



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR RESEARCH AND INFORMATION GROUP

GAUTENG PROVINCIAL PLATFORM



Friday 7 February – Sunday 9 February 2020

Stay City, Berea

Johannesburg

INTRODUCTION

The International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG) welcomes you to our first provincial platform for 2020.

Provincial platforms are a space for community organisations in Gauteng to come together in solidarity to share and learn from experiences of struggle, and to build a collective programme of action. This particular platform was requested by the Gauteng Housing Crisis Committee (GHCC), an alliance of over twenty communities in Johannesburg fighting for land, housing and basic services. The objective of this workshop is to identify and develop the GHCC's overall plan of strategy and tactics, including elaborating on its theoretical understanding of the problems it faces, its organisational model, and its code of conduct.

In a context of rising neoliberalism, state corruption, unemployment, and collapsing SOEs, the repercussions of which hit poor and working-class communities the hardest, many worker and community organisations are strained and demobilised or actively repressed. In order to challenge the forms of oppression, inequality and exploitation created and sustained by white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, our organisations must solidify a clear understanding of what they are up against, the new world they are fighting for, and alternative, sustainable ways to build movements and challenge power.



**The image on the cover of this programme is adapted from a poster (left) produced for the Soweto Civic Association by the Ad-hoc Poster Group in 1983. This poster was part of a campaign by the Soweto Civic Association to discourage residents from voting for community councils, a new form of local government pushed by apartheid Minister of Co-operation and Development Piet Koornhof. Community activists argued that these councils were simply puppets of the apartheid government.*

PROGRAMME

TIME	ACTIVITY	NOTES & OBJECTIVES	FACILITATOR
FRIDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2020			
14:30	Arrival and Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants to sign the attendance register and check-in to accommodation 	Leila
15:30	Activity 1: Welcome and Overview of Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions To run through objectives and contents of the programme 	Leila
16:00	Activity 2: political context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the local and global contexts of community struggles, particularly in relation to the land question. 	GHCC
17:00	Activity 3: Where are we?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pg. 5-9 To map out issues faced by each community as well as existing opportunities, resources, and organisations. To identify the GHCC's organisational model. 	Leila
19:00	<i>Supper</i>		
20:00	Documentary/ logo design session		
SATURDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2020			
08:00	<i>Breakfast</i>		
09:00	Activity 4: Where do we want to be?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pg. 10 To elaborate on the GHCC's political framework for its struggles. To determine the short-term and long-term goals and demands of the movement. 	Leila/ GHCC
09:45	Feedback session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To debate and consolidate commission findings. 	GHCC
10:30	<i>Tea</i>		
11:00	Activity 5: How do we get to where we need to be? (tactics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pg. 11-19 To identify different tactics for movement-building and achieving organisational objectives from historical and contemporary examples. 	Leila
12:00	Feedback session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discuss the strengths and limitations of different forms of mobilisation and action in our contexts 	Leila
13:00	<i>Lunch</i>		

14:00	Activity 5 continued: How do we get to where we need to be? (principled organising)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pg. 20 • To learn from the principles and values adopted by organisations struggling alongside us. • To identify the code of conduct, principles and values of the GHCC. • To identify disciplinary procedures for breaching the code of conduct. 	Dale
16:30	<i>Tea</i>		
17:00	Activity 6: Developing a plan of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To draw up a concrete plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Movement-building - Strategic partnerships - Media strategy - Legal strategy - Direct action 	GHCC
19:00	<i>Supper</i>		
SUNDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2020			
08:00	<i>Breakfast</i>		
09:00	Check-out of rooms and transport reimbursements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove belongings from room and check-out. All bags will be locked away safely until the end of the workshop. • Fill out transport reimbursement forms. 	Leila
10:00	Activity 7: Recap and way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reflect on the outcomes of the workshop, amend and adopt the logo, organisational model, code of conduct, and strategy going forward. 	GHCC
11:00	Activity 8: Planning for upcoming action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To discuss logistics for the GHCC's court action on 10/02/2020. 	GHCC
12:00	Press Conference		
13:00	<i>Lunch</i>		
14:00	Departure		

Strategy and Tactics

A strategy is a movement or organisation's **overall plan** to make sure that it achieves its objectives and overcomes the problems it is trying to solve.

Tactics are the **specific actions** used to achieve goals that are part of this overall strategy. For example, students might use the tactic of occupying a building to force university management to negotiate or to meet certain urgent demands as part of a broader strategy to achieve free decolonised education for all.

In developing a strategy, we need to answer these questions:

1. Where are we?
2. Where do we want to go? And
3. How can we get to where we want to go?

Activity 3: Where are we?

Exercise 1: Community mapping

1. How many GHCC members are in our community?
2. What are the main problems facing our community?
3. What is the reason for these problems?
4. What are the important relationships and resources that exist in this community? (Are there political education programmes? Are there social movements and other community organisations to build partnerships and solidarity with? Are there NGOs or government programmes which offer useful services and provide resources? Are there meeting spaces such as libraries, churches, and schools? Is there a history of activism and a base of older activists with experience of alternative forms of community organising, such as street committees?)

Exercise 2: Understanding the GHCC's current organising model¹

An organising model is an important part of a movement's strategy and tactics. It tells us about the way in which members are organised, which tells us about the capacity of a movement to grow and organise in a sustainable way.

Look at the examples of organising models below. Are these examples similar or different to how the GHCC or any other organisation you are part of is organized? In which ways? Write these down.

Now answer these questions about the GHCC:

1. Who are the members of the GHCC and where are they from? Why are certain communities organised and not others?
2. Where, when and how do members of the movement meet? Do communities meet separately to report back from GHCC meetings?
3. What resources are needed to bring members together? Where do these resources currently come from?
4. Is there a leadership structure that does the work of bringing members together? How is this leadership structure decided and how often does it change?
5. Are there specific roles played by individuals or task teams and what are they?
6. What are the main activities of the GHCC and what has it achieved?

Example 1: COSAS

The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was established in June 1979 as a national organization to represent the interests of Black school students in the wake of the Soweto uprisings.

COSAS structures consist of:

¹ This section is adapted from Equal Education's 2018 National Congress programme.

1. National Executive Committee (NEC): The NEC is elected every two years at the National Congress. It meets at least 4 times a year and carries out decisions made at National Congress.
2. National Executive Council: Consists of the NEC, 2 representatives from the Regional Committee and 3 members of every branch
3. Regional Committees (RC): RCs are formed in an area where there are 3 or more branches, and are elected by Branch Committees of the Branches in the region. RCs are elected every year and meet once a month.
4. Branch Committees: Branches are made up of 126 or more members from 1 or more schools in the same area. Branches are usually made up of 1 school. Branch Committees are elected every year and meet once a month

COSAS' organising work:

1. Meetings and decision making
 - a. Branches meet once a month, usually on a Saturday, to discuss campaigns and branch-based issues.
 - The Regional Committee deploys RC members to these meetings to observe meetings and, if needed, to provide advice. The RC deployees represent the Branch views at the monthly RC meetings.
 - Branches decide on campaigns and if needed approach the RC for support.
 - RC formulates campaigns and strategies based on the needs of their branches. These campaigns and strategies feed into the Branch actions.
2. Learner representation
 - COSAS primary campaign focus is ensuring COSAS members are represented on RCLs. This, COSAS argues, will strengthen RCLs for a true representation of learners. Having representatives on RCLs will allow COSAS branches a more authoritative and representative voice. It also allows COSAS to mobilise learners, broadly.
3. Organising model

- COSAS has four structures of organising: branch-level, regional, provincial and national.
- Branches determine the agenda of the movement's campaigns and organising work. Decisions made at branch level feed into Regions and this could inform collective regional/provincial campaigns.
- COSAS does not have any structured or centralised political education.
- Branch campaigns are, in the main, funded by branches or regions raising money through affiliates (ANC and YCL).

Example 2: Brazil Landless Workers' Movement (MST)

Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra in Portuguese) is a mass social movement, formed by rural workers and by all those who want to fight for land reform and against injustice and social inequality in rural areas. The MST was born through a process of occupying latifundios (large landed estates) and became a national movement in 1984. The movement has led more than 2,500 land occupations, with about 370,000 families - families that today are settled on 7.5 million hectares of land that they won as a result of the occupations. Through their organizing, these families continue to push for schools, credit for agricultural production and cooperatives, and access to health care. Currently, there are approximately 900 encampments holding 150,000 landless families in Brazil. Those camped, as well as those already settled, remain mobilized, ready to exercise their full citizenship, by fighting for the realization of their political, social economic, environmental and cultural rights.

The MST is organized entirely, from the grassroots-level up to the national coordinating bodies, into collective units that make decisions through discussion, reflection and consensus. This non-hierarchical pattern of organization also avoids distinct leadership that can be bought off or assassinated. The branch unit is made up of 10 to 15 families living in an MST settlement is known as a "nucleo de base". A nucleo de base addresses the issues faced by member families, and members elect two representatives, one woman and one man, to represent them at settlement meetings. These representatives attend regional meetings, and elect regional representatives who then elect the members of the national coordinating body of the MST, a total of 400

members of state bodies (around 20 per state) and 60 members of the national coordinating body, around 2 per state. Every MST family participates in a nucleo de base, roughly 475,000 families, or 1.5 million people.

The MST is not a political party and has no formal leadership other than a dispersed group of some 15 leaders, whose make very few public appearances. This secrecy minimizes the risk of arrest and also maintains its grassroots and decentralised organisational model. This is regarded as an important strategy by the MST, in that it allows the movement to maintain an ongoing and direct flow of communication between member-families and their representatives. Coordinators are aware of the realities faced by member-families and are encouraged to discuss important issues with said families. To assist with communication between Coordinators and member-families, and as an attempt to democratize the media, the MST produces the Jornal Sem Terra (below) and the MST Informa.



Activity 4: Where do we want to be?

After answering the question “where are we?” and determining the problems the GHCC is trying to solve and how far it has come in doing so, it is important to look forward to ensure that the movement has a coherent and shared vision for society.

Exercise: Commissions

Break into commissions on land and housing, basic services, and safety.

The aim of these commissions is to identify the guiding political vision of the GHCC so that it is able to answer the question “what kind of world are we fighting for?”. It is important to be clear on these politics because they help to determine the tactics used and which short-term and long-term objectives are being fought for.

Questions for all commissions:

1. Who do we want to prioritise in our struggles? Who are we fighting for?
2. What do we want to achieve in the short-term?
3. What are our long-term goals?
4. Who are our strategic partners in these areas?

Activity 5: How do we get to where we need to be?

So far, we have analysed the problems we are trying to solve and tried to develop a shared vision for how we want the world to look after we have solved these problems. The final step in defining an overall strategy is to determine the tactics and organising principles which will move us from our current position to reach our key objectives.

Exercise 1: Tactics – mobilisation and direct action

1. What methods are used by the organisation in the example to reach its goals. How successful are they in doing so?
2. How does the organisation mobilise others to join its cause?
3. Who does the organisation rely on as its strategic partners? Who are they willing/not willing to work with to reach their goals and why?
4. How do their underlying principles determine the organisation's actions?

Example 1: Zapatistas



“On January 1, 1994, Subcomandante Ana Maria led the Zapatistas – indigenous people, one-third of them women, wearing ski masks and carrying mostly wooden replica guns – to capture the town of San Cristobal. In doing so, the group reclaimed land across Chiapas. Twelve days of fighting and 100 deaths later, the Mexican state agreed to a ceasefire. Peace talks followed, and both sides signed the San Andres Accords, in 1996, although the Mexican government never fulfilled its commitments. Skirmishes continue until today, but the indigenous people maintain their autonomy. It is not only a story of armed rebellion. Zapatismo power is more about words than guns.

Globally, neoliberalism peaked in arrogance in the mid-1990s. The Zapatistas dispelled any argument that "there is no alternative". They showed the world a third way: co-creating power from the bottom up. Their path diverged from the centralization of power inherent in state-oriented capitalist and communist systems. The journey continues.

Within Zapatismo, creating autonomy² means every "world" has its place, respecting indigenous customs and knowledge. The Women’s Revolutionary Law was passed two years before the Zapatistas reclaimed their land, and the 10-point charter made women's liberation central to the new order. They rejected "bad government" – meaning Mexican state handouts, programs, services and interference. Instead, the land was divided into five autonomous areas, known as "caracoles", or snails, under the mantra: “We go slowly, as we go far”.

These self-governing units provide schools, teaching in both indigenous and Spanish languages; and they provide healthcare based in both indigenous and Western knowledge. Economically, cooperatives form a strong part of the economy – not least producing coffee. Community banking is created through credit unions. The whole Zapatista region has around 250,000 inhabitants, covering roughly a third of Chiapas. Neighbouring peoples can also access services.

The rebel zone divides into 27 Rebel Zapatistas Autonomous Municipalities. These run on world-leading participatory democratic ideals, namely “mandar obedeciendo” (to lead by obeying).

² Self-governance.

Local representatives rotate regularly, and they aim at gender parity. Being a representative is an unpaid honor, but one is fed by the community.

...Grounding the struggle locally and simultaneously reaching out for solidarity elsewhere explains Zapatista resilience, and is a thread in emerging radical municipalism. It engages international solidarity while building local counter-power. This diverges from classic leftist class struggle, which is more exclusive, often focusing on working class men and leaving aside other oppressed communities, thereby gaining less support.

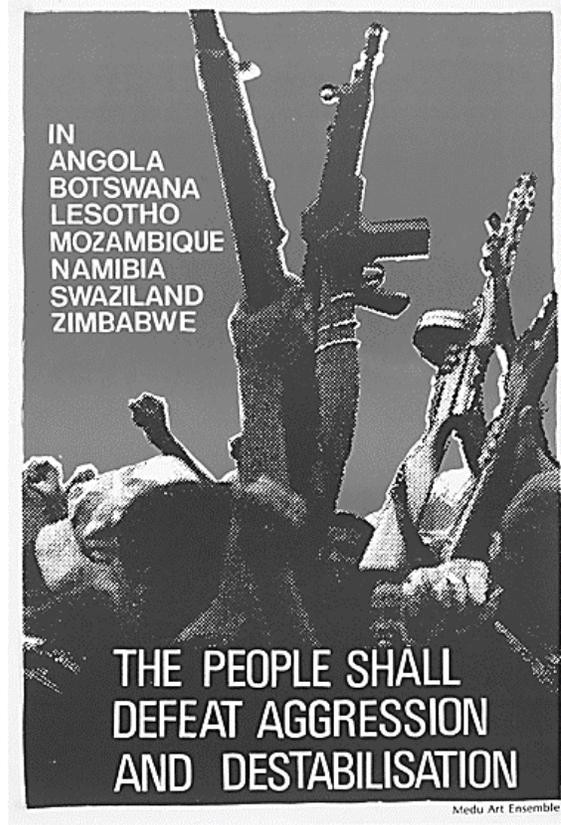
The overarching approach of the Zapatistas is the call for intersectional solidarity³. One example is when Zapatistas spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos was called gay in the mid-1990s, a supposed attack by pro-Mexican detractors. He responded: "Yes, Marcos is gay. Marcos is gay in San Francisco, Black in South Africa, Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Ysidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, a Mayan Indian in the streets of San Cristobal, a Jew in Germany, a Gypsy in Poland, a Mohawk in Quebec, a pacifist in Bosnia, a single woman on the Metro at 10pm, a peasant without land, a gang member in the slums, an unemployed worker, an unhappy student and, of course, a Zapatista in the mountains."⁴

Example 2: The Medu Art Ensemble

The Medu Art Ensemble (1978-1985) was a collective of cultural workers whose approach to art was informed by the question: 'how does art become a weapon of struggle?' They were based in Gaborone, Botswana and most of their members were South African exiles, with some members from Botswana, USA, and Sweden. Medu was made up by some of the most politically and socially important South African writers, artists and musicians including Betty and Mongane Serote, Jonas Gwangwa, Thami Mnyele, Baleka Mbete and Keorapetse Kgositsile. In 1982, Medu organised the Gaborone Culture and Resistance Festival which began to attract more attention

³ This refers to the politics of intersectionality, which looks at how systems of oppression overlap and impact each other. For example, intersectionality will consider how race and gender will interact to create more complex systems of oppression and discrimination for black women.

⁴ Steve Rushton (2018) *REBEL CITIES 3: Zapatistas are still trailblazing worlds beyond Neoliberalism*, accessed at <http://www.occupy.com/article/rebel-cities-3-zapatistas-are-still-trailblazing-worlds-beyond-neoliberalism#sthash.HaQnOdvN.dpbs>.



from the SA apartheid government who viewed them as a threat. On 14 June 1985 the SADF bombed the Medu base, destroying buildings and killing twelve people. This effectively ended the collective as remaining members fled and others went underground.

Part of the Medu legacy is their approach to art and the work it can and should do in society. Speaking on these questions, Medu artist Dikobe wa Mogale Martins said: "Our art must become a process - a living, growing thing that people can relate to, identify with, be part of, understand and not a mysterious world a universe apart from them." Medu produced many posters used in the anti-apartheid resistant movement. This work is important in that it has created a historical documentation of this resistance. Political posters have been critical in mobilising masses around protest action, and in making the work done by social movements visible to an international audience.

Medu ‘cultural workers’⁵ took a collaborative approach to the production of art, involving all its members as well as the surrounding community in discussions around the imagery used to translate political messages. Medu also engaged with South African cultural groups doing similar work across the border, such as the Community Arts Project. In this way, both their process of creating art, as well as the art itself, played a large role in popular education and developing political consciousness. These histories show the importance of social movements cultivating artists within their own ranks where possible (as opposed to relying on outside artists and designers who are less connected to the movement’s ideals) who can do the work of decolonising how information is shared.⁶

Example 3: The Black Panthers

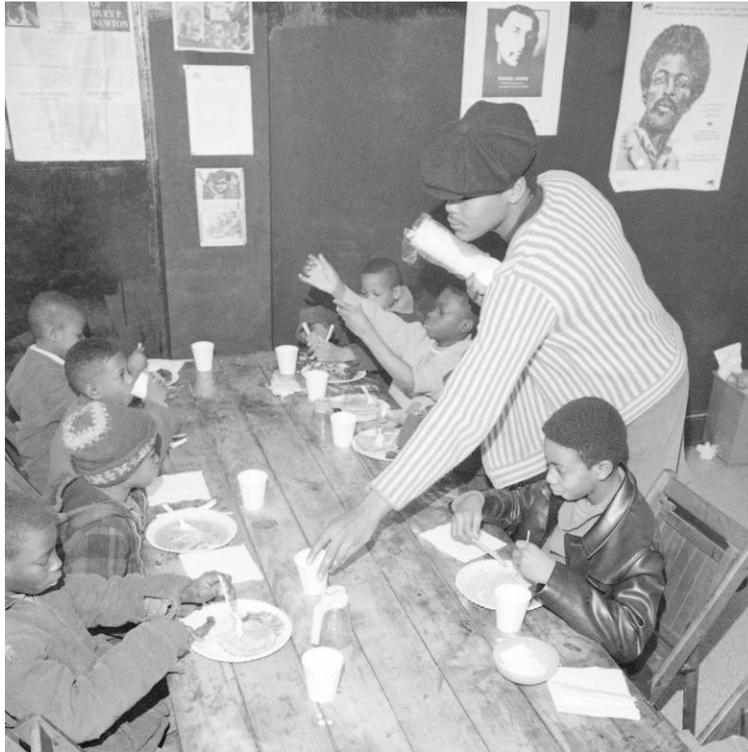
“In 1969, a group of children sat down to a free breakfast before school. On the menu: chocolate milk, eggs, meat, cereal and fresh oranges. The scene wouldn’t be out of place in a school cafeteria these days—but the federal government wasn’t providing the food. Instead, breakfast was served thanks to the Black Panther Party. At the time, the militant black nationalist party was vilified in the news media and feared by those intimidated by its message of black power and its commitment to ending police brutality and the subjugation of black Americans. But for students eating breakfast, the Black Panthers’ politics were less interesting than the meals they were providing.

“The children, many of whom had never eaten breakfast before the Panthers started their program,” the *Sun Reporter* wrote, “think the Panthers are ‘groovy’ and ‘very nice’ for doing this for them.” The program may have been groovy, but its purpose was to fuel revolution by encouraging black people’s survival. From 1969 through the early 1970s, the Black Panthers’ Free Breakfast for School Children Program fed tens of thousands of hungry kids. It was just one facet of a wealth of social programs created by the party—and it helped contribute to the existence of federal free breakfast programs today.

⁵ Members of Medu rejected the term ‘artist’ because it was seen to reflect elitism and individualism, and so that members would see themselves as part of a cultural community working within a context of struggle.

⁶ Adapted from the Student Cadre Curriculum.

When Black Panther Party founders Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the party in 1966, their goal was to end police brutality in Oakland. But a faction of the Civil Rights Movement led by SNCC member Stokeley Carmichael began calling for the uplift and self-determination of African-Americans, and soon black power was part of their platform.



At first, the Black Panther Party primarily organized neighborhood police patrols that took advantage of open-carry laws, but over time its mandate expanded to include social programs, too. Free Breakfast For School Children was one of the most effective. It began in January 1969 at an Episcopal church in Oakland, and within weeks it went from feeding a handful of kids to hundreds. The program was simple: party members and volunteers went to local grocery stores to solicit donations, consulted with nutritionists on healthful breakfast options for children, and prepared and served the food free of charge.

...Soon, the program had been embraced by party outposts nationwide. At its peak, the Black Panther Party fed thousands of children per day in at least 45 programs. (Food wasn't the only part of the BPP's social programs; they expanded to cover everything from free medical clinics to community ambulance services and legal clinics.)...Free food

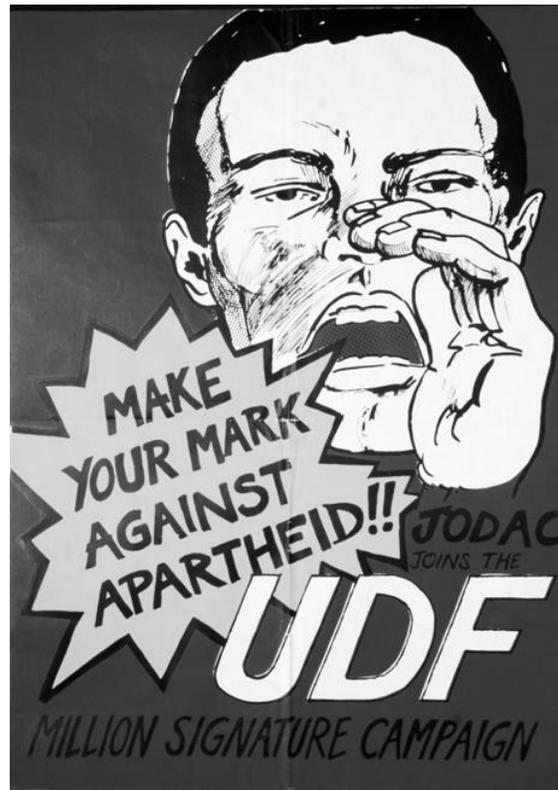
seemed relatively innocuous, but not to FBI head J. Edgar Hoover, who loathed the Black Panther Party and declared war against them in 1969. He called the program “potentially the greatest threat to efforts by authorities to neutralize the BPP and destroy what it stands for,” and gave carte blanche to law enforcement to destroy it.

The results were swift and devastating. FBI agents went door-to-door in cities like Richmond, Virginia, telling parents that BPP members would teach their children racism. In San Francisco, writes historian Franziska Meister, parents were told the food was infected with venereal disease; sites in Oakland and Baltimore were raided by officers who harassed BPP members in front of terrified children, and participating children were photographed by Chicago police...Ultimately, these and other efforts to destroy the Black Panthers broke up the program.

In the end, though, the public visibility of the Panthers’ breakfast programs put pressure on political leaders to feed children before school. The result of thousands of American children becoming accustomed to free breakfast, former party member Norma Amour Mtume told *Eater*, was the government expanded its own school food programs. Though the USDA had piloted free breakfast efforts since the mid-1960s, the program only took off in the early 1970s—right around the time the Black Panthers’ programs were dismantled. In 1975, the School Breakfast Program was permanently authorized. Today, it helps feed over 14.57 million children before school—and without the radical actions of the Black Panthers, it may never have happened.⁷

⁷ Erin Blakemore (2018) *How the Black Panthers’ Breakfast Program Both Inspired and Threatened the Government*, accessed at <https://www.history.com/news/free-school-breakfast-black-panther-party>.

Example 4: United Democratic Front



“In January 1984 the UDF launched the Million Signature Campaign. The plan was to send volunteers from door to door to ask people to sign the petition against apartheid. Because black South Africans were not allowed to vote in national elections, the UDF saw the Million Signature Campaign as a way of organising and expressing the political ideas of the majority of the people. The campaign would engage many people in actively talking about the need for democratic organisation and an end to apartheid laws; it would show the mass strength of the movement; it would not break existing security laws...Within a year, grassroots opposition to the new deal became the single loudest theme of UDF organisation, media and publicity. Tricameral parliament elections were scheduled to be held in August 1984. Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, with relatively large coloured and Indian populations, seethed. The UDF and its affiliates denounced and rejected candidates for Indian and coloured parliaments. They called for a boycott of these elections for the (coloured) House of Representatives and the (Indian) House of

Delegates. Countrywide, fewer than 10% of the Indians and coloureds eligible to vote actually cast a vote.”⁸

“...The organisers agreed on a logo for this new thing, the UDF, and their first public slogan – “UDF Unites, Apartheid Divides”. Their next decision was that any group working with government structures, cooperating with the homeland state structures (the “bantustans”), or groups breaking the increasingly visible sport and cultural boycotts would not be allowed to join the new UDF.

...(By the late 1980s) the UDF had won its main demands for a real movement towards a new order and a movement towards a constitutional assembly to draft a future non-racial, democratic, and unitary South Africa. But then, at the moment of their victory, as UDF tried to rebuild its own structures, it now needed to address the challenges of defining its relationship with the now-returning ANC – especially as many of its most prominent and experienced leaders were being drawn into the repatriation and establishment of the ANC inside South Africa, instead of any further UDF campaigns or more mundane organisational issues. And so, after much discussion, in March 1991, they decided the UDF would disband – and any subsequent reconstruction of its broad church of affiliates would now have to be left to new parties.”⁹

⁸ ‘Against Botha’s Deal’, *South African History Archive*, accessed at: http://www.saha.org.za/udf/bothas_deal.htm.

⁹ J. Brooks Spector (2013) The UDF at 30: An organisation that shook apartheid’s foundation, *Daily Maverick*, accessed at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-08-22-the-udf-at-30-an-organisation-that-shook-apartheids-foundation/>.

Exercise 2: Principled organising – drafting a code of conduct

“The militants of the social movement must have an ethical conduct. Ethics and responsibility are basic values and are radically opposed to the values of capitalism. A responsible militant takes initiative, takes responsibility before the social movement and fulfils it, gives the collective back to the tasks for which he was responsible, has attitudes that are consistent with the spirit of struggle, in short, contributes to the social movement in the best way possible. Responsibility in the social movement is one of the most evident forms of militant ethics, since by fulfilling the task for which it was acclaimed or presented the individual does not overburden others. It collaborates, in a solidarity and decisive way, with the whole social movement facilitating the arrival to the ends previously objectified by all. In addition, the responsible militant does not have irresponsible attitudes: they do not have selfish attitudes that compromise the collective, they do not do things that detract from the struggle, they do not fail to carry out important activities for the movement, etc.

It is fundamental that values within the social movement are opposed to the values of capitalism. Ethics and responsibility, besides being pillars of the social movement, must oppose the whole culture of capitalism that has made a society of unethical and irresponsible people. The struggle for ethics and responsibility is a struggle against the values and culture of capitalism.”¹⁰

When thinking through what to include in a code of conduct, think about your own experience of organising, and the tensions and conflict that can arise between individual and communities which can lead to the break down of an organisation. What principles can be put in place to prevent this? Consider:

1. How should we treat each other?
2. What kind of behaviour will we not tolerate?
3. How do we deal with disputes and with those who breach the code of conduct?

¹⁰ Adapted from *Capitalism, Anti-Capitalism and Popular Organisation* by Universidade Popular, Rio de Janeiro (translated by Jonathan Payn).