

# LEARNING AND ORGANISING SERVICES

## 2009 IN REVIEW

### **Introduction**

Welcome to the Learning and Organising services (LAOS) Unit annual review which summarises the contribution of key aspects of LAOS activity to UNISON's objectives and priorities for 2009.

LAOS works with Regional Education Officers, Regional Learning and Development Organisers and other head office departments to design and deliver training and development programmes for activists and members.

Within UNISON's Objectives and Priorities for 2009, LAOS identified its specific priorities for the year. These are set out overleaf and the LAOS priorities under Objective 1 were circulated to the Development and Organisation Committee in January 2009. This review outlines our progress against those priorities and also includes information on LAOS activity to meet Objectives and Priorities that was not included in our priorities at the start of 2009.

### **2009 Headline Information to Note:**

- 3,008 new stewards were trained in 2009, showing a training density of 59.3% against new stewards appointed in the same period and an increase of 41.7% in the number of stewards trained compared to 2008.
- 11,093 training places, 19.23% of TUC provision, were taken up by UNISON reps on TUC 10-day and short courses.
- The Branch Secretary Development project, piloted in 2009 is ready to roll-out across regions, including mentoring of secretaries by regional staff or senior activists to maximise the effectiveness of the development.
- A Refresher Workplace Reaccreditation course has begun roll-out across regions with over 265 stewards taking part in the course this year
- LAOS staff continue to contribute to AO and LO training to support Meeting the Organising Challenge.

While the review concentrates on specific activity to support one or more of UNISON's Objectives and Priorities, it is important to acknowledge also the huge contribution made by our essential 'business as usual' functions that underpin our training and development work. These include the administrative and support services that allow courses and events to run smoothly, and members, activists and staff to access information on opportunities available, and also the ongoing updating of course materials to ensure that they reflect new developments and legislation.

Many thanks to all involved for their contribution to the achievements of LAOS in 2009. It is a collective effort of which we can all be proud.

**Pam Johnson**  
**Head of Learning and Organising Services**

## **L&OS PRIORITIES 2009**

### **Objective 1: Recruiting, organising, representing and retaining members**

- 1.1 Supporting Meeting the Organising Challenge through activist and staff training
- 1.2 Promoting leadership development as part of cultural change process
- 1.3 Support the regional/branch assessment process; linking BDOP and organising toolkit materials to the process
- 1.4 Increasing the diversity, number and percentage of workplace reps trained for their role: Pathways into UNISON; Activist Learning & Development Routes linked to national standards and qualifications; promote cultural awareness among activists; organising around ESOL; Learning and equality training materials, mentoring programme for activists
- 1.5 Union Learning Fund Projects: - Learning, Equality and Diversity: Support regional projects arising from LEDU- Bridges to Learning: A Northern Region Partnership
- 1.6 Establishing Equality Reps - Union Modernisation Fund Project
- 1.7 Improving the evaluation of the quality and impact of activist training provision
- 1.8 Improved data collection systems to better monitor density of stewards trained and target training programmes

### **Objective 2: Negotiating and bargaining on behalf of members and promoting equality**

- 2.1 Procurement – activist and staff training programme
- 2.2 Review how Meeting the Organising Challenge will change work with regions and delivery of training
- 2.3 Integrating skills for life for activists and members in campaign issues and issue specific training materials
- 2.4 Providing support to service groups and sector groups in developing learning agreements and employer engagement
- 2.5 Developing the UNISON ‘learning offer’:
  - Health offer review and KSF
  - Local Govt and Skills agenda

### **Objective 3: Campaigning and promoting UNISON on behalf of members**

- 3.1 Provide training support to UNISON campaigns:
  - linking strategic campaign course to topic specific courses
  - promoting community engagement
- 3.2 Develop UNISON political profile on workplace learning and development
- 3.3 Support service group engagement with sector skills bodies and policy development
- 3.4 Provide training support to UNISON equality strategy and include equality and diversity issues in programmes
- 3.5 Promote environmental awareness in training programmes
- 3.6 Supporting UNISON international work through education and training
- 3.7 Develop member political education

### **Objective 4: Developing an Efficient and Effective Union**

- 4.1 Move from Amber to green in Investors in People - Action Plan in place and reviewed regularly
- 4.2 Evaluate and action LAOS equality plan
- 4.3 Provide training materials to support changes in branch financial accounting process
- 4.4 Evaluate and action LAOS green workplace plan
- 4.5 Ensure AMT and LAOS requirements included in RMS development (new system)
- 4.6 Explore better use of e-communications on training and development
- 4.7 Staff development to 'future proof' and ensure LAOS work focus on UNISON organising, campaigning and development objectives
- 4.8 Implement flexible working policy for staff to improve work life balance.

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***Activity to support LAOS Priority 1.1, “Supporting Meeting the Organising Challenge through activist and staff training”***

**All Together Now**

**Three Companies Organising Project with the SEIU**

LAOS became been involved in this new national campaign launched in June 2009, working with SEIU trainers to educate staff and activists on organising methods and preparing the team of seconded UNISON activists to organise workers in Sodexo, Aramark and Compass. At the close of the project, evaluation will be carried out on the extent of the link between organising and education.

**National Education Forum**

The theme of the 2009 Forum, held in November, was “Organising for Learning, Equality and Diversity”. 57 activists and staff involved in the learning agenda attended. The Forum received presentations on:

- The ULF Learning Equality and Diversity in UNISON project with an overview of local learning initiatives and presentations from the Living Books project in the North West region; Keeping the NHS Working in the East Midlands region; Developing a Learning Infrastructure in the South West region; the UNISON/Open University Partnership’s new web portal; and Learning and Organising in E.on UK in UNISON Power Branch
- Using new media to promote UNISON and learning, with an opportunity for participants to work together on a short piece to be videoed
- Linking Learning and Equality issues
- The activist development project. Forum participants also gave feedback on the next steps for implementing the project.
- Taking forward the UNISON Skills for Life strategy

Participants also took the opportunity to sign up to the Million Voices Campaign.

**Meeting the Organising Challenge – staff training**

LAOS has continued to deliver Area and Local Organiser training and LAOS staff also act as moderators on the new Area and Local Organiser Sharepoint teamsite.

**Fitness to Practice**

Training to raise awareness of Fitness to Practice issues on supporting members who have been reported to their registration body and on organising around the Fitness to Practice agenda was developed and piloted for activists and staff. This now includes more elements on case preparation and representation skills using case studies and fits well with the existing advocacy course on Fitness to Practice.

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### **Independent Safeguarding Authority**

A new course for activists and staff on understanding the Independent Safeguarding Authority was developed and piloted, covering all aspects of the new Vetting and Barring Scheme as it affects those members working with children and vulnerable adults. 9 million+ workers need to be registered in next five years and the course reflects the organising potential of this issue.

### ***Activity to support LAOS Priority 1.2, "Promoting leadership development as part of cultural change process"***

#### **Leadership Development Programme**

Two courses with the Health Service Group Executive were run in 2009, with a further two pilot courses in regions. The new two-day Regional Leadership Course was rolled out to regions via a tutor briefing in July. In addition, the pilot Mentoring Scheme for new NEC members was successfully launched, with mentors trained and a new handbook developed. The new NEC induction took place in July, with a pilot Dealing with Documents course in November. A leadership course for NEC members is planned for March 2010.

The first national leadership school took place in November, with 50 participants including lay members and staff from regions and national. The evaluations were extremely positive.

### ***Activity to support LAOS Priority 1.3: "Support the regional/branch assessment process; linking Branch Development and Organising Plans and organising toolkit materials to the process"***

#### **Supporting the Regional/Branch Assessment Process**

LAOS work on the Activist Development project incorporates support for this process. Materials to be used by organisers are already available and have been incorporated into the training for new Area and Local Organisers,

### ***Activity to support LAOS Priority 1.4, "Increasing the diversity, number and percentage of workplace reps trained for their role: Pathways into UNISON; Activist Learning & Development Routes linked to national standards and qualifications; promote cultural awareness among activists; organising around ESOL; Learning and equality training materials, mentoring programme for activists"***

#### **Activist Development Project**

The Branch secretary development project was piloted in 2009, and is ready to roll out across UNISON in January 2010. A mentor training programme is being developed so that all new branch secretaries on the programme will be mentored by regional staff or senior activists as

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agreed at regional level.

A guide for branches on mentoring and developing activists has been produced and will be published in January for use in conjunction with the next round of branch assessments. In addition a new branch education co-ordinator course was developed which will be piloted in February 2010.

### **U-Train**

The U-Train map has been well received by activists as an attractive clear and usable way of setting out UNISON's learning and development routes and programmes for members and activists. Work has continued throughout 2009 in preparation for the launch of an on-line version in the New Year.

### **Stewards' refresher course**

The refresher Workplace Reps Reaccreditation course was piloted in April and tutors were briefed on the course in July. The course has been successfully rolled out in regions. While full data for 2009 is not yet available, records so far show that over 265 stewards have taken part in the training.

### **On-line Stewards Training**

In 2009 LAOS ran two on-line Stewards training pilot courses in Eastern, London and South West regions. In the light of these courses, the course materials and delivery process were reviewed and towards the end of the year the revised course was delivered for activists in Eastern and London regions. The course covers the same issues as the class-based course with the addition of elements of IT skills. Feedback from the latest course has been positive and a final evaluation will be given to the Education Staffs meeting in Spring 2010.

### **National Activist Training Programme**

In 2009, a total of 314 activist training places were taken up through the national activist training programme organised by LAOS. The national programme supplements the wide range of training available through regional education programmes and offers a range of advanced employment law courses for experienced activists, skills development courses for national committee members and a programme of nationally co-ordinated and regionally delivered branch welfare officer courses. 159 places were made available to activists on employment law courses, 48 places on national committee skills development courses and 107 on branch welfare officers training courses.

### **UNISON Take-up of Places on TUC 10-day and Short Courses**

LAOS works in partnership with regional education services where the bulk of activist training is delivered. In addition to activist training delivered by regions, many activists are signposted to UNISON-specific or generic courses delivered by TUC unionlearn.

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Based on figures provided by unionlearn and reported to Congress 2009, UNISON representatives took up 11,093 training places, 19.23% of TUC provision, on TUC 10-day and short courses in 2008. This was made up of 1,378 UNISON reps (13.93% of places) on TUC 10-day courses and 9,715 reps (20.34% of places) on TUC short courses.

The high level of training that our reps take part in through the TUC is illustrated by the fact that they took up more training places than any other union.

### **Mentoring Programme**

In addition to the NEC pilot, a pilot course aimed at organising staff took place in June 2009 to help develop skills in mentoring colleagues and activists in line with Meeting the Organising Challenge.

### **Pathways into UNISON for Women**

This women's development programme was delivered twice in Northern Ireland in 2009 to build understanding of the union and encourage women members to get active in the union. Plans were made with two further regions to deliver the course in 2010.

### **Migrant workers participation project**

LAOS developed and piloted a Migrant Workers' Pathways into UNISON course to support the Migrant Workers Participation project. This residential course gave participants an understanding of unions in this country, their rights at work, the political context of UNISON's support for migrant workers and the structure of UNISON itself. Due to its popularity, six courses in total were delivered, attracting 92 workers of more than 14 nationalities. The response to the courses has been very enthusiastic and a follow up survey found that 37% of participants reported recruiting new members, some in substantial numbers, and 39% took up branch or rep roles. The course was also evaluated by an external educational researcher from Lancaster University, who concluded that "the course effectively fulfilled its aims and went beyond to engage a diverse group of students to critically think through the issues of migrant workers and unions and obtain new and broader perspectives."

### **Training Materials Review**

Materials for the following courses were updated during 2009 to take account of changes in legislation and to maintain their relevance to current issues:

- Dealing with Reorganisation and Changes at Work
- Conference Delegates
- Handling Grievances and Disciplinarys
- Identifying Legal Cases in the Workplace Guide
- Handling Basic Pensions Enquiries

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### **Lay Tutor Programme**

Five regions put a total of 28 activists through the Stage 1 training in 2009. In addition 27 organising staff from across regions also completed the course.

In addition, 11 experienced lay tutors who wished to develop their skills further took part in a nationally delivered Stage 2 course was in October which was well received.

### **Equality and Learning course**

A course for reps was developed and successfully piloted in September to highlight the links between equalities issues and learning. Course materials are now available for use at regional level.

***Activity to support LAOS Priority 1.5, "Union Learning Fund Projects: - Learning, Equality and Diversity: Support regional projects arising from LEDU - Bridges to Learning: A Northern Region Partnership"***

### **Learning Equality and Diversity in UNISON Project**

2009 has seen considerable progress with over 30 regional and branch projects established and 198 ULRs trained in the first three quarters of 2009. In addition 1,106 learners have gone through UNISON courses. Work is underway on a follow up project for 2010.

### **ULRnet**

During 2009, ULRnet has continued to offer an online network of support for UNISON Union Learning Reps (ULRs). The site now has over 300 registered members and attracts regular contributions from ULRs on learning and education issues. It has been particularly popular with newly recruited ULRs who have been able to exchange ideas and good practice with experienced learning co-ordinators from across the regions.

During Adult Learners Week in May, members posted details of education events in their regions with examples of workshops and learning activities which could be shared by other ULRs.

The site also continues to keep ULRs updated on education policy such as information about the Skills Pledge and briefings on the Learning Revolution.

### **Learning Angles**

The following short Learning Angle briefings were produced during 2009 to help ULRs promote learning around current issues:

- Dealing with the Credit Crunch
- Why do we need Equality Reps?
- Tackling Procurement

These included information on each subject, a case study to illustrate how learning could support branch activity and action points and signposting to resources to support ULRs to get active around the topic.

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**Organising for Learning Event – March 2009**

The UNISON Learning and Organising national learning event was held March at Congress House and was attended by over 200 delegates. The theme this year explored the learning and organising agenda and offered delegates the opportunity to attend specialist workshops looking at issues ranging from Skills for Life, the credit crunch and the role of the equality rep.

Speakers to the conference included union learning reps from the East Midlands, Northern and Yorkshire and Humberside regions. One of the speakers Nicola Njie from E-on (UNISON Power Branch) was later awarded the TUC Union Learning Rep of the Year award for her outstanding achievements in organising and recruiting many new members and activists through promoting and engaging work colleagues in learning opportunities.

***Activity to support LAOS Priority 1.6: Establishing Equality Reps - Union Modernisation Fund Project*****Establishing Equality Reps in UNISON project**

This project has been managed from within LAOS and in 2009 the focus has been on working with Equality Reps in pilot branches in South West, Wales/Cymru and Northern regions, beginning with training for Equality reps at the beginning of the year. There were 26 branches involved in the pilots and of a total 56 Equality Reps were recruited and trained, 20 of whom are brand new reps. The Equality Reps course covers an introduction to concepts of discrimination, awareness raising around equality issues, equalities legislation including Public Sector Equality Duties, and practical strategies for tackling issues in the workplace. The course has been accredited by the TUC and a tutor briefing run to roll it out to regions. Since the course was rolled out to regions in late September a further 49 Equality Reps have been trained on courses in the Eastern region, Wales/Cymru and London. More courses are planned for the South West and Yorkshire & Humberside regions. Staff from head office and from most regions have been briefed on the project and the role, and further briefings are planned for the beginning of 2010.

***Activity to support LAOS Priority 1.7: Improving the evaluation of the quality and impact of activist training provision***

Activity to meet this priority has been partially addressed by work around the activist development project to on Motion 2 and the one-to-one review process for activists at branch level, to identify their development needs before and after training. This work will be carried forward into priorities for 2010.

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***Activity to support LAOS Priority 1.8: Improved data collection systems to better monitor density of stewards trained and target training programmes***

**Monitoring and evaluation of Stewards Training Data**

From January 2009 data entered to the Activist and Member Training (AMT) of RMS on the numbers of new stewards trained was compared to the numbers of new stewards appointed. This was reported to the Development and Organisation Committee and to Regional Education & Training functions. Across the union total of 3,008 new stewards were trained in 2009, showing a training density of 59.3% against new stewards appointed in the same period and an increase of 41.7% in the number of stewards trained in 2009 compared to 2008. This process also enabled some useful feedback to RMS one or two system anomalies that can be taken forward in a future revision of the system.

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***Activity to support LAOS Priority 2.1, “Procurement – activist and staff training programme”***

**Procurement – staff and activist training**

To enable activists and staff to get to engage effectively with the procurement agenda over 40 courses have been delivered since the start of 2009, mainly at regional level. Over 260 organising staff and 150 activists have taken part in the training. Activist training and some further staff training will continue into 2010.

In addition a new course on the effects of procurement in Primary Care Trusts was developed and piloted. Called ‘Transforming Community Services – Service Reviews’ it deals with what branches can do to get involved in the service review process which is sometimes the first step in outsourcing and privatisation. A tutor briefing was also held to make it available to all regions.

***Activity to support LAOS Priority 2.2, “Review how Meeting the Organising Challenge will change work with regions and delivery of training”***

**Reflecting Meeting the Organising Challenge in delivery of training and work with regions**

All new courses developed, and particularly the Stewards Refresher course, have reflected Meeting the Organising Challenge. In addition, LAOS staff have also been involved in the training of Area Organisers.

***Activity to support LAOS Priority 2.3, “Integrating skills for life for activists and members in campaign issues and issue specific training materials”***

**UNISON Skills for Life Strategy**

To implement Motion 2, “ Meeting the Organising Challenge”, carried at National Delegate Conference 2009, work has begun on developing a comprehensive UNISON Skills for Life strategy. Plans have been made to set up a project board in January 2010 to take this important work forward. A Skills for Life survey was carried out at the National Delegate Conference with 200 delegates and the results will feed into the strategy.

As part of the strategy a two-day ‘Dealing with Paperwork ‘ course was piloted with National Committee members. This course was designed to provide practical techniques to assist with reading and interpreting information which covered skimming, scanning, speed reading techniques and learning styles.

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**Skills for Life Union Network**

LAOS has led on establishing a Skills for Life network in partnership with NIACE and unionlearn. The first meeting had representation from ten other unions and included consultation on the unionlearn Skills for Life strategy.

**Skills for Health: Redevelopment of NVQ in Health and Support Services**

LAOS has contributed to the Steering Group for the redevelopment of the above NVQ by ensuring that Skills for Life needs were taken into account in the redesign of the qualification. Steady progress is being made on finalising draft unit specifications following rationalisation of National Occupation Standards and alignment of Qualifications and Credit Framework across the 22 Health NVQ pathways at Levels 2 and 3 and Support Services at Level 2.

**Numeracy/Financial Awareness Courses**

Six Debt Awareness Workshops were delivered in 2009 for 64 participants. The workshops aimed to raise awareness among activists of signs of members who may be in struggling with debt and/or numeracy issues so that they could be signposted to support from ULRs or UNISON Welfare. The workshops were popular with branches and a tutor briefing to roll the workshops out in the regions was also held.

**Fast Facts Booklets**

LAOS has worked with NIACE to produce UNISON sponsored Fast Facts booklets including Fast Facts for Domestic, Health care, Teaching Assistants, Health professional, Catering, Working with Elders Working with Early Years and for Street/ Refuse & Recycling Operatives. They are designed to fit into a top pocket or purse. Fast Facts are an ideal aid for those who do not have instant access to a dictionary, textbook, calculator or spell-checker.

**Embedding Skills for Life in Careconnect Learning materials**

During 2009 LAOS has worked with the Skills for Life co-ordinator at Careconnect to update the teaching and quality monitoring paperwork.

***Activity to support LAOS Priority 2.4, "Providing support to service groups and sector groups in developing learning agreements and employer engagement"***

**GO Awards**

LAOS worked closely with the Local Government Service Group and the IDEA on the GO Awards, which offer an excellent opportunity for ULRs to work with local authority employers to provide skills for life learning for staff. The project provided accredited training for a number of UNISON ULRs to assess GO Award action plans and give their unique

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perspective on how to make Local Authorities plans practical and effective.

The ULRs involved were presented with their certificates at the GO Awards event. UNISON was one of the sponsors of the event and received a positive profile for our work on learning and skills for life.

### **Skills for Health – Joint Action Working Group**

A member of LAOS sits on this Group which met three times in 2009. The Memorandum of Undertaking was signed by Unionlearn, the Joint NHS trade unions and Skills for Health in June 2009. This outlines the signatories' shared strategic ambition to increase the learning and development opportunities for all staff in the Health Care sector, especially those in pay bands 1-4, so they can develop themselves as individuals, progress in their learning and careers and maximise their contribution to service transformation and improvement.

### **Activity to support LAOS Priority 2.5, "Developing the UNISON 'learning offer'"**

#### **Cleaning Staffs Learning Offer**

Learning and Organising Services organised a workshop at the UNISON national *Cleaners in the NHS Conference* in November, which was attended by over 200 cleaning and support staff. This included a survey of delegates to inform learning provision for cleaning staff and over 130 delegates took part. The findings highlighted members' needs for learning opportunities to help them in their role and for personal and career development and for employer support.

LAOS has also met with the cleaning and support services sector skills council, Asset Skills, to explore possible ways of working together under the Women and Work initiative.

#### **Internal Programme – Return to Learn and Women's Lives**

The UNISON Internal Programme, Return to Learn and Women's Lives, has continued to offer UNISON members the opportunity to develop their communication and numeracy skills, with over 300 learners completing the programme during 2009.

The courses were advertised by direct mailings to members and in the Yorkshire and Humberside region alone, this produced a response from over 500 members who were invited to attend an Information and Guidance meeting to signpost them to an appropriate course.

This year UNISON commissioned a learner survey by the WEA which asked learners to comment on the lifelong learning opportunities and personal development that the programme offers. This showed that over 13% of learners were interested in becoming a UNISON ULR and

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30% of respondents said that they had become more involved with their community as a result of studying on a UNISON programme.

By working closely with Regional colleagues and by promoting the learning agenda, the Internal Programme continues to offer organising and recruitment opportunities. The programme encourages members to become more active in the union by equipping learners with the skills and confidence they need to support them in a union role.

### **UNISON/OU Partnership**

The UNISON/OU Partnership continues to develop and is increasingly focused on learning offers which can be used to promote UNISON's organising agenda. A recent meeting of the UNISON/OU Partnership steering group received reports about the new partnership web site which will be up and running in 2010 together with news that learning partnerships with employers on Openings courses and the foundation course, "An Introduction to Health and Social Care", are still recruiting over 300 students each year. UNISON was responsible for recruiting over 700 students directly to OU courses in 2009. New developments in 2009 have included a special offer to 24 young members to do a free Openings course on the environment together with continued liaison with the Bridges to Learning project in the Northern region, which is pioneering new workplace progression routes for UNISON members. In 2010 it is hoped to pilot new short course continuing professional development programmes which will help branches to offer short attractive flexible learning offers to members, which will help build the union.

### **UNISON Educational Bursaries**

The Bursary scheme raises UNISON's profile and supports members' members' and activists' development. It offers awards for trade union and labour studies, career development and general education. In 2009 it supported 89 members as follows:

- 8 activists undertaking trade union and labour studies courses ranging from certificate/diploma courses to bachelors and masters degrees.
- 45 members who received Open University Awards.
- 33 members who received Book Grants
- 1 ULR on the London Metropolitan University ULR continuing professional development course.
- 2 members on UNISON/Sheffield Hallam University housing courses received achievement awards

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***LAOS activity to support Objective 2 not specified in LAOS priorities for 2009***

**Negotiating Skills training – Business and Environment**

This annual course Stage 1 negotiating course for Business and Environment representatives was delivered over 3 days in Birmingham in the autumn and was well attended. This popular course covers skills needed for in depth negotiations with employers and is based on role playing a case study.

**Education and Children's Services**

A two-day course on the new national framework agreement for school support staff has been piloted and two taster sessions developed with North West region. A tutor briefing, to enable the course to be rolled out across the country, took place in December with another one planned for early 2010.

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**Activity to support LAOS priority 3.1, “Provide training support to UNISON campaigns:**

- **linking strategic campaign course to topic specific courses**
- **promoting community engagement “**

**Public Services Campaign - A million voices**

LAOS have worked with the Policy and Campaigns unit to develop the outline for a handbook to support the Million Voices campaign, using the approach adopted in the strategic campaign course. The Million Voices campaign has also been promoted through training with Area and Local Organisers and as part of the National Leadership School.

**Pensions: Capital Stewardship**

A series of three-day modules for pension trustees and those with an interest in negotiating around pension schemes were run nationally in April, May, June, July, September, October and November and were well attended. They covered Local Government Pension Scheme representation, Trustee representation, pension investment and capital stewardship. Feedback from course participants was positive and a full evaluation of the course is underway.

**Distance-learning Introduction to Pensions Course**

An ‘Introduction to Pensions’ distance-learning course was piloted over two months in North West and Northern regions. Subjects covered basic and key issues, types of pensions, doing the sums, protecting futures pensions.

Over 100 members and activists completed the course and feedback has been very positive. Plans for rolling-out the course will be made in 2010.

**Dealing with Redundancy**

In response to the credit crunch, LAOS developed and piloted a new course for activists on Dealing with Redundancies. The course covers redundancy agreements and criteria, equality considerations and getting the best deal for members plus action planning. Course materials are now available to all regions.

In addition LAOS contributed to local government service group advice to branches on how the learning agenda and ULRs can support negotiators in situations where members are facing the possibility of redundancy.

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***Activity to support LAOS priority 3.2, “Develop UNISON political profile on workplace learning and development”***

**Campaigning Alliance for Lifelong Learning**

The Campaigning Alliance for Lifelong Learning (CALL) was set up in response to the decline in the number of adults participating in publicly-funded learning programmes. UNISON was one of the founder members of CALL, along with the Workers’ Education Association (WEA), the University and College Union (UCU), the National Union of Students (NUS) and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE).

Cuts to adult education provision reduce opportunities for our members, particularly the low paid, to access the sort of learning which can change their lives. They also threaten the jobs of members working in colleges and local authority adult education departments.

LAOS has worked closely with Policy and Public Affairs and the Education Workforce Unit to ensure UNISON’s full participation in the campaign, making extensive use of our regional and branch networks.

LAOS staff provided stewarding for a successful lobby of Parliament in February, organised by CALL and addressed by representatives of all the founder members and by John Denham, then Secretary of State at DIUS.

***Activity to support LAOS priority 3.3, “Support service group engagement with sector skills bodies and policy development”***

**Sector Skills Council – mapping representation**

LAOS has mapped UNISON representation on Sector Skills Councils in liaison with relevant National Officers to produce an up to date list of staff and members involved in all Sector Skills Councils.

**Learning at Work in the Social Housing Sector**

LAOS supported the Local Government Service Group in working with Asset Skills on a ‘Learning at Work in the Social Housing Sector’ seminar during the year.

***Activity to support LAOS priority 3.4, “Provide training support to UNISON equality strategy and include equality and diversity issues in programmes”***

**Supporting UNISON’s Equality and Diversity Strategy**

Integrating equality and diversity issues into all training and development materials is an ongoing part of LAOS activity.

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***Activity to support LAOS priority 3.5, “Promote environmental awareness in training programmes”***

**Environmental issues**

A new Branch Development and Organising Toolkit module, ‘Organising Around Climate Change and other Environment Issues’, was developed for delivery by regions and branches. The materials are available through the Activists Zone on the UNISON website.

***Activity to support LAOS priority 3.6, “Supporting UNISON international work through education and training”***

*LAOS staff have been involved in exploratory meetings with the German trade union, ver.di, about a joint project on widening participation in trade union education.*

***Activity to support LAOS priority 3.7, “Develop member political education”***

A detailed discussion at the National Education Forum took place involving lay members and staff from national and regional levels. The outcomes from this will be fed into to the UNISON report to the National Executive Council.

## **UNISON OBJECTIVE 4: Developing an Efficient and Effective Union**

### ***Activity to support LAOS priority 4.1, “Move from Amber to green in Investors in People - Action Plan in place and reviewed regularly”***

#### **LAOS Investors in People Action Plan**

The action points discussed with LAOS Staff in 2008 were implemented and the staff survey carried out in Summer 2009 indicated that on the ‘traffic light ‘ scale, LAOS had moved to green in all areas within the remit of the department. LAOS staff also took part in confidential interviews to gain further insight into the culture and working relationships in some parts of the Union.

### ***Activity to support LAOS priority 4.2, “Evaluate and action LAOS equality plan”***

#### **LAOS Equality Action Plan**

During 2009, Learning and Organising Services implemented its Equality Action Plan, by extending areas of good practice and implementing ideas identified by the team. The Equality Action Plan has been monitored and reviewed using the traffic light assessment, with all LAOS action points being awarded either Green or Amber ratings.

### ***Activity to support LAOS priority 4.3, “Provide training materials to support changes in branch financial accounting process”***

*No specific new training materials are required and existing branch officer training materials will be amended.*

### ***Activity to support LAOS priority 4.4, “Evaluate and action LAOS green workplace plan”***

#### **LAOS Green Workplace Plan**

During 2009 LAOS staff implemented their green travel plan by reducing air travel to a minimum, using public transport rather than cars as far as possible and making use of video conferencing to avoid travel to meetings. In addition individual waste bins were replaced with two banks of bins incorporating recycling as well as general waste disposal.

### ***Activity to support LAOS priority 4.5, “Ensure AMT and LAOS requirements included in RMS development (new system)”***

The AMT user group led by LAOS continues to meet and feed into the process and this is supplemented by discussion between the head of RMS and the Head of LAOS.

## **UNISON OBJECTIVE 4: Developing an Efficient and Effective Union**

### ***Activity to support LAOS priority 4.6, “Explore better use of e-communications on training and development”***

#### **E-communications**

The on-line course for stewards was reviewed following earlier delivery in 2009 and was well received on subsequent delivery. The CD-ROM ULR course was also successfully co-ordinated by the South West region for ULRs from around the country. While the numbers who choose these courses are relatively small, those who find it the best way of taking up rep. training report very positive experiences of the courses.

ULRnet on-line activity for ULRs is ongoing and has been reported under Objective 1.

The National Education Forum also provided an opportunity to raise with participants the issue of using new media, e.g. online news services, blogs, Facebook, You-Tube and Twitter, in learning and organising, and to offer them an opportunity to prepare a short piece to be videoed.

### ***Activity to support LAOS priority 4.7, “Staff development to ‘future proof’ and ensure LAOS work focus on UNISON organising, campaigning and development objectives”***

The activist training and workforce learning functions within the unit have been integrated to ensure that workforce learning development is combined with service group activity and activist development and that workplace learning is explicitly linked to UNISON’s organising objectives.

### ***Activity to support LAOS priority 4.8, “Implement flexible working policy for staff to improve work life balance”***

#### **LAOS Flexible Working Plan**

Following a workshop in September to understand how flexible working could be implemented and to share with each other, individual preferences for flexible working patterns, LAOS drew up a departmental plan to clarify protocols and ensure that the work of the department would be adequately covered and implement the scheme. Staff satisfaction with the scheme is good and a full evaluation will be carried out early in 2010.