement with parties - facilitate meetings over number of months, maybe even years.
- Too high expectations not good enough preparation, lack of after care.
- Too short a period (costs difficulties).
- Inadequate briefing, too little time for the process, too few facilitations, inadequate monitoring, feedback. Not aware of impact/effect on parties.
- IMSSA inadequately involved in follow-up.
- Time consuming.

### 16. **Suggestions**

- Improve pre-RBI briefing - give proper feedback to facilitators before the exercise.
- Involve greater awareness of grading, race and gender discrimination and the psychology of conflict.





- Better training/feedback on interventions.
- Publish reports from panelists.
- Facilitators can "specialise" in specific industries, more long term involvement with parties. In depth needs-assessment. Better "after care", improved. Further facilitation training for facilitators.
- Broader involvement with parties, e.g. mediations, research, problem solving over long periods of time etc.
- Stage 1. Identify their expectations of the process.
- Stage 2. Wait a few days then attempt to temper the expectations to something more realistic.
- Earlier involvement, more process certainty.
- Greater pre-recognition of policies.
- Follow up is not systematised, hence my suggestions for stating that interactive planning is as essential as the four day RBO - gone back to basics.

