

THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

WORKERS' PARTICIPATION DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Fourth Annual Report 1984

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**WORKERS' PARTICIPATION
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**

**Fourth Annual Report
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Annexe - Financial Statement

1. Introduction

The Workers' Participation Development Centre (WPDC) was established at the University of Malta in 1981. It operates within the area of industrial relations and seeks to support and promote the process of workers' participation within the Maltese economy and within society as a whole. The principle of worker participation is envisaged as being an effective strategy for national development through the social and economic emancipation and advancement of working men and women. This is particularly relevant for a newly-independent and developing country like Malta undergoing transition from colonialism to self-reliance.

The principle of workers' participation is now accepted by the major social and political forces in Malta and has been embodied among the main objectives of the current Development Plan.¹ The principle has been developed to full self-management at Malta Drydocks, the country's largest enterprise. It also finds expression in the local cooperative sector and in some other enterprises.

The immediate objectives of the WPDC are the following:

- **Education:** The organisation of workers' educational courses and production of appropriate educational aids. These courses are aimed at imparting to workers and students the basic tools of social science and, particularly the skills and responsibilities demanded by participation and cooperativism.
- **Consultancy:** The provision of consultancy services to institutions, enterprises and individuals concerned with participation. These services are supplemented with the daily monitoring of industrial relations developments in Malta. In this way the Centre acts as an information bank on the local industrial relations scene.
- **Research:** The pursuit of social science research work on Maltese industrial relations and participatory experiences in collaboration with other researchers and institutions.

1. *Malta: Guidelines for Progress - Development Plan 1981-85*
Valletta, OPM, 1981 pp.136, 170 and 190-2

The realization of such long-term objectives involves active collaboration with other public and private agencies, locally and internationally, having similar or compatible aims. The strategy for a gradual incremental achievement of workers' participation is pursued through appropriate workers' educational initiatives and research inspired consultancy.

During the year under review, the WPDC has continued to organise its activities under the direction of its Committee using the personnel and facilities placed at its disposal by the University and the other participating institutions. In this way, the Centre, as a University agency, follows the role earmarked for tertiary education in the Development Plan², by directly relating its research, educational and consultancy programmes to the needs of the world of work.

1.1. The WPDC Committee

The WPDC Committee has the role of linking the WPDC directly with the actual field of worker participation, through collective planning and support of its activities. It is composed of key persons in participatory enterprises, Government departments, trade unions and other strategic areas.

During 1984, the WPDC Committee was composed as follows:

Dr E.L. Zammit	Chairman
Mr G. Agius	(General Workers' Union)
Mr A. Busuttil	(General Workers' Union)
Mr J. Buttigieg	(Malta Drydocks)
Mr J. Camilleri	(Malta Drydocks)
Prof. D. Darmanin	(Faculty of Management Studies)
Dr G. Kester	(Institute of Social Studies, The Hague)
Mr J. Magro	(Malta Development Corporation)
Prof. E.J. Scicluna	(Faculty of Management Studies)
Mr S. Spiteri	(Confederation of Trade Unions)
Mr G. Baldacchino	Secretary

2. Ibid. (1981) pp.176-77

The Committee held its meetings in accordance with the WPDC Statutes. During such meetings, proposals and initiatives were made and discussed. The ensuing decisions were carried out with the support of the Committee members' parent organisations.

2. The Programme for Worker Education

2.1. Diploma Course in Applied Social Studies (Labour Studies)

In collaboration with the Faculty of Management Studies, the WPDC has continued running a Diploma Course in Social Studies, specializing in Labour Studies. This is a part-time evening course launched in September 1983 and scheduled to come to an end in July 1986. Two-hour lecturing sessions are held twice weekly during the academic term together with additional tutorial sessions.

Participants in this course are predominantly active trade union officials, workers in participatory enterprises and general worker representatives. The current intake consists of twenty-two manual and non-manual workers from Malta Drydocks, together with a number of other workers from parastatal, government and private enterprises.

Units covered in this course during 1984 include Psychology of Collective Decision-Making, Political Science, Labour Theory and Practice and Industrial and Labour Law.

With the assistance of a grant offered by UNESCO under its programme for leaders in workers' and cooperative education plans were made for a study visit by the Diploma participants to Yugoslavia as part of their study units on the Economics & Sociology of Workers' Participation in 1985.

It is hoped that a new intake for the Labour Studies Diploma stream will commence in 1985/86.

2.2 Short Courses

The policy of short intensive courses, intended specifically for workers, was also continued throughout 1984. Such courses are intended to impart the fundamental concepts of economics, law, sociology, psychology and political science to worker participants in order to promote their understanding of the workings of society and to develop their personal educational and cultural experience.

One such three-month course held in 1984 was entitled Women and Development. It was a sequel to a course having a similar title organised during 1983 which dealt specifically with the role of women and problems they may encounter in their social lives. The sequel examined the nature and extent of women's participation at home, at work and in society. By making use of articles, newspaper reports and literary extracts, the group developed a series of stereotyped feminine roles. In this way, a clearer understanding of how society looks at women in particular circumstances was achieved.

From responses to anonymous questionnaires distributed to the course participants, an overall satisfaction was expressed with regards to course content and presentation. The subject-matter covered was found to be relevant to daily life and led to the acquisition of a better understanding of social problems.

The WPDC intends to pursue further its specific educational programme for women workers. The aim is also to reach a wider segment of the female population, particularly those working in factories and elsewhere, for greater impact.

2.3 Seminars

The following seminars were organized during 1984:

(a) A half-day seminar at the University of Malta (Tal-Qroqq) for the National Council of the General Workers' Union was held on the 14th January. The seminar examined the role of a trade union, within the framework of workers' participation. The session was brought to an end by the then Deputy Prime Minister, The Hon. Dr K. Mifsud Bonnici.

Various interesting issues were raised during the proceedings. Below are reproduced some of the conclusions reached:

- The Union Steward occupies a role of conflict brought about by heightened aspirations from the general membership and the official union participatory policy.
- Television should be exploited as medium of worker education
- The traditional mentality of the Maltese worker must gradually change to come more in line with

the demands of participatory management.

- Taking part in management and decision making does not simply mean sharing in profitable times but also in carrying some of the burdens and responsibilities when the business is not thriving.
- Worker Participation is the highest form of Worker Democracy.

(b) A 2-day Seminar was held at the University of Malta (Tal-Qroqq) for Malta Drydocks Apprentices on 13-14 March. This seminar, attended by over 100 young workers, sought to examine the role and contribution of young workers within the Drydocks system of self-management. The various issues discussed during the proceedings included the Trade Union Role, Discipline at Work, The Workers' Opinion on Participation, The Recent Developments at the Drydocks, the Role of Workers' Committees and Productivity Issues. This seminar was organized in collaboration with the Education Department of the General Workers' Union and the Young Drydocks Workers' Association.

The University Rector presented Journeyman's Certificates to the Apprentices at the end of the Seminar.

(c) A weekend residential seminar was held at Hal-Ferh Holiday Complex, Ghajn Tuffieha on 30 June to 1 July. This was held for the participants of the Labour Studies Diploma Course (See Section 2.1). Matter for deliberation was the issue of Collective Decision-Making, examined from various social science perspectives.

(d) A public lecture on "Partnership in Labour Relations" was delivered at the Old University Building, Valletta on June 22. The lecturer was Prof. Dr Erwin Weissel, an Austrian trade unionist, lecturer at the University of Vienna and Director of the Social Academy, an institute which provides trade union education for officials of the Austrian trade unions. During his visit, Dr Weissel also discussed matters of common interest with WPDC Staff and visited the Drydocks.

(e) A seminar on cooperatives was held at Floriana Government Primary School on June 7. The aim of this seminar was the promotion of a producer cooperative. The costs and benefits which may accompany such a venture were discussed during the seminar on the experiences of other cooperatives. The meeting was organised in collaboration with the Board of Cooperatives of the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries and the Department of Management Studies of the University of Malta. The Hon. Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries, Mr J. Debono Grech delivered the opening speech.

(f) Apart from the above listed activities, preparations were made for a wide-ranging series of seminars for Drydocks workers, management, workers' committees and trade unionists, centred on the results of the WPDC Drydocks opinion survey (See Section 3.1). These activities were earmarked for 1985.

2.4 Educational Programmes on Radio

In order to have a more effective impact on a wider public, in line with its objectives, the WPDC embarked on a series of short programmes on the local Radio/Cable Radio Network of Xandir Malta. A series of weekly programmes of 15-minute each was broadcast with the subject: The Transition to Workers' Participation.

The general aims of this series were the following: to make listeners more aware of the world of work and its associated problems and issues; to give a short but lucid account of the progress of the working class; to impart some basic knowledge on the tools of analysis of social science and on the theory and practice of workers' participation, as arising from local and international experiences.

The programmes were broadcast between January & April 1984 in collaboration with the Staff of Xandir Malta. The programmes dealt with the following themes:

- Introduction to Participatory Democracy
- Participation in the Family
- Participation at the School
- The Market and the Consumer
- The Industrial Revolution
- The Value and Importance of Work
- The Division of Labour and its Effects

- Industrial Relations
- The Trade Union Movement
- Participatory Enterprises - Case Studies
- Development of Participation in Malta
- Workers' Committees
- Cooperativism
- Cooperatives in Malta
- Contemporary developments in Workers' Participation
- The Future development of Participation in Maltese Society

Throughout these programmes popular imagery, interviews, dramatized sequences and appropriate musical scores were used to pass on the message in an interesting and popular format.

The comments from those who listened to these programmes were generally very satisfactory and encouraged the WPDC to embark on similar ventures on radio and on television.

3. Research, Consultancy and International Cooperation

3.1 Survey at Malta Drydocks

In December 1982, the WPDC carried out an opinion survey among a stratified random sample of Drydocks' industrial workers. This survey was undertaken in order to explore the workers' opinions regarding participation, productivity, union role and other aspects of their work experience. Interim reports were published in 1983.

The full analysis was completed in 1984 with the use of computerized statistical techniques at Government Computer Centre, Dingli and at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. The results obtained from this sociological study, together with other research reports were presented at an International Conference in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia in October 1984 (See Section 3.3). The full, final report is due for publication by the International Center for Public Enterprises (ICPE) in 1985/86.

The WPDC has also prepared a popular abridged version of the Survey results in Maltese. This is intended for local dissemination particularly among the Drydocks employees themselves, in order to promote their awareness and raise their consciousness of the issues and problems related to their participatory experiences. The booklet is also intended as an educational tool, for use during the educational programmes undertaken by the WPDC from time to time.

3.2. Promotion of Worker Cooperatives

The year under review saw an increased involvement of the WPDC in the field of worker cooperatives. A long-term project of cooperative promotion was initiated with the active collaboration of the Board of Cooperatives of the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries.

These initiatives are intended to support and promote the local cooperative sector, which offers good prospects of development, both due to the possibilities of increased worker control and to its potential generation of new employment opportunities.

In practice, this project involves the provision of specialized technical and general cooperative education courses, both for actual and for potential members of worker cooperatives. The WPDC offers its consultancy services on worker cooperativism and a booklet on cooperatives was compiled for onward transmission to interested Maltese workers and students. In addition, University students in the Faculty of Management Studies are being assisted to undertake research assignments on subjects in the field of Maltese cooperatives. To date, two dissertations have been finalized, apart from various other short assignments. These consist of case-studies of two agricultural cooperatives, namely:

- A Study of the Management of Agricultural Cooperativism; the case of Farmers' Central Cooperative Society, and an Economic Assessment of the Farmers' Wine Cooperative Society.

3.3. Participation in International Research Project: Workers' Self-Management and Participation in Decision Making as a Factor for Social Change & Economic Progress in Developing Countries.

The WPDC continued playing an active role in this project, together with thirteen other developing countries coordinated by the International Center for Public Enterprises in Developing Countries (ICPE) of Yugoslavia. The aim of this long term project is to study the different form of participatory management both from a theoretical angle and from a practical one, as emerges from the variety of experiences found among the participatory nations. By taking into account the different historical, socio-cultural, political and ideological contexts of these countries, it is aimed to develop a comprehensive understanding of this sociological phenomenon.

The Malta Drydocks Survey conducted by the WPDC (item 3.1 above) represents the Maltese contribution to the experimental field research on the functioning of participation which constituted the second phase of this project. An international conference to evaluate the results of this phase was held at Ljubljana, Yugoslavia in October 1984. The conference discussed the results of the research work carried out in all participating countries and laid down the guidelines for the Third Phase of the Project. This will evolve as an international comparative study on chosen aspects of workers' self-management and participation which appear to be of crucial importance irrespective of national contexts. These include wage differentials, leadership, the cultural propensity to participate and supporting structures.

3.4 Exchanges with the Institute of Social Studies (The Hague)

In the context of the long standing cooperation between the WPDC and the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, the WPDC Chairman was a visiting lecturer at the ISS during September and November 1984. During the period he contributed to the M.A. 'Labour and Development' Programme at the Institute. He also collaborated on a project of trade union education for effective workers' participation in developing countries in association with the Dutch Trade Union Federation (FNV) and the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU).

Dr G. Kester (of ISS) visited the WPDC twice in 1984 in order to carry out research on the current state of participatory structures at Malta Drydocks. It was felt necessary to undertake group interviews with all those involved in the participatory structures of Malta Drydocks (Shop Stewards, Worker Committee members, the Drydocks Council, the Trade Union Executive, Top and Middle Management) in order to identify problems of structural interactions. This activity was undertaken with the full cooperation of the Drydocks Council and the GWU Drydocks Section Executive, and with the assistance of WPDC staff. The full report is due for publication during 1985.

3.5 Study Group on Workers' Participation at the Drydocks

The role conflicts which sometimes emerge between Union Stewards and Worker Committee members was also the subject of a motion passed by the 1983 General Meeting of the Drydocks Section of the GWU. The motion called for the setting up of a study group to study the current state of workers' participation at the Drydocks, in order to identify and define the roles and interactions between the various power structures. The WPDC

Chairman accepted to chair and form part of this Study Group which also has representatives from the STPSA and Metalworkers' (Drydocks) Sections of the GWU, the Drydocks' Council and the Workers' Committees, in addition to WPDC officials.

This study group held its meetings during 1984 and a set of preliminary recommendations have been submitted. Final and more fundamental recommendations will be made after the conclusions of Dr Kester's research project (Section 3.3) have been submitted for the Study Group's consideration.

3.6 Other International Contacts

Active links were also maintained by the WPDC with various organizations abroad. Such links are mutually beneficial and help to improve the quality of the WPDC's resource and at the same time keep it abreast of international developments in the field of industrial democracy.

Amalgamated Metals Foundry and Shipwrights Union
(AMFSU) N.S.W. Australia
Association of Workplace Democracy (AWD) - Washington
DC, USA
Centre International de Coordination de Recherches
sur Autogestion (ICRA) - Paris, France
Centre for Research into Industrial Democracy -
Participation (CRIDP) University of Glasgow, Scotland
Centre for the Study of Industrial Democracy and Self-
Management, University of Haifa, Israel
Consejo Latino Americano y del Caribe para la
Autogestion (CLA) - Lima, Peru
European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) Brussels, Belgium
Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB) London, U.K.
Industrial Cooperative Association (ICA)
Massachusetts, USA
International Association of Quality Circles (IAQC)
Oklahoma, USA
International Industrial Relations Associations (IIRA)
Geneva, Switzerland
Institute for Democratic Economic Alternative (IDEA)
New Jersey, USA
Institute of Workers' Control, Nottingham, UK
Trade Union Institute Research & Education Group
(TUIREG) Oxford, UK
The Plunkett Foundation for Cooperative Studies
Oxford, UK
The National Center for Employee Ownership (NCEO)
Virginia, USA

UNESCO Literacy, Adult Education & Rural Development
Division, Paris, France
Yugoslav Center for the Theory & Practice of Self-
Management Edvard Kardelj, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.

The WPDC was also visited by Ms V. Hughes (Ruskin College, Oxford) and Prof. E. Weissel (Social Academy, Austria - see Section 2.3 (d))

4. Publications and Other Activities

4.1 Reports and Publications

The following publications and reports were made by the WPDC Staff and associated workers during 1984:

- (a) WPDC Third Annual Report - A brief review of the workings and activities of the Centre during 1983.
- (b) Workers' Participation Under Strain - The Changing role of the Union at Malta Drydocks - a paper presented at the International Conference on Third World Unionism and the New International Division of Labour (Ottawa, Canada - October 1984)
- (c) 'Workers' Education for Effective Participation' and 'Workers' Education as a Key in the Search for New Formulas'. - Papers presented at the 1st International Conference on Lifelong Education Initiatives in Mediterranean Countries (University of Malta - November 1984)
- (d) Workers' Participation has come to stay - A comparison of 1973 and 1982 Drydocks workers' perceptions as emergent from two opinion surveys.
- (e) The WPDC Newsletter - Another issue was published during 1984. This recorded participatory developments in Malta and abroad, a general monitoring of local industrial relations and general information about the activities of the WPDC
- (f) Koperattivi - A manual on cooperatives and cooperativism. Written in Maltese and intended for use in worker education courses and in

trade and secondary schools. To be published in 1985.

- (g) Participating in Industrial Society: paper presented at a conference entitled Orwell 1984 - An Intellectual Challenge University of Malta, February 1984
- (h) Il-Partecipazzjoni fit-Tarzna - Kif Jahsibha 1 - Haddiem - An abridged version in Maltese of the WPDC 1982 Drydocks Survey. The third publication in the Worker Education Series of the WPDC
- (i) Workers' Participation at Malta Drydocks - An analysis of Workers' Perceptions. The full report on the Drydocks Opinion Survey (1982) was presented at the international conference in Yugoslavia in October 1984. To be published by ICPE in 1985/86 (see Sections 3.1, 3.3).

4.2 Monitoring of Industrial Relations

One of the main aims of the WPDC is to provide a service of information for participatory enterprises, researchers, students and others who may have an interest in participation and in the general study of industrial relations or who are actually involved in its implementation at the workplace. For this purpose the WPDC undertakes a systematic and regular monitoring of events in local industrial relations. Press cuttings and other data are coded and filed chronologically at the WPDC Office for easy access and retrieval. The WPDC also carries out from time to time intensive case studies on current industrial issues. These are eventually published in the WPDC Newsletter or in other reports and publications.

4.3 Other Activities

- (a) The WPDC Association embraces all the former participants of the WPDC educational activities who are interested in keeping regularly informed about the Centre's work. These member associates receive copies of the WPDC's publications including the Newsletter. During the year under review there were 90 associated members.

5. Conclusions

The above report shows that, in spite of its limited manpower and financial resources, the WPDC continued to break new ground in 1984. During this year a variety of activities were undertaken in connection with Malta Drydocks, this being the main local, self-managed firm and therefore the crucial test case of workers' participation in Malta. The educational programmes offered by the WPDC were supported by research and consultancy on problematic issues. These represent the main WPDC initiatives during 1984.

Concurrently, the WPDC established stronger links with a wider public. In this area the first series of radio programmes proved to be a major success. This was a completely new venture by the WPDC which enabled it to expound the principles of participation to the public at large. The series provided an opportunity to develop the potential for mass education and it paved the way for more challenging ventures on radio and television in 1985.

The Centre also made the first direct contact with potential cooperative members in 1984. The field of Cooperatives and cooperative development will feature prominently among the WPDC's future activity priorities. Cooperatives provide, after all, challenges and opportunities for other forms of industrial democracy.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
Income & Expenditure Account - 1984

INCOME

University Funds	Lm 5,200.00
Miscellaneous	Lm 458.32 (a)
Other Income	Lm 1,200.00 (b)
	<hr/>
	Lm 6,858.32

EXPENDITURE

Workers' Educational Programmes	Lm 884.32,7 (c)
Personal Emoluments	Lm 3,739.88,9 (d)
Publications	Lm 888.21,6 (e)
Office Equipment	Lm 780.00 (f)
Other Equipment & Stationery	Lm 416.77,1 (g)
Miscellaneous	Lm 27.80
	<hr/>
	Lm 6,737.00,3

Surplus of Income over Expenditure Lm 121.31,7 (h)

- (a) Represents Registration and Membership Fees (Lm 311.50) and transferred interest (Lm 146.82)
- (b) Represents contributions by the General Workers' Union (Lm1,000.00) and the Bank of Valletta (Lm200)
- (c) Includes lecturing fees, seminar and course expenses and hire of audio-visual material. Excludes running cost of Diploma in Labour Studies which is met out of special University vote.
- (d) Includes salaries of research and secretarial assistance, national insurance contributions and allowances.
- (e) Includes cost of printing of books in the Workers' Education Series, journal subscriptions and other purchases of literature.
- (f) Cost of electronic typewriter for photo-type setting
- (g) Includes postage, telephones, advertisements, telegrams, photocopying and stationery
- (h) Amount transferred to Reserve Fund. Vide WPDC First Annual Report (1981) p.7 (2)

