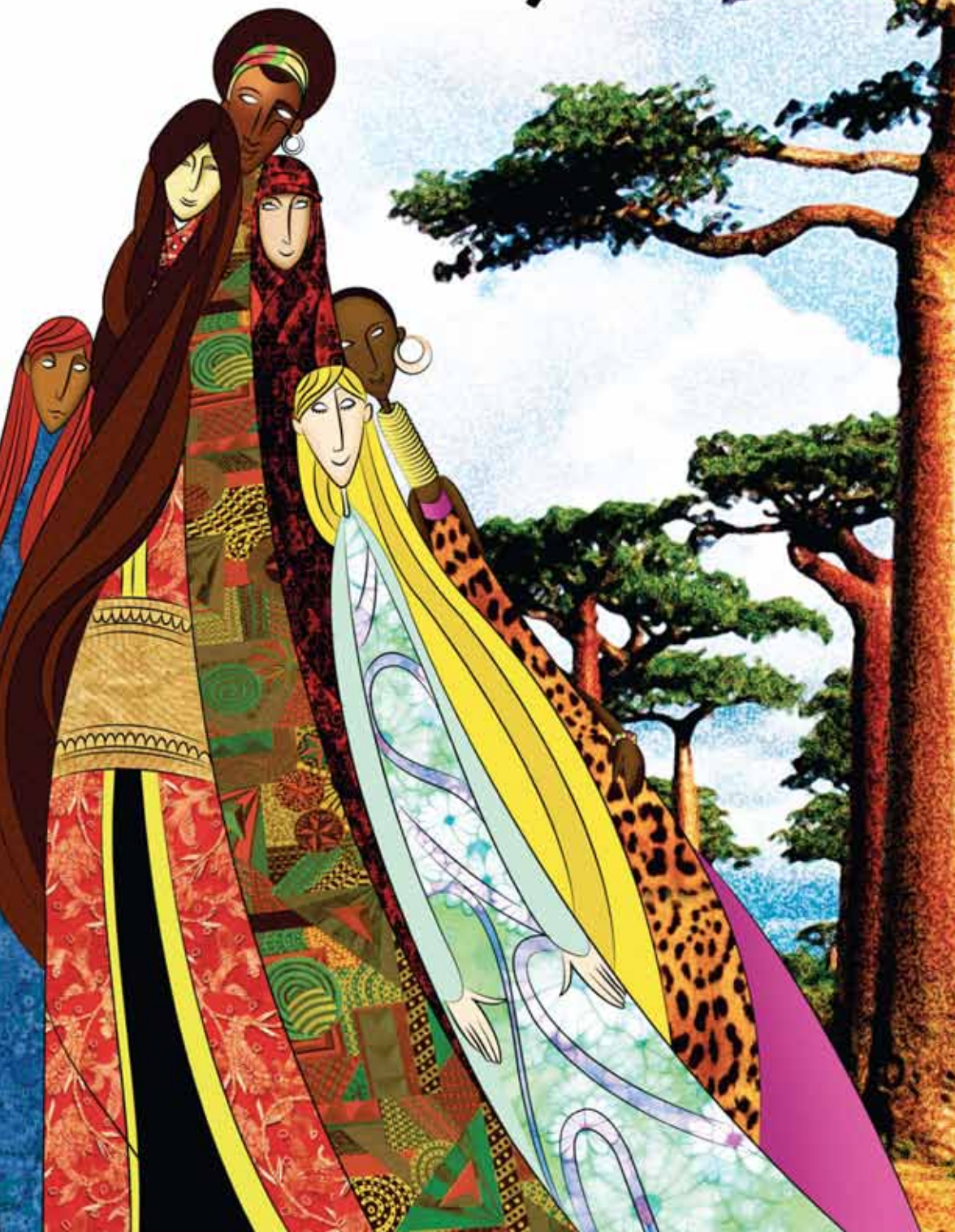


Women's Organising Assembly



DISCUSSION GUIDE

ITUC, International Trade Union Confederation

2nd World Women's Conference
Dakar, Senegal 19-21 November 2013



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Sincere thanks also go to Daina Z. Green, contributing author and editor of this discussion guide. Daina has worked on gender equity issues for many years. She is certified by the ILO as a Facilitator for Participatory Gender Audits and enjoys advising workplace teams involving unions, governments and non-governmental organizations on how to identify and eliminate discriminatory barriers.

Based in Canada, over the last decade many of her training and equity projects have taken her to Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally, our thanks go to all the authors, whose contributions have made this such a rich discussion guide. We hope that their thoughts and words will serve as inspiration to union women not only at this Women's Organising Assembly but also in our own unions, our communities and beyond.

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Introduction



A Revolutionary woman

A poem by Marwa Sharafeldin

You talk to me about your austerity measures
The need to copyright my past, present and future
To relieve your financial crisis pressures
I have to tighten my belt and work hard
For somehow, I have to save the banking system
So it can save me and my daily, hard work pleasures

I am told that the financial architecture is designed
So that abundance overflows
from rich to poor,
strong to powerless,
man to woman,
But all I can see in your architecture ... is bad plumbing
Clogged pipes everywhere
Congested with your investments
And my assortment of hard-earned debts
But you better watch it, for you really cannot beat me
I'm used to tying your free trade with my free labour
Your market economy with my care economics
Your fiscal policy with the welfare of my tenderness...
But not for you, for those I love...
And in my love lies my revolution
So don't get too comfortable
Because I am a revolutionary woman

Did you know of the kind of world that I desire?
My fickle warrior heart, and my eyes that shine like fire?
My dancing step and my strong working hands?
That knead our freedom together without tire
My deep wild laughter
At the colourful dreams to which I aspire?
Don't let my thunderous silence fool you
For I shall never honour your economic ceasefire
Don't get too comfortable
I'm a revolutionary woman

I am all too aware that you need me
Can you survive without my loving free labour?
Without the royalty of my generous nature?
Can your empires last one second if I decide to with-hold
The abundance of my one dollar?
What if all of us decide to do so?
What happens to your profits
If my womb decides to hibernate
No more babies for this world

And no more consumers for this market
What if I ... decide again to Occupy?
A new market, a new system, a new justice

Never forget
Your power comes from my acquiescence
To my legion of beloved friends, sisters and mothers
'The street is ours!'...once said an old ancient mama sage
Its true you know, all it takes nowadays, is one Facebook event page
Let us then see you cower ... under the surge of this woman power
So don't get too comfortable
I'm a revolutionary woman

Untamed minds and boundless dreams
Ablaze with all possibilities
Equality, justice and solidarity
Connecting our joint bloodstreams
I pluck the stars and scatter them around us
It is an old protection ritual for the adventurous
Be prepared...
For I know the smell of revolution when it's a brewin'
Don't get too comfortable...
'Cause in front of me lies, a terrifying bunch, of revolutionary women

Foreword

By Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary



Welcome to the Women's Organising Assembly

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC

The Women's Organising Assembly marks a strategic moment in the critical fight to reclaim our democracies, our communities, the dignity of work and our rights as women and as workers.

We are witness to alarming decent work deficits in an ailing global economy; decent work deficits that impact disproportionately on women. The dominant model of corporate greed has driven a global economy based on exploitative wages, insecure and unsafe work. It must end and we will counter the threat to equality, social justice and our environment posed by the power and influence of these corporations on democratically elected governments.

The ITUC is determined to take up this challenge by building the power of workers. Organising women everywhere is critical to this priority.

The global economy is no more stable today than it was six years ago and the scourge of unemployment and inequality is driving economic instability and social despair.

In 2010 global growth stood at 5 per cent and it was described as the 'green shoots' of recovery, but in hindsight it was the height of concerted action. The IMF just last month again, for the 7th consecutive time, revised down global growth projections to a mere 3.1 per cent. With the Eurozone in continued recession and slow growth in the US the drag on the BRICS countries is the latest casualty. With projected growth for Brazil at 2.5 per cent and with growth declining in China and India while growth in Africa is largely jobless growth there is an urgent need for leadership.

No nation is an island in today's globalised economy and we need to rebuild economies based on shared values where people's lives and livelihoods with their families and their communities come first. The challenge is significant. We are, at best, facing an era of prolonged stagnation. Add to this, the increasing failure of multilateralism, when from the IMF to the UN, the EU and the G20, the failure to understand that the global economic crisis, caused by greed and inequality, required a social response of equal or greater urgency to that of bailing out the financial sector simply underscores the leadership crisis.

In this context the state of the world for working people and their families is very bleak. Unemployment is again rising above 200 million and youth unemployment is a problem in every nation. For crisis countries and developing nations - facing continuing unemployment with youth unemployment levels of 30 to 60 per cent - societal tensions are in ferment.

The ILO estimates a need to create 600 million new jobs in the next 10 years. Without a determined approach to rebuilding economies with sustainable jobs and social protection at the core of a coordinated global effort, we are facing an economic and social time bomb.

If you consider the global workforce, there are around 2.9 billion workers on our planet. The global economy has a formal sector of just 60% and more than 50% of workers have some form of irregular employment contract. The informal sector is therefore around 40% of the global economy and growing. Here there are no rules; it is the sector of desperation where the dominant profile of workers includes women, migrants and young people. This is no longer a north-south divide as even within G20 countries this sector occupies between 25% and 85% in individual nations.

And 75% of the world's people have no social protection.

And inequality is increasing in almost every nation.

The OECD (2011) reports that "Increases in household income inequality have been largely driven by changes in the distribution of wages and salaries, which account for 75 % of household incomes among working-age adults....This was due to both growing earnings' shares at the top and declining shares at the bottom, although top earners saw their incomes rise particularly rapidly."

The most recent OECD report (2013) shows no reversal of the inequality trend – quite the contrary. Market income inequality increased further and more rapidly than ever before. The increase between 2008 and 2010 was as strong as in the twelve years prior to the crisis.

Indeed the 300 wealthiest citizens in the world hold the equivalent wealth to that of the poorest 3 billion.

The decent work deficit is increasingly characterising the global economy and its supply chains.

Women have been hardest hit by the financial crisis as their employment and income levels steadily deteriorate. The ITUC (2013) Global Poll shows that 65 % of women think the economic situation in their country is bad.

54 % of women think their country is going in the wrong direction.

Only 12 % of women say their income has risen in the last two years and only 12% of women think their government is focused on the interests of working people.

66 % of women say laws do not give them adequate protection to ensure job security.

67% of women say laws do not give them protection for fair wages

This is a strong indictment of the failure of governments to ensure decent work. But the good news is that 68% of women think work places with a union provide better wages, conditions and health and safety for workers. This is a sound foundation for organising.

And women know what will ensure security and opportunity for themselves and their families. Women are more strongly in support of a social protection floor:

76 % strongly support decent retirement incomes

78% strongly support access to healthcare

73% strongly support access to education, and

62% strongly support affordable access to childcare. Sadly only 54 % of men indicate strong support for childcare which is critical for women's participation in the workforce.

Women may be half the working-age population, but they represent less than one-third of the actual labour force. For a decade or more, women's participation in the workforce has been stuck at about 50 per cent, whereas male participation has remained consistently—and comfortably—close to 80 per cent.

According to the IMF these global averages mask wide regional variations. The situation is starkest in the Middle East and North Africa, for example, where about 80 per cent of working-age women do not participate in the labour market.

Women in paid employment still earn less than their male colleagues even when doing the same work. The gender pay gap is around 18 % in the OECD nations and expands dramatically in the developing economy. Women hold fewer than 14 per cent of corporate board seats in the European Union, and fewer than 10 per cent of chief executive officer positions in Fortune 500 companies. The number of women in government appears to have stalled at around 20% and women in union leadership falls way short at just 12%.

If employment trends had continued at pre-crisis levels, there would have been nearly 29 million more people in the labour force in 2011. Falling participation among women accounts for two-thirds of this shortfall. This must be corrected.

Mobilising the untapped female workforce is a critical part of rebuilding our economies. If women equalled the number of men in the workforce the GDP of France would increase by 4%, Japan by 8% and Egypt by 34%.

We demand a different world, a world that we can achieve only by fully including women. This requires us to organise the values, voice, and contributions of women. Our unions, our workplaces and our democracy will be stronger for it.

And we see progress.

The '12 by 12' campaign for Domestic workers has been supported by more than 80 affiliates organising domestic workers to fight for ratification of Convention 189 and just labour laws.

Labour Rights for Women is an organising project that has reached out to thousands of women across eight countries, both in formal and informal sectors.

Street vendors, waste pickers and marginalised agricultural workers are being organised in the informal sector - demanding social protection, minimum wages and labour laws to formalise their jobs.

Young people are being supported to organise in their workplaces and their communities through the ITUC 'Get Organised platform' and young women leaders are emerging through the Decisions for Life campaigns.

We are building the ITUC Global Academy to train and support lead organisers to coordinate organising in their workplaces and in communities.

Equally the ITUC 'Count Us In' campaign to raise the numbers of women in trade union leadership has been launched and affiliates are signing up.

But these efforts are just the beginning. As we celebrate the struggles of women for democracy and peace, for rights, decent work and climate justice we must draw inspiration and determination from their courage to organise to build the power of women.

Looking Back – Looking Forward

By Diana Holland, Chair of the ITUC Women's Committee



It is not working women, low paid workers, pregnant women, mothers and carers who caused the global economic crisis, and yet women are disproportionately paying the highest price. The ITUC Global Poll 2012¹ includes the important statement:

“Women are more pessimistic than men. 68% say their country is going in the wrong direction”.

This 2nd World Women's Conference - Organising Assembly - is not just about opposing discrimination and injustice because it is wrong. The focus on organising working women is central to the trade union response and part of the solution for the global trade union movement – women leading the way, as the young women involved in the ITUC Decisions for Life Young Women's project are doing, for example.

The global economic crisis has increased poverty and swelled the ranks of the “working poor” to 1.5 billion working men and women, the majority being women - whose jobs do not provide enough to meet basic needs. The ITUC report² International Women's Day 8th March 2011, showed that while the initial impact was equally detrimental to men and women, a second wave of the global economic crisis has led to increasing numbers of women losing their jobs or being forced into more precarious, temporary, and informal forms of work. The ITUC report for International Women's Day 8th March 2012 reported on the lack of progress in closing the gender pay gap in the workplace, although importantly it does show that there is a smaller gender pay gap in sectors with higher union organisation.³

These threats to hard-won gains are having a major impact on women's lives and to their families and communities. Austerity measures, challenges to trade union rights, and cutbacks are deeply threatening to women's rights and opportunities to work throughout the world. Action on sex discrimination, unfair pay, sexual harassment, violence against women, women's health, including reproductive health and support for pregnant women, working mothers and carers, is increasingly being challenged and given a lower priority. The ILO⁴ has documented increases in complaints of workplace discrimination at the same time as cutbacks in bodies charged with inspection and preventing the economic crisis from generating more inequalities.

Against this backdrop, action called for at **the 1st ITUC World Women's Conference 2009 'Decent Work, Decent Life for Women'**⁵, bringing together 450 women delegates from 102 countries across the world, has taken on a sharp focus. The conference underlined the International Labour Conference resolution on gender equality: *“Crises should not be used as excuses to create even greater inequalities nor undermine women's acquired rights”*, and called for implementation of the agreed Jobs Pact: *“measures to retain persons in employment, to sustain enterprises and to accelerate employment creation and jobs recovery combined with social protection systems in particular for the most vulnerable integrating gender concerns on all measures”*, and the ITUC women called for action plans for:

- organising women workers
- collective bargaining, social dialogue and gender equality
- worldwide action on gender equality, economic and social justice, climate change and food security
- core labour standards
- women's representation in trade unions

1 http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/120604_-_ituc_poll.pdf

2 “Living With Economic Insecurity: Women in Precarious Work”, ITUC March 2011

3 “Frozen in time: Gender pay gap unchanged for 10 years”, ITUC March 2012

4 In its report “Equality at Work: The continuing challenge”, ILO May 2011

5 First ITUC Women's conference 2009 Conclusions and Recommendations

ITUC Women's Committee: Action for Equality

In the years since the conference, the ITUC Women's Committee with the Equality Department has ensured these action plans are being implemented in line with the ITUC Charter for Women and Action Plan for Equality in Trade Unions. As well as inspiring action at national and workplace levels, internationally ITUC women have been active across the world on International Women's Day and on the International Day to End Violence against Women & Girls, with Global Union Federations, on the World March of Women, at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, defending the Beijing Platform for Action, and in the Workers' Group of the ILO.

As part of its central commitment to positive action, the committee has also advanced new developments, and it is the achievements of young women workers, domestic workers and Arab women in particular that lead the way. Their achievements demonstrate very clearly that workers in some of the most vulnerable and exploited positions in the economy can inspire the most positive change needed by all across the world.

Decent Work for Women: Domestic workers convention – 12 by 12 campaign

After a long campaign for justice led by domestic workers, particularly migrant domestic workers, the ITUC has been part of the major alliance with the IUF which achieved the ILO Convention and Recommendation on Domestic Workers at the 2011 ILC, central to its campaign for Decent Work, Decent Life for Women. Domestic work is undervalued work, mainly carried out by women, central to our economy, with serious exploitation and abuse hidden in communities and homes, and limited or no access to redress. The ILO Convention is a major achievement, and the campaigning for ratifications throughout 2012-13 has been turning words of support into action which needs to continue.

Arab Women's Network – Changing for Equality

International Women's Day 2011 saw women trade unionists from Arab countries coming together to launch their network 'Changing for Equality' under the umbrella of the ITUC with the support of the ILO. At the heart of the network is mobilisation for democracy, social justice, decent work and gender equality. Their declaration confirms the urgency of promoting women in all sectors of society, and their action plan states:

- *'women have to be actors of the transition to more democratic regimes and involved on an equal footing with men in the decision making process towards democracy*
- *that trade unions in the region must increase their commitment to gender equality and the advancement of women's rights*
- *that quotas remain a necessity to ensure women's access to decision-making bodies'*

Young women – 'Decisions for Life'

The ITUC Decisions for Life project has been reaching out to thousands of young women workers internationally: *"The lifetime decisions adolescent women face, determine not only their individual future, but also that of society: their choices are key to the demographic and workforce development of the nation"*. The project has been achieving a ground-breaking level of tangible changes in workplaces, conditions and involvement. The motivation and creativity of young women coming forward in some of the most challenging situations is rebuilding the confidence of workers everywhere. As one of the young women has said: *"Don't give up easily, strive and fight for your rights as workers... and focus on your dreams and goals regardless of the environment you are living in"*.⁶ The principle of ensuring young women have the space, resources, opportunity, respect and value must continue to be a priority.

6 Quoted in The Labour Research Service Bargaining Monitor Volume 25 No 175 May 2011 Cape Town South Africa www.lrs.org.za

Moving forward

This latest global economic crisis and its aftermath needs the leadership and strength of all women – including young women, Arab women, domestic workers, and all those across the world facing discrimination, exploitation and exclusion from power and decision-making. Trade unions internationally are demonstrating that they can be central to making this happen through organising in the informal economy; recognising the potential for job creation in the care economy; eliminating the barriers and empowering the talents of women in the workplace, the union and wider community and in leadership at all levels.

This is how we will strengthen our movement – harnessing the talents and strength of all working people, women and men.



ITUC Congress Resolution on Gender Equality



1. Congress reiterates that gender equality is a key human rights goal and component of social justice. It commits the ITUC to the achievement of gender equality in all its endeavours, deplores the continuing reality of deep and pervasive discrimination against women in all areas of economic and social activity and recognises the equal contribution of women and men to society, to economic life and to the trade union movement.
2. Congress notes with concern that gender differences in participation and unemployment rates are a persistent feature of global labour markets in spite of advances in educational levels of women. Women suffer multiple disadvantages in access to labour markets, and in most cases do not have the same opportunities as men in the choice of work and in having access to the working conditions to which they aspire. Such exclusion is particularly serious as regards young women migrants. In addition, traditional social roles burden women with an undue share of caring responsibilities and domestic or family work.
3. Gender discrimination is evident throughout the world in access to resources, educational and economic opportunities, political power and leadership positions. Only 40% of those employed in the world are women, with the majority being in the agricultural sector and in informal economic activities where incomes and working conditions are generally lower. Women are over-represented in low-paying jobs, under-represented in executive, management and technical positions and often suffer poor working conditions. Women's skills and jobs have been historically undervalued with the global gender pay gap at around 22%. Policies and programmes to achieve gender equality are essential, but have not proven adequate to dismantle stereotypes and overcome injustice.
4. Cultural, economic, social and religious barriers must be identified, condemned and overcome in order for women's human rights to be respected and fully implemented everywhere. As gender discrimination frequently interacts with other forms of discrimination such as age and gender identity, policies and programmes should be put in place to address the multiple forms of discrimination against women and a cross-cutting approach on gender should be adopted.
5. Sexual harassment and other forms of abuse are serious forms of discrimination that undermine the dignity of women and men and negate gender equality. Congress deplores the reality that one third of women suffer from violence at some stage in their lives.
6. Because traditional occupational segregation has forced women into economic activities often characterised by low pay, whether low-skilled or skilled, it is critical to recognise appropriately the importance and value of the jobs, sectors and activities where women are overrepresented. Provision should be made for women to acquire the skills that are related to jobs, activities and sectors that are growing and offering decent work opportunities, and women's skills must be valued equally with those of men. Women should also be encouraged to join non-traditional sectors such as those linked to green jobs. Vocational training, education and skills development policies should promote equality of opportunity for

girls and women, and initiatives should be taken for the sharing of family responsibilities between men and women to reconcile equitably work and personal life especially in relation to child and dependent care.

7. Discrimination and disadvantage in the world of work is often related to, or exacerbated by women's reproductive role and their lack of access to affordable related services and support and the inadequacies of maternity protection. Donor governments must provide developing country governments with the resources to provide satisfactory and universally accessible reproductive health and medical care and access to sufficient professional staff for all, to reduce maternal and new-born mortality around the world in line with the fifth Millennium Development Goal.

8. Congress recognises that globalisation affects women and men differently and that its differential impact and resultant needs should be subject to gender analysis in both policy development and impact assessment. The withdrawal of the state from regulatory and economic activity, and the reduction of public spending adversely affect employment in sectors in which women are highly represented and reduce those services on which women are disproportionately dependent because of the unequal division of family responsibilities.

9. Congress underlines that the global crisis has deepened inequality and undermined women's rights and that as a result an impoverishment of women, especially elderly women, is taking place. The crisis should be seized as a critical opportunity to adopt a new policy paradigm that reflects a rights-based approach and promotes equity and gender equality. National economic recovery strategies must therefore incorporate a comprehensive gender analysis from the outset.

10. Congress declares that gender equality should be addressed as a central element of all aspects of employment policy, including macroeconomic frameworks, active labour market policies, skills development, enterprise promotion and employment-intensive infrastructure programmes. Gender issues must be central to the process of designing and assessing the impact of recovery packages.

11. Congress demands the full respect of core labour rights in all export processing zones (EPZs) where women make up nearly 80% of the workforce, in order to eliminate exploitative, dangerous and sometimes brutal practices of which women are the most frequent victims.

12. Congress notes that women constitute nearly half the world's migrants and that many work in the least protected and most exploited sectors and are increasingly trafficked into illegal employment and prostitution. It condemns the growth of such slavery-like practices and commits the ITUC to fight against them and to achieve more effective national and international enforcement of measures to eliminate them.

13. Women also make up the majority of workers with precarious jobs and of workers in the informal economy who are not protected by legislation, are denied fundamental rights and are subject to sub-standard conditions of work. Congress calls on affiliates to intensify the organisation of all women and men workers, both in the formal and informal economy while making all efforts to bring those workers who are currently denied their fundamental rights at work within the scope of legislative protection.

14. Congress encourages and supports the actions of unions working to lend moral and material assistance to women and children who have refugee status owing to conflicts or violent situations.

15. Congress is concerned that in spite of the growth in women's membership of affiliates of the ITUC to 40% and the efforts made to better represent women in their structures and policies, the full integration of gender perspectives in trade union decision-making, policies and activities remain inadequate. Trade unions have the basic responsibility, and must be at the forefront of the struggle, to achieve gender equality in the workplace, in their policies, in their own structures and in society. The ITUC calls on affiliates to prioritise and ensure the organisation of women into unions and the promotion of women into leadership positions and throughout their structures.

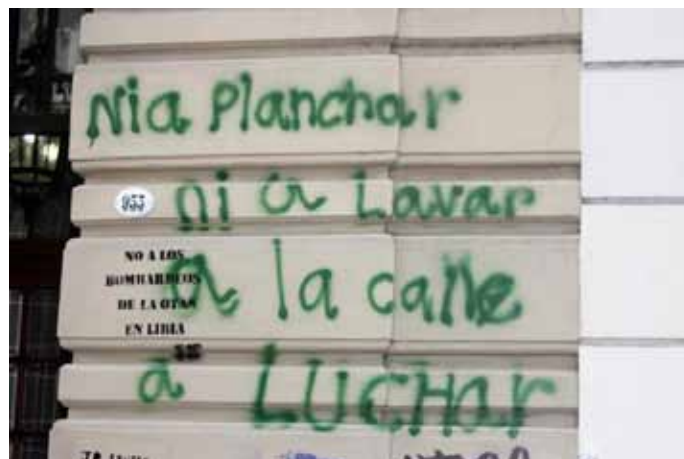
ITUC Action Programme

16. Congress instructs the ITUC and regional organisations and structure, working together with Global Unions partners and affiliates to:

- (a) intensify the Decent Work for Decent Life for Women Campaign aimed at achieving social justice and gender equality at the workplace and in trade unions and to continue the drive to organise women workers, particularly in EPZs and the informal economy, as well as domestic, migrant, rural, young, and other vulnerable workers;
- (b) assist in the extension of gender awareness training programmes to both men and women trade union leaders and activists with a view to the systematic incorporation of gender perspectives in policies, programmes, publications and negotiations;
- (c) promote the appropriate participation of women as trade union negotiators and implement a Plan of Action for collective negotiation, social dialogue and gender equality, including: health and safety of women in the workplace and health policy, including HIV/AIDS; policies and procedures to eliminate sexual harassment, discrimination and violence in the workplace and in the community in general; and training for all negotiators and union representatives regarding the incorporation of gender policies in all trade union activities;
- (d) increase union activity for pay equity at national, regional and international level, including collective bargaining, research and information dissemination on the gender pay gap, support for equal pay for work of equal value, revision of the widely-held notion of certain jobs or professions being the preserve of a single gender, capacity building, and campaigning on the work-life balance and for the right to a decent living wage sufficient to cover basic needs, and for women working involuntarily on part-time contracts to have the possibility of moving to full-time contracts or at least to increased hours;
- (e) promote access of women trade unionists to education on all areas of trade union work at the national and international levels, including the global economic crisis, trade and labour standards, climate change and international institutions;
- (f) monitor and assist unions to bring about coherence in trade union gender policies at the international, regional and national levels and encourage unions to carry out gender audits to strengthen their policies and structures on gender equality including through use of the ILO Gender Audit tool;
- (g) take affirmative action and other corrective measures as necessary to further strengthen women's involvement in trade union decision-making, policies and activities and promote actively the ITUC's commitment to achieve gender parity in its programmes and in access to positions of responsibility in the leadership and structures of the ITUC, its affiliates and trade unions generally, with particular attention to the active participation of young women in decision-making bodies, including by collecting disaggregated data on gender parity in affiliates and taking measures in the case of non-compliance;
- (h) promote gender parity within the ILO and a higher representation of women at the International Labour Conference, and the involvement of trade union women at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW);
- (i) fully engage in efforts to enable the adoption of an ILO Convention supplemented by a Recommendation for domestic workers, and its subsequent ratification and full implementation;
- (j) intensify campaigning at national, regional and international levels for the ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions 100 (Equal Remuneration), 111 (Discrimination), 156 (Workers with Family Responsibilities), 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples), 175 (Part-Time Work), 177 (Home Work) and 183 (Maternity Protection), and implementation of the recommendations of the 2009 ILO Conference on "Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work";
- (k) carry out gender analysis of the policies and actions of the IFIs, WTO and other institutions dealing with the global economy and development, and address these issues in the framework of achieving the UN's third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3) on gender equality;

- (l) ensure gender equality is mainstreamed in all decision making, including measures to deal with the global crisis as endorsed in the ILO Global Jobs Pact and investment in green jobs for women and for men;
- (m) Identify and condemn cultural, economic, social and religious barriers to the respect of women's rights that have to be overcome in order for women's human rights to be respected and fully implemented everywhere;
- (n) Strengthen the commitment of companies to positive actions and programmes that seek to achieve gender equality;
- (o) actively promote the access of women to quality public services including health, education, transport and water, and public services such as day care centres and preschools that enable women to have access to the labour market and to remain in it, as part of the struggle for achieving gender equality;
- (p) undertake specific actions for girls' education and the elimination of child labour and the elimination of human trafficking, particularly in the sex trade;
- (q) undertake specific actions to protect women's health and safety at work, with particular regard to their reproductive health and maternity rights;
- (r) defend women's right to free decisions on their bodies and their sexuality;
- (s) condemn violations of women's trade union rights and violence against women trade unionists, participate actively in the International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November and strive for the elimination of all the various forms of violence against women;
- (t) make every possible effort to secure the application of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- (u) promote the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, in particular Section F on women and the economy, at national, regional and international levels and ensure effective trade union input and participation at follow up meetings, as well as support the organising of a Fifth World Conference on Women;
- (v) support the building of solidarity between trade union women at all levels, including international solidarity actions with the Global Union Federations;
- (w) actively take part in 8 March, International Women's Day, making it a day of global action, and build alliances with civil society on behalf of women trade unionists and with women's organisations in order to achieve common goals, including the World March of Women.

June 2010



Organising for Change



Women in the Senegalese Labour Movement

Senegalese workers under French colonial rule resisted forced labour conditions, as their colonisers set about building roads and railways to export the country's wealth back to rich nations. Workers saw little difference between 19th century forced labour and slavery.

The country's first unions were made up of male public service workers educated in French. They used their relative privilege to help other workers establish trade unions and even negotiated for their brothers in private sector unions. By the 1930s, there were unions organised by sector (banking, railway, construction, metalworkers and merchant marine).

Several key strikes leading up to World War II galvanised the nascent working class. The French Army fired on mass protests during the railway workers' strike to silence the workers' demands, but workers and their communities held firm, and achieved their goals. Workers in the Port of Dakar won major wage increases during a historic strike during the same period. However, unions were suspended during that war, both in France and its colonies. In 1945, printers led a successful strike for higher wages followed in 1946 by a number of others strikes, including a railway strike in 1947.

The 1947 railway strike was a watershed moment in Senegalese trade union history. The colonial authorities not only cut off wages, but also cut off water supplies and pressured local traders not to sell food to the strikers. Neither side would concede and the strike dragged on into 1948. Following a tragic shooting incident that left two youths dead, it was the mobilisation of women - who took to the streets in a show of support for the strikers - that tipped the balance and forced the bosses to the negotiating table.

Women began to join the paid labour force in greater numbers in the years following Senegal's independence in 1960. Midwives, doctors and teachers were the pioneers of women's labour activism. It was not long before the women realised they needed to be present in their unions, and to sit at the negotiating tables with their brothers. In the industrial sector, women first joined the ranks of fish processing and tobacco workers. And they joined unions. Women fought against the unlimited working hours imposed on them by bosses obsessed with increased production for export. Not willing to invest in refrigeration facilities, bosses insisted that women work up to 14 hours a day, in order to process the entire day's catch before it went bad. Women began to take part in May Day marches and union conventions.

Women in fish processing were outraged to be excluded from the 40-hour week set out in the colonial Overseas Labour Code. They were joined in their struggle for reasonable working hours by working women around the country, and were finally victorious in the 1970s.

But that was just the beginning of their struggles. The women then had to fight for basic safety equipment. They had no gloves to protect them when handling frozen fish. Basic human rights such as maternity and widowhood leave, and childcare were not respected. Working in these deplorable conditions, women sometimes miscarried at work, and there were countless rapes on the dangerous roads as women made their way home late at night. Women's male partners also sometimes pressured them to quit and come back home to take care of domestic responsibilities. But many women trade unionists embraced feminist principles and pushed for full participation in the labour movement.

During the "golden age" of women's militancy, female hospitality workers fought for the right for promotion and to become supervisors. In healthcare, women were leaders in many struggles benefitting them and their male co-workers. Women municipal workers, making up 40% of the sector, are highly visible in their unions.

A bloody strike in the food processing sector in 1982, and two subsequent strikes in the sector, showed that when women workers could count on the support of their husbands, an unbreakable chain of solidarity was formed. The women occupied the SAIB processing plant for three months. They kept the scabs out and no tuna was processed until the strike was won. As a result of their militancy, the women now have more humane working conditions and much improved labour relations with their company.

Known as the “blouses blanches” (white shirts), doctors and midwives continue their high-profile struggle for decent wages and working conditions. They continue to fight for wage equality, the right to leaves, and safety at work.

The first Working Women’s Conference, organised by the highly-female Food Workers’ Union in 1972, sparked greater consciousness of the need to fight for women’s rights as women and as workers. Today, Working Women’s Conferences are held in each region of the country.

Senegalese women are steadily moving into union leadership posts, including top positions.

Today, the ITUC has 5 affiliates in Senegal:

- Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal (CNTS)
- Confédération des Syndicats Autonomes du Sénégal (CSA)
- Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal - Forces du Changement (CNTS-FC)
- Union Démocratique des Travailleurs du Sénégal (UDTS)
- Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes du Sénégal (UNSAS)

We thank them for their invaluable assistance in organising and hosting this 2nd World Women’s Conference – the Women’s Organising Assembly.

Key messages:

1. Senegalese trade unions evolved from their roots up under French colonialism to a militant model of unity and strength with the emergence of the country’s democracy. Before Senegal’s independence in 1960, unions were almost entirely male-dominated.
2. Both before and after independence, women took part in struggles for improved wages and working conditions. From the beginning of their participation in paid work, especially in the tobacco industry, healthcare, and fish processing sectors, women have been gradually taking their place as leaders in labour organisations.
3. Women trade-unionists today fight alongside their brothers for better working conditions and social policies that reflect their needs as workers and as women.

Get inspired!

1. Women in the fish plants called on their husbands to support their strike for safer work and higher wages. Making the fight “a family affair” was the key to success.
2. Sometimes achieving unity among trade unions is a question of “two steps forward and one step back.” We need to keep working at it.
3. Have we been able to de-colonise our own unions? Are we stuck in patriarchal models? Popular education is one way to understand how we as workers have the “bosses in our heads.” Once we understand, we can kick the bosses out, along with outdated patriarchal beliefs! Brazilians Paulo Freire (Pedagogy of the Oppressed) and Augusto Boal (Theatre of the Oppressed) pioneered popular education approaches that have produced great leaps in awareness when used in union education.

Introduction to the World March of Women

By Wilhelmina Trout



The World March of Women (South Africa)

In October 1998 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, women from various parts of the world came together to discuss the preparation of a new worldwide campaign to confront the causes of poverty and violence. At this meeting it was decided to embark on international action which was launched on International Women's Day 08 March 2000 and ended on October 17 2000, this led to the formation of the World March of Women (WMW).

The WMW remained and grew into an international feminist action movement connecting grass-roots groups and organisations rooted in local struggles and local contexts. We believe that the only way to create a better world is to change the balance of power favourable to the well-being of women by building a broad-based women's movement that organises, mobilises and unites many women around the world who want and struggle for the transformation of societies.

Today we are organised in National Coordinating Bodies (NCB's), composed of hundreds of women and grassroots groups in more than 76 countries. We have an International Committee (IC) composed of feminist activists, two from each of the five continents. An International Secretariat (IS), with an International Coordinator, coordinates the movement's day-to-day activities and rotates every six years to a different country. The first country to host the IS was Quebec, Canada and currently Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Every second year member organisations come together in an International Meeting (IM) where the International Committee members and the International Coordinator are elected and strategic decisions are adopted.

The active participating groups and NCB's are free to define their actions, agenda, and priorities in their respective countries. International actions are decided on by all member groups through a broad participatory consultation process, with the final decision taken by the IM. Decisions are not imposed, the groups support them because they identify strongly with the discourse, actions and images that build and symbolise unity in the diversity of the WMW internationally.

The entire history of the WMW is marked by a dynamic of analysis and action developed from the local to the international and vice-versa. The connection between the international and the local has become one of our strengths and an incentive for many groups to support the March. We do not want to simply reproduce a communication line from the international to the local level. We want the actions and analyses of the local groups participating in the March to have increasing influence on our vision of the world, and our alternatives. This presents concrete challenges, including the translation of the contents of our work into three languages (French, English, and Spanish) and into other languages (the responsibility of each NCB).

Since 2000 there has been global action every 5 years.

- Throughout 2000, over 6,000 groups from 161 countries organised national demonstrations, came together to share ideas and give voice to their demands. The mobilisation built up locally and regionally, culminating on 17 October with simultaneous marches in 40 countries. The official closing event took place in New York with the symbolic handing over of over five million signatures collected to the UN Headquarters, denouncing the devastating impact of the IMF and World Bank policies on women.

- In 2005, unlike 2000, the responsibility for the 2nd world action lay with the NCB's. The aim was to strengthen NCB's and build solidarity at both national and regional level. With very limited financial support, three principal actions were organised
 - The World Relay of the Women's Global Charter for Humanity
 - A worldwide collective creation of a solidarity Patchwork Quilt
 - 24 Hours of Feminist Solidarity

The Charter presents in 31 affirmations the world that women want to build. Each country contributed its analysis and expressed its concerns and after several versions it was adopted at the 5th International Meeting in Rwanda in 2004.

The Charter and quilt started their international journey together on March 8 2005, in Sao Paulo. Over 30,000 women participated, marching in the streets passing through 53 countries on five continents and ended up in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on October 17. At each border, groups of women ceremoniously passed on The Charter and the Quilt to each other. These were moments of great impact. At each stop women organised actions to raise awareness and inform people about the contents of the Charter and they urged their political leaders to put into practice the Charter values. As the solidarity patchwork quilt arrived, countries added their square to the quilt. Piece by piece, the March's vision of another world, expressed in the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, materialised as the quilt was assembled. Ideally each square was made by groups of women through a collective process of sewing, embroidery and reflection about the values of equality, freedom, solidarity, justice and peace captured by the Charter's contents.

- Leading up to the 3rd global action in 2010, and inspired by women's struggles at the local level, four action areas emerged around which the March wanted to deepen its analysis and strengthen its action:
 1. The common good, food sovereignty and access to resources and biodiversity.
 2. Peace and demilitarisation.
 3. Violence against women as a tool for controlling women's bodies, lives and sexuality
 4. Women's work

In 2010 thousands of women across the globe marched under the slogan "**Women on the March Until we All are Free!**" National actions took place in 52 countries, directly involving more than 38,000 women who had built national platforms around the 4 action areas. In Pakistan, in spite of bombs exploding women took to the streets. Women from Mali debated peace-building and demonstrated in Gao, an area of armed conflict. In Greece, they held demonstrations against high military expenditure and austerity measures. In Brazil, more than 2,000 women marched for 10 days under the slogan.

Three regional actions were also organised, leading to debates and public demonstrations. In Asia, women from 10 countries met in Manila, Philippines and demonstrated against the military presence of the United States in Southeast Asia. In Europe, women from 23 countries came together in Istanbul, Turkey and proclaimed their demands under the slogan, "Women, Peace, and Freedom". In the Americas, the WMW joined the Women's Social Movement against War and for Peace to raise awareness and denounce the reality of the Colombian conflict.

The 2010 global action culminated in a gathering of an international delegation of 220 women from 41 countries in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. It was our decision to take action there, first as an expression of our solidarity with the women who resist day to day armed conflict, particularly women in Eastern DRC. We also wished to continue our discussion to reassert our on-going denunciation of the growing militarisation of the world; increasing militarisation is a tool that bolsters the patriarchy in its ties to capitalism.

This Closing Event was a huge mobilisation success in the DRC; the international delegation was well organised; solidarity with women who live in conflict areas was expressed; large participation of Congolese women from all 9 provinces (3,000 people registered); support from allied organisations; women from the country believed they were in a better position to present their demands to their government; the permanent structural benefits for the city of Bukavu, all these achievements gave us the courage to reflect on our weaknesses and challenges, it expressed our level of maturity as an international feminist movement and the accumulation of our 12 years of collective history.



Women Workers in Egypt - before and after the Revolution

By Nawla Darwiche, New Women Foundation (Egypt)

In Egypt, women's participation in the formal economy has doubled from 10.9% (917,000) in 1981 to 22.34% (5.11 million) in 2006 (last available statistics). However, the official rate of female unemployment rose from 19% in 1981 to 24% in 2002, then declining to 18.76% by mid-2008.

And the Unified Labour Law No. 12/2003 has contributed to cutting back several benefits previously enjoyed by female workers:

- Article 91 of the new modified law states that women may only obtain a maternity leave after 10 months on the job, whereas the old law allowed maternity leave to be given after only six months. Employers take advantage of this change, especially with women working under temporary or seasonal contracts - mainly within the private and the investment sectors – by hiring workers on contracts of less than 10 months. Moreover, if a woman gets married during the contract period, the contract is usually not renewed.
- Article 94 of the same law restricts to two the number of leaves for childcare a worker can take. Under the previous law, a woman was allowed to take up to three leaves over the entire period of service.
- In addition, the law exempts some specific categories of workers (domestic workers and agricultural workers) from legal protections.
- Women are also excluded by law from certain jobs “that might be harmful to them for health or moral reasons”. Women are not allowed to work night shifts, which has a substantial negative effect on their access to promotional opportunities (Articles 90 and 91).
- Article 123 of the law stipulates that the female worker has the right to rescind her contract whether for marriage, pregnancy or childbirth. Practically, this is a way to encourage women to quit their jobs under the pretext of protecting the unity of the family.

Illustrations of discrimination against women in the workplace

In the textile and clothing industry, women are concentrated in the ready-to wear clothing sector that pays lower wages than spinning, which has an almost entirely male workforce. According to the testimonies of women from different regions, the starting salary of females is lower than that of males. Moreover, female workers are deprived of the opportunity for promotion or to hold supervisory positions. They are usually temporary workers that can be disposed of at any time as a consequence of their reproductive role within the family.

There is large gap between the percentage of male and female supervisors, even in mainly-female sectors. The marginalisation of women is especially noticeable in the chemical and electronics industries where female supervisors account for only 2% and 3% respectively.

In 2009, the NWF prepared a report on sexual harassment in the industrial zones based on a sample of 40 female workers from four regions (Alexandria, Suez, Port-Said and Ismailiah). All those interviewed confirmed that sexual harassment occurs at the workplace regardless of the dress of the worker (either veiled or unveiled), her marital status, or her age. Most cases of sexual harassment are perpetrated by colleagues, supervisors, or employers.

In most factories, eligibility for company housing is restricted to men.

Contribution of women workers before the revolution

Since 2006, Egypt has witnessed important social movements, especially in the ranks of the working class. Note the great strike at the Mehallah El Kobra spinning and weaving factory in December 2006 and September 2007, involving some 26,000 male and female workers. It is worth mentioning that the December 2006 strike was initiated by 3,000 female garment workers who left their work stations and marched to the spinning and weaving sections where their male colleagues had not yet stopped their machines.

For the first time, the role of women in these strikes is changing from merely supporting men, to standing side by side with them in the negotiations. Moreover, several women participated in the hunger strike organised by the protesters. Two women workers played a role that has become legendary: Amal Said and Widad Demerdash. As a result of their defiance, they were threatened with rape in front of their children by the security services of the factory.

Women have also been very active and have played leadership roles in sectors such as nursing and property tax collection, where the first independent trade union for Egyptian workers was founded in 2009.

At the Mansura-Espana garment factory, the great majority of employees are women. They were the principal force behind a two-month strike in April-June 2007. In the course of the strike, several women went on a hunger strike and five threatened to commit suicide.

Another prominent figure from Southern Egypt is Aisha Abu Samada, elected as a member of her local union committee for the 2006-2011 term at the "Hennawi" tobacco factory where most of the workers are women. In 2007, she led 350 men and women in several collective actions. She also collected 250 signatures on a petition to recall some union committee members who did not support the demands of the majority of workers. As a punishment, she was fired from her job and banished from the union's executive.

The marginalisation of women in the "official" trade union structures is very pronounced. In the 2001-2006 trade union elections, women won 4% of the total local union committee positions, 1.5% of the local union presidencies and 2% of the positions on the executive boards of general unions.

During and after the revolution

Undoubtedly, the firm stand of the Egyptian workers during the revolution played a decisive role in the withdrawal of the former president. Women workers were at the heart of this movement. Women were generally present in all the Tahrir squares of Egypt: at check points, in field hospitals, and side by side with their male colleagues, throwing stones at the thugs, as well as falling victim to fire from security forces and Mubarak supporters. The number of identified female martyrs during the first months of the revolution has reached 23.

During 2010, two women board members of the local trade union committee of the Suez El Nasr fertiliser factory refused to withdraw their complaint of financial contraventions by the company management. They were falsely accused of physically attacking one of the members of the general trade union and former member of the local council. These women continue to fight against corruption and bring to light all the fraud occurring in the factory.

On June 14 2011, the first Egyptian woman worker was charged along with six other workers and was summoned to appear before a military court. Nadia Mohamed Ahmad Youssef, Vice President of the local trade union committee at the El Tamsah factory affiliated to the Suez Canal Authority, was accused of participating in a sit-in after requesting the enforcement of the new collective agreement negotiated with seven trade unions. After a number of protests against the arrests, the case was stayed by the military prosecutor.

The marginalisation of women increased after January 25, 2013, with the rise of Islamist discourse calling for women to return to their homes.

The representation of women remains quite limited even in the independent trade unions registered after the revolution.

What are the main demands regarding women and work?

- Establish wage scales with minimum and maximum wages.
- Adopt all necessary measures to secure equal opportunities for women and men at work in terms of wages, promotion and vocational training.
- Amend the labour law to include all working women (domestic workers, and women in the agricultural and informal sectors).
- Reinstate the articles related to women's reproductive rights: maternity leave, childcare leave, kindergartens, etc.
- Call on the government to take all the necessary measures to allow women to occupy public positions: as judges, governors, ministers, etc.
- Enact measures to prevent women from being sexually harassed at the work place.
- Make women's economic participation visible in official statistics.



Towards 'leaderfull' transformation

By Hakima Abbas, AWID

Leadership has been a mainstay of social development since time immemorial. Leaders have been the centre piece of folktale, legend and mythology as much for their embodiment of 'good' leadership – courageous, bold, problem solving, innovative, creative, shrewd and caring - as for stories of failure, disrepute and overthrow. Leadership in Africa is a complex web of multiple images of authority, power and hierarchy. While commentators often underscore the political leadership woes of Africa as evidence of a leadership crisis on the continent, the collective leadership of African peoples in social transformation has largely been ignored in the body of knowledge determining and understanding leadership. Similarly, within our movements, the single charismatic man continues to be heralded as the leader of transformative processes while African women's leadership has been consistently disappeared from dominant narratives of change on the continent.

The individualised male-centric definition of leadership contributes to the lack of recognition of women as leaders. Patriarchy offers a central place to men in seats of authority and positions of power. However, an important distinction must be drawn between leadership and authority, the latter being merely a claim to legitimacy through title or position, and the former being a set of actions and processes set in motion by individuals or groups of individuals understood to be leaders. Title may cement authority but it does not equate to leadership.

Dominant understandings of leadership define success in leadership to be determined by the talents, skills, knowledge, performance and behaviour of the individual leader. Within this paradigm, the key abilities of a leader include the capacity for having a vision, seeing the big picture, and bringing people into the fold to 'follow' the leader towards a common goal and behind their vision. Traits however that make for a good leader are often the same traits in patriarchal constructs that make for a 'bad woman': strength, courage, daring, authority, vision. Contention about whether traits and attributes of a 'successful' leader are inborn or learned continue to shape discussion on leadership development and the possibilities therein. Perhaps more noteworthy than the debate itself is the important assumption therein that not everyone at all times is a leader or is taking leadership, that shifts in leadership within and between people does not occur. Yet, as we will explore, African activism is increasingly challenging this assumption, as does feminist and anarchist theory.

Much of leadership scholarship is based on organisational development and concerned with efficiency of business. By extension, dominant leadership theory rests on capitalist framings and outcomes where hierarchy and male-centrism is normative. Recently, more attention has been given to women's leadership in this frame with value placed on outcome and efficiency in what is termed the 'gender dividend': "those organisations with the most women as senior leaders enjoy rates of return that are greater—often by double-digits—than those with far fewer or no women in their leadership ranks. (...) the Gender Dividend is a steady benefit that is earned by making wise, balanced investments in developing women as workers and potential leaders, as well as understanding women as consumers and their impact on the economy and the bottom line."¹ Women's leadership in this construct is commodified; rendered an efficient investment for the capitalist market.

On the other hand, women's rights actors have been increasingly vested in the increase of women's visibility and participation in political leadership and other positions of authority. The global women's movement has mobilised to enhance women's role and representation in authority under the assumption that women in these positions would advance gender equality by creating the policies, legislation, implementation and enforcement to challenge patriarchy, and transform power and the practice of leadership through their own feminist leadership. The focus has largely been with the number of

1 The Gender Dividend – Transforming business through the leadership of women by Sharon Allen (2011) accessed at: <http://globalblogs.deloitte.com/deloitteperspectives/2011/01/the-gender-dividend.html>

women and the qualitative difference women's leadership purportedly achieves. The mainstreaming of gender equality frameworks has failed to take into account a transformation of the very basis of leadership that feminism as a theory and praxis offers. Consequently, these initiatives tend to rest on an essentialist view of persons gendered as women derived still from societal projections of gendered attributes. Women's leadership is considered, within this, to be imbued with characteristics seen as inherent to women such as collectivism, nurturing, listening etc. and supposed to be important to encourage and enable more women's participation.

Feminist values, ethics and principles must play a central role in the process and practice of feminist leadership. This precondition for feminist leadership renders somewhat obsolete conversations of the number of women in positions of authority and rather places emphasis on the values, norms and vision of leadership for the transformation and dismantling of patriarchy. Feminist leadership however is not only concerned with the end objectives and vision of a formation² or movement but with the manner in which the work is carried out.

Importantly, African feminist Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi notes that "the feminist leadership model conceptualizes leadership as a service."³ This is a radical shift from the notions of leadership for power and goes to the heart of leadership as movement building and for transformation. Bisi goes further to state that feminist leadership "allows for individual feminist leaders to guide and lead their movements responsibly, but it also decentralizes power and decision-making so that everyone in the movement becomes a leader in their own right. Developing feminist leadership is fundamental to the survival of our organisations and we therefore need a re-conceptualisation of power and leadership." The relationship between feminist leadership and power is wrought with complexities and is as critical in the process of leadership as in its end goal. Srilatha Batliwala notes that "feminist leadership will strive to make the practice of power visible, democratic, legitimate and accountable, at all levels, and in both private and public realms."⁴

"Women need to know that they can reject the powerful's definition of their reality – that they can do so even if they are poor, exploited or trapped in oppressive circumstances. They need to know that the exercise of this basic personal power is an act of resistance and strength. Many poor and exploited women, especially non-white women, would have been unable to develop positive self-concepts if they had not exercised their power to reject the powerful's definition of their reality." bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre*

In mainstream scholarship and activism, African leadership remains largely undefined if not derided⁵. Further, the dearth of documentation on transformations in African societies has rendered the weapon of theory somewhat blunt for Africa's current social movements and continues to enable a static, essentialist and often oppressive perception of African 'tradition', norms or culture to be perpetuated. However, it is important in considering any distinction to feminist leadership in Africa, to examine less superficially, the positions and practices of leadership within Africa's transformative movements.

The African Union has recognised "Africa's rich tradition of solidarity, consensus, national reconciliation and communalism and its contribution to the universal principles of governance, democracy, and human rights."⁶ These values are indeed the cornerstone of many documented political systems in many of Africa's nations (rather than in the Nation state, which has been largely characterised by dominant - at best two - party power). For instance, in describing the Ashanti political system, Kwasi Wiredu⁷ notes "For all concerned, the system was set up for participation in power, not its appropriation, and the underlying philosophy was one of cooperation, not confrontation." It must be recognised however that along with the positive (and this is a subjective attribution) aspects of African political leadership that have and continue to exist there are, hand in hand and equally, characteristics that reinforce oppressive power such as patriarchy and ethnic chauvinism. The degrees and breadth

2 A formation is a group or collective of individuals brought together to work towards a common goal. A formation can be an informal entity such as a collective, hub or affiliate group, or can be a formal structure such as an organization, network or institution. A formation may be permanent or temporary and may undergo various permutations of its original purpose.

3 The Satang Jobarteh Memorial Lecture: A Feminist Never Dies by Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi (2003) published in the *Feminist Leadership in Eastern Africa: Opportunities and Challenges* report of the Eastern African Sub-Regional African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI) by Akina Mama wa Afrika available at www.akinamamawaafrika.org

4 "Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation" by Srilatha Batliwala (2011) CREA accessed at web.creaworld.org/files/f1.pdf

5 African political leadership is often equated with 'bad governance' - a loose framework used (and misused) by neo-liberal and liberal commentators that has become standard in human rights, development and governance lexicon.

6 Declaration on the Theme of the Summit: "Towards Greater Unity And Integration Through Shared Values", Assembly/AU/ Decl.1(XVI)

7 Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics: A Plea for a Non-Party Polity by Kwasi Wiredu in *Post-Colonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader* (1997)

of freedom embodied in Africa's political system vary, like in all political systems, and change across time. These changes are often created by leadership – taken by the people – and dependent on the openness of these political systems to change, the timing and conditions, and the efficacy of leadership.

In turn, Thomas Sankara emphasised the necessity of vision and non-conformity when he noted: “You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness. In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future. It took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today. I want to be one of those madmen. (...) We must dare to invent the future.”⁸ a characteristic further expounded by Assata Shakur who went further to state that this vision be accompanied by a conviction in its realisation, stating: “The first thing I want to say is that I love you. And the second thing I want to say is that we can win, we will win, our liberation. And in order to win our liberation, we have got to think positively. We have got to believe that we can win. And if we don't believe that we can win, we are whipped before we start. We have got to realise what dangers exist and we have to look at those dangers realistically. We cannot afford to have a subjective, distorted, irrational fear. We've got to look at the obstacles to our liberation coolly and clearly and to develop ways to get rid of those, for us to struggle, for us to fight, for our liberation and for our nation.”⁹

When Assata speaks of love, there is an underlying motivation of transformative leadership that is little acknowledged in explicit terms perhaps because of the inherent difficulties in theorising a deeply subjective emotional (though actionable) trait. However, other leaders involved in radical transformation have talked of similar motivation; an important distinction when considering the personified leadership that seeks to be loved from that that loves. El Hajj Malik el Shabazz (known as Malcolm X), for instance, stated: “I am neither a fanatic nor a dreamer. I am a black man who loves peace, and justice, and loves his people.”¹⁰ While Ernesto Guevara de la Serna (known as Che Guevara) famously said: “At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality. Perhaps it is one of the great dramas of the leader that he or she must combine a passionate spirit with a cold intelligence and make painful decisions without flinching. Our vanguard revolutionaries must idealise this love of the people, of the most sacred causes, and make it one and indivisible. (...) In these circumstances one must have a large dose of humanity, a large dose of a sense of justice and truth in order to avoid dogmatic extremes, cold scholasticism, or an isolation from the masses. We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity is transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force.”¹¹

African, and indeed global history, tells us that true leaders are those whose names we do not know. For instance, while the ‘father of the nation’ in Ghana's independence has been hailed as Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, the market women who organised and led active campaigns of resistance have disappeared in the annals of mainstream historic narratives. Yet, within the peoples' history of Africa lies a wealth of knowledge about leadership and leaders that have transformed Africa. A key piece of African transformative processes must be to unearth those histories, reclaim the knowledge of these leaders and document the lessons from these forms of leadership. Indeed, as recently as 2011 the civil resistance in Tunisia and Egypt with unprecedented peoples' mobilisation overthrew of undemocratic regimes and continue to strive for radical transformations of society. These ‘revolutions’ were described by the media as being leaderless because of the difficulty of identifying a singular leader or leadership entity. Yet it is much more accurate to define these actions as leaderful: being led by collectives of activists, coalitions of formations and affiliate citizenry. Throughout the history of transformative change in Africa, it is leaderful movement that has been the most impactful. Out of these movements, prominent spokespersons are likely to arise, as is often necessary, but their relationship, accountability and responsibility to the movement and its multi-faceted leadership will determine the on-going collectivisation of power and therefore the movement's true test of transformation.

⁸ Thomas Sankara, 1985

⁹ Assata Shakur, audio message accessed at http://www.freedomarchives.org/audio_samples/Mp3_files/Assata_Shakur_We_can_win.mp3

¹⁰ Malcolm X accessed at: <http://www.malcolm-x.org/quotes.htm>

¹¹ Socialism and Man in Cuba, Ernesto Guevara (1965)

Transformative feminist leadership must be an active service guided by conviction, an understanding of linked fate, a sense of love and a disciplined commitment towards the fulfilment of social justice for all. This type of leadership will recognise the multiple sights and spheres of struggle, from the public to the private, and is committed to building a leaderful movement where each and every contribution is valorised and power is collectivised. In turn, transformative feminist leadership must dare and seek to vision and (re)envision the world, our practices and our leadership; be committed to ethical, accountable, horizontal, affirming, authentic, multi-generational, inclusive and non-discriminatory practices, formations and vision. It must be critical and self-critical, learning, adapting and transforming and must be committed to the accessible, transparent, just and equitable use and distribution of resources. Transformative feminist leadership is based on delegation rather than representation and puts at the centre voices from the margins of society; it is an individual and collective responsibility. Embedded in the collectivism of transformative feminist leadership is a transfer of knowledge, skills and resources for succession, sustainability and growth between individuals and within formations. Critically, transformative feminist leadership stands and acts in solidarity and sisterhood.

African women are resisting multiple oppressions and creating alternative paradigms and practices for a just world. The collective knowledge of African women is a deep and diverse well of consciousness that has the power to transform our world, communities, movements and selves. African feminist leadership is etched daily upon a transformational canvas based on this knowledge, experiences and realities. It is this canvas that we must reveal and contribute to in order to shift our notions of leadership and by extension of relations to power and a more just world.

“The only leadership I can respect is one that enables every man and woman to be his and her own leader” June Jordan, *Civil Wars*.



Transforming the Terrain

By Lisa McGowan, Senior Specialist for Gender Equality, Solidarity Centre

In July 2013, the Solidarity Centre (an AFL-CIO-aligned workers' rights organisation supporting the struggle for women's and men's economic and political empowerment in more than 60 countries) hosted a meeting of nearly 100 workers/activists, union leaders, and academics to share experiences and ideas for advancing women's labour rights and gender equality. The conference focused on three themes: women's labour rights in agriculture and light manufacturing—two sectors that between them employ hundreds of millions of women around the world, and are central to the economic development of many countries—and transformational leadership. (Transformational leadership can be defined as a way of leading based on inclusion, power sharing, participation, and collective analysis. Transformational leadership enables and relies upon workers' voices to be front and centre and readily embodies gender equality as a core principle.)

Participants gave inspiring and insightful presentations and engaged in substantive discussions throughout the two days, reflecting the scope, power and depth of women's leadership in the international labour movement. Below are some highlights that offer concrete examples of women advancing their issues at the bargaining table, through legislation and in their day-to-day lives.

Women are building power through education and organising, alliance-building and political action

- Claudia Santos Reguelin from the Brazilian Metalworkers Union of the City of Osasco shared how the union's Women's Collective provides a space for women to participate and grow as leaders and members. The collective runs seminars for workers and ensures issues central to women—who make up to 80 per cent of factory workers—are on the bargaining table.
- Rosana Sousa de Deus, executive committee member of the Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT), noted that the women unionists in Brazil “need to dialogue on issues and be at the centre of the debate to build a just society with full participation of women and young people.” Women workers turned out in force to support recent social mobilisations calling for faster action to address the lingering and deep inequalities that still exist in Brazil, despite a decade of significant and successful anti-poverty strategies. “These mobilisations were “completely different than other mobilisations over the last 30 years, with the participation of 5 million workers, women and men.”
- Sally Choi, project coordinator for the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) on China and International Affairs, described the founding of the women's labour movement in Hong Kong, which resulted in part from women working together in study circles (initiated by feminist NGOs) to better understand capitalism, and from their emerging understanding of how patriarchy was used to exploit women for capitalist gain.
- In Morocco, women working in agriculture are taking part in unique training programmes tailored for a workforce with low literacy, said Touriya Lahrech, coordinator of the Confederation Democratique du Travail (CDT). The CDT has also worked to bring women's priorities to the table in collective bargaining, by conducting extensive dialogues with rural women workers and including their demands and concerns in a draft contract—the first of its kind in Morocco. The union is now negotiating the contract on behalf of hundreds of employees of a privately-owned farm.
- As a critical first step to empowering and organising women, the Honduras Federation of Agricultural Unions and the Latin American Banana and Agro-industrial unions (COLSIBA) developed and implemented a sectoral needs assessment. The union studied working conditions, women's role in the union and how women interact in society. That diagnostic identified the information that

led to the platform of demands the union now uses across the region, and formed the template for the clauses the union includes in collective bargaining agreements with local and multinational enterprises.

- Women comprise the majority of light manufacturing workers in Honduras, where Evangelina Argûeta Chincilla is coordinator for the Apparel Sector Organising at the General Workers Confederation. Argûeta described how unions created international support for their struggle after workers were prevented from joining unions in Honduras. Women garment workers achieved victories, such as reopening a closed factory, through “alliances with the United States and with student groups,” she said. “Students are the main consumers of our products.”
- Rosa Aguilar, secretary of Women’s Affairs at the Camposol agribusiness union in Peru, described her union’s outreach to women, to explain its work on issues most relevant to their lives, such as healthcare. Over time, this approach has achieved higher levels of women’s union activity and leadership.

Women (and some men) are transforming leadership by:

- Forming their own unions, where women workers’ voices, needs and priorities take centre stage, is an essential element of an overall strategy of improving workers’ rights. One of the oldest and most successful examples is the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) founded in India in 1972. Now with 1.7 million members in 14 states, it is the largest women’s union in the world. Geeta Koshi, coordinator for SEWA’s legal department, says the union began with five women, who went door to door to determine women’s priorities and build trust with them and their families. This outreach formed the basis of their methodology, and from there, women were trained to do similar outreach work in their communities.
- Transforming organisational culture, which tends to be male-dominated and hierarchical, is essential in the union context as well. In South Africa, four unions, recognising that their internal culture does not easily address issues such as gender-based violence and discrimination, partnered with Gender at Work and the Labour Research Service for a unique process to develop alternative models of power. Among the projects’ tangible results: union activists—male and female—reported that the process reinvigorated and re-inspired them, even in the face of wide-scale workplace restructuring, deteriorating working conditions, and an all-out assault on labour rights in South Africa by employers. Increasing numbers of women joined the unions, more women ran for leadership positions and female and male union leadership gained a deeper understanding of workers’ concerns and became more accountable for addressing them.
- In Mexico, the women-led Comité Fronterizo de Obreros (Border Workers Committee, CFO) is using popular education and feminist social mobilisation to empower women on production lines and in factories to speak out against violations of women’s rights and worker rights in the sector. Working in a unique new partnership with the powerful Mexican Miners’ Union, a male-majority union, the CFO is helping to bring women and men together in new ways to understand, and to fight for, workers’ rights in both male and female-dominated sectors.

Women are transforming their unions by:

- Grounding their labour rights activism in a vision and practice of working women’s rights, gender equality and social and economic justice for all
- Calling for and creating internal mechanisms designed to increase women’s participation in union decision-making. Quotas for women’s participation in elections and union structures were noted to have been very successful over the long term in South Africa, Brazil and Hong Kong in increasing women’s power and influence in union decision-making bodies. Women in the East Africa Trade Union Confederation amended the organisation’s constitution to create space and support for women’s leadership.
- Providing leadership training and empowering women to take on important roles in their unions and communities, as was instituted by Iris Munguía, in the banana, pineapple and sugar cane industries in Honduras.

- Leading by example and as women, and in the process showing male unionists and family members how to integrate the reproductive role and contribution of women workers as a strategic dynamic for positive change.
- Bringing young women's issues to the fore, creating space for their leadership, and following their lead in critical new areas of advocacy. The Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KPVU) is educating young workers on their rights, and women and youth are joining forces to protest against poor wages and working conditions, and proposing legislation to support work and families. The East African Trade Union Confederation recently instituted constitutional provisions related to women and young workers, to enhance their voice in the union.

Women are working to complete the 'unfinished business of the labour movement'

A major piece of unfinished business is addressing the relative scarcity of male workers and union leaders fully in the struggle for women's rights and gender equality. Nhlanhla Mabizela of the Solidarity Centre (South Africa) reminded participants that patriarchy harms men as well as women, and suggested that men needed to listen to discussions about these issues to facilitate progress.

Participants also noted the importance of greatly expanding education, organising and activism—including on forces in the global economy—in a way that connects and integrates the heart, mind and body in our struggle for rights and gender equality. Participants highlighted the need to better integrate an understanding of and support for reproductive rights, including maternity and paternity rights and the necessity of a work/life balance for all workers, all of which were prevalent themes throughout the workshops.



ETUC statement on International Women's Day 2013: Women are paying too high a price! Europe must break with austerity and deliver on equality



On 8 March 2013, International Women's Day (IWD), women worldwide will unite in solidarity to celebrate their courage, determination, and strength and to repeat their collective demand for a basic yet fundamental right: equality between women and men. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) celebrates with them and salutes the contributions and achievements, large and small, of the millions of trade union women and men who are constantly striving for women's rights in and out of the workplace.

IWD provides an occasion to assess the progress made towards achieving equality between women and men and to reflect on the current situation of women in society. Whilst the ETUC celebrates past progress, we also wish to highlight our increasing alarm at the impact of the crisis on gender equality and women's rights. Women are paying too high a price for austerity. The European trade union movement takes the occasion of IWD 2013 to call on the European Union and its Member States to urgently address the gender dimension of the crisis and to deliver on concrete measures to secure gender equality.

Europe is in the midst of a social crisis, characterised by record unemployment, spiralling poverty and rising insecurity affecting both men and women across the EU. There is growing evidence, however, that the crisis is having a disproportionate impact on women who were already disadvantaged on the labour market and at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The situation is made worse by the harsh austerity and accelerated fiscal consolidation policies, focused particularly on radical restructuring of public sector jobs and services, which a majority of EU countries are slavishly implementing encouraged by the European Commission. This short-sighted approach has been implemented with scant or no regard for the impact they are likely to have on women who are predominantly employed in the public sector and rely disproportionately on public services. Cuts to public budgets and services, including healthcare, education, child and other dependent care, transport, housing, welfare, social protection, advice centres and equality bodies directly affect women and their ability to engage in the labour market and their economic independence, as well as contributing to gender inequalities.

The ETUC is extremely concerned that the economic policies that are being pursued will not only jeopardise future progress towards gender equality, but also risk reversing the hard won advances that have already been made in the workplace, the home and all spheres of women's lives. Trade unions and women's groups have been raising these concerns for some time, however, to date, the European Union and national governments have failed to give the issue the attention it deserves.

To draw attention to the matter and gain a better understanding of the situation, this year's ETUC 8 March Survey returns to the impact of the economic and employment crisis, as well as national and European policy responses, on women's participation in the labour market. Initial findings from the survey show that 86% of the ETUC's affiliates that responded agreed that the economic and employment crisis

was impacting on women's participation in the labour market and on their employment conditions. Members highlighted: an increase in the precariousness of female employment; a decrease in female employment, particularly in the public sector, and/or increased unemployment; deteriorating working and contractual conditions with women increasingly forced to accept atypical and involuntary part-time work; lower wages; labour law reforms to the detriment of all workers, but particularly women and young people; increased stress and pressure at work; and greater difficulties in reconciling work and family responsibilities as well as women withdrawing from the labour market due to cuts in public services or entitlements.

We are well versed in the causes and results of gender inequality. Women are over-represented in part-time and temporary work, in low-paid and poor quality jobs. They are more likely to be in precarious employment or work in the informal economy, unprotected by employment law or social security safety nets. They are under-represented in decision-making positions in the workplace, in politics and in economic policy-making. Despite more than fifty years of legislation assuring equal pay, the gender pay gap persists fuelled by discrimination, labour market segregation and the baby penalty. Women continue to carry most of the responsibility for caring for children and other dependents, as well as the lioness's share of domestic chores. These disadvantages impact on women throughout the course of their lives and are ultimately reflected in female pensioner poverty. Far too many women continue to live in fear of violence and worryingly, the social effects of the crisis are leading to an increase in domestic violence.

On IWD 2013, we, the ETUC, repeat our calls for Europe's political leaders, governments and the European institutions to take the following concrete action:

- urgently carry out gender impact assessments of the policies being pursued in response to the crisis;
- a moratorium on austerity and a halt to public sector pay freezes, cuts and reform without proper and effective social dialogue;
- recognise and promote the vital contribution that collective bargaining can play in tackling gender inequality, including the gender pay gap;
- a revision of the equal pay directives in consultation with the European social partners;
- ensure decent state pensions which maintain a proper standard of living in retirement;
- adoption of the revised Pregnant Workers' Directive;
- present proposals for an EU-wide right to paternity leave and a carers' leave directive;
- ratification of the ILO Convention on Domestic Workers; and
- ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and the adoption of a European legislative framework on this basis.

The ETUC looks forward to a time when women have achieved equality of treatment in all spheres, economically, politically and socially and we can use International Women's Day just to celebrate women full stop. The European trade union movement will continue our efforts to achieve this aim, with, we hope, the full support of our social partners and the European governments and institutions.



**ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION FOR
EMPLOYMENT CREATION**



PART I

Women in Leadership – UNION GROWTH

Women Leaders for Workers' Power

By Claire Courteille, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Although women make up about 40% of union membership, achieving gender balance in leadership and decision-making bodies is still a major challenge for the trade union movement. Out of the 315 national centres affiliated to the ITUC, about 15% have a woman president or general secretary. Progress to include more women in senior positions at the local or branch level is slow.

Identifying and overcoming obstacles

What are the barriers preventing women from accessing leadership positions? Women activists, and some academics from outside the union movement, have found that some obstacles are relatively easy to identify and fix, such as women's limited access to training opportunities or inconvenient timing and location of leaders' meetings. Other barriers have more to do with hidden structures of power. The prevalence of a masculine culture in many unions, the tendency to equate leadership with individuals, and male-defined bargaining agendas, all have a negative effect on women's opportunities to lead.

All union activists face the challenge of combining paid work, household responsibilities and social engagement. This triple role puts extra pressure on women leaders in their day-to-day life, and is especially discouraging for those with young children.

Unions take steps

The great majority of national centres affiliated to the ITUC have taken some steps to try to redress the underrepresentation of women in their governing bodies. Some have established women's committees with decision-making power, while others have introduced quotas. The ITUC's own Constitution sets a progressive target starting at 30% as the minimum level for women's participation in its governing structures. The objective is to achieve parity. The ITUC Women's Committee, like those of several national centres, has developed some interesting strategies, methodologies and tools to promote women in leadership. For example:

- training tailored to women's needs
- women's organising campaigns
- training and advocacy targeting male leaders
- quotas at all levels of leadership and committee membership
- mentorship systems,
- solidarity actions
- women's networking

Beyond the leadership, it is generally rank-and-file women who have been the driving force behind unions' positive actions to increase women's participation in decision making. Achieving gender balance in unions' executive committees has always been and still is a key element of the women's agenda.

Women have learnt that what makes a difference is not necessarily the sex of the labour leader but rather his or her leadership style. Women willing to climb up to senior positions may find they have to adopt a "masculine" leadership style and repeat discourses and approaches that reflect the dominant culture. And masculine leadership, whether exercised by men or women, is failing women.

But women cannot do it alone. It is crucially important for women to work with men at all levels of the movement to eliminate stereotypes and convince them of the value of diversity. Changing mind-sets is a process that cannot happen overnight. Persistence pays off.

More than quotas

Beyond the number of men and women in senior positions, we need to look at what our leaders actually DO. How are women encouraged to become leaders? How do union leaders deliver on women's issues? How do women leaders change the union's culture? Today a majority of national centres understand the importance of prioritising actions and campaigns that attract and retain women members. Getting these commitments from resolutions onto local bargaining tables ultimately depends on the commitment of the leaders at those tables. Although women and men share bargaining priorities like pay increases and safety at work, some demands are clearly gendered such as maternity leave, childcare and flexible time arrangements. These issues directly reflect the reality of women's additional caring roles.

Unless female workers are directly involved in negotiation teams at the local level, it is not likely that women's specific needs will wind up in collective agreements. And the disadvantaged position of women in the world of work is not likely to change. But women unionists have often been the vanguard for progressive laws on pay equity, sexual harassment and maternity protection. In many countries, the introduction of gender sensitive labour laws has been the result of a long process that started with the persistent demands of women trade unionists at local bargaining tables.

But there is more: Women activists at the local level have the capacity to take unions beyond their traditional areas of recruitment and reach out to those working in sub-standard conditions. After all, women make up the majority of informal, marginalised and unprotected workers as illustrated by the plight of those working in domestic work, the garment industry, agriculture and export processing zones. We need more empowered women to reverse the tide of work informality and precariousness. They need to be taking their seat at bargaining tables. Women can lead the fight for rights and against discrimination and challenge patriarchal norms and practices.

ITUC Campaigns

Recently, the ITUC launched several campaigns aimed at organising non-unionised women. The Decision for Life Campaign targets young working women, the Labour Rights for Women's Campaign reaches out to women in vulnerable employment, the '12 x 12' Campaign helps organise non-unionised domestic workers to gain rights and protection in a collective manner.

Organising at the local level, internally within unions and in the broader community, is crucial to achieving both increased representation and greater success in negotiating equity-sensitive agreements. But truly, in our movement, this type of "constituency organising" is often invisible as a form of leadership, partly because of the tendency to equate leadership with persons, and partly because it is associated with "marginalised" groups.

In recognition of these challenges, the ITUC Women's Committee launched a global campaign in 2013 to promote women in leadership positions. This Campaign aims to stimulate women's organising strategies, shifting priorities to the local level. Questions related to how women's local leadership is conceived, valued and practiced are indeed essential and must be given the priority they deserve in the debates on revitalising the labour movement. The price of ignoring gender diversity in the workforce is much too high for a trade union movement that urgently needs to build workers' power and regain political strength.

Key messages:

1. Unions must set specific goals and objectives to move beyond the masculine trade union culture. In order to create a movement that listens and responds to the concerns of working women, unions must act to remove obstacles to their full participation in decision making.
2. To win collective agreements containing measures women members prioritise, women must be at the negotiating tables and have support from their leaders.
3. Women's connections with their communities can help unions grow by organising in communities and the informal sector.

CASE STUDIES

RENGO-Japan: Bringing More Women into Trade Union Movement

Japanese trade unions realised a decade ago that with more women entering the paid workforce every year, affirmative actions were needed to encourage women to join unions.

At the time, there were very few women in leadership positions and there was a prevailing view that unions were for men. However, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation RENGO had set a goal of transforming society from one with a sexual division of labour into one where men and women participate as equals. This meant that union members must take the lead in promoting social reform. The goals of the movement included “comfort and affluence,” “the happiness of families,” “social fairness,” and “contributions to international society.”

RENGO established a plan in 2000 with a number of phases. After each phase, RENGO surveyed its affiliates to see how much progress had been made.

In the first phase (2000-2005), the goals included targets for Women’s Participation in Central Executive Committees, Women’s Participation in Conventions and Other Decision-Making Bodies, Promoting Participation in Government Councils and Promoting Participation in International Activities.

Affiliates were to take immediate steps to elect at least one woman to their Central Executive Committee and to make a plan to achieve greater representation of women in executive positions. This goal included special transitional measures for organisations that found it difficult to elect women immediately, and supported the idea of electing more than one woman at a time to prevent isolation or tokenism. To encourage more women to attend conventions, affiliates were urged to name women as observers to help them become familiar with the procedures. The special measures listed above also applied to convention participation. Training was to be provided to help women be more effective on government councils, and special measures were to be implemented to make sure women who work part-time could take part.

When representing the unions in international activities, RENGO called for equal numbers of men and women in delegations and an end to all-male delegations. The commitment included providing subsidies for women delegates and making it clear to organisations sending delegations to Japan that mixed-gender delegations are preferable.

The 2000 Action plan included setting up an Expert Committee to set the targets and establish women’s committees, childcare facilities and educational activities, as well as studying a change to union constitutions to include “gender equal participation”.

By 2013, the third phase of the action programme had produced the following results:

- Promotion of women in leadership is included in trade union policy papers: 66%
- Women ratio in membership: 31.4%
- Women union official rate in proportion to women membership: 9.3% of JTUC affiliates
- Number of women officials: 27 of 54 industrial federations
- Rigorous approach to non-women official federations

However, because progress toward the previous goals was slow, RENGO has recently reformulated its plans for the next phase (2012-2020), with the following goals and targets:

- All RENGO affiliates to set out actions to promote gender equality by 2015
- ALL organisations elect women to leadership positions by 2017
- Increase percentage of women in leadership to 30% by 2020
- Focus on increasing the number of women activists
- Address work-life balance for men and women
- Attract diverse people and vitalise the labour movement

UGT - Spain: A School for Women Leaders

In 2006 the Spanish national labour centre UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores) launched the Women Leaders School. Every year, the School brings about 150 women union leaders together for three days. The participants are women who already occupy positions of responsibility and decision-making posts in various trade union spheres, from executive committees to industrial trade union sections.

The topics covered have a gender perspective and include analysing the obstacles that hamper women's access to positions of responsibility; and discussion of new forms of leadership, positive measures and the introduction of a gender perspective into trade union organisations. Through workshops, focussed discussions and informal moments these women leaders reflect on achievements over the past thirty years, when legislation to promote equality was introduced. The School is also an opportunity to build networks and share experiences and knowledge. Attendance has been growing! The School has a dedicated webpage on the UGT-E website as well as a Facebook page that lets participants keep in regular contact.

Women in the UGT

UGT Spain has a membership of 880,000, about 36% of whom are women. The union's current Statutes require that the representation of women and men in management and decision-making structures must be balanced: neither can be less than 40% or greater than 60% of the total. The Confederation has also drawn up an action plan for equality and a campaign to increase the representation and participation of women in the union. The impact of these measures, first introduced in 1998, is that women's representation at all levels of the UGT has improved significantly. Women are currently 50% of the Confederal Executive Commission, and were 33% of delegates to the last Confederal Congress. The Secretariat is made up of five men and six women.

Preparing for Leadership through Study Circles in Peru

By Maria Bastidas Aliaga - Asociación de Desarrollo Comunal (ADC)

Despite the progress made towards greater gender equality in the world of work over recent decades, gender continues to be a constant source of inequality and an inadequate use of human resources. Women continue to be at a disadvantage to men. They are more vulnerable to poverty, to the casualisation and informalisation of employment, and have new and urgent needs in terms of organising, representation and social protection.

In Peru, despite the advances in the area of gender equality, discrimination still exists and women still have to struggle with serious challenges and obstacles to their progress at home, at work and within trade unions. The situation is even bleaker for women working in the informal economy and agriculture.

As regards participation in trade unions, women are faced with numerous difficulties, such as the cultural norms in place, which define men and women's roles and attitudes in society, or the tough macroeconomic context in which the region's trade union movement is operating. In addition to these general factors, women are also confronted with the following difficulties:

- Most trade union organisations are “historically more male-dominated territories” than other organisations in the public sphere.
- What are considered to be the ideal qualities for trade union leadership coincide with the characteristics culturally identified with men.
- Women's access to and recognition within trade union organisations is strongly conditioned by their position in a predominantly female segment of the labour market. Nonetheless, strong female presence in a sector does not necessarily guarantee an equally strong female presence in the leadership structures.
- The real, fundamental inequality is clearly manifested within trade unions by the relations with and solidarity shown by the male “equals”, access to resources, time available as a result of the triple shift (reproductive, productive and trade union work) and the dominant socialisation models in the organisation.
- The place of women within the physical spaces and structures of trade unions as well as in their decision-making processes means that they hold little appeal for women.
- Women continue to be poorly represented in trade union leadership structures despite their massive incorporation into the labour market.

Women's participation in the Peruvian trade union movement is currently mired by two key structural problems. Firstly, the characteristics of female employment: (i) a high percentage of women work in the informal economy, in which trade union organisations do not traditionally operate and (ii) even within the formal sector, most women are employed on fixed-term contracts, which constitute a barrier to trade union membership. Secondly, the “double shift” (work and household duties) highlights the conflict between work and family life and the difficulties faced by women in the context of production models often based on long working days and work intensification. The unequal distribution of domestic and family responsibilities makes working life more difficult for women and hampers their full involvement in public, political and trade union life, as it places them under even greater pressure than men.

In this context, trade unionism has an essential role to play in fighting discrimination within the family, at work and in the community, at national, regional and international level. This important mission progressively taken on by trade union organisations has highlighted the need to integrate gender equality within trade unions themselves, to help build, through social dialogue, a structural change in the existing production culture and gender relations in public and private companies, with a view to eradicating discrimination and inequalities.

Some progress has been made within trade union organisations. There is a greater tendency to mainstream gender policies and gender issues. They also now advocate greater participation in defining the principles of the organisation and its institutional management (quotas for women on executives and in leadership positions, non-sexist measures, etc.), thanks to the work women have been doing through the federations' and confederations' Women's Secretariats. Gender, however, continues to be a constant source of inequalities within trade unions, where women continue to be an underused human resource.

Women trade unionists hope to see greater internal qualitative and quantitative progress in their trade union organisations. Another demand relates to the attention trade union organisations need to give women contract workers, who are the most vulnerable to discrimination.

In addition, education is a critical and key factor in the progress of women in employment and the recognition of their rights. The low level of education and even illiteracy suffered by large groups and segments of the female population contribute to keeping women in low quality, low productivity and low paid jobs.

The principle of equal opportunity and treatment is one of the fundamental pillars of the ILO focus on decent work, as well as being one of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Tripartite Declaration, and is a key objective in efforts to establish a more just and democratic society. It is, however, essential that equal opportunities for men and women in trade unions continue to be a priority goal, to ensure the strengthening of trade unions and the achievement of gender equality in trade unions, at work and in the community.

Within this framework, the ITUC/TUCA, together with the Women's Secretariats of the Peruvian trade union centres, the Regional Network of Women Informal Economy Workers and the Communal Development Association (ADC), have set up an equal opportunities study circle project. The aim is to promote (self) education and capacity building among a group of women trade unionists, who will take on the task of organising and developing education multiplier circles in their trade union organisations.

Study Circles for Gender Equality at Work and in Trade Unions

They are small groups of 10 to 15 women workers and trade unionists from diverse segments of the economy (formal, informal, public, private) and various trade union organisations, who meet voluntarily and periodically (weekly, fortnightly or monthly) to work on a common project. The programme contains and proposes methods so that the women, individually and collectively, gain consciousness of the various situations they encounter and interpret them from their own gender perspective, and subsequently develop the self-confidence and the empowerment needed to tackle inequalities in the home, in the workplace, in their organisations and in the community.

One of the main features of the study circles for equality is that they are a forum for education and action, aimed at combating sexual discrimination at work and rebalancing the position of women in the trade union movement. The circles encourage women to talk about the issues they face on a daily basis, to analyse their situations and identify the differences with men in the workplace and trade unions, promoting sharing with other women.

They promote self-awareness (awareness is raised through collective reflection and the exchange of experiences) among the women workers and trade unionists, based on their possibilities and potential. They foster debate and discussion, strengthening the participants' analytical skills and their ability to develop proposals and produce information with a gender perspective, as well as improving their skills of persuasion to promote gender equality at work and in trade unions. They are not only intended to generate and deepen intellectual reflection, but also encourage a deeper examination of gender issues across the board, so that women develop critical thinking, renew their knowledge, draw on their experiences, formulate concepts and strengthen their commitment to rethink and initiate trade union actions in favour of gender equality.

The circles contribute to changing the mentalities of men and women trade unionists and their organisations, promoting a metacognitive and active learning process in which the participants are the architects of their own knowledge building and transformation. They also provide the trade unionists with an opportunity to share or put into practice what they have learned, through a series of educational replicas, in their various social environments. Equipped by this knowledge socialisation process, the women from the various trade union organisations go on to establish new networks, join forces with other women, discover common ground and initiate actions to promote equality.

The Focus of the Study Circles

The study circle participants work actively on their own learning processes, based on a constructivist and metacognitive educational approach in which the participants play the lead role in the progressive and collective construction of knowledge, using proposal-based and self-directed discussion, focused on the goals they set.

The free expression of ideas, initiative, solidarity and democratic practices are encouraged. The women participate actively and consciously in the work; the ideas and opinions put forward are listened to and respected, so that everyone feels confident, at ease and part of the group.

The qualities to be developed, especially those related to autonomy, emerge from group self-analysis regarding the capabilities and skills required to tackle discrimination and inequalities at work and in trade unions.

Expanding opportunities and gender equality are central to the planning of the circles, which focus on two key goals:

- Gender mainstreaming, to ensure that consideration of the needs and specificities of men and women constitute a permanent and integral dimension of trade union organisations' internal and external institutional policies.
- Targeted concrete actions and methodologies for women workers and trade unionists, based on specific support and strategies to address any initial disadvantages.

As regards the methodology, the equality circles are planned around three benchmark criteria:

- A comprehensive and systemic approach to globally and jointly addressing the various issues related to equal opportunities and gender equality at work and in trade unions.
- A logic of process to visualise the accumulative effect of the knowledge building, which is developed and adapted over time.
- A flexible, participative and low-cost organisational model that is accessible to working women. The participants decide on the key themes and schedule the sessions and timetables.

The circles are founded on the following principles:

- The work is voluntary. Each member of the study circle takes part voluntarily and commits to passing on their learning through education multiplier actions (socialisation of knowledge).
- The work is based on real life experiences. The starting point is the participants' everyday lives. By discussing their personal experiences in a group, a process of sharing unfolds, giving rise to deeper knowledge. Common situations and singularities are identified, fostering gender identity, a feeling of belonging, and learning for action.
- The work is active and cooperative. The learning takes place in a climate of cooperation, mutual support and consensus seeking, under the democratic control of the participants, one of whom is the facilitator. Each member contributes her experiences, defending, discussing and enriching her proposals.
- The work is systematic. It organises and channels individual reflection, collective discussion and analysis, as well as the materialisation of the agreements and future commitments.
- The work is concrete. The goal is equality. The circles contribute to gender mainstreaming in institutional action as well as promoting equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities at work and in trade unions.

Labour Women's Transformative Global Leadership

By Professor Dorothy Sue Cobble, Rutgers University (USA)

Building on the traditions of our grandmothers

First, a few words about labour women's long history of transformational leadership: It is inspiring to share the rich history of labour women's efforts to transform their unions and the societies in which they live. There is a long tradition of labour women's transformational leadership on which to build. It is also inspiring because of what they stood for. When we talk about leadership, we have to ask, leadership for what?

In my view, our foremothers forged a distinctive vision of social change that is well worth recalling and reclaiming today. Theirs was a working women's politics and a working women's feminism. I call it labour feminism. It differs from the feminism of more elite women but it was feminist politics nonetheless.

What did labour feminists want? First, they sought the full development of each individual. But they did not celebrate individual advancement, or integrating women into an unjust system. They argued that we are only truly free when those around us are free. For each to advance, all must go forward. In other words, individual progress and collective progress are intertwined, and neither can be achieved without the other.

Secondly, they embraced gender equality but sought to go beyond it. After all, if we are only asking to be equal to men who are also exploited, albeit in their own ways, that is not enough. Labour feminists believed women faced discrimination as a sex, and they sought to eliminate those discriminations. Yet they also sought to end other injustices. They were concerned with dismantling multiple structures of inequality and they fought hard to secure economic justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

Women's global vision

Thirdly and lastly, theirs was a global vision. Here is one story from a hundred years ago of labour women's global vision. It emphasises how our global movement today rests on the efforts of many who came before us.

In 1919, 250 trade union women and their allies from 19 different nations in Latin America, Asia, Europe, North America, and the Caribbean gathered at a "Women's Labour Congress" to found what they claimed was the first union women's international organisation. They called themselves the International Federation of Working Women. They opened their doors to a wide variety of working women's unions, traditional and non-traditional. They sought to move beyond nationalism, beyond imperialism, beyond colonialism and racism, and find common ground for, in their words from a hundred years ago, "raising the standard of life for all workers". They sought peace too through international law. "Make law not war," they proclaimed, and they vigorously asserted that peace could only be achieved when the uneven distribution of wealth and privilege was rectified.

They claimed for women the right to vote in nations around the world as well as the right to participate fully in the new international labour organisations that were emerging. In 1919, for example, the ILO convened its first conference in Washington D.C. Only 23 of the 269 delegates were women, and NONE of the women had voting rights. In response, labour women called their own conference in Washington at the same time and for 10 days they formulated their own global standards and conventions. They created, in the words of one participant, a great "labour sisterhood".

Like many of their union brothers, they wanted industrial and political democracy, living wages, shorter hours, and the right to education. But in a proposed “working women’s charter,” they called also for equal pay, maternity benefits, and women’s “full enfranchisement,” described as “political, legal, and industrial equality”. Their resolutions in 1919 stressed migrant rights as well, including “equal wages and rights for foreign workers” and freer “movements of peoples among the communities and the nations”.

The 1919 labour women also organised for more power and representation in the dominant international labour bodies of the day, primarily the International Federation of Trade Unions. In 1924, they set up the first international committee of women trade unionists in the IFTU. It was this committee that a new generation of labour feminists revived in 1956, the same generation who would secure the passage of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) Women’s Rights Charter in 1965. Some fifty years later, that committee is still functioning. Indeed, in 2010, when Sharan Burrow became General Secretary of the ITUC, the first woman to hold that top office, she had been active in and had the support of an expanded and updated version of the mid-century women’s committee. She was standing on the shoulders of the labour women of 1919.

Three gender gaps

In a recent report I wrote¹², I focus on three gaps: the gender gap in women’s access to worker organisation; the gender gap in leadership; and the gender gap in union priorities, that is, to what degree do union priorities reflect the concerns of women?

The first point to note is the startling lack of global data on women in labour organisations - both in traditional trade unions as well as in new worker movements. There are huge gaps in our knowledge. Of course, national union data has significant problems. It is often unreliable, and fragmentary; and cross-country comparisons are difficult because of widely varying definitions of “union” and “union membership”. However, gathering such data illuminates what we do not know as well as what we do – both valuable.

One finding is about what can be called the “feminisation” of trade union membership. This is a global trend that is not slowing down, and in many places we are seeing a significant shift in the historic pattern of male-majority unionism. Indeed, in one-third of the nations I analysed, women are now the new majority of trade unionists, even though, worldwide, men are still the majority in the official labour force statistics. We find that in two-thirds of nations, women have reached parity in union membership.

However, feminisation in and of itself is no guarantee of women having leadership positions – we can all think of many unions with a majority of women members but no women in top office. There may be progress in closing the gender gap in union membership but women’s overall access to collective representation may be worsening, depending on whether union membership as a whole is rising or falling. Is union feminisation another example of what some call “lemon feminisation”? In other words, are women moving into labour organisations because men are leaving as unions decline in power? Without detailed comparative studies it is impossible to say for sure, but since feminisation does not seem to correlate with the size or power of national labour movements, it appears not.

Looking at the numbers of men and women in unions at the national level obscures the realities of the organisations in which most workers reside: most are either heavily female or heavily male, that is, the labour movement, like the work world as a whole, is still very sex segregated

Looking at women’s leadership globally, in recent years there have been many breakthroughs and many individual women now hold positions of power. Yet at the same time, the “pyramid of exclusion” still exists: the closer one gets to the top, the fewer women you find. Traveling the other direction the reverse is true: as you get closer to the bottom of the power pyramid, you see a lot of us.

Secondly, we are progressing at two speeds. There is a fast lane and a slow lane, with one wing of the labour movement having made a lot of progress and another wing where there is actually very little change. We could call this a bifurcated pattern or what sociologist Ruth Milkman terms “the

12 Gender Equality and Labour Movements: Toward a Global Perspective, Professor Dorothy Sue Cobble, February 2012

two worlds of unionism”. Significantly, the unions making most progress or the “best practice” cases rely on top-down pressure – “reserve seats” for women and other measures – as well as bottom-up pressure. That is, there is often “self-organisation” among women and active women’s committees, conferences, and other woman-only spaces.

It is women at every level who are moving the labour movement in new directions and women who are inventing new kinds of worker organisations and new ways of being a trade unionist - a new labour movement in which women are the new majority of leaders.



CUT Brazil: Gender Policy and Leadership Building

By Rosana Souza de Deus, National Executive Member, Brazilian Labour Centre, CUT

Affirmative action: quotas and parity

The CUT's Fifth National Convention in 1994 passed a quota policy. Each gender should make up at least 30% of the Centre's elected leadership. The quotas also applied to the union centre's hierarchical and horizontal bodies. The resolution was enshrined in the Centre's Constitution in 2008.

At the 2012 Convention, an additional change to the Constitution established gender parity for elected leaders at all national and state levels, to be implemented by 2015.

Gender parity means equal participation of women and men, but it goes beyond the numbers or percentages. The policy is to strengthen and motivate women's participation in the union sphere.

Parity is an important step toward building the kind of policy that actually changes the way women participate in politics and in the union. It strengthens free and autonomous trade unionism. While parity does not automatically guarantee that there will be no more inequality between women and men, it is a first condition for equality.

Among the other important initiatives we are working on is the mainstreaming of gender into all our policies, activities and areas so that the CUT can increasingly act on behalf of women and men to organise the working class.

Campaign to Ratify ILO Convention 156

Organised women within the CUT put the Sexual Division of Labour and power relations on the Centre's agenda. The focus was on overcoming the challenges in achieving equality for women through concrete actions. The women's goal was to convince the membership, both male and female, that this is not just women's struggle, but is a goal that belongs to the entire working class.

One key way to show the commitment was to ensure that the Brazilian government ratified ILO Convention 156 dealing with non-discrimination of men and women with family responsibilities.

We built a national petition campaign calling for ratification of the Convention. We presented this to the Tripartite Commission, which then issued a report supporting ratification. We distributed a pamphlet on the issues.

We also linked up with the feminist and women's movement to push for the National Women's Policy Conference to support public, high quality, full-time childcare services near to where families live.

The CUT passed an internal resolution on parental leave of 180 days for women, followed by 180 days for men for heterosexual couples. The alternation of parents would not apply to same-sex couples.

Women in Leadership - The ITUC Count Us In! Campaign

Time for Action

In need of better rights and protection, millions of women have joined a union, adding strength and activism to our movement. However, despite an estimated 40% female membership among ITUC affiliates, women's presence is not reflected in union leadership positions. Recent figures show that only 12% of ITUC affiliates have a woman in one of the two top positions. Women are noticeably underrepresented in national decision making structures, at a rate well below the progressive target starting at 30% set forth in the ITUC Constitution (see Box 1).

It is time for trade unions to build a leadership that better reflects the gender composition of their membership and of the global workforce. Women's voices are needed to enhance the representativeness and strength of our movement. We need a leadership that acknowledges women's capacities and encourages them to become active members and stand for elections at all levels.

Boosting women's participation in decision making and leadership positions can enhance outreach to unorganised sectors. It stimulates women's activism at the local level which can take unions beyond their traditional areas of recruitment to informal, marginalised and unprotected sectors where women often make up the majority of workers.

"Count us in!"

The overall objective of the "Count us in!" Campaign, as endorsed by the ITUC Women's Committee, is to enhance the ability of unions to reach out to, organise and mobilise more women members and activists and to promote them in leadership positions. Campaign activities can be initiated or intensified on the protection of working women's rights in law, in collective bargaining agreements or in practice. But actions should also target women in informal and precarious work as well as young women building upon the success of the Decisions for Life methodology.

While focusing specifically on the members of the ITUC General Council, the Campaign aims to engage all ITUC affiliates. The specific goals the campaign aims to achieve are:

- 100 ITUC affiliates subscribe to the "Count us in!" Campaign by the 3rd ITUC Congress (Berlin, Germany, May 2014)
- 80% of ITUC General Council members have at least 30% of women in their decision making structures by the 4th ITUC Congress in 2018
- 5% increase of women's membership in each national centre subscribing to the "Count us in!" Campaign by the 4th ITUC Congress in 2018

The "Count us in!" Campaign, which is a crucial component of our common objective of building workers' power, wants to ensure that the ITUC constitutional principle of at least 30% women's participation in decision making structures is applied at national level.

Tools and tactics

A key instrument of the campaign is the sign-up form that commits the leadership. When signed, leaders agree to support the aims of the "Count us in!" campaign and will be invited to submit an action plan indicating how and by when they will achieve 30% women representation in their decision making bodies. Those national centres in compliance with the 30% (or more) quota are invited to show their support by filling in the sign up form and providing a solidarity message in support of the campaign.

Gender coordinators and women's committees at the national level are expected to analyse and closely monitor how women's leadership emerges, how it is valued within the organisation and how it delivers on working women's demands and interests. The Campaign will further promote the use of a gender audit.

To ensure the success of the campaign, we need the support of our male colleagues and of top leaders of our movement. Men can indeed be very good ambassadors of gender equality and it is important that they are part of this global effort to promote women leaders.

BOX 1

The average figures below - based on the information supplied by organisations that have replied to various questionnaires - provide an overview of the current state of women's representation in decision making bodies at the regional level:

- AFRICA: figures vary between 0% (UGTT – Tunisia) and 30% (CNTG-Guinea) – average rate stands at 22.3%.
- ASIA: figures range from between 2.07% (FTUC-Fiji) and 50% (CIWA - Cook Islands) – average rate stands at 13.1%.
- AMERICAS: the figures range from 4.76% (CUT-Colombia) to 50% (CSE – Ecuador, CLC-Canada) - average rate stands at 25.5%.
- EUROPE - outside the ETUC: figures vary between 7.10% (AHIC – Azerbaijan) and 48.3% (KVPU – Ukraine) - average rate stands at 24.1%.
- EUROPE ETUC - some organisations in southern Europe and in central and Eastern Europe show rates below 10% while some of the Nordic unions have a rate exceeding 50%. Average rate stands at almost 24%.



PART II

Working and Caring –

SUSTAINABLE JOBS,
SECURE INCOME AND
SOCIAL PROTECTION



Placing work/family reconciliation policies on the agenda of a post-neoliberal era

By Claire Courteille, ITUC

To the extent that the current economic global crisis reveals some new paths towards a post neoliberal world, trade unions will have to seriously rethink and actively promote reconciliation policies designed to balance family responsibilities and labour market obligations. The neoliberal agenda, through the privatisation of care provisions, has made it extremely difficult for a majority of women to combine paid work with care for the family. A new model of growth should not only aim to provide decent work for all, it should also create an environment that will enable paid and unpaid work to be equally shared between men and women and for workers with family responsibilities to be adequately supported by public policies.

Neoliberal globalisation has opened up new opportunities for women in the world of work. Over the last decades, female participation in labour markets has increased virtually everywhere. In developing countries in particular, women, often perceived as a cheaper and more docile labour force, have taken up paid employment in huge numbers in export industries. This situation, however, should not hide the fact that on average the rate of unemployment amongst women is higher than amongst men and that overall, women are over-represented in precarious forms of work with fewer rights and less access to social protection.

The ILO estimates female labour market participation worldwide at about 52%, as opposed to men's participation estimated at 77%, approximately two thirds. Significant differences exist between regions: while female participation is close to 75% in the Nordic countries, in the Arab world, only 23% of women are engaged in paid work. Available data also points to a narrower gender gap in the employment rate for the younger generation. For example in the EU in 2007 the gap was estimated at 6 points for 15-24 years old as opposed to almost 18 points for those aged between 54-65¹³.

All data across countries seems to indicate that the increase in the rate of female employment is a persistent trend that will continue to grow. Many trade unions have declared outdated the traditional household model of a male bread winner and a female care giver. Double income households have indeed become commonplace in many countries. Another equally persistent trend, both in developing and industrialised countries, is the growth of female-headed households.

Although female engagement in paid work is a positive development, it puts great strain on working women who have to combine family responsibilities and professional obligations. As they work outside the home, women have less time to spend on domestic tasks and care work which continues to fall on their shoulders. In addition, family structures have changed over the last decades, offsetting the traditional reliance on extended female family members taking on the care obligations. This trend, more pronounced in developing countries, has further increased the pressure on working women.

The crisis of care

The neoliberal agenda has failed to provide an adequate response to the care needs of working women. The market has proved unable to match supply and demand creating huge care deficits in virtually all countries. In the poorest parts of the world, the deficit is often made up by workers in the informal economy who have limited rights and access to social protection. Richer countries have sometimes implemented measures to facilitate the combination of work and family responsibilities, but generally under the incorrect assumption that women are the primary caregivers and men the primary breadwinners. As a result very few policies have been successful in promoting a fair distribution of paid and unpaid work among men and women within the household.

The lack of adequate public intervention has several implications:

Firstly, the market approach has contributed to widened inequalities. While high-income families can afford good quality private care services, for lower income families the lack of collective support has

13 Eurostat Statistics in focus 99/2008

had adverse consequences on families' wellbeing and decent work objectives. The conflict between work and family restricts the options of the worse-off, forcing them to choose between employment and care, or to combine them, all of which require painful trade-offs in terms of quality of employment and/or quality of care and long-term consequences for escaping poverty.

Secondly, the privatisation of the provision of care has largely contributed to the feminisation of migration. Over the last decades, millions of women in developing countries have left their own children behind to take care of other people's children. In some cases, rich countries have actively promoted such migration flows as a way to address their care deficit. In other cases, when governments were reluctant to open up legal channels, the needs were met by women migrants in irregular situations, who are particularly vulnerable to all kinds of abuse. This export of care labour deprives millions of children of their mother, leaving the question of the impact on their psychological development unanswered.

Thirdly, the market approach has pushed women into precarious jobs. In order to be able to combine work and family many women had no option but to accept poorly paid, insecure, part-time, home-based or informal work. This has confined them to low skilled, low paid jobs with little prospect for advancement.

Fourthly, the privatisation of the provision of care and indeed the whole neoliberal agenda has further eroded the notion of collective answers to collective problems. Yet developing work/family policies and programmes is not just an issue concerning the welfare of individual workers and their families, it affects the economic and social development of society as a whole.

The only way to care is to share

Trade unions need to underline government's responsibility to provide care for working families as a way to facilitate all workers' access to decent work. In a post neoliberal model, reconciliation measures such as flexible time arrangements, a compressed working week, reduced working hours and overtime, extended maternity, paternity and parental leaves, teleworking or homeworking should be extended to all workers. The same regulations and supervision of the terms of employment and social protection rights should be granted to all, including part-time and home based workers. Public support to care institutions such as crèches, pre-schools, after-school or out-of-school care facilities, homes for the elderly, the disabled or the sick, should be substantially increased. Providing good quality collective solutions has a cost which ought to be socialised. Women can no longer assume this burden alone.

It is interesting to note that the job-creation potential of such social infrastructure is consistently overlooked. This could probably be addressed if more women were involved in the economic decision making process. Yet some studies have found that 10 jobs can be created in the care economy for each additional 100 women at work¹⁴.

The ILO's Convention 156 and its accompanying Recommendation 165 on workers with family responsibilities provide useful guidelines. These instruments seek to promote policies reducing the work/family conflict and combating labour market discrimination. Only 40 countries have ratified the Convention to date.

But trade unions should also actively promote men's participation in family responsibilities which remains generally at low levels. The principle of men and women's having co-responsibilities for the care of the family members should underpin the new generation of reconciliation policies. Making women and men's engagement in care equal implies that men and women are granted equal entitlement to work/family measures. It also implies breaking down the gender norms of care and employment.

Making the "other economy" visible

However all these fundamental changes are not likely to happen unless visibility in macroeconomic aggregates is given to unpaid care work. Taking account of the "other economy" where the care of human beings takes place is a long standing call of the feminist movement. The fact is that unpaid care work contributes to economic growth by supplying human resources and maintaining the social framework. Yet it is excluded as a matter of principle from the UN System of National Accounts and GDP calculations. The UNDP, which has on several occasions recognised that mainstream macroeconomics is based on a partial understanding of how the economy works, has estimated that unpaid work produces an output equivalent to at least half of GDP.

14 Esping-Andersen, quoted in Party of European Socialists, 2006.

As a matter of fact, it is ludicrous to maintain a system of GDP calculation which includes financial speculation whose impact on welfare is pretty close to zero and exclude care work whose contribution is enormous.

Paid and unpaid work constitute a fundamental element of analysis and of public policy because it is one of the major factors affecting women's integration in the labour market. Taking account of the unpaid work performed by care givers is essential to better reflect the economic reality and to lead to less arbitrary decision making in the labour market and welfare reforms. It is also essential if we are to build societies centred on people and not on profit.

CASE STUDIES:

Rethinking Childcare in Canada – Around the Kitchen Table

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), along with eight of the largest public and private sector unions of Canada, is putting the spotlight on the country's inadequate childcare services. So many families are struggling to find decent childcare and are scrambling to piece together care they can afford. In Canada, most everyone has an experience of frustration or desperation to share. The message of the campaign is that it does not have to be this way, and that building a better system can be a key issue in federal elections in 2015.

Canada has no national childcare policy, and the current federal government believes that the private sector can meet the "demands of the market." The current campaign, established by a CLC convention resolution in 2011 challenges that approach.

Under the banner of "Rethinking Childcare," each phase of the 3-year campaign has a different focus. In year one (2013), the goal is to begin conversations around the country to collect stories of caregivers. The conversations start to challenge the notion that childcare is "just your problem." The stories that are collected around the nation's kitchen tables and in union halls will be used in the next phases. Those involved in telling their stories are viewed as future advocates for a functional, universal system of caring for our children and others who need services.

In the second year, the campaign expands to the building of local alliances, using the stories gathered as "Childcare: True Confessions." In this phase, communities begin to reflect collectively about what we should be demanding to meet families' needs.

The third year of the campaign coincides with the federal elections in 2015. Key events will be planned around the country and in specific regions to increase the visibility of the issue. The campaign aims to shift the view of the problem as an individual family's challenge, toward recognising the need for affordable, universal and high quality services. The campaign materials highlight the absurdity of the childcare dilemmas and the guilt working families feel. The messaging has to be inclusive and draw in stories from dads and grandparents, and from a wide range of families. To position this as a policy matter that the incoming government must address urgently, it is critical to raise the profile of the issues and engage broad-based support.

Parental Benefits and Paternity Leave in Norway

Did you know that Norwegian parents have the right to a paid leave of absence during the first three years of a child's life? To encourage more men to assume a greater share of care-giving responsibilities, 14 weeks of parental leave are reserved for fathers.

The aim of the parental benefit scheme is to help parents to combine working life and family life. Thanks to the scheme, Norway tops European statistics on birth rates and participation of women in the workforce. Norwegian parents may choose to take a total of 49 weeks of leave at 100 per cent pay and a further 10 weeks at 80 per cent pay. Of these weeks, at least 14 will now have to be claimed by the father. The aim of the measure is to make fathers more involved in child rearing and to bridge the gender gap.

The paternal quota works

Since as far back as 1977 fathers have had the right to share parental leave with mothers. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 1990s only 2-3 per cent of all fathers were taking advantage of this opportunity.

The paternal quota gives men an opportunity to develop a stronger bond with their children from birth. The benefit was introduced in 1993 to encourage more fathers to participate in caring for their child during its first years of life. Today 14 weeks of the parental leave period are reserved for fathers. If a father does not use his quota, these weeks will be forfeited. Norway was the first country in the world to establish such a scheme.

The results have been striking. In 2008, 90 per cent of fathers used their paternal quota. Moreover, a growing number of men are choosing to take more leave than their quota. In 2008, 16.5 per cent of fathers extended their leave beyond the reserved weeks, compared to 11 per cent in 2000.

Debate on sharing leave

Parental leave is still a hot topic of debate. The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombudsperson has proposed that the parental leave period be divided into three, with one-third reserved for the mother, one-third reserved for the father and one-third to be used as desired. As of yet few political parties have shown their support for this solution.

There is, nevertheless, broad political agreement that the paternal quota is an excellent instrument for encouraging more men to take paternity leave. The quota was therefore extended from six weeks to 10 weeks in 2009, and to 14 weeks in 2013.



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A Space for Breastfeeding in Filipino Workplaces

In 2010, the Philippines government passed legislation requiring most workplaces to establish “lactation stations” equipped with sinks, refrigeration or appropriate cooling facilities for storing breast milk, electrical outlets for breast pumps, and comfortable chairs and tables so that working mothers can breastfeed during working hours.

The new law also mandates “lactation periods” for nursing employees who are granted at least 40 minutes in every shift, in addition to the regular time-off for meals, to express their milk (by hand or using a pump). Milk is then stored and can be taken home.

According to ILO-Philippines Director Lawrence Jeff Johnson, “Working women often feel the pressure of immediately reporting back to work and giving up breastfeeding for fear of losing their job or returning to work with lower pay or position.” Implementation of the new law has been slow, but the ILO has taken up the issue with employers as part of the Decent Work agenda, in support of women’s right to breastfeed by providing lactation facilities in the workplace.

ILO project coordinator Ana Liza Valencia points out that while breastfeeding facilities in offices are not a pressing necessity, they enable women to become more productive at work. She noted that breastfeeding can lead to better attendance, fewer medical and parental leaves, and fewer cash advances for healthcare expenses, because infants who are breastfed are generally healthier and require less medical attention. Breastfeeding also saves families money.

Government agencies complying with the new law receive extra funding to offset the costs. In the private sector, expenses incurred in complying with the new law are deductible for income tax purposes up to twice the actual amount incurred. The employer can claim the deductions after setting up the facilities.

“The strong legislative and policy framework in the Philippines is being recognised as one of the best in the world, protecting every Filipino mother’s right to breastfeed,” said UNICEF representative Tomoo Hozumi.

“The very substantial improvement in the exclusive breastfeeding rate that we are seeing today is a dividend of such efforts made by leaders and people in the Philippines over the last two decades. These laws are something which the whole nation should be proud of and continue to uphold”, he added.

Adapted from an original article: <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/267844/news/nation/ilo-support-women-provide-breastfeeding-facilities-in-workplace>

Labour rights for women campaign in Ouganda

The Labour Rights for Women campaign started in Uganda in July 2012 involving 20 NOTU affiliates in five sectors.

As a starting point, union organisers made sure that the women workers they visited talked about their problems at work. In order to ensure that the women would really say what they think and talk about their personal experiences, the organisers were all women: women talking to women leads to a more genuine dialogue. The following issues were identified: lack of maternity protection, prevalence of sexual harassment, inadequate protective gear and contract work with no income security.

The first step was to explain to women workers, in particular the youngest ones, their rights at work. This was done through campaigns, debates, training and work place visits. It took time to make it understood that although it is only women who can become pregnant and bear children, it is a unique function that women play in society and therefore they need the protection from society at large while carrying out this function.

Awareness-raising activities also included public debates and lectures which attracted over 100 participants per session. The speakers were experts from different areas including medical doctors, lawyers, employers and government and worker representatives.

Based on the input collected during the activities, study materials, hand-outs, leaflets on 'know your rights', stop sexual harassment in the work place, brochures on maternity protection and a simplified Trade Union Guide on New Labour laws were discussed and elaborated. This process was important to make them realise the protection that collective agreements can bring to pregnant women and the protection offered against sexual harassment. Indeed many of the younger women were not familiar with the unions' role and the concept of collective agreements.

The campaign had an impact on sexual harassment, especially in the plantations, mines and the horticulture and flower industries. Women came up openly and reported cases of sexual harassment even in the presence of their supervisors who were said to be their greatest harassers. Some women started to tell their success stories of how they had fought sexual harassment. This was a sign that women would speak up if they knew their rights. The horticulture union in particular instituted a sexual harassment policy at the work place.

But there was also an impact on the national centre: following the good coverage of the campaign the NOTU amended the Constitution to form women's and youth committees and incorporated gender concerns that opened up opportunities for women and young people to participate in social dialogue and high level decision-making interventions. Women realised that it is their right to compete for any position and started to accept responsibilities without fear.

Lessons Learnt from the campaign

- Labour laws though stipulated on paper, are not known and understood by a majority of women workers which puts them at risk of having their rights violated.
- It was absolutely essential that the workplace visits targeted the women who had minimal chances of leaving their workplaces and the participatory way in which the workplace visits were conducted enabled women to open up. Sensitisation on their rights instilled confidence among them.
- Although the visits were targeted for specific numbers, many more workers were reached and organised in the labour union than what was expected. This was partly thanks to the translation of several materials into many local languages.
- Sexual harassment though not always reported, is rampant in all workplaces that were visited.

Way Forward

- Ugandan workers should campaign for the implementation of Convention 183 on Maternity Protection and men should fight for paternity leave. Follow-up training is needed.
- The labour union leaders should make an effort to enforce the laws in the workplace and ensure that gender concerns are incorporated in collective bargaining agreements.
- Further campaign work is requested to ensure that maternity protection is granted to all women without employment discrimination.
- Although the project is targeting young workers, the involvement of men, especially labour union leaders and human resource personnel should always be taken seriously in order for them to understand the problems concerning women workers. There can then be hope of improving workers' conditions and incorporating the missing gender gaps in policies.

Fixing the Wage Gap: Pay Equity and Employment Equity

By Daina Z. Green, Gender Specialist (Canada)

Women overall earn less than men any way you look at it. In almost all countries, women's per-hour wage rates tend to be lower. Women also tend to have lower earnings overall because so many work part-time work, fewer overtime hours, cannot afford to train for other professions or can only get short-term, precarious employment.

Why are women's rates of pay lower? Have equal pay laws not fixed that?

Laws have been on the books for more than 50 years in most countries requiring equal pay for equal work. That is, men and women doing the same job in the same workplace should be paid the same. In practice, that is not always true. Where employers think they can get away with it, it is still common to find women paid less than the men working beside them.

Equal pay for equal work laws did not fix the problem of women's lower pay. That is because in most workplaces, men and women do not do the same jobs. Women are concentrated in a small number of occupations, such as teaching, caring for people who are sick or disabled, clerical, and sales positions. It is often difficult for women to get higher-paid work, such as production, information technology, finance, or management. Many professions and trades are still a "closed shop" that excludes women. The situation is even worse for indigenous and racialised women, as well as older women and those with disabilities.

There are three main strategies to achieve pay equity for women:

- Re-value traditional women's work,
- Remove the barriers that keep women out of the full range of occupations, especially the higher-paying ones, and
- Organise women into unions, because the wage gap is much smaller for unionised workers.

Since all societies need teachers, healthcare workers, and administrative workers, we cannot solve the wage gap by telling women to just get out of these "female job ghettos". If all women went into higher-paying jobs, who would provide these needed services? But women should not have to subsidise the services they provide by accepting low wages. That is why we need to implement ILO Convention 100. Women have a right to equal pay for work of equal value.

Pay Equity: Changing the market value of women's work

A job's pay is determined by a number of factors, such as the skills and responsibilities involved in a job. Jobs may get extra pay because of their working conditions, like facing hazards or isolation. But the requirement to keep people safe and well rarely attracts a higher wage. We need to fix that.

Re-valuing traditional women's work means identifying skills and responsibilities that have been invisible or undervalued.

Pay equity programmes, legislated in many countries and called for in ILO Convention 100, change the market value of women's work. Employers are required to eliminate the gap between the wage rates in female and male dominated jobs of comparable value. A job evaluation system is applied to jobs with very different requirements. If the total number of points for a woman's job matches the points for a male job, the pay should match too. In many countries, where a job evaluation is carried out jointly by employers and unions, women's wages go up.

Employment Equity: Removing barriers

Imagine if women were encouraged to pursue further studies and develop their skills. Imagine if women were encouraged to enter occupations that today are male preserves, and were supported in those careers after hire. Imagine if men and women had the same amount of free time in their lives.

In some countries, these aspirations are taken seriously in the workplace. Where employers are required to implement employment equity programmes, barriers to advancement are identified and eliminated. Over time, the enterprise commits to hiring and promoting more women and workers from other groups affected by systemic discrimination in employment, such as racism. The enterprise benefits from a broader and deeper “talent pool”. The workforce ends up looking more like the community it serves.

Employment equity programmes involve a systematic review of an enterprise’s employment systems, such as recruitment, selection and promotion practices.

The review of policy and practices attempts to answer the question “Why are some groups under-represented in this workplace?”

The next phase is to identify what the employer must do to remove obstacles to hiring and promotion. Some barriers are obvious, such as allowing supervisors to give preference to their friends and relatives in hiring, or where a candidate’s physical attractiveness can trump qualifications for a job. Other barriers are more subtle, such as policies that make it impossible to balance work responsibilities with personal commitments, restricting access to training to those who can apply the new skills in their current jobs, or a failure to provide safety equipment in women’s sizes.

In the final phase, the employer and the union look ahead. How many opportunities will there be to hire and promote in the enterprise over the next period? The employer then sets goals for hiring women and under-represented groups, and monitors the progress toward these goals. In some countries, such as Canada, companies that want contracts with the federal government, and agencies within the government itself, must develop and report on such plans.

The Best Place for a Woman is in her Union

The third strategy is the most obvious one: support women’s organising. In almost all countries, unionised women earn far more than their non-unionised sisters, and are also able to bargain for working conditions that reflect their needs.

Key messages:

- 1 Equal pay for equal value is a fundamental labour right (ILO Convention 100). Gender-fair job evaluation is a tool to achieve pay equity for women.
- 2 A review of employment systems and policy in an enterprise usually turns up evidence of discriminatory practices. Once identified, an employment equity plan can design measures to remove them.
- 3 Unionised women are moving toward equality faster. Unions fight to remove workplace barriers and change social policy.

Get inspired!

- 4 A commitment to pay equity and employment equity can be an ORGANISING tool. Women may be more motivated to join a union if they know have a better chance of improving their conditions with a committed union behind them.
- 5 Most countries are lagging in their implementation of ILO Convention 100. Unions should make non-sexist wage setting a priority.
- 6 Are your members aware of ILO Conventions 100 and 111? National labour centres receive their government’s reports on progress toward women’s equality—get the reports and demand that your government do better!

CASE STUDY:

Belgium's Audacious Equal Pay Campaign

Equal Pay Day in Belgium takes place at the end of March. The date is not chosen randomly: it is the day to which women must work to in order to earn as much as men earn in a single year. It symbolises the size of the difference in pay between women and men in the Belgian labour market. If this pay gap diminishes, Equal Pay Day shifts to an earlier date in the year. The opposite happens when the gap widens. On this day, the socialist labour union ABVV and the progressive women's rights movement *zij-kant* organise a unique public campaign with activities by volunteers throughout the country.

The Campaign has used a series of provocative images and video clips over the last six years to dramatize the wage gap. The most recent example:

2013 Campaign

- Equal Pay Day on 20 March 2013
- Pay gap in gross monthly wage: 22%
- Slogan: 'Extreme Housekeeping. Sometimes a man gotta do what a woman usually does'

The 2013 Equal Pay Day campaign featured a video-clip with four-time world champion kickboxing Semmy Schilt to demonstrate that real men break gender stereotypes in an original way. As a natural-born action hero, he cleans the house and prepares dinner. The humorous video plays on clichés from the action film genre.

Beyond the sensational, and sometimes shocking, media approach, the Campaign raises awareness of causes of the pay gap, including:

- horizontal and vertical occupational segregation (for e.g. men in construction, women in the cleaning sector; the lack of women in top positions...)
- over-representation of women in part-time work (44% of Belgian women work part-time, versus 9% for men)
- access to professional training
- extras (employee benefits such as luncheon vouchers, mobile phone, laptop, company car, hospital insurance, etc. are given more often to men than to women)
- career breaks (time-outs for someone in need of care are taken more by women than men).

What does Equal Pay Day aim to achieve?

Equal Pay Day aims to eliminate pay inequality between women and men by:

1. Raising awareness

The pay gap between women and men exists, but not everyone knows about it. Equal Pay Day not only highlights the pay difference, but also its social causes, consequences and solutions. The debate on the pay gap must be kept alive in order to make progress possible and prevent resignation with respect to the status quo.

2 Gathering facts and figures: Numbers tell the tale

Equal Pay Day demands official and reliable figures and research to increase knowledge on the (causes and consequences of the) pay gap. Official figures and their analysis reinforce the message and give more clout during negotiations or when enforcing policy measures. In 2007, at the explicit request of the initiators of Equal Pay Day, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men published the first official Belgian pay gap report. The report is a major step in the availability of pay gap statistics, but data on important sectors is still lacking.

Key messages:

Measures for greater pay equality. The pay gap must be tackled in a structural and permanent way. Laws, especially their effective enforcement, are important instruments in eliminating the wage difference between women and men.

Attention to gender in education. Attention to gender needs to start early, also in education. Your choice of studies after all influences your further career, and thus also your future pay and pension as well as your opportunities for promotion and career advancement. Gender stereotypes also need to be eliminated from school curricula.

Collective care facilities. Care for children and people in need of assistance is often a barrier to (full-time) work. This affects primarily women because they still handle a majority of the care tasks. And those who (temporarily) interrupt their career not only receive a lower income, but also have fewer opportunities for promotion or a pay increase, and later receive a lower pension.

Valuing 'women's work' more and rewarding it (financially) more fairly. Women are over-represented in sectors where wages are lower, such as the care and non-profit sectors. These so-called 'women's jobs' and 'women's sectors' usually pay less. In a number of cases, this is due to the lack of a gender-neutral job evaluation system.

FGTB
Ensemble, on est plus forts

**LES FEMMES
SONT EN SOLDE
TOUS LES JOURS.**

Différence de salaire F/H=25%!

-25%

31 MARS 2008
**Journée de l'égalité
salariale**

L'égalité salariale est un droit fondamental

FGTB    

www.fgtb.be

Understanding Unpaid Care

Extract from “Making care visible” - Women’s unpaid care work in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya by Action Aid - 2013

Key campaign messages

Defining and measuring work and production

Most people probably think about factories and farms when they hear the word “production”. However, the work that is done on factories and farms accounts for only a small part of the work and production that is done in any country. The “third person rule” can be used to distinguish what constitutes production if we want to appreciate the full scope of work and production. This rule is accepted in standard economic theory although, as discussed below, some economic measures are not fully in line with this rule. The rule says that any activity that one can theoretically pay someone else (i.e. a third party) to do is work and is therefore production.

Thus:

- Eating, sleeping and learning are not work because one cannot pay someone else to do them for you
- Growing vegetables is work
- Collecting water is work
- Caring for children and housework are work. These tasks constitute ‘unpaid care work’ if they are done unpaid in a person’s own home or for others in the community

The national accounts are the statistical system that underlies the calculation of the key economic measure of gross domestic product (GDP). GDP is commonly used as a measure of the economic “success” of a country, and informs important decisions – including on aid and investment – that strongly influence the prospects for a country and its people. The system of national accounts (SNA) contains the rules that state how GDP must be calculated. The SNA does this by specifying a production boundary which includes:

- 1 Production of all individual or collective goods or services that are supplied to units other than their producers [production for the market]
- 2 The own-account production of all goods that are retained by their producers for their own final consumption or gross capital formation [subsistence production]
- 3 The own-account production of housing services by owner-occupiers and of domestic and personal services produced by employing paid domestic staff [imputed rent and paid domestic work].

The SNA recognises that own-account, unpaid production of services that are for “final consumption” by the producer’s own family or community constitute work. However, these activities are not included in the calculation of the GDP. It is these activities, which are not properly recognised by the SNA, that make up unpaid care. Not measuring women’s full contribution through unpaid care work means that policymakers do not have the statistical data to assess how this work impacts on the reproduction of the labour force and the market economy, but also on the overall wellbeing of a society.

Unpaid care work

Unpaid care work includes all those activities that go towards caring for a household such as cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood and caring for the ill, elderly and children when these activities are done by family members for no pay. Unpaid care work also includes voluntary community work.

In most societies cooking, cleaning, fetching firewood and water are seen as women's work regardless of women's social class and level of education. Caring for children, the ill and elderly and volunteer community work are also seen as women's work. The work consumes time and energy and can be a form of physical hardship. Women who can afford to hire domestic workers shift this responsibility to lower class women who do this work often for low pay. This in part helps solve the problem for wealthier women, but this solution is not available for women living in poverty. Without enough income to meet basic needs, women can rely only on their own labour and that of girls and other women in the household to provide the unpaid care work that they and their families need.

Reducing and shifting the responsibility for care provision by women is especially important because most women living in poverty do not do only unpaid care work. Even in societies where the common perception is that men are the main breadwinners, large numbers of women find themselves in the position of main breadwinner, additional household earners, single mothers, or for some other reason bearing major responsibility for their family's food security and other basic needs. Women living in poverty may also engage in production for the "market" (i.e. producing goods and services that will be sold to others) even if their work is unpaid (because they are seen as "helping" in a family business) or poorly paid.

If they do not measure women's unpaid care work, governments cannot assess the contribution made through this work, and cannot identify the impact this has on different segments of society. They can also not assess the impact of economic and social policies on the level and quality of unpaid care work that is provided in the household. Policy makers often assume that women's ability to provide care is infinite and ignore the effect that cuts to public services have on the amount of unpaid care work women and girls provide.

The solution to women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work is not to reduce the production of the services as they are essential for the functioning of society and for well-being and productivity. Instead, as this report demonstrates, there are other ways of ensuring that these services are provided, that the services are of good quality and available to all who need them, and that those who provide the services are compensated in some way and not unduly burdened.

Who does care work?

There are a number of actors that play a role in care provision. They include women, girls, men and boys, government, the non-governmental sector and the market. The different actors who provide care are themselves influenced by gender norms that define women's work versus men's work. Today unpaid care work is predominately seen as women's work not only by individuals, but also by government, the non-governmental sector, and the market. By ignoring unpaid care work in economic analyses, government and the market assume that unpaid care work is more a matter of concern for the household – and in particular for women in a household. The non-governmental sector often relies on women's voluntary work in their programmes such as community kitchens and community healthcare without enough consideration to the impact this work has on women's time. The responsibility for care provision is therefore not equitably shared among these multiple actors.

Three R's

There is not a single solution to address women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work. Instead, there is need for solutions to be tailored to the particular type of service and the situation in a particular country or community. In general terms, however, the solutions can be categorised into the three Rs, as follows:

- **Recognition** of unpaid care work means that the work done by (mainly) women is "seen" and acknowledged. It also means that it is recognised as being "work" and "production". Recognition can take several forms, including provision of compensation for the work, recognising it when determining other benefits, such as pension payments, or measuring unpaid care work in national statistics.
- **Reduction** of unpaid care work means that the burden is reduced for individual women and for the society more generally. This can happen through the service being provided in a different

way. For example, women's childcare responsibility would be reduced if government provided accessible and affordable childcare services. Similarly, unpaid care work would be reduced if services were provided closer to where people live and work so that less time is spent accessing healthcare and the like.

- Redistribution of unpaid care work means that the overall amount of unpaid care work remains the same, but it is more fairly shared among different people. One example of this is where male household members take on a greater share of housework and childcare. Another example is where government takes on a greater share of healthcare provision by setting up an effective public healthcare system.



© Photo: Eliane Beeson & Francois Vaxelaire taken from the brochure "The FGTB and the trade unions in the South together against violence"

PART III

Formalising Informal Jobs –

SUSTAINABLE JOBS,
SECURE INCOME AND
SOCIAL PROTECTION

모든 노동자에게
양질의 일자
돌봄노동자
미래의 희망을!

가사관리사 라고
불러주세요

이대

산재
간병노

산재노

고용노동부는

ILO 가사노동자 협약 비준

조속히 추진



한국노총



ILO 가사노동자 협약 비준

2012년을 가사노동자

12 by 12 Ratification Campaign
No.189 & Promotion of the No.20

12월 19일(월) 11:30-12:30

장소 : 청계

Final resolution on tackling precarious and informal work



More than 50% of the world's workers require our determined action to extend organising and bargaining rights, decent jobs and social protection to workers in precarious and informal employment

1. According to the ILO, at least half the world's workforce is engaged in various forms of vulnerable work. And over 80% of the world population has no, or highly limited, access to social protection and is not covered by even basic labour protection including occupational health and safety laws. This situation has been exacerbated by the economic crisis since 2008, casting one hundred million more people into extreme poverty and effectively halting efforts to improve the social and employment prospects of millions of workers. It is a social crisis of massive dimensions requiring urgent worldwide action by all, with a particular responsibility falling to the trade union movement.

2. Precarious, atypical and unprotected forms of employment deprive millions of workers of the coverage of labour legislation and social security and undermine the union capacity to organise and bargain collectively. Such workers are effectively denied these rights because of the inadequacy of law or its application, which often does not cover the full range of relationships under which work is performed. Women make up the majority of workers with precarious jobs and of workers in the informal economy who are not protected by legislation, are denied fundamental rights and are subject to sub-standard conditions of work.

3. Temporary workers, those forced into self-employment, domestic workers, agricultural workers, cross-border workers, workers in supply chains and workers supplied by agencies, intermediaries or other labour brokers are often unable to exercise their rights in practice. Companies avoid the obligations that laws place on employers through contracting out work and by denying employment relationships. The growth of precarious work impedes organising; vulnerable workers are often reluctant to join trade unions even where they may have a right to do so. Where work is performed on an informal basis, as is the case for a majority of the workers in many developing countries, the right to organise and to collectively bargain is particularly difficult to realise.

4. Accordingly, the ITUC General Council instructs the General Secretary as a priority to work intensively with affiliates, regional organisations, TUAC and other Global Unions over the course of 2011 to implement a programme of actions to respond to the urgency and the gravity of the situation faced by the hundreds of millions of workers in precarious and informal work worldwide, incorporating the following measures:

- a) To campaign together with the ILO for the extension of social protection to all, for ratification of ILO social security conventions and for a basic social floor for all, including the adoption of an ILO Recommendation on the establishment of a social protection floor set at a level above the poverty line, and sufficient to provide reasonable living standards;

- b) To assist the ILO in promoting such efforts in the UNDP's work initiated by the Seoul G20 Summit to support developing countries to strengthen and enhance social protection programmes, and insist that the ILO's primary expertise and mandate in this area be recognised by the G20 as well as in the elaboration of the World Bank's new Social Protection Strategy;
- c) To assist affiliates in pressing for broadly-based and higher minimum wages, both to protect vulnerable sections of the workforce and, as recognised by the Global Jobs Pact, as this provides a vital means of raising aggregate demand and hence achieving economic recovery;
- d) To realise the provisions of the ILO Employment Relationship Recommendation No. 198 (2006) and translate it into national law and action, as well as implementing the 2002 conclusions of the ILO general discussion on the informal economy and supporting effective labour inspection to ensure the application of labour law, as is central to eliminating poverty and exploitation in the informal economy, and to promote ratification and implementation of ILO Convention No. 181 (1997) on private employment agencies;
- e) To seek a more robust programme of activities from the ILO to address these issues including through expert meetings, regional and sub-regional meetings and publications on specific aspects and through technical cooperation and policy guidelines aimed at strengthening administrative and judicial action;
- f) To work with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the ILO to improve property rights and streamlined registration for currently informal businesses, giving them a stake in joining the formal economic system so that they increase investment and training, at same time as paying taxes and contributing to national revenues for development;
- g) To work with the ILO, governments and donors to support active labour market programmes for vulnerable workers including increased access to public employment agencies and training, whilst ensuring equality in access for women;
- h) To continue to participate in the Council of Global Unions Work Relationships Group to tackle precarious work and to address organising issues arising out of the various relationships under which work is performed;
- i) To encourage unions to extend the scope of collective bargaining throughout the supply chain;
- j) To promote the Global Unions Principles on Temporary Work Agencies to prevent private employment agencies from contributing to precarisation of the workforce and to ensure that such agencies respect all internationally recognised workers' rights;
- k) To campaign jointly with affiliates, TUAC and Global Union Federations against deregulation and precarisation policies such as those advocated in the OECD's "Going for Growth" report;
- l) To intensify organising campaigns focusing on young workers performing precarious or informal work including the "Decisions for Life" programme for young women workers, as well as actions under the ITUC special action programme on the informal economy;
- m) To prepare reports on precarious and informal work worldwide with a focus on vulnerable groups particularly affected by the economic crisis and on identifying problems common to different countries and to proposing solutions;
- n) To work to eliminate trafficking in persons and illegitimate "labour migration" agencies, which frequently place people in a situation of precarious or informal work;
- o) To provide input to the G20 Labour Ministers and other relevant international fora on the situations of precarious and informal work and to make policy recommendations as to how governments should end these situations; and
- p) To organise a meeting involving affiliates, regional organisations and Global Union Federations to discuss effective means to achieve the transformation of precarious and informal work into secure and decent work (entailing social protection, respect for workers' rights, employment and social dialogue), followed by implementation activities including an informal network of affiliates and Global Union Federations to promote the development of policies and activities to this end.

The ITUC 12 by 12 Campaign

By Marieke Koning, ITUC

“If someone had told me 45 years ago that we would be here today, I would not have believed it. We do not have to be slaves anymore. But the fight is not over. We need to go back home. We need to campaign. We need to be sure that what we vote for is implemented. We must not rest until our governments ratify the Convention.”

Myrtle Witbooi, former domestic worker in South Africa and leader of SADSAWU at the ILO Conference, Geneva, June 10, 2011.

The historical adoption of ILO Convention No. 189 and Recommendation 201 on decent work for domestic workers built worldwide momentum to support and protect this often forgotten category of workers. It is estimated that worldwide there are between 50 to 100 million domestic workers, the overwhelming majority being women, many being migrants or children. When ratified and implemented, the provisions of Convention No. 189 secure the minimum rights domestic workers should enjoy.

Too many domestic workers today still face a blatant lack of respect and violation of their most fundamental rights. Exploitation and abuses are frequent including poor or non-payment of wages, extremely long working hours, no days off, lack of access to social protection, payment of excessive fees to employment agencies, physical and verbal violence including sexual harassment, rape and torture. The Convention provides hope to millions of domestic workers that from now on their lives can be changed.

A few months following the adoption, on December 2011, the ITUC launched the ‘12 by 12’ Campaign in partnership with the IDWN/IUF. The objectives of the Campaign were:

- 12 ratifications of the Convention in 12 countries
- Labour law reforms recognising the rights of domestic workers
- Organising 12,000 domestic workers in trade unions

The Campaign was embraced quickly by national centres, unions, domestic workers’ organisations as well as women, migrant and human rights groups. Strategic ‘12 by 12’ planning meetings were held at national, regional and international levels in cooperation with the IDWN/IUF. ‘12 by 12’ teams emerged in more than 90 countries and partnerships and alliances were built up. 175 ITUC affiliates joined the campaign as well as hundreds of unions and other organisations. An international ‘12 by 12’ network of nearly 2,000 activists is connected through the ‘12 by 12’ Facebook page and the ‘12 by 12’ list-serve, which help spread news and updates. ‘12 by 12’ newsletters, press releases and articles are regularly posted on ITUC’s ‘12 by 12’ webpage and widely circulated.

Today the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN), IUF, PSI, ETUC, Human Rights Watch, Anti-Slavery International, Amnesty International, Caritas, SOLIDAR, Migrant Forum Asia, the Global March against child labour, World Solidarity and FOS are the official partners of the ‘12 by 12’ Campaign. All these partners have mobilised their network around the Campaign and continue to do so. Human Rights Watch’s sharing of information on the legal steps taken at the national level regarding the protection of domestic workers’ rights is much appreciated. The ITUC together with UN Women, another supporter of the Campaign, issued a briefing kit “Domestic Workers Count too” aimed at highlighting the benefits of a better protection of domestic workers rights for workers, employers and society at large. The kit was launched during the 57th UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2013.

A global movement defending domestic workers' rights emerged, taking different actions in different parts of the world, pressuring governments, organising public events, lobbying members of parliament, developing advocacy strategies, reaching out to the public in the street and via (social) media. In parallel, domestic workers' unions were built and strengthened.

The 12-12-12 (12 December 2012) was a key date for the Campaign. Teams in more than 50 countries organised a chain of events around the world. March 8, the International Women's Day and October 7, the World Day for Decent Work also triggered dozens of activities worldwide.

The Campaign and its supporters had an impact and made a difference for many domestic workers worldwide who saw their conditions improved and their rights better respected. An increase in wages, regulation of working hours, right to a day off, access to social protection are some examples of these improvements. In addition, the Campaign contributed to the following results:

- 11 ratifications: Uruguay, Philippines, Mauritius, Italy, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Bolivia, South Africa, Colombia, Germany and the Dominican Republic. And Belgium is very likely to be the 12th Country!
- Major labour law reforms improving the rights of domestic workers including in Brazil, Argentina, Philippines, Chile, Vietnam, Spain and in the U.S (State of Hawaii and New York).
- Significant rise in minimum wages in e.g. Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi.
- New collective bargaining agreements in Italy, Uruguay and Brazil.
- New unions established in Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Sri Lanka, Columbia, Egypt, Brazil and Angola and
- More than 20,000 domestic workers organised in unions.

In the coming years, the ITUC will continue to pursue the objectives of the '12 by 12' campaign with its partners and friendly organisations and keep up the pressure on governments to ratify Convention No 189 and adopt labour law reforms while further strengthening the focus on organising domestic workers.

Organising is key to building and strengthening domestic workers' unions and enhancing their collective bargaining power. Throughout the development of the '12 by 12' Campaign, dozens of national centres from all regions have been supporting the organisation of domestic workers, helping them to strengthen their advocacy around the ILO Convention and labour law reforms, providing training and capacity building to leaders and organisers of domestic workers and building national alliances.

COSATU in South Africa and KSBSI in Indonesia encourage their members who employ domestic workers to sign them up to the union. In the case of South Africa, it has led to an immediate increase of hundreds of members for the domestic workers union SADSAWU. The CNUS in the Dominican Republic formed a union and organised 2,000 domestic workers in 2012 who now have access to social protection. The women's section of NTUF in Sri Lanka initiated activities to organise domestic workers which were followed by the commitment of 350 trade union activists and leaders to organise these workers in their districts.

2013 is an important year with the 12 ratifications likely to be achieved, several labour reforms are on their way, and commitments to organise domestic workers were pledged (including the impressive number of 50,000 in Asia). But the most striking event of the year is the Founding Congress of the IDWN in October. This is a very important event for the '12 by 12' Campaign and its supporters all around the world! Congratulations to all IDWN members!!!!

CASE STUDIES:

Domestic workers organising and building alliances around the world

Indonesia. The Action Platform KA PPRT was formed in 2012 to speak with one voice and to increase pressure on the government. Founding members are Jala-PRT (domestic workers organisation) and 3 national centres KSBSI, KSPI (both ITUC affiliates) and KSPSI. The objective is to further strengthen the platform by asking more unions, NGOs and Domestic workers' organisations to join. Their mission: convince the government to adopt a draft bill on domestic workers and ratify ILO Convention 189. Their strategy: lobbying legislators to join the discussion on the bill, lobbying members of national and local parliaments and well known personalities. Rallies are organised to keep up the pressure too on the government as well to sensitise the public through (social) media. A programme aimed at strengthening the capacities of domestic workers (leadership, advocacy, unionism) helping them build strong unions. Members of the Action Platform KA PRT committed to organising hundreds of domestic workers in 2013 and 2014. KSBSI organises domestic workers employed by trade union members and reaches out to street vendors whose children work as domestic workers.

South Africa: On 7 July 2013 South Africa ratified ILO Convention 189 - An historical day for SADSAWU, the biggest and oldest union of domestic workers in Africa. The ratification was achieved after two years of pressuring the government, lobbying members of parliament and organising marches and protests. This was not the first achievement of SADSAWU: their advocacy work throughout the years resulted in a chain of improvements for domestic workers in the national legislation. Innovative organising approaches are explored and implemented by SADSAWU such as the recruitment of new members while they commute between home and work. COSATU fully supports the organising drive and offers training to domestic workers. In 2013 COSATU adopted a resolution to encourage its members who employ domestic workers to sign them up as trade union members. It resulted in an immediate increase of hundreds of members! But challenges to unionisation such as illiteracy and frequent job changes are still present.

Latin America: TUCA's campaign "Trabajo Decente para las Trabadoras del Hogar" run in conjunction with the '12 by 12' campaign has been very successful. Alliances between national centres, domestic workers' organisations, women's rights groups and other NGO's have been key in getting 6 governments of the region to ratify the ILO Convention (out of 12 throughout the world). The advocacy of these alliances resulted in a chain of 'wins' which better protects domestic workers in several countries and in particular in Uruguay, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Dominican Republic and Colombia, Brazil and Argentina. Several national centres have helped build and strengthen domestic workers' unions. In the Dominican Republic, CNUS organised and supported 2,000 domestic workers to form a union and access social protection. In total 6 new unions of domestic workers were formed in: Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Brazil, Costa Rica and Columbia. CONLACTRAHO, which has been in existence for 20 years, is the regional federation of domestic workers' organisations in Latin America!

Philippines: Domestic workers in the Philippines can celebrate the recent adoption of a domestic workers bill and the ratification by the government of ILO Convention 189. The alliance between SUMAPI (domestic workers' organisation), the 3 national centres (FFW, TUCP, APL) the Visayan Forum, Migrant Forum Asia, employers' organisations, the ILO, several government agencies led by the Department of Labour and Employment was crucial in changing the life of domestic workers in the country. Unions, domestic workers' organisations and NGO's organised very strategic advocacy work that led to the creation of a broad network of supporters including a senator who became a '12 by 12' champion. Today the members of the alliance continue working together to ensure adequate implementation of the Bill and to build and strengthen domestic workers' unions. Strategies have been set up by the national centres and Migrant Forum Asia to organise up to 5,000 domestic workers in 2013 and 2014.

The achievements made in the Philippines had an impact across borders too: The Philippines uses C189 in their negotiations of migration bilateral agreements including with the GULF countries such as the one agreed upon in 2013 with Saudi Arabia which sets a minimum wage floor at 400 USD a month for Filipino migrant domestic workers working in Saudi Arabia.

Italy: Cooperation between the three national centres (UIL, CISL and CGIL) and local unions led to important victories for (migrant) domestic workers in Italy. Thanks to a strategic advocacy strategy, Italy was the first European country to ratify ILO Convention No 189. A new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for domestic workers was reached providing for wage increase, greater protection for working mothers and paid leave. The CBA covers 2 million working women and men and came into effect on 1 July 2013. 21 associations of employers and trade unions signed the CBA after nearly two years of negotiations. Italian unions have a long history of organising and providing services to (migrant) domestic workers.

USA: Founded in 2007, the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) is the nation's leading voice for the millions of domestic workers in the United States, most of whom are women. The NDWA is powered by 39 local, membership-based affiliate organisations of over 10,000 nannies, housekeepers and caregivers for the elderly located in 14 states, plus the District of Columbia. The NDWA is supported by domestic workers, employers and families. In the 1930s, the National Labour Relations Act was passed to protect the rights of most workers in the United States. In a concession to Southern lawmakers hoping to maintain slavery-era work conditions for African Americans, domestic workers and farmworkers were deliberately excluded from these laws and the protections they offered. Many of these exclusions remain in effect today. As a result, domestic workers are one of the most vulnerable workforces in the nation, working without the benefit of core labour standards or basic employment protections. The NDWA aims to change this. In 2010, after a 6-year grassroots campaign, the Governor of New York signed into the law the Domestic Worker's Bill of Rights – the first state law to ensure basic labour protections for domestic workers. In 2011, the NDWA launched "Caring Across Generations", a large-scale national campaign that addresses the working conditions of people providing direct care to elderly and people with disabilities, while also creating avenues that will drastically improve the quality of life for both care givers and their clients. In 2013 the NDWA is organising a massive campaign to convince Governor Brown to sign into law the California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights. It will provide housekeepers, childcare providers & caregivers with overtime pay, meal and rest breaks and adequate sleeping conditions for live-in workers.



**2012: Fair laws
for domestic
workers in 12 countries**

Organising women workers in the informal economy

By Naila Kabeer, Kirsty Milward and Ratna Sudarshan

This article, an adaptation of the introductory chapter published in a new book on organising among women in the informal economy, focuses on the challenges facing organisation among the hardest-to-reach working women in the informal economy. What gives some of them the impetus and courage to organise? What particular strategies do they draw on to raise their status and their economic position? What barriers do they continue to face in fighting injustice?

Women working in informal work are mostly found in casual, geographically dispersed, isolated, part-time, irregular, and often home-based, activities. We find them on the invisible margins of urban informal economies, or in remote rural areas. Sometimes they are in direct competition with each other for work or places to sell their goods and services. They may be divided by different kinds of inequality: class, race, caste, occupation, and legal status. Given the daily struggle for survival and security, one of the most powerful barriers to organising is fear. Women have been brought up in fear of their men, of losing their livelihoods, of starvation, of losing their children to illness and of being thrown out of their houses. The likelihood of spontaneous self-organisation among these workers is extremely low.

In recent decades, efforts to promote collective action among women have emerged in mainstream trade union movements. It is striking, but not surprising, that often the membership of most of these organisations is not engaged in the same livelihood strategies or come from the same class background as the women who are being organised.

Building a shared identity

Many women workers in sectors such as rag picking do not identify themselves as workers who share interests with other more formalised industrial and service workers. It is a longer process to work with such women to a stage at which they come together around shared interests. Organisations need to convince women that the costs of formalising their status as workers will actually benefit them in ways that outweigh the risks. This shared identity cannot be assumed: it most often has to be built.

Of course, gender inequalities are not the only ones that divide the identities and interests of workers. In some cases, divisions stem from the organisation of work. Within the waste collection sector in Pune, India, for example, there are many different kinds of tasks, with different social and material implications: there are itinerant buyers who use pushcarts and are mostly men and female itinerant buyers who use baskets. The worst off are those who collect scrap from dumps or landfills and who are nearly all women.

Where women do not see themselves primarily as workers, it is more effective to give value to their problems as women: as mothers and household managers. This increases the motivation to be members of the group. For example, when consulted about how they wanted to apply funds to work on gender issues, migrant women from Myanmar living and working in Thailand chose the issue of the violence they experienced as migrants and as women. In this way the women, who were from different ethnic identities, sought to understand what united them as migrants in Thailand as opposed to what divided them. Later they were able to organise around their rights as workers.

Adapted and abridged from: Naila Kabeer, Kirsty Milward & Ratna Sudarshan (2013). *Organising women workers in the informal economy*, Gender & Development.

Key messages:

In order to better represent the interests of informal women workers, trade unions need to change their patriarchal attitude and involve more women in leadership. A number of different approaches can be fruitful in working with groups of unorganised women in informal sectors.

1. Start with the local, with the issues on the ground. The concerns for the most marginalised workers (waste pickers, domestic workers, migrants, etc.) are as much about dignity as daily bread. The way groups evolve, their strategies and priorities, will have a strong local dimension. Unlike sector-based trade unions, organising of women workers in the informal economy tends to be locality-based, at least at first. Groups evolve around their own agendas at their own pace and scale.
2. Deal with what is important at the local level rather than working to a pre-determined agenda. Organising will be slower, because it takes time to build social and self-recognition of the value of the work that these women do, and to gain their confidence. It takes effort and patience to build common identities and interests and to win gains, whether large or small. But it is these gains that build commitment.
3. Strategies evolve and change over time. As women come together around the more practical concerns of their daily lives they may become more willing to take on more political issues, engaging in legal action or open conflict against those in power who violate their rights.
4. Although international social movements may not always be well-attuned or helpful to local organising groups, forming alliances has brought some large organisations much new learning and they stand to gain much more. Supporting and engaging with workers on issues as they are experienced in the real lives of a considerable section of the world's working poor deepens the perspectives of global movements and can help them to become more truly representative. Reciprocally, local women's organisations can sometimes benefit from the experiences of national and/or international movements in bargaining with public authorities. For example, unions' political weight at the national level has proved helpful in advancing the interests of local domestic workers' organisations in several countries.

CASE STUDY:

A Union for Home Workers in India – SEWA

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is a national labour union that operates in the informal sector. Unlike unions that represent workers in a specific workplace, SEWA organises workers who tend to work in non-factory settings such as home-based workers; domestic workers; agricultural labourers, and those who work in public places, such as street vendors. The SEWA believes organising is the basis of development and progress. More than a trade union, SEWA is a movement.

Working from home, isolated from others in their sectors, home-based workers have traditionally had few opportunities to make their needs known to employers or public authorities. The SEWA has given a voice and visibility to these workers. Before it could be registered as a trade union in 1972 under the Trade Union Act of India, the SEWA had to argue convincingly that informal women workers were, in fact, workers, and were entitled to the same rights as others. In 2006, home-based workers had grown to 17 per cent of the organisation's membership.

The SEWA has long been advocating for improved official government statistics that include measurement of the numbers and contribution of home-based workers. These efforts have borne fruit. India is one of the few countries where home-based workers are included as a category in the national data collection.

Long work hours, often in cramped and unhealthy postures with poor lighting and unhygienic work conditions, have an adverse reaction on the health and productivity of home-based workers, making poor health an occupational health issue. The SEWA's approach has been to i) provide training and health education to the workers; ii) provide appropriate tools and safety equipment; and ii) advocate for policy action.

The SEWA has fought for higher piece rates, and sometimes negotiates face-to-face with the employers, contractors and traders whom the women supply. Tripartite agreements are formed between the workers, the union and the employer, and in the long run, have effectively changed the balance of power in the bargaining relationship between the worker and the employer/contractor. These agreements refer to work rates, monitoring compliance and resolving conflicts.

Despite the SEWA's efforts, home-based workers are still denied the full protection of India's labour laws. For example, although home-based workers are typically paid on a piece rate basis, the Minimum Wage Act does not cover piece work. Where the Act does apply, it is poorly enforced. The SEWA has been running campaigns demanding that minimum wages for home-based workers be fixed on piece rate and not time rate, overseen by a tripartite welfare board. And, in one sector at least, the SEWA has achieved just that. After a long struggle for the rights of agarbatti rollers (incense stick rollers), a tripartite wage committee was established, where workers and employers' leaders sit with government officers to discuss wage increases. After the employers and SEWA representatives agree, they provide in writing the recommended increase in the minimum wage.

Compounding the very low average wages of the home-based workers is the fact that homeworkers have to pay for many of the non-wage costs of production: notably, the overhead costs of some, or all, of the raw material. The ready-made garment workers in Ahmedabad get raw material from the employer/contract, but have to purchase thread on the open market with their own money. The SEWA opened a thread distribution centre to provide thread at reasonable rates for the workers that forced the nearby shopkeepers to decrease the price of thread. The SEWA also provides training to upgrade the skills of its members.

Social security is a crucial need for all home-based workers. Because a large proportion of these workers are women, family-oriented needs such as healthcare, maternal benefits and childcare are of particular importance. Since 1992, SEWA has provided a type of health insurance scheme to these home-based workers. The woman is the primary insured, and she has the option of insuring her family for an additional premium.

Abridged from Supporting Women Home-Based Workers: The Approach of the Self-Employed Women's Association in India, by Shalini Sinha



Social Protection Floors: a comprehensive strategy for universal access to social protection

By Claire Courteille, ITUC

For decades, the global labour movement has been calling for comprehensive social protection policies that provide higher levels of protection to as many people as possible. With the increase of informality and precariousness in the world of work, in many countries, the priority became the extension of coverage including through the introduction of social protection floors. In 2012, the ILO adopted a Recommendation on national social protection floors based on decent work and universality of rights. The ITUC supports the concept of rights-based social protection floors and demands its inclusion into the post-2015 development framework. As women are over-represented among those lacking access to social protection, they are likely to benefit greatly from the introduction of social protection floors in line with ILO Recommendation 202.

With half of the global work force living with income insecurity, the biggest challenges facing the globalised world today is certainly the growth of precarious and informal work. This worldwide decent work deficit is intrinsically linked to the neo-liberal globalisation which has induced a downward pressure on wages and working conditions in many countries and an ultra-flexibilisation of labour laws, leaving an increased number of workers with no rights and protection.

Today about 80% of the world population has limited or no access to social protection. This means poverty and inadequate protection of social needs. At the global level, income inequalities have never been so blatant, with the richest 1% of the world's population owning 40% of global assets while the bottom half of the world's population owns just 1% of global wealth (UNRISD, 2012). Wealth redistribution is urgent, not only to protect people against poverty and vulnerability, but also to keep the economy running. The concentration of wealth in a few hands has indeed become a destabilising factor and in some cases an obstacle to growth.

The right to social protection is protected under international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 22) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 9). The ILO flagship Convention 102 on social security has recently been complemented by Recommendation No 202 on National Social Protection Floors. These two international standards form a comprehensive approach to social protection, providing for the realising of the universal and intrinsic human right to social protection throughout people's life cycle.

Social Protection Floors comprise basic social security guarantees defined as necessary at the national level and which ensure that, at a minimum, all those in need have access to essential healthcare and to basic income security over the life cycle. These basic income guarantees should give access to nutrition, education, healthcare and other essential goods and services during childhood; basic income security for people of working age who cannot earn sufficient income particularly in case of illness, unemployment, maternity and disability, and basic income security for the elderly, to a nationally defined minimum level.

ILO Convention 102 and Recommendation 202 are key instruments that commit the state to a rights-based social protection system, with the objective of universal coverage. Taken together they set out a two-dimensional social protection extension strategy that progressively ensures higher levels of social protection (the vertical dimension) for as many people as possible (the horizontal dimension). Recently, several countries have begun to extend protection coverage, targeting workers in the informal economy. The examples below illustrate that the creation of social protection floors is not only feasible but also has huge beneficial effects in terms of inequality and poverty reduction.

Some well-known experiences

India introduced the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in 2005. This public-job programme guaranteed 100 days of salaried employment (at the legal minimum wage) in unskilled manual work related to the public sector. It improved the income security of millions of families in rural areas.

- Thailand progressively introduced a social protection floor through which poverty among informally employed workers was significantly reduced.
- Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme, a social cash transfer programme providing cash and health insurance to extremely poor households, has significantly reduced poverty in the country.
- In Senegal, the Suqali Jaboot programme launched in 2010 is a national initiative providing basic social protection to the most vulnerable groups.
- Brazil's Bolsa Familia programme helped lift millions of women and their children out of poverty by providing conditional cash transfers to poor families whose children attend school and healthcare centres.
- The Dominican Republic launched the Solidarity Programme in 2005 for families living in extreme poverty. This programme is part of the Social Protection Network and is hinged around three key components: food, school attendance and civil documentation.

While these initiatives did have a positive effect on poverty reduction, more is needed. The challenge in many countries remains to build rights-based social protection systems, achieve universal coverage and establish clear links with decent work policies providing for fair wages underpinned by rights. The sustainability of social protection systems is indeed largely dependent on progressive tax policy and on workers' own contributions. In order to be able to pay into these schemes, decent wages are essential.

Women and social protection – some key trade union demands

- Universal and affordable access to sexual and reproductive health
- Women's individual entitlement to benefits without discrimination
- Elimination of all discriminatory policy, practices and benefits
- Public social policy that alleviates women's care responsibilities, and social protection schemes that encourage a fair distribution of care responsibility between men and women
- Social protection programmes and policies to combat gender stereotypes and gender role in the household
- Universal access to maternity care and benefits, with the costs being socialised (as the costs of maternity cannot be borne by the concerned families and/or women only)
- Involvement of women in the design and formulation of social protection policy
- Increase access through mobile services
- Programmes adapted to lower levels of illiteracy
- Registration of membership in programmes and ownership of assets in women's names

CASE STUDY:

Social Security for Informal Workers in the Dominican Republic

Maternity leave benefits help working women in formal jobs overcome inequalities in earnings and working conditions. But what if you are a self-employed hairdresser or a woman working in someone else's home?

Francisca Jiménez (known as Altagracia) is a leader of the CASC, (Confederación Autónoma Sindical Clasista), one of the largest trade union confederations in the Dominican Republic. She coordinates a programme that offers an innovative way for informal and self-employed workers to qualify for government employment benefit programmes.

Many informal workers were previously employed in the maquiladora factories that assemble products for export. The maquilas employed some 155,000 people, accounting for 7% of the working population. However, due to increased competition from Asian factory production, up to 100,000 people were laid off in recent years, most joining the ranks of the informal sector. These workers, the majority women, found themselves without healthcare or pensions.

The CASC set up the Mutual de Servicios Solidarios –AMUSSOL—to let domestic workers, self-employed bus drivers, handypersons and hairdressers sign up to the national Social Security (health) and Pension systems. The way formal workers contribute to these national programmes is on a 30%-70% split with their employers. Contributions are deducted automatically from their pay. But since independent workers have no boss to contribute the 70% of the cost of the premium, the CASC worked out an agreement with the government in 2006. The premiums for independent workers and domestic workers are calculated at 10% of a minimum wage income for the family health coverage, plus an additional 10% for the pension plan. These women also have wage replacement during maternity leaves. In fact, most workers covered by AMUSSOL are actually paid somewhat more than the minimum wage, but not enough to allow them to live on 80% of their earnings. Calculating their premiums on the basis of the minimum wage makes the programme more affordable.

Altagracia explains that this option is advantageous for domestic workers as well as for their employers. It covers healthcare for the whole family as well as a wage subsidy after a woman gives birth (equivalent to three months' wages).

There are additional subsidies for breastfeeding. "All these benefits represent savings for the lady who employs the domestic worker if she gets pregnant. The employer can send her home, knowing that she will get her three months' wages from the pension system."

Jimenez further explains: "For some time now CASC has been organising workers in the informal sector, based on the conviction that we have to be more than just a trade union organisation, we have to be a great social movement of working people." In addition to signing up more than 7,000 informal workers, AMUSSOL helps workers join organisations that are glad to include them, such as the National Federation of Private Independent Workers (FENTEP), a transport workers' union or associations of domestic workers.



PART IV

What Young Women Want – REALISING RIGHTS



FUTURE STARTS NOW!
empowering unions in the struggle for decent jobs.

El Futuro Empieza YA!
refuerza los sindicatos en la lucha por empleos decentes.

Le Commencement
renforce les

Breaking Gender Barriers for Young Men and Women

Compiled by Daina Z. Green, Gender Specialist (Canada)

“We are a precarious generation: unemployed, underpaid or working for free and invisibly, sentenced to a long dependence on our parents. Precariousness is our leitmotiv, we live our lives in the absence of any rights: the right to study, to housing, to a decent income, to health, to live our emotional relationships happily and freely”. Extract from the appeal of the Italian network of precarious workers, entitled “Our life is now. Life doesn’t wait”.

The ILO estimates that 73.4 million young people are expected to be out of work in 2013, an increase of 3.5 million between 2007 and 2013. In Greece and Spain, youth unemployment has reached the unacceptable level of 50% as a result of the financial crisis. Behind these alarming figures, the 2013 ILO Global Employment Trends for Youth Report highlights the proliferation of temporary jobs and growing youth discouragement in advanced economies and a majority of poor quality, informal, subsistence jobs for young people in developing countries. The long-term impact of the current youth unemployment is likely to be felt for decades.

Productive employment and decent work for young people cannot be achieved through fragmented and isolated interventions. Rather, sustained, determined and concerted action by a wide number of actors is required. Reducing youth unemployment requires a coherent approach articulating supportive policies centred on two objectives: 1) an integrated strategy for growth and job-creation and 2) targeted interventions to help young people overcome the specific barriers and disadvantages they face in entering and remaining in the labour market.

The difficulties young people face in entering the labour market might prematurely push them into parenthood. Women in particular might withdraw from the labour market at an early age because no jobs are available for them after they finish school. This is exacerbated in these cultures where there are pressures to conform to societal expectations by entering early marriages.

Yet early parenthood is one of the factors that perpetuates the intergenerational cycle of poverty for both young women and men. Many young girls in the developing world have little option but to get married which, given their poor family backgrounds, is most likely just a move from one poor household to the next. In addition, early pregnancy may cause complications.

The foundations for youth employment are strongly rooted in equal access to education for girls and boys. Good quality education remains a key pathway to increasing women’s opportunities in the world of work. Significant progress towards the goal of universal primary education has been made in most regions, with gender parity having been achieved in 118 countries. But indirect discrimination against girls in secondary education still exists, resulting in stereotyping them as less interested or capable in certain subjects, mainly maths and sciences. Too often young women are encouraged to train in relatively low-skilled and poorly paid ‘feminine’ occupations related to household work, with little prospect of upward mobility such as food preparation and garment manufacturing, while young men are encouraged to go for modern technology-based training and employment. Providing young women and men with formal and non-formal educational possibilities, including vocational training, without gender stereotypes would lead to their empowerment.

High quality apprenticeships are of critical importance. The ITUC and IOE (International Organisation of Employers) have been lobbying the G20 on the importance of apprenticeship systems to reduce youth unemployment. The international social partners insist that such systems facilitate training of

both male and female participants including in non-traditional gender occupations. They agree that apprenticeship must be workplace-centred and that the curricula must correspond to the needs of employers as well as the interests of the young worker. The ITUC and the IOE further agree that apprenticeship systems should be based on contractual arrangements consistent with national law and practice. While there can be no one-size-fits-all approach across national and local settings with regards to how such systems may be defined or operated, compliance with core labour standards, appropriate remuneration and linkage with social benefit and occupational health and safety systems must be important elements of any apprenticeship programme.

Finally, evidence from the ILO School to Work Transition surveys shows that in a number of countries, young women have a more protracted and difficult transition to working life than young men. Very often they have more limited access to information channels and job search mechanisms than young men. Importantly, employers in a range of countries revealed a striking preference to hire young men rather than young women for a variety of reasons. Even though there are countries and regions where unemployment is lower for young women than for young men, this often only means that women do not even try to find a job but leave the labour market, altogether discouraged. Research looking at gender and salary revealed that men asked for higher pay at eight times the rate of women. This indicates the need to increase women's negotiation skills and build up their self-confidence: a challenge that unions should take up.

Key messages:

- 1 The creation of decent work is the most urgent priority. Young people face particular barriers that must be addressed through targeted actions involving the social partners.
- 2 Trade unions must strongly advocate for breaking gender stereotypes in training and education for young people.
- 3 Young women are particularly in need of training in order to increase their negotiation skills, build up their confidence, and make their voice heard in the workplace.

Source: ILO: Youth employment: Breaking gender barriers for young women and men



“What kind of working world are young women entering?”

By Nina Benjamin, Labour Research Service, South Africa

Entering the working world – needs, hopes and dreams!

Our contexts might be different but as young working women we have all had some experience of the patriarchal norms and practices in the workplace – where many women find themselves in workplaces that are discriminatory towards women, where sexual harassment is used to control and undermine, where inadequate maternity protection disadvantages women who choose to be mothers and where inadequate social protection disadvantages women who end up carrying all the care giving responsibilities associated with being a parent.

Many young women enter the world of work believing that they can do anything men can do, expecting equality and even at times being encouraged to aim high – but they often find their hopes dashed and what they want seen as trivial.

How often have we heard from employers and even our fellow older workers that young women are unreliable and because of the time used to carry out the reproductive roles assigned to them by society, add little value to the workplace?

But young working women expect to be respected for the value, contribution and skills they bring to the workplace and not to be discriminated against because of their age and gender.

Young working women – facing the economic crisis!

All over the world it is women who are shouldering the economic crisis and it is women who are most likely to be find themselves unemployed or employed in very precarious forms of work with no real social protection. It is also women who are faced with increasing levels of care giving responsibilities as they struggle to bring in an income while taking care of children and in many cases elderly parents.

Young women who are starting out to gain a foothold in the labour market and planning to start their own families are finding life increasingly difficult as their position in the labour market becomes increasingly marginalised. Young women are most likely to hold temporary employment contracts and low quality, low paid jobs or to be trapped in the informal sector. They are also more likely to lose their jobs if there are cutbacks or retrenchments. Increasing their levels of marginalisation is the exclusion from the family and social networks that are often the informal channels to jobs. Alienation from trade unions and workplace representation leaves them with little protection when faced with employers who see young women as nothing more than cheap labour.

The marginalisation and exclusion young women experience in the workplace systematically blocks them from accessing rights, opportunities and resources afforded to those in more formal employment. Calls for an extension of these workplace rights would need to take into account the level of individual and collective empowerment needed for marginalised young women to access and use these rights. Young women might know that certain rights exist, but not feel empowered or confident enough to exercise these rights. A daily undermining and devaluing of what you do and who you are can erode the sense of self belief needed for young women to feel that they can be part of making change happen.

Being a young woman in this time of economic crisis means working harder for less reward, providing care for more people as the state cuts back on social services, having less access to public spaces, struggling against increasing attempts to control one’s sexuality and struggling to respond to the crushing impact of sexual harassment while fearing that you might lose your job.

This story by a young woman from South Africa participating in the Decisions for Life Campaign illustrates the kinds of challenges faced by many young women all over the world:

My name is Agnes and I am 28 years old. I take care of my child and brother and sister as my parents have passed away. I work as a technician and install and repair telephone lines.

One day I was working in the office because I was pregnant and could not go out into the field. I was in the first trimester of my pregnancy. My executive manager came to the office and asked for my number. I gave it to him. I did not ask him why he wanted my number as he is a senior person and respected by all in the company. He then started touching my breast and private parts. He said I was beautiful and that he could easily get me a better position at work.

I started feeling very uncomfortable and stopped him. I then walked out of the office and told him that I was going to report this to my supervisor. I felt violated and scared. Even though I said I was going to report this I felt that I could not because I thought that I could lose my job if I did.

But this story from the Philippines illustrates just how capable young women are of fighting back and forging ahead in an uncertain and challenging world of work:

I was 18 years old when I had to work as a part-time employee for a food chain. It never occurred to me that I would have to work while studying until my father, a migrant worker for most of his life, lost his job abroad and was sent back home. Needless to say, it was a rude awakening for me. I thought that working part time would be easy. I was completely wrong. I had to struggle every step of the way. Completing my pre-employment requirements, like obtaining a health permit, working permit and many others was not only expensive but time consuming. By cutting back on my food and transportation expenses I was able to stretch my meagre daily allowance as a student and pay for all the processing and documentary fees.

Then came the shock of working for very long hours with very little pay. At that time, my salary was only 47.50 pesos (US\$ 1.11) per hour. As if that was not hard enough, I also had to clean my designated place and wash at least 100 serving trays after my four-hour shift. These chores, which took up more than an hour, were no longer considered paid time. After my shift, I had to go to school. On most days, I was already too tired to focus on my studies. And that was the irony of it all. I had to work to keep up my studies, only to find that to earn enough I had to use up all my energy which, in turn, prevented me from learning in school. When I got involved in a youth orientation conducted by the Alliance of Progressive Labour (APL), I realised that many young workers like me are not aware of their rights at work.

I readily joined one of its youth organisations. This turned out to be the start of my new found vocation, to educate young workers about their rights and to raise their awareness that they deserve a better deal and working conditions than what I had to endure.

Through the Decisions for Life Campaign we have gained a deeper insight into the levels of stress, anxiety, fear and often despair that young women workers confront daily. Through the Campaign we have brought together groups of young women who have expressed hope, enthusiasm and energy both individually and collectively - and this is the story that we would like to share.



CASE STUDY:

Spotlight interview with Thulile Motsamai (SACCAWU)



Our Message to Women is: “Take Your Own Decisions”

Thulile Motsamai, trade union representative at the Birchwood Executive Hotel in Johannesburg, is one of the key players in the “Decisions for Life” campaign in South Africa. She explains how this ITUC campaign is helping young South African women gain awareness of their rights and develop within the South Africa Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union, SACCAWU.

What is the “Decisions for Life” campaign?

It is a campaign aimed at young women, it informs them not only about their rights in the workplace but also in their homes, at school, etc. It is not only aimed at working women, but young mothers, for example, some of whom leave school at a very early age. We take our campaign to supermarkets, cybercafés, to the streets, children’s homes, and shelters for women who have suffered domestic violence, etc. We set up a table with leaflets in public places and approach passers-by to talk to them about the campaign; in some cases we invite them to a campaign workshop or meeting. We make sure there is a bit of fun at these events, otherwise young people would soon lose interest if faced with nothing but long speeches.

Approaching people is not difficult: we are young people talking to young people; we speak about our own situation. We are trying to reach as many young people as possible, because if your CV shows that you have no work experience, employers see you as easy prey, as a person they can underpay and exploit to the hilt. When you are aware of your rights it is different.

Do you take the campaign also to women who are not in formal jobs?

Yes, the campaign is also aimed at students, as they have to take important decisions about their future as soon as they complete their studies. We try, for example, to raise their awareness about sexual harassment, to help them gain self-confidence and teach them to say “no” by making them realise that this harassment can lead to many serious problems such as HIV, desolation and even suicide. They have to take care of themselves before they enter the labour market, so that when they do they are strong women who know their rights and know what can and cannot happen.

We are also targeting unemployed women, as we know that some of them decide to sell their bodies. We cannot stop them from doing so, but they should at least do so safely.

“Decisions for Life” is therefore addressed at a larger public than trade union members...

Yes, but we also take the opportunity to inform young women about the benefits of being unionised. We try to change the perception people have of trade unionists, as seen on television: to show [young people] that they have a place in the trade union movement, that their points of view can be heard, that they are just as important as everyone else, that age is of no consequence.

Our message is really to say to women: “Take your own decisions”, be it about moving house, starting a family, having sexual relations, getting married or not, etc. When we are capable of deciding for ourselves, we are capable of doing it in all other areas, such as choosing a job.

What does your involvement in this campaign bring you, on a personal level?

Happiness! My involvement has awoken a part of me that I didn’t know existed. I have a diploma in management and marketing. It is not easy working as a chambermaid, but I have to do it to feed my three children. Thanks to the “Decisions for Life” campaign, I am a new person and I do not even dislike my work as a chambermaid any more.

Has the campaign had any impact on your union?

The campaign has helped us recruit new members, as young women come to realise the benefits of being unionised. Those who are still studying come to the same conclusion and when they enter the world of work, they will make sure they have a union behind them. Women account for 80% of my union's members, and yet the leadership is dominated by men. But things are starting to change.

Has the campaign changed things at the hotel where you work?

Tremendously! When we want something, we have to do it ourselves. We cannot really expect men to negotiate for our rights. Ever since we started taking part in the negotiations ourselves, we have succeeded in negotiating a policy on parental rights, the signing of a policy on sexual harassment, a policy on health and safety, another on HIV, and have secured a commitment from the company to reimburse 50% of medical costs (which we are trying to push up to 75%). Similar results have been achieved in several other companies thanks to the campaign, as the women are more involved.

Could you tell us more about the policies negotiated within your company?

The policy against sexual harassment involves a strengthening of the complaint mechanism. That on parental rights covers maternity leave, the leave that can be taken if a child is ill, preventative measures to stop pregnant women from being overburdened, etc. Some of these points were already provided for in the national legislation, but the management only respects these rights if they are laid down in the collective agreement it signs. The same is the case with HIV: the legislation stipulates that people affected by the virus should not be discriminated against at work, but we have negotiated the assurance that this will never happen in our hotel. We have also secured an agreement whereby a person infected with HIV can take up to eight months sick leave, with half of her salary paid by the company and the other half by social security, and that she can return to her job and to the same position in the hierarchy, when she is better. This is an added gain relative to the legislation.

SACCAWU is the South Africa Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union, affiliated to COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions)



Young and unemployed on Planet Earth - When can I start my career?

By Daina Z. Green, Gender Specialist (Canada)

Globally, young people aged 15 to 24 are three times more likely than adults to be out of a job. Those who do have a job typically find themselves underemployed, in part-time or temporary work, and in the informal sector in poor working conditions. This global youth unemployment crisis imposes a heavy cost, both in terms of depletion of human and social capital and loss of opportunities for economic growth for present and future generations.

There are differences across continents, but it is critical for all governments to act now to ensure that young people can apply and develop their talents. Young workers need a decent start in the labour market, because if they get stuck in endless cycles of precarious sub-employment, they may never be able to develop their careers. In many countries, the situation is even worse for young women than for young men.

The ILO addressed the youth employment crisis at its session in June 2012. A series of national consultation events on youth employment in 40 countries were held across the world leading up to this meeting, including a global Youth Employment Forum held in Geneva in May 2012.

Some of the key regional findings from these consultations, and other sources, are set out below.

Africa

The African continent faces the additional challenge of a youth population much higher than most other regions worldwide, weak national labour markets and persistently high levels of poverty. The majority of Africa's population is under 30 years of age and the median age is just 18 years. Youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa is twice that of adults (12.8% for youth and 6.5% for older workers) and triple that of adults in the case of North Africa (27.1% for youth and 7% for older workers). Unemployment is only the tip of the iceberg. African youth are more likely to be underemployed and among the working poor than the general population.

From North to Southern Africa, countries are experiencing a clear "youth bulge" in which the proportion of young people in the population is increasing more significantly compared to other age groups.

The recent social uprisings of young women and men in North Africa are a critical reminder of the urgency for action to address young people's rights to enter and stay in the labour market. If youth unemployment persists, there is the growing risk of greater inequalities and social and economic instability across the region.

While African economic growth improved in the first decade of the 21st century, the global economic and financial crisis undermined many gains to the job-poor growth patterns of the pre-crisis era before 2009. Many African macroeconomic policies are too heavily focused on export-commodities. In countries like Zimbabwe and Zambia, there is an over-dependence on a few industries. When demand for their products declines because of the global economic and financial crisis, industries close down and few new jobs are created.

Some of the sectors that are growing the most rely heavily on capital investment and create few jobs. This creates a "reserve army" of the unemployed in countries like Tanzania, where about 800,000 people enter the labour market each year, but only about 5% find jobs. Even in countries with high levels of education, like Egypt, most of the jobs created are precarious and have low pay. In many countries, young people find themselves last in and first out of the labour market.

Desperate to find work, many youth resort to taking on precarious, underpaid, and seasonal work mostly in the informal economy. Young women may be pushed aside as many employers favour men. Even educated youth turn to work that is underpaid, with long hours, limited personal and job security and zero social protection, such as vending or street car washing. This is not the decent work we fight for.

There is deepening inequality of wealth and status among youth workers with rural youth, young women, out-of-school youth and youth living with disabilities particularly denied their rights to decent work. In rural areas, under-employment is common.

Across Africa, young people are faced with bleaker life prospects and are disenchanted with policies and established institutions for failing to provide them with opportunities to fully reach their potential and to live with dignity. Some countries are seeing young workers, especially more educated ones, giving up on finding good jobs in their countries and migrating away.

It often takes young women longer to transition from school to work. Young single mothers report they are more prone to unemployment, discrimination, sexual harassment and underemployment.

In countries going through violent conflict, there are additional challenges for young people looking to start their working lives. Youth survivors of war may be socially, economically and geographically marginalised and excluded.

Asia and the Pacific

In 2010, about 90 per cent of young people worldwide lived in developing countries. Fifty five per cent of these young people live in Asia. Asia-Pacific is an incredibly diverse region. It is home to some of the world's most advanced economies and some of the poorest countries. Accordingly, the issue of youth employment looks very different across the region. A commonality for most parts of the region, however, remains the lack of gender equality in the youth labour market. In all sub-regions except East Asia, the unemployment rate is higher for young women than for men, and the youth labour force participation rate and employment-to-population ratio are significantly lower for young women than young men.

While unemployment throughout the region was relatively low (around 5 per cent), some countries have rates exceeding 10 per cent, with a higher proportion for young women. Notably in Sri Lanka, unemployment of young women is 10.8 percentage points higher than men; followed by Singapore with 6.8 percentage points.

In South Asia, there is a huge increase in young people and young women in temporary, non-regular, lower-skilled, poorly-remunerated occupations and enterprises. In countries such as the Philippines considerably more young women end up in part-time work than their male counterparts. The same rapid increase of part time employment among young women was also evident between 2008 and 2010 in Australia, Japan and New Zealand. While part-time work may help young mothers balance their family and economic needs, part-time work is often insecure, with little labour protection, and poorly paid. The inadequacy of maternity leave and benefits including paid paternity leave (in the region, only 12 countries provide paid paternity leave) further limit young women's access to productive jobs and opportunities to advance their careers.

Although young women are increasingly becoming more educated, they continue to face difficulties getting hired in occupations appropriate to their qualifications. Young women are more likely to engage in self-employment, in traditional unpaid, family-based work. Young people that are neither in employment nor in education (NEET) have risen. In parts of developing Asia, the share of youth NEET remains high, with the share of young women notably higher than that of young men, particularly in Bangladesh (32.7 percentage points), Indonesia (16 percentage points), and Philippines (13.5 percentage points).

Latin America and the Caribbean

In Latin America and the Caribbean the rate of urban unemployment among young people is thought to be 14.9%— more than double the general rate of unemployment and triple that of older people, which is 5%. Furthermore, some 6 out of every 10 youths who do find employment are working in informal jobs, in precarious conditions and for low wages. The transition into the world of work is even more difficult for young women, especially those living in rural areas.

High education dropout rates, especially among 15 – 17 year olds is another serious issue facing most countries in the region. Only 14% of young people have completed higher education and only 65% have completed high school, with Central America lagging behind the other sub-regions. Faced with few options, most 18-24 year olds enter the workforce through low quality jobs. Fewer young women than men are active in the labour market. Over time, they become trapped in a vicious circle of poverty, with fewer possibilities to have access to credit, training opportunities and education, to be organised in unions and to demand the fulfilment of their labour rights.

The deficit of decent work opportunities, high levels of informal work, and low wages and incomes among young people in the region is a major challenge that needs to be tackled through national policies, programmes and youth employment initiatives which address both the quality and quantity of decent jobs. Such policies should place a special emphasis on indigenous youth, women and young people in rural areas. Governments, employers, trade unions and young people should be actively involved in the design and implementation of these policies. Furthermore, unions need to strengthen their organising strategies and campaigns for young people and ensure participation of young people in decision making positions in the unions.

Europe

In the context of the economic crisis that began in the region in 2008, young people in temporary work, along with migrant workers, have become the buffers of employment, and get the worst of the upheaval in European labour markets.

In the first years of the crisis, labour market segregation (women's over-representation in service employment, including public sector jobs, and underrepresentation in manufacturing, construction and male-dominated branches of the financial sector) effectively sheltered women's employment, labour market activity and pay. But when push comes to shove, women risk being more negatively affected by this recession in two ways: first, the crisis has raised pressure on women in terms of their labour market participation. Second, it has jeopardized gender equality initiatives, measures and policies at the European and national levels. Although in the early stages of the crisis existing gender gaps on European labour markets were levelled down as male workers were much more hit by lay-offs and rising unemployment, in its ulterior phases the crisis affected more and more female workers as well.

That said, the situation varies greatly across Europe—countries with stronger social programmes generally experienced less job loss as a result of the crisis. The rates of unemployment among young women vary from 8% in the Netherlands and Germany to 52% in Greece. For young men, the unemployment rate varies between 8% in the Netherlands and Austria to 48% in Spain. Comparatively, countries that were hardest hit overall saw young workers hit even harder, such as Southern European countries and the Baltic States.

Overall, the growth in the region's knowledge-based jobs has been hampered by problems in the educational systems. Too many are leaving school too early, especially young men. There continue to be many mismatches between educational attainment and labour market needs. Men tend to lag behind women in terms of their level of education. However, because of gender segregation across study fields in higher education, young women are penalised by ending up in professional careers generally associated with lesser rewards and promotional opportunities on the labour market.

Sources: ILO report: Africa's Response to the Youth Employment Crisis, Regional Report, Synthesis of Key Issues and Outcomes from Eleven National Events on Youth Employment in the African region, March - May 2012; ILO report: National Forum on Youth Employment in Latin America and the Caribbean; ITUC – AP: Youth and Employment in Asia and the Pacific through a gender lens; "Gender in the crisis and prospects for the future" - a report by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

CASE STUDY

Cristina, Recently laid-off, young Broadcasting Worker from Spain



I was working for a state TV broadcaster in Madrid. They are cutting a lot of public services. They decided to dismiss all the workers on TV. I was dismissed one month ago.

On one side we have austerity cuts because of the crisis, the cuts in public services in the community and the country. And on the other side we have ideological decisions that are made because of positions that staff held that are different to the Government. These austerity measures will not help the Spanish economy.

People need to have an income. But the government is not listening to people.

Employers will not share their wealth. It feels like a dictatorship. You feel impotent when the government treats you like this.

There is a feeling of hopelessness, people are afraid, the median wages in Spain are very low. When you finish unemployment benefit, things get very bad, very quickly. Children go to school without having breakfast and do not get lunch. I have a one-year-old daughter, Julia. I hope when she is older things will be better. I am very afraid that we cannot guarantee a good future for our children.

People are bitter. The cuts on budgets and to our rights are coming from outside, like a dictatorship. Our Government could say no – they could choose a different path. If you cannot bargain, you cannot get a decent wage. But the choice you get is between keeping your job accepting lower wages and trying to bargain collectively and being dismissed.

This is a challenge, we are in poverty and there are tough decisions to make. But we have to keep fighting.



Young, female and ready for work – a view from the USA

By Sarah Lewis – AFL-CIO

The United States' economy is still struggling to recover from the 2007 financial crash. Today, nearly four years after the recession was declared to be over in the U.S., workers aged 16-24 are still unemployed at more than twice the rate of the overall population and struggle with education debt and higher rates of underemployment and precarious work. Though some statistical measures seem to indicate that the situation of young women is relatively better than that of their male counterparts, the full story reveals that many of the same factors continue to result in today's young women still lagging behind at work.

A major component contributing to young women workers' financial struggles is the lower rate of unionisation among women workers, and young women workers in particular. The rate of unionisation among women is 10.5 per cent versus a rate of 12 per cent for men. For women of 16-24 years of age, and 25-34 years of age, those rates are 3.3 per cent and 9 per cent respectively. Men's rate, on the other hand, while still lower than in many industrialised countries, are 5.1 per cent for the youngest workers and 10 per cent for 25-34 year-olds.

Looking solely at unemployment, however, young women aged 16 to 24 appear to have fared somewhat better than young men. But the relatively lower unemployment rate of young women workers compared to their young male counterparts does not mean that women are actually doing better in the workplace. The difference in unemployment can be explained by multiple variables, including the feminisation of the workforce. Since the 1970s, the United States' economy has shifted away from heavy industry and other stereotypically "male" jobs, and into services. The housing bubble and financial crisis worsened this trend with higher layoff and unemployment rates for men as factories closed and construction work slowed.

Additionally, the labour force participation rate of women still lags behind that of men. For young women aged 16-24, the civilian labour force participation rate was only 53.7 per cent, and 73.5 for 25-34 year-old women as of the second quarter of 2013, while the participation rate for young men was higher at 56.5 and 89.4 per cent.

Under-employment continues to be a major problem for many young workers, who end up taking jobs for which they are educationally over-qualified. The largest employers of young workers are low-wage retail, service, and healthcare industries. Jobs are often part-time, with young women more than twice as likely as young men to work only part-time.

Compounding this is the gender pay gap, which for young workers is generally lower than for the overall workforce. However, with women more likely to be in precarious employment, the difference in pay adds up, making it harder for young women workers to find financial security. Further complicating the financial situations of young women is the current student debt crisis. While higher education remains an important factor contributing to youth employment, the cost of college has increased at astronomical rates while non-loan based aid has declined, resulting in students owing an average of almost \$27,000 in student loan debt.

The inability to accumulate and maintain wealth among younger workers means that they are more unlikely to experience retirement security down the road. Individual savings have become more and more important to retirement security as employer-provided pensions become rarer, especially among the current generation of young workers. Delayed entry into the workforce and stretches of unemployment further erode retirement security for young workers by lowering their contributions,

and therefore their eventual benefits, from the Social Security system. This is especially a problem for women as their Social Security benefits tend to be lower than those of men.

While women workers in the United States have been gaining ground toward equality in the workplace, much work remains to be done if today's young workers are to solve the problems of gender inequity in the workplace.





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