



WSM: a partner in synergies for development



ONDERZOEKINSTITUUT VOOR ARBEID EN SAMENLEVING

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In 2011, WSM in collaboration with HIVA, carried out an internal evaluation of its programme for the period 2008 - 2010. Partner organisations, WSM coordinators and staff from the WSM head office in Brussels were actively involved in this evaluation process. The results of the evaluation were analysed in two steps. A first step involved a reflection meeting in Brussels with staff from the WSM head office. In a second step, the evaluation results were further analysed by HIVA who identified a series of critical factors that can be helpful to consider in future programming.

One such factor that emerged strongly during the internal evaluation was the importance of networking or synergy as a strategy to contribute more effectively to the programme objectives. To illustrate this with practical examples it was decided that HIVA would explore a number of good cases of 'synergy in action' that emerged during the internal evaluation and to document them as examples of good practice.

The following cases were explored and documented in this publication:

1. Joining hands to improve health conditions among handicraft and market workers in Bolivia.
2. Burundi: Empowering people through transformative social protection.
3. The Dominican Republic workers movement: Synergy in action.
4. Domestic workers from India to Geneva.
5. The power of collaborative action research - Improving working conditions and trade union rights in Togo.

The main elements of the methodology to develop the five cases involved the following:

- Analysis of the outputs of the 2011 internal evaluation process: reports of the partner organisations, country reports and regional reports.
- Interviews with representatives from partner organisations and WSM staff.
- Feedback from partner organisations and WSM staff on draft versions of the cases through email.
- Validation of the cases during an international seminar in June 2012.

The aim of these cases is to provide insights in the mechanisms of successful synergies and the possible pitfalls that one can face when trying to stimulate processes of collaboration between different actors. It is hoped that such insights can also inform the strategic planning of WSM's new programme for the period 2014-2019.

SYNERGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT: MAIN LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIVE CASE STUDIES

Our exploration of the five cases is based on practical and detailed information and “thick description”. This means that, instead of looking for too theoretical conceptualisation, we highlight the particular and contextual nature of each of the cases. We try to capture the complexity of collaborative action, by also taking into consideration the less evident or unexpected factors that may determine success. Through this open approach, we entered each of the five cases from a relative “tabula rasa” or without preconceived theories. The following five ‘factors of success’ were shown to come back across the five cases: a practical approach; complementarity; action-based research; large ownership; and international back-up.

Successful synergies are *practical*. Synergies do not exist in a vacuum or as an end-in-itself, but are ways to work together towards concrete outputs and objectives. The partners of WSM in India put their strengths together in advocacy activities towards their local and national governments in preparation of the International Labour Convention on domestic work. They write letters together to policy makers, get the approval in the own organisation, discuss a joint position, etc. Also in Bolivia, the partners of WSM engaged in a joint research, involving various meetings to decide on target groups, methodology, the development of a questionlist, to the elaboration of a communication strategy on how to use the results in their political work. This practical dimension does also in-



volve a lot of personal contact that determines the success of joint action. In the case of the Dominican Republic, we find that the leader of one of the partner organisations comes from the own community, being highly respected by the people for and with whom they work. As a response to the earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010, the Dominican partners mobilized people, medicines, ambulances, food, shelters, etc. This has only been possible through the long lasting personal relations between Dominican and Haitian organisations.

Synergies have been *complementary*. Very different organisations, ranging from trade unions, NGOs working with women or children, to community-based organisations join from various angles on a joint issue. Be it informal employment, social protection or domestic work. The important benefit of this diversity and complementarity is that organisations can take advantage of each other's strengths and expertise. Whereas a trade union may contribute a large membership or political credibility, an NGO may have a strong technical expertise or experience in service delivery. In the Dominican case, the synergy between various organisations with their particular approaches resulted in an accompaniment in legal issues, social protection, organisational empowerment as well as trade union membership. Also in the case of Burundi, the partners of WSM join together in a platform that includes not only grassroots mutual health insurance organisations, but also NGOs and international donors. In Togo, WSM supports the organization of a social solidarity forum for Togolese workers. Also here, the approach is based on complementarity, bringing together and building bridges among a very diverse group of actors, ranging from trade unions, employer organizations, the ministry of labour, churches, youth movements, NGOs to human right organizations.

Synergies have been based on *participatory, action research*. In the case of Togo, the partner of WSM has conducted research, in collaboration with trade unions, on work conditions in free export processing zones, labour rights in private education and the legal dimension of labour in Togo. These researches on their turn have been input for exchange and debate. In the Bolivian case, WSM supports the action research of its partners on the health situation of market and handicraft workers. The action dimension involves the participation of the own organisations and their members in

the research. Also in Burundi, a study commissioned by WSM on social protection schemes in Rwanda and Burundi, has been an important input in the establishment of the platform of mutual health insurance organisations.

Synergies are *owned*. A key factor of success is the ownership of networks, whereby the partners take initiative and often voluntarily engage in collaborative action to solve a common problem. To respect the priorities and rhythm of its partners, WSM plays an accompanying role from the margin, giving input or direction at important moments. However, WSM leaves key decisions to its partners. By focussing on ownership, the empowerment of the partners themselves becomes central. Partners are supported to organize from the bottom-up, to defend their rights and assure access to social security, health care or better labour conditions. This has been very present in the Indian case, where domestic workers who historically have been the most excluded in society, join hands to give domestic workers a face and a voice.

Synergies are *backed-up internationally*. WSM has played an important role in backing-up its partners in their work in often politically sensitive or contentious settings. In the Indian case, WSM mobilized its partners worldwide and utilized its experience in political work at the level of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to promote the rights of domestic workers. In the case of Burundi, WSM opened doors to facilitate access to government officials for other civil society organisations such as the catholic church or the social partners. In Togo, WSM visited the ministry of labour to highlight the seriousness of intimidations and threats to its partner. Also in the organization of the social forum of Togolese workers, the back-up of WSM facilitated the contacts with policy makers. And this international back-up is not taking place from the desk in Brussels: WSM is in the field, at the side of their partners, actively engaged in political work and campaigning.

These are only some of the most striking factors determining the success of synergies for development. There is much more, though. Therefore, we invite the reader to have a closer look at each of the cases in India, Togo, Burundi, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic to have a better idea about what synergies for development are about. Please, enjoy!



1. JOINING HANDS TO IMPROVE HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG HANDICRAFT AND MARKET WORKERS IN BOLIVIA

CONSTRUCTING A PARTNERS' OWNED NETWORK IN BOLIVIA

FINDING EACH OTHER THROUGH A SHARED INTEREST

In Bolivia, WSM has a strong tradition to work on the following three thematic areas: worker rights, social protection and employment creation. The main partners of WSM in Bolivia are the Bolivian trade union Crisol (Corriente de Renovación Independiente y Solidaridad Laboral), the NGO Casa Waki, the Centre for the Promotion of Women Gregoria Apaza and Sentec.

Crisol has been founded in 1979 as the Comité de Relaciones Intersindicales y Solidaridad Laboral and afterwards transformed into Crisol. Nowadays, Crisol counts 17 confederations, has a membership of more than 850.000 affiliates and is part of the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB). WSM supports Crisol to set up training programs for trade union leaders to carry out political work on the "Ley General del Trabajo" and the new Constitution and to organize campaigns in favour of workers' rights in the mining sector.

Gregoria Apaza is an NGO that has been founded in 1983 and works in the region of El Alto on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of women. They aim to transform existing gender relations that are characterized by inequality in order to empower women. WSM supports the work of Gregoria Apaza in the area of solidarity economy which involves for example the establishment of women associations, access to commercialization, micro-credits and activities in the informal economy.

Casa Waki on its turn, is an NGO that has been established in 1993 to work with children and youths around reintegration in the regular school system, psychological assistance or nutrition. This takes place through an integrated approach, also involving the families of these youth. In addition, Casa Waki accompanies youths in their own economic activities through scholarships for



professional training, the setting up of individual or collective commercial initiatives, and feasibility studies. WSM supports these activities because they help to improve the chances of youths on the labour market.

Sentec on its turn is a local NGO, situated in the province of Oruro and working with mining populations in the Andean highlands. WSM supports the elaboration of natural medicines, based on ecological products.

While being involved in different activities, Crisol, Casa Waki, Gegoria Apaza, Senctec and their member organisations share a strong common focus on the sector of handicraft and market workers. In the Bolivian context, handicrafts are understood as manual work without the use of mechanics, and where each product is unique. This involves woodcrafts, miniatures, ceramics, music instruments, clothing, jewellery, the making of shoes, painting, etc. One of the member organisations of Crisol, the Confederación Sindical de Trabajadores Artesanos de Bolivia (CSTAB), represents the largest number of handicraft workers in the La Paz-El Alto region. Another member is the Federación de Mercados de la Paz which affiliates the market workers.

It is this common interest in the sector of handicraft and market workers that has brought Crisol, Casa Waki, Gegoria Apaza, Sentec and their member organisations together in a joint effort of networking. The interesting element in this case, is the strong feeling of ownership by WSM's partner organisations about this network. The partners take the lead in carrying out joint projects while WSM plays a facilitating role from the sideline, financing specific



activities, giving guidance or delivering particular expertise at certain moments.

The next section describes how this network provided a platform for organisations to join hands to address the challenge of poor health among handicraft and market workers.

JOINING HANDS AROUND A COMMON CHALLENGE

In the framework of the "Ecosol" programme WSM, Crisol, Casa Waki and Gregoria Apaza gathered in a meeting (in April 2010) to discuss possible collaborations in the sector of solidarity economy. All three organizations work in a certain way in the solidarity economy, be it in El Alto or La Paz, with handicraft or market workers, with youths or women, or from an NGO or trade union perspective. During the meeting it emerged that all three organizations have been con-

fronted with precarious working conditions of the handicraft and market workers with whom they work. Many handicraft workers have difficulties in finding access to a workshop with sufficient ventilation, illumination or access to water. Furthermore, because of low incomes, their nutrition, living conditions and levels of education are often limited, which contributes to limited attention and access to health care. Similarly for market workers, working conditions are very precarious, often lacking the most basic conditions, such as access to water, sanitation or waste collection.

As a response to these needs, Casa Waki, Gregoria Apaza and Crisol decided to engage in a joint research project to explore the health conditions of market and handicraft workers in El Alto and La Paz. On invitation of WSM and as first introduction with the other participating organisations, Sentec only participated as external observer.

In addition, it was decided that the research would be carried out by the members of the network. This does not only mean Crisol, Casa Waki and Gregoria Apaza, but also their associations and federations, such as the afore mentioned Confederación Sindical de Trabajadores Artesanos de Bolivia (CSTAB) or the Federación de Mercados de la Paz. Network members were well aware of the importance of actively involving handicraft and market workers because of past experiences with similar projects that ended up with the establishment of health posts or hospitals that did not correspond to the expectations of the target population. In one such instance for example, people expressed a more urgent need for more modest and close by health posts instead of a fully equipped hospital that had just been installed.

It was also argued that actively engaging handicraft and market workers in the research project would tackle a first elementary step of awareness-raising on the importance of health in their work and living environment.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF EACH OTHER'S STRENGTHS

A next step in the research project was the joint construction of the research methodology. This involved a variety of meetings and consultants who assisted in the development of the survey and the statistical work.

It was decided to examine the profile of handicraft or market workers including age, sex, educational level, etc. Furthermore, network members decided to explore broader health issues such as nutrition, housing conditions, practices of giving birth, the number of children that fall sick, whether children received their vaccinations and which diseases are most frequent. In addition, it was jointly decided to conduct a mapping of existing health care services such as the availability of a health posts in the communities, the cost of health care and the quality of the offered services.

This phase of the research involved a lot of exchange of experiences and expectations of the different network organizations

involved. Quickly, Crisol, Casa Waki, Gregoria Apaza and their member organisations were confronted with different work dynamics. Whereas Crisol is a grassroots organization that heavily thinks in terms of representation and political work (e.g. doing advocacy on the new handicraft law), Casa Waki and Gregoria Apaza can count less on a mobilization base and apply a service delivery logic. Casa Waki for instance works with youth through professional training or employment creation. Gregoria Apaza on its turn has a strong focus on assisting women in the establishment of economic initiatives. Although Sentec contributed in the debates on health conditions of handicraft and market workers, its participation has been an introductory one, getting to know the other partners and deciding whether there exists a potential for further collaboration in the future.

This mix of different expectations, experiences and capacities of the different network members has greatly contributed to the strength of the research methodology that was designed. For example, Crisol can count on a large social base and the idea of representation is very important to them. This means that actively involving their member associations and federations in the research design has been a key priority. For the more NGO-like organizations such as Casa Waki and Gregoria Apaza, this representation was less a priority and could have been neglected without the input from Crisol.

The large social base of Crisol and more in particular the Confederación de Trabajadores Artesanos de Bolivia has also been a great help to mobilize handicraft and market workers in conducting the data collection. In total, more than 400 people participated voluntarily in various workshops to fill in the questionnaire. Furthermore, partly thanks to the strong gender focus of Gregoria Apaza, 300 participants in the data collection workshops were women. This was an added value for the research because women play an important role for health care in the family. Also, the presence of grassroots organisations within the network facilitated the collaboration with the local government. As a result they were able to work with local governments in El Alto to collect additional information about health issues within their localities.

LEARNING THROUGH CONCERTED ACTION

For the participating organizations in the collaborative action research, it has been an important learning experience of having to



adapt their own expectations and to agree to a common vision and plan of action that satisfies all the organizations involved.

Whereas at first, the heterogeneity of the various organizations may have led to a certain frustration, in the end this fostered learning. It resulted in a dialogue between very different organizational dynamics or cultures. A trade union as Crisol for example that becomes more active in service delivery to its affiliates and an NGO as Casa Waki that engages in more political activities. Or the young handicraft workers of Casa Waki that enter into a commercialization dynamic of Gregoria Apaza and Crisol.

Instead of collaborating or networking being an end in itself, the Bolivian experience teaches us that collaborative action across a common challenge is crucial to make a network alive and relevant.

On the other hand, this case study also teaches us to be realistic. The process is still young. The first steps have been taken in researching the challenge of health among handicraft and market workers, raising awareness about this issue and getting it on the agenda. But more work has to be done in creating policy alternatives and translating the results of the research in concrete programmes of the network.

As a next step, network members are planning to use the research results in their political work at the local level. Also the establishment of a health cooperative or the organization of a platform to promote the dialogue with the local governments are mentioned as options for future action.

Apart from this very practical approach, the personal touch of the network contributed to a vivid dynamic among the participating



organisations. The collaboration involved more than 15 meetings with a lot of discussion. These were held alternately in the offices of the various organizations. Gradually, the network got a “human face” by getting to know each other.

LOCAL OWNERSHIP IS KEY

A major lesson, for WSM, has been to respect the own rhythm of the network and its member organizations. Accordingly, WSM supports the network by taking up an accompanying role from the sideline, assisting certain meetings and giving advice for some strategic choices. The effectiveness of support strategies that respect local ownership can be illustrated by a contrasting experience with another Bolivian network that WSM supports and in which the same organizations participate: the Decent

Work Platform. This is a network that pursues ILO’s Decent Work Agenda in Bolivia. One of the main differences with the network described in this case study is its limited local ownership. The decent work platform was predominantly initiated by a group of international and Belgian NGO’s. This contributed to less dynamism at the level of the Bolivian member organisations. Furthermore, the established trade union confederation COB (Central Obrera Boliviana) did perceive the decent work platform as a competing initiative. This resulted in some of the WSM partners (Casa Waki and Gregoria Apaza) to leave the platform and join an alternative network (the Red Boliviana de Defensa de los Derechos Laborales de la Juventud). Also the trade union Crisol finds difficulties in its participation, as apparently the network prefers to work directly with certain member federations and not through the umbrella of Crisol.



**2. SYNERGY IN ACTION:
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC WORKERS MOVEMENT**

A GROWING DOMINICAN REPUBLIC WORKERS MOVEMENT

In the Dominican Republic (DR), WSM works together with mainly three organizations: the Confederación Autónoma Sindical Clasi-sista (CASC), Mosctha (Movimiento Sociocultural para los Traba-jadores Haitianos) and Amussol (Asociación Mutua de Servicios Solidarios).

Only one year after the assassination in 1961 of the Dominican general and dictator Rafael Trujillo who governed with a firm hand from 1930 until 1961; the CASC was established as the first Do-minican trade union with Christian inspiration. Priest Manuel González Quevedo and trade unionist José Gómez Cerda who came back to the DR after years of exile, played a major role in the establishment of the CASC. Finding its origin in the organization of small-scale farmers and farmers without land, CASC always had the ambition to become a large movement. Nowadays, it is the

largest trade union movement in the DR, representing more than 200.000 affiliates and 1.485 organisations from a variety of sectors, ranging from the transport, the rural to the health care sector.

Knowing that around 56% of the economically active population in the DR works in the informal sector, CASC has since its establish-ment been confronted with the need to respond to this reality. It is in this light that Mosctha has been founded in 1985 to respond to the needs of Haitian migrant workers who often live for a long period in the DR without identity papers or work permits that give them the possibility to work in the formal circuit. CASC's concern for the Haitian worker population goes back to the year 1965, when a large movement of Haitian workers ended up in the DR in exile during the Duvalier regime. This happened in addition to an already large presence of Haitian workers who often lived in pre-



carious conditions. At that time, CASC already worked together with its counterpart in Haiti: the CTH (Confederación de Trabajadores Haitianos). Both were part of the Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores (CLAT).

From the traditional trade union perspective, this decision to work with the informal sector is in itself revolutionary and presented some practical questions. Who for example do you have to negotiate with about working conditions when there is no formal contract, no collective convention and no official employer? At that moment, no similar experience existed in the Caribbean region.

Over the years, Mosctha has grown considerably. Besides various offices in the DR, they have one office in Haiti and in the US. They also diversified their activities. These include legal support to Haitian migrant workers without official papers and the provision of vital health care services such as health posts, hospitals or ambulances with professional staff. Mosctha in collaboration with Amussol and CASC also offers a “last-care” insurance, referred to as the “plan vive tranquilo” to finance funeral costs. Previously, people could only rely on their local government or contributions from their community to help them finance such costs. The communities where Mosctha works are called bateyes and find their origin around the cane sugar plantations, which originally has been the major economic sector in the DR and counts a large population of illegal Haitian migrant workers.

Amussol is a mutual health insurance organization (the so-called *mutuelle*) that developed (in 2005) out of CASC’s initiative to organise a health insurance for workers of the informal sector. They initiated the “plan viajero” to offer an insurance for the informal workers in the transport sector such as mini-bus owners, drivers, conductors and travellers.

Although the Dominican Republic has an official social security scheme since 2002, backed up by the *Ley de Seguridad Social*; the informal sector does not find access to this scheme. After having been the major protagonists for this law, CASC has continued its struggle for social security by fostering the idea of the “virtual employer”. Whereas in the formal economy, both the employee and employer contribute to the social security scheme; informal workers do not have an employer that pays their contribution. Amussol



takes the role of “virtual employer”, and channels the contributions of its members towards the formal mechanism of social security. As a result, Amussol is now the 6th largest employer in the DR, representing over 37.000 workers of the informal sector and employing 26 persons as fixed staff.

Although, Mosctha and Amussol find their origin in the CASC, both gained autonomy over time, having own statues, different roles and target groups. CASC continues to focus on the more traditional trade union activities such as organizing professional training for trade union leaders, accompanying the establishment of newly formed trade unions and representing the rights of their member federations through the negotiation of collective agreements; Amussol is a mutual health insurance organization that represents the informal workers toward the national social security scheme (including access to the pension scheme and health insurance for the whole family). Mosctha on the other hand defends the right of Haitian migrant workers in the DR, offering a large array of services, ranging from legal support and medical care to the organization of local groups of women or channelling micro-credits for small-scale economic initiatives.

NETWORKING FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTION

The strength of CASC, Mosctha and Amussol is the close synergy between them. Somebody from Amussol mentions this as follows: *"we are autonomous, but in our work, we reflect on our origins and the global vision of the confederation, inspired by a Christian humanism"*. By taking advantage of each other's expertise and capacity, Mosctha, Amussol and CASC are able offer their affiliates a broad, "all-in" package of services. It also allows them to strengthen their campaigns and political action.

Migrant workers

Migrant workers do not only receive legal support of Mosctha to regularize their papers; but are also covered, together with the whole family by the national social security through the work of Amussol. In addition, in cases of labour disputes, CASC has a strong legal office to mediate on conflicts with employers, give professional training ranging from woodcrafts, driving to nursing. CASC also accompanies the establishment of newly formed trade unions.

Informal sector

The large membership of CASC, including various federations of informal workers such as the transport sector (taxi's, mini-buses, etc.), market vendors and domestic workers, helped Amussol to offer a social security scheme to a large group of informal workers. In turn, CASC did gain credibility among a whole new group of workers through the work of Amussol.

Domestic workers

This is also the case for Mosctha. Thanks to ear-to-ear promotion, more people get to know Mosctha, but also Amussol and CASC. The people who receive services in the hospitals and health posts that are organized by Mosctha, often become affiliated to Amussol. The strength of this synergy is well illustrated by the example of a group of 45 female domestic workers who had been organized in their community through Mosctha had found access to social security for themselves and their families through Amussol. The same group with the accompaniment of CASC managed to organize their own trade union of domestic workers in 2012.

Political work and campaigning

The synergy between Mosctha, Amussol and CASC on the one hand, and collaboration with WSM (or broader ACW-MOC movement) on the other hand, resulted in a strong protagonism of the Dominican partners in the local, national, and even international political landscape. The back-up of CASC as the major trade union

in the DR, and Mosctha for instance having its office physically in the same building as CASC, did open doors at the level of governments. For relatively young organizations as Mosctha and Amussol, it worked out well to work under the wings of an organization as CASC.

Mosctha leads the Jacques Viau network that does political work in defence of the Haitian migrant workers. It consists of trade unions and other civil society organizations, including the Catholic church and the ministry of migration. They gather every two months in the preparation of not only political work but also to visualize the issue of migrant rights towards the wider population. Mosctha did also participate in international fora of the United Nations on the rights of migrant workers and is an active member of the Latin American association of insurance cooperatives. At the local level, Mosctha started various conventions for collaboration on health care with local governments. In addition, in 2011, Mosctha worked together with CASC on the Ley General de Migración. This law existed already before, but never has been translated into a regulation.

Since last year, Amussol is part of the national platform to assure access to social security and did win a lot of credibility with the government. This is a first step towards tripartite dialogue, involving the government, the informal sector and the main social security institutions.

At the same time, CASC did consolidate a variety of networks in which it takes part, such as a platform at the level of the Ministry of Labour and the pension fund. Furthermore, the training centre of CASC (Infas) has signed a collaboration with the governmental professional training centre Infotep to offer a variety of trainings. This is an important recognition of the quality of the professional training of CASC and in broader terms of its political weight.

CASC's 'political weight' has also helped to influence the national press towards paying more attention to the issue of Haitian migrant workers and reporting about it from a more positive angle. This has been an effective campaigning strategy of CASC and Mosctha, as they try to change the often negative public opinion about Haitian migrant workers. Repression towards Haitian workers is found to be decreasing thanks to this continuous awareness raising by Mosctha and CASC.

The effectiveness of synergy for political work and campaigning is also illustrated by the following example. In 2011, Amussol, Mosc-



tha and CASC did collaborate to promote the Convention 189 on domestic workers in preparation of the annual labour conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva. This involved a strong awareness-raising campaign towards the Dominican government. The Dominican Republic government did vote in favour during the annual conference. Thereafter, Mosctha, Amussol and CASC tried to push the C189 on the agenda of the Dominican Senate by mobilizing 25.000 women members of CASC, Mosctha and Amussol and other Dominican trade unions.

Responding to the earthquake in Haiti

The strength of synergy is well exemplified by the spontaneous solidarity action that was organized in close collaboration between CASC, Mosctha and Amussol as response to the earthquake in the neighbouring country Haiti. On January 12th 2010, one of the poorest countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region, Haiti was struck by a devastating earthquake of a magni-

tude of 7 on the scale of Richter. More than three and a half million people were affected and more than 200.000 people died.

The partners of WSM in the Dominican Republic in support of their counterparts in Haiti, the Confédération des Travailleurs Haitiens (CTH) and the JOC Haiti (Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne), mobilized hundreds of volunteers, doctors and nurses to travel to Port-au-Prince to help deliver emergency support. They sent mobile hospitals and organized food convoys. Whereas Mosctha sent its ambulances with professional doctors and nurses, CASC mobilized their member federation of transporters to deliver food, tents and medicines. The training centre of CASC developed into an ad hoc storage for donations and Amussol mobilized its member base to provide help. The offices of the CTH were converted into a coordination centre. The complementarity of the different forms of expertise and capacity of the different members of the network guided by the local knowledge of the Haitian network partners,

contributed to the speed and the effectiveness of the emergency support offered.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, BASED ON PERSONAL RELATIONS

Mosctha, Amussol and CASC are all organizations that are strongly embedded in the local environment. They are grassroots organizations, based on close contact with local communities and personal relations.

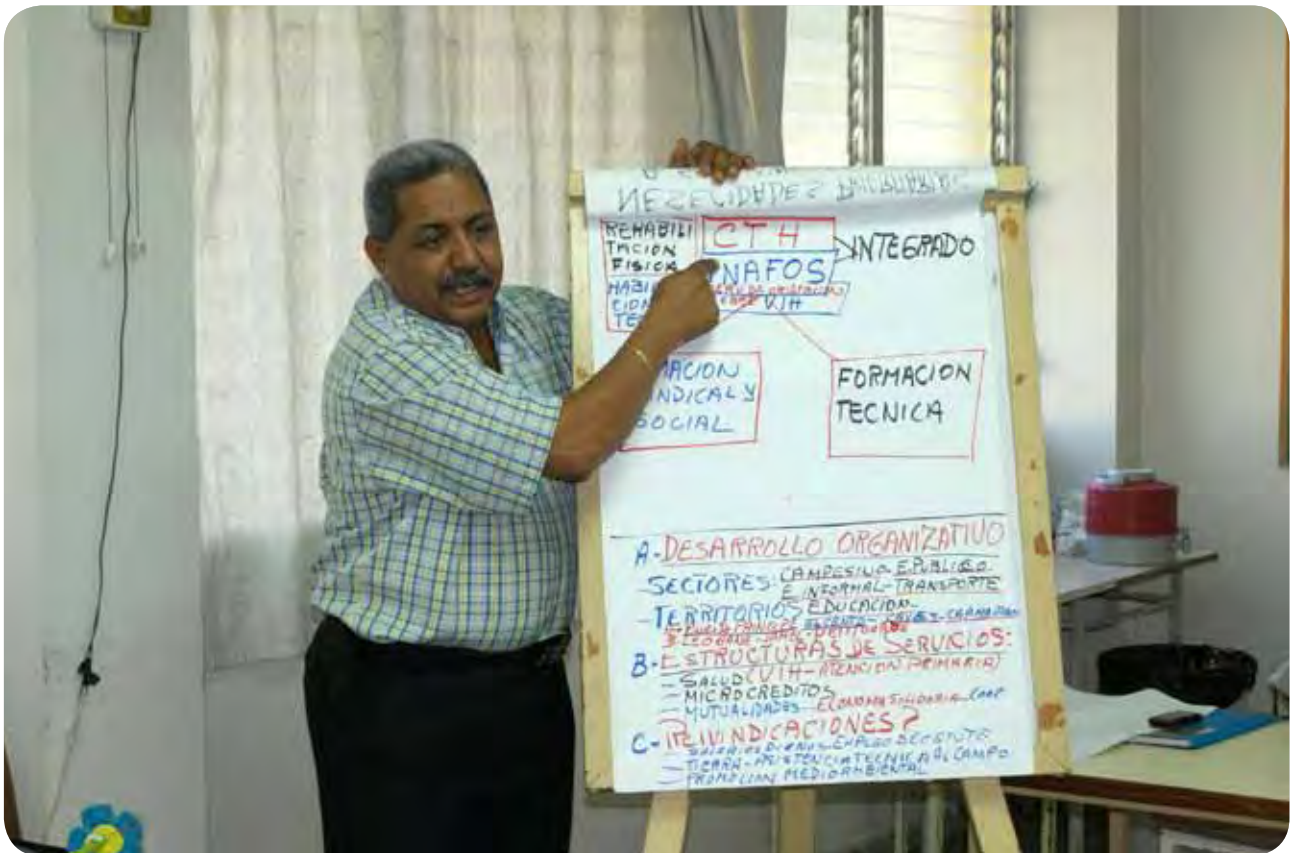
Mosctha works in, and with, the most needed communities in the DR, Haiti and the US. They have their office in the bateyes and their director is not only someone from the neighbourhood itself, but is also respected and trusted by the community. Furthermore, Mosctha decided not only to offer services to its own members, but to the whole community, which has fostered their positive image.

This has also been an advantage to quickly respond to the earthquake in Haiti. Thanks to the strong network of Mosctha at the community level in Haiti and the good relations with local governments, they could easily collaborate with JOC Haiti (*Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne*) and CTH (*Confederación de Trabajadores Haitianos*) to quickly identify the most urgent needs of the affected populations.

In addition, many people from CTH had been trained in the past in the training centre of CASC (Infas). This resulted in personal friendships and a strong feeling of solidarity between the Dominican and Haitian organizations.

The same can be said for CASC, whose secretary general participates in mobilizations and events, but also travelled various times to Haiti to help in the reconstruction. Also, years before, during the dictatorship of the Duvaliers, the same secretary general was arrested and taken to prison as he participated in a workshop in





Haiti. He was again liberated thanks to the intervention of the Haitian Archbishop. These personal experiences and engagements still play today and have been a strength for the movement.

COLLABORATION WITH THE BELGIAN CHRISTIAN LABOUR MOVEMENT

The Belgian Christian labour movement (ACW-MOC), involving a broad array of organizations such as the trade union ACV-CSC, the mutual insurance organization CM, the youth movement (KAJ), the development work organisation (WSM), etc. has been an inspiration for the Dominican CASC. The general secretary of CASC travelled various times to Belgium, getting to know the very broad and institutionalized ACW "as an utopia for the DR". Mosctha, Amussol and CASC have been immersed on different occasions in the concrete functioning of various organizations of the Belgian Christian labour movement (not only WSM, but also ACV-CSC, the regional offices of ACW-MOC, etc.) It has been a strong motivation for the Dominican partners to see that it is possible to establish a broad movement, offering a variety of services in different domains.

This broader collaboration between both the Belgian and Dominican movements, has been taking place in two directions. Also various volunteers from the Belgian WSM movement did visit CASC, Amussol and Mosctha in the DR. These practical exchanges have been moments to create friendships and solidarity which has consolidated relationships between both movements.

Based on a vision of solidarity and embedded in the broader Belgian Christian labour movement, WSM has supported the Dominican Republic workers movement over the last 25 years. Active participation in the activities of the partners, respect for local ownership and a central focus towards promoting synergy have been important ingredients for the success of WSM's collaboration with its partner organisations in the Democratic Republic.

Examples of WSM's support activities include frequent visits of the WSM staff and active participation in the activities of the partners (such as training sessions), the organization of workshops (e.g. on the campaign "Mujer, Vida y Derechos") and development of tools that can help the Dominican partners in programme management or the assessment of their political work.

OPENING UP TOWARDS NEW LOGICS OF ACTION

The synergy among CASC, Mosctha and Amussol did result in an opening up of the own dynamic towards new logics of action or working with new target groups.

Amussol for instance included the emphasis of Mosctha in its own work, resulting in a stronger focus on the rights of Haitian migrant workers (e.g. this has been incorporated in the presentation flyer of Amussol). Mosctha is not a trade union and puts more emphasis on service delivery (on micro-credits, human rights, HIV, poverty, etc.), but did learn from the more political emphasis of CASC (e.g. through the work on the “Ley de migraciones”), which has been one of the triggers to take a lead role in the platform Jacques Viau. CASC on its turn opened up its social base towards migrant workers, but also towards the issue of social security.

KEY DRIVERS FOR SUCCESSFUL SYNERGY

The case of the Dominican workers movement illustrates three important drivers for successful synergy or collaboration between labour movement organisations.

Firstly, the synergy between Mosctha, Amussol and CASC has been characterized by an integrated approach, where the different organisations complement each other and provide a diversity of services that respond to the needs of the workers.

Secondly, the synergy between the Dominican partners has grown locally. It is a process that has been led by the own organizations and not by an external actor.

A third important driver has been the strong interpersonal relations and the close connections of the collaborating organisations with the communities they represent or work with.

As a result, Mosctha, Amussol and CASC now form the core of an action oriented network that is able to take concerted action whenever the need arises. To say it in the words of the director of Amussol: “in familia hacemos más”, or “as a family we achieve more”.



3. BURUNDI: EMPOWERING PEOPLE THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION



Still a large majority of people in Africa do not find access to health care insurance. Social security often only covers workers from the public or the formal private sector. Commercial insurances rarely propose health care insurance products that are accessible and adapted to the needs of people who are not “formally” employed. At the same time, the main elements that limit access to health care are the financial costs that come with sickness and its treatment. These may involve direct costs for medicines and medical care at the hospital, and indirect costs as a result of not being able to work or not being able to take care of the children. Proper health care can therefore easily become an inaccessible luxury for many informal workers and their families.

Mutual health insurance organizations seek to overcome this challenge by offering an alternative access to health care, based on the principle of solidarity, where risks are shared among a large membership and where the individual contribution does not depend on the individual risk. Furthermore, mutual health insurance organizations bring people together in the defence of their rights; allow members to participate in decision-making; and consider the service to the members before profit maximization.

WSM has a longer tradition of supporting mutual health insurance organizations in Burundi (since 1997), and has been one of the main supporters of the platform of health insurance organizations in Burundi: Pamusab (“Plateforme des acteurs des mutuelles de santé au Burundi, 2010). Based on a broadly diffused study that has been commissioned by WSM to compare social protection schemes in Rwanda and Burundi, the partners of WSM, but also of other actors (such as SocSol and Adisco, Louvain Coopération au Développement and UCODE, Memisa etc.) were sensitized on the possible role of mutual health insurance organizations to improve the access of informal workers and rural populations to health care in Burundi. However, apart from a more general law on social protection still dating from 1957 (issued during Belgian colonization), and a law from 1992 dealing with the whole range of non-profit organizations; there was no legal framework to recognize or regulate mutual health insurance organizations. As a result, they hardly could open their own bank account and had to function without proper autonomy under the wings of so-called ‘promoting organisations’.

This has been exactly the aim of Pamusab: getting together mutual health insurance organizations, promoting organizations and interna-

tional donors to speak with one voice in the creation of a proper legal framework and favourable political environment for mutual health insurance organizations in Burundi. It groups the mutual health insurance organizations of the archdiocese of Gitega (MSAG); of coffee farmers ("Programme de promotion des mutuelles de santé des caféiculteurs du Burundi" - Promuscabu); of the archdiocese of Muyinga; and of the province of Ngozi.

The promoting organizations that are part of Pamusab include Adisco ("Appui au développement intégral et la solidarité sur les colinnes"), ODAG ("organisation de développement de l'archidiocèse de Gitega"), the development organization of the archdiocese of Muyinga (ODEDIM) and the "Union pour la coopération et développement" (Ucode).

A third important group within Pamusab constitutes the international donors, such as WSM, CM-Alliance, SocSol, Memisa and Louvain Coopération au Développement. Together, Pamusab represents more than 160.000 members and their joint effort has been a success!

Since 2011, mutual health insurance organizations are recognized in various policy documents as a pillar in enhancing access to health care for informal and rural workers. This is evidenced by the "politique nationale de protection sociale-PNPS" and the "cadre stratégique de croissance et de lutte contre la pauvreté-CSLP.

The Burundian government did also commit itself to promote the development of mutual health insurance organizations at the community level through its "politique nationale de santé" and its "plan national de développement sanitaire".

In addition, since May 2011, a ministerial decision has been agreed upon that sets the criteria for being recognized as mutual health care organizations, resulting in the recognition of 26 "mutuelles" in 2011 ("ordonnance ministerial 570/519).

The past months, Pamusab has been strongly involved in the so-called CAM-Carte d'assistance maladie: a government-led initiative to

improve the access to health care for the poor. Based on a Ministerial Decision of 1984 (and adapted in 1996), every Burundian, aged over 21 years old and active in the "informal sector" (farmers, fishermen, small entrepreneurs, etc.) has the right to enrol in the CAM scheme. For a price of 3.000 Franc burundais, CAM holders and their family find access to a large set of health care services (medical consultations, surgery, dental care, medicines, etc.) for only 20% of the total cost. A positive initiative at first sight, but holding a serious risk to harm existing mutual insurance organizations, as the CAM applies a contribution that is way under the real health care cost and therefore not sustainable. In the past, this resulted in health posts that refuse to treat sick people as reimbursement by the government is not assured, that lack medicines or that are characterized by low quality of health care. Therefore, Pamusab is actively following-up how to integrate the CAM and existing systems of mutual health insurance.

WSM, guided by its believe in the principle of transformative social protection, played an important supportive role in the political work of Pamusab. Action-based training, facilitation of South-South exchange and the provision of international back-up are some of the main support strategies offered by WSM, but also by other organizations like Socialist Solidarity..



PAMUSAB: A RECOGNIZED POLITICAL ACTOR

In a period of only 2 years, Pamusab has become a political actor that is strongly involved in various policy processes on social protection and mutual health insurance organizations. They are consulted and recognized by the Burundian government, the own sector of mutual health organizations and broader civil society, such as the social partners (trade unions and the private sector). An important dimension of the political work is the consultation and construction of a joint agenda among the partners involved in Pamusab. These are very different organizations, encompassing mutual health insurance organisations at the parochial, the commune or the company level; but also more grassroots organizations, very much concerned with the practical, daily implementation of health care insurance; next to technical promoters or even international donors that are not directly part of the existing political landscape. Hence, coming to a joint position on a sensitive issue such as CAM is not an easy task.

Pamusab organized several meetings with various ministries and parliamentarians, such as the Ministry of public health and the struggle against HIV (Ministère de la santé publique et de la lutte contre le Sida), the Ministry of Public affairs, work and social secu-

urity (Ministère de la fonction publique, du travail et de la sécurité sociale), the general directorate of social protection, etc.

As a result, Pamusab has been invited to take part in technical committees that worked on the 'politique nationale de protection sociale -PNPS'; the ministerial decision on the recognition of mutual health insurance organizations, unfortunately a bit less for the implementation of the CAM. This has been a strong recognition for Pamusab.

TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

WSM played an important role in the initiation of Pamusab. Not only by investing in a study to get better insight in the existing landscape of mutual health insurance in Burundi, but also by offering financial assistance at a moment that the success of Pamusab was not evident at all. WSM, however, believes in the idea of so-called transformative social protection. Mutual health insurance organisations enable people to empower themselves, to organize from the bottom-up, defend their rights and assure the access to, and quality of, health care for those that are excluded. Without a proper legal framework, mutual health insurance organisations could only exist in Burundi under the tutelage of promoting organisations. As this legal framework is now a reality, these organizations are in the possibility to take their destiny in their own hands. Besides The continued focus on the practical and local concerns, such as the recruitment of members, the collection of membership fees and getting medicines on time in health posts, these grassroots organizations are now also gradually gaining capacity in getting together, organizing people at the national level and participating with one voice in the political debate on social protection and the role of mutual health insurance organisations.

ACTION-BASED TRAINING

WSM has a strong expertise on political work, not only in Belgium and towards international organizations such as the EU and the ILO, but also in collaboration with its partners towards national governments or regional institutions (e.g. the African Union or Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine) in the South. Through an approach of action-based training, WSM organizes workshops where its partners learn to develop an advocacy strategy (prioritizing a clear position, elaborating a sound argumentation, identifying key political actors, building synergies with other civil society organizations or how to direct public opinion); In ad-





dition WSM engages together with its partners in practical political action: visiting ministers together, sitting at the table with trade unions and employers organizations, participating in mobilizations or TV debates. WSM is not afraid to dirty their hands. During a continental workshop in Cotonou (Benin), the African partners of WSM from 9 different countries, addressed together various ministries, parliamentarians and the broader media to explain and defend their position on universal health care.

SOUTH-SOUTH EXCHANGE

Over the years, WSM developed an approach towards learning where the local context is central and where organisations learn at their own rhythm and from their peers. South-South cooperation is a way to do this. Through the organization of continental seminars, WSM's partner organisations from different African Countries were able to exchange experiences and good practices, but also frustrations and challenges.

Furthermore, this South to South exchange helps to build the partners' credibility in their own country. Organisations as Pamusab are now better informed about what is happening in neighbouring countries such as Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso or Mali. In the case of Mali for instance, the government works through the existing mutual health insurance organisations to cover health care in the informal sector. Or RANS (Réseau d'appui aux mutuelles de santé) in Burkina Faso has been designated a serious budget of the government to provide health care to the very poor.

INTERNATIONAL BACK-UP

One of the main contributions of WSM to Pamusab has been its international back-up. Whereas Pamusab on its own, finds difficulties in accessing government officials, WSM opens doors. The Belgian platform Masmut ("Plateforme belge Micro assurance santé/ Mutuelles de santé"), brings together representatives of NGOs

(WSM, SolSoc, CDI-Bwamanda, BRS, FOS, Memisa, Louvain coopération au développement), mutual health insurance organisations (the socialist, Christian, free and international association of mutual health insurance organisations), research institutions (HIVA, CES, IMT, ULB) and the Belgian development cooperation (DGD and BTC-CTB).

In March 2011, Masmut visited Pamusab in Burundi to accompany its political work. Whereas Pamusab already tried before to schedule three times a meeting with the second vice-president (which has been cancelled three times); they achieved this at the side of Masmut. Furthermore, they visited the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Health, the president of the Health commission of the House of representatives ("l'Assemblée Nationale"), the general secretary of the governing party CNDD ("Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie"), but also the delegation of the European Commission, the Belgian embassy or the Belgian Development cooperation.

Apart from political leaders, WSM (in collaboration with Masmut) facilitated the dialogue with broader actors in society, such as the social partners, the catholic church or Caritas. The latter is a particular important actor in Burundi as it provides 34% of health care. The participation of the Belgian Christian mutual health insurance organisations (such as CM-Alliance), at the side of the Christian partner of WSM in Burundi (ODAG/MSAG), resulted in the Archdiocese in Gitega to openly express his concern on the CAM and the possible consequences for mutual health insurance organisations. Also the social partners agreed to take a joint position with Pamusab on the issue of the CAM. As the Burundian government carries on the establishment of the CAM, Pamusab currently works on the integration of existing schemes of mutual health insurance organisations and CAM.

In brief, WSM is not only supporting its partners from the desk in Brussels. They are in the field, at the side of their partners, actively engaged in advocacy.





4. DOMESTIC WORKERS FROM INDIA TO GENEVA

Around 300 million people worldwide, predominantly girls or women, work as domestic worker. In the majority of countries, this takes place behind closed doors, in the grey zone of illegality or informal economy, often without labour legislation. More than 90% of domestic workers worldwide are women. They make a living as maids, cooks, child minders or perform a combination of these activities. Male domestic workers will more easily end up with a job as driver, gardener or guard. Child labour is very common. The highest percentage of working girls under sixteen can be found in the domestic work sector.

Although, a large number of people worldwide are active as domestic worker, we know very little about them since most domestic work takes place in the secrecy of private houses and often far from home. Only in Latin-America, domestic work is responsible for 60% of labour migration. But also in France, 50% of migrant women are active in domestic work.

In India, one of the biggest defenders of the rights of domestic workers is the National Domestic Workers Movement (NDWM), partner organisation of WSM. After 26 years, the NDWM is a solid organization, spread all over the country, and counts more than 2 million members. Lots of domestic workers belong to the poorest of the poor, situated at the lowest level of India society.

The NDWM starts from the idea that social change does not fall as manna out of the air: "to be respected as human beings and to recognize domestic work as decent work, domestic workers first have to organize themselves". And this is what is taking place, thanks to organizations as the NDWM, but also other partners of WSM in India, such as the Association of Rural Education and Development Service (AREDS), the Confederation of Free Trade Unions in India (CFTUI), the Christian Workers Movement India (CWM-I) and the Youth Christian Workers India (YCW-I).



AREDS is an organization working for the development of rural poor, especially women and children in the Karur District of Tamil Nadu. They are convinced that “education should precede development, and development should be achieved collectively by the community members”. AREDS works at the very grassroots level, focusing on education and organization as key conditions for development. Although they are mainly active in only one state (Tamil Nadu), they have a strong experience with grassroots political work. For example, AREDS assists local communities in their preparations for local elections and the establishment of their own political party. Another example is AREDS’ political work to defend property rights of women (knowing that women traditionally do not have the right to own income generating property). Since three years, WSM works with AREDS on social protection, labour rights and employment creation.

CFTUI, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of India, is active in 13 states in India, representing over 500.000 workers. They mainly represent unorganized workers, such as fishermen, port workers, people who are active in confection, drivers, etc. CFTUI also includes a set of federations of domestic workers mainly in the states of Delhi, Mumbai and Andhra Pradesh, representing around 20.000 domestic workers. This is a unique difference with other more political Indian trade unions that are more active in the formal economy and that do not prioritize domestic work. CFTUI’s collaboration with WSM is oriented towards social protection, labour rights and employment creation. Specifically related to labour rights, CFTUI campaigns for the increase of minimum wages and against the increasing use of short term contracting. Active lobby for all salary payments to be carried out through bank transfers that can be traced and controlled is an important element of this campaign. CFTUI also struggles to protect the rights of traditional fishermen and opposes the evacuation of farmers from their villages without proper rehabilitation in favour of the development of Special Economic Zones.

The Christian Workers Movement India (CWM-I), on its turn, aims to improve living conditions for the unorganized sector and invests a lot in awareness building. They are predominantly active in the Southern states of India, representing around 22.000 workers of which the majority are migrant workers. CWM-I offers



vocational training to their members and tries to link vulnerable people with existing social protection schemes.

The Young Christian Workers India (YCW-I), has a particular focus on young workers but also tries to reach out towards the whole community. YCW-I provides vocational training and career guidance. In addition they lobby local governments for an improved access to scholarship schemes.

JOINING HANDS TO GIVE DOMESTIC WORKERS A FACE AND A VOICE

In October 2009 WSM used the opportunity of a Planning and Evaluation seminar in Chiang Mai to organize a small and first round table with its five partner organisations to explore the opportunities and added value of stronger networking and synergy amongst each other. Afterwards, the partner organisations continued to meet and beginning 2010 they decided to collaborate on the issue of domestic workers. WSM initially facilitated this collaboration but by the end of the year, the partner organisations took full responsibility of their own network and appointed the NDWM to take up a lead facilitating role. Collaboration grew gradually involving a variety of meetings, elaborating press communications, convincing other Indian civil society organisations on the importance of getting domestic work on the national agenda, and conducting political work at state and national level.

By working together the partner organisations were able to take advantage of each others expertise on the issue of domestic workers. Organisations like AREDS and NDWM have been raising awareness about the plight of domestic workers since the early 80s. NDWM for instance started identifying and organizing domestic workers in a social movement and invested in training pro-

grams, campaigning, advocacy and lobbying. With the support and commitment of nuns from various religious congregations, some priests and other social workers under the leadership of Sister Jeanne Devos, NDWM organised domestic workers into a large movement, and managed to give the domestic workers a face and a voice.

Similarly, organisations like AREDS, YCW-I, CFTUI and CWM-I included the voices of domestic workers in meetings with their membership and communities. The CWM-I included testimonies of domestic workers in their newsletters which are distributed among the various dioceses in the different states. Also AREDS highlighted the issue of domestic work when working around women rights at the community level. Through its women collective SWATE (Society of Women in Action for Total Empowerment), an organization with more than 25.000 women members, the public and political opinion could be influenced. The domestic workers issue was also brought to the attention by YCW-I in public meetings and national rallies or through their magazine.

In addition, the same organisations took advantage of the upcoming International Labour Conference of 16 June 2011 where the Convention 189 on "Decent Work for Domestic Workers" was scheduled for a vote, to raise awareness among other Indian trade unions. Many trade unions had not prioritized the domestic workers issue because domestic work was not yet considered as real work. In a meeting in Chennai on March 2010, the partners shared their contacts and relationships with Indian trade unions, and gave each other the task to contact specific trade unions. CFTUI, for example, met personally with the political leaders of the most important Indian trade unions to convince them of the importance of domestic workers. The CWM-I did the same towards the Catholic Research Council or Council of Bishops.

WSM's partner organisations also joined hands and divided tasks to organize collective actions to raise public awareness. For example, as was done for the trade unions, available contacts and relationships with media were shared. This made it possible to diffuse a common message that was elaborated in a letter with the heading of the five organisations and the signatures of the five presidents, through a variety of media channels.

Other examples of such awareness raising actions include a postcard campaign to the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Labour, various poster campaigns, signature campaigns, public meetings,





seminars and workshops highlighting the issues of domestic workers, the need for the ILO Convention and National Legislation. Protest programs in front of district and state headquarters by the domestic workers, press conferences at various states and strikes were also organized. In Kerala for example, on the 7th of January 2011, more than 5000 domestic workers refused to work and instead conducted public meetings in cities, corner meetings in rural areas and signature campaigns at public places. Prior to the strike a press conference was conducted to make the event known to the government and to the larger society. Various trade union representatives and political leaders were invited to speak in support of the domestic workers in public. It was an excellent opportunity for the domestic workers and their leaders to voice their demands for ILO Convention and National Legislation for domestic workers and inclusion of this issue in the Protection of Women Against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill 2010. Thanks to these actions, the media has increasingly been paying attention to the cause of domestic workers.

The various awareness raising activities have also contributed to the domestic workers issue entering the national political agenda in India. There has been a notable shift in the position of the Indian government, from very critical (during ILO Conference in June 2010) towards a more constructive attitude and finally a yes vote during the annual conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the Convention 189 on domestic work in 2011. It became clear that the domestic workers in India had become a political force that has to be taken into consideration.

LEARNING TO WORK TOGETHER

Synergy does not exist in a vacuum or as an end-in-itself, but as a way to work together towards a concrete output: writing letters together towards policy makers, getting the approval in the own organization, getting the logo's for the letter, discussing a joint position on the draft texts of the ILO convention, etc. To coordinate this among organizations that have not the tradition to work to-



gether, has been a challenge. The difference between so-called member based organizations and NGOs is large and sometimes the one finds it difficult to recognize the other. However, through concerted action around the domestic worker's issue, WSM's partner organisations managed to build up trust and learned to work together more effectively. "In the beginning we were known to each other, but now we feel more as a family," one organization expressed during an evaluation meeting last May 2012. Clear tasks and responsibilities were agreed upon during various collective meetings with representatives of the different organisations. At one such meeting it was decided to direct their work towards the media, the trade unions and members of parliaments to get the issue of domestic work on the agenda of the national government. To make sure this would happen, an action plan was devel-

oped with clear tasks on whom to be contacted by which organisation by when.

As India is big and the various organizations are active in different states and work with different target groups, it was agreed that each organization works towards their particular target group in those states where they are active. The CWM-I and YCW-I focus more on Christian workers and youth; the CFTUI has connections with the most important trade unions in different sectors in most parts of the country. AREDS works with women in the Tamil Nadu state and the NDWM is present in 23 states all over India, working directly with domestic workers. Taking advantage of each others target groups and geographic distribution has contributed significantly towards upscaling the reach of the domestic work campaign.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF EACH OTHER'S STRENGTHS

Initially, thanks to its large experience around domestic work, the National Domestic Workers Movement (NDWM) was able to take the lead in this concerted action around domestic work.

At present, CFTUI and CWM-I, play a more active role too in the ratification and implementation of the Convention 189. With the international legal framework for domestic work in place, CFTUI is giving training on trade union rights, and was resource organisation in a training that NDWM gave on unionization of domestic workers. YCW-I has been the least experienced organization on domestic work. In this collaboration, an organization as YCW-I has been learning more from the other organizations than contributing with particular expertise but could help to strengthen the public awareness initiatives.

Currently the same members that spearheaded the domestic work issue have again joined hands to work around social protection. But this time more organisations have practical experience in this field and club their efforts in order to link more vulnerable people and groups to the existing social protection measures in the country or in the states.

SNOWBALL-EFFECT

All the organizations involved in the network around the domestic work issue are strongly community-based and active in different states, focusing on different target groups. To get domestic work on the national agenda, they decided to work from the bottom upwards. This involved organizing people at the community-level, carrying out political work at the local and state level and as such, by means of a domino-effect, 'contaminate' other states. The states that by May 2012 had already adopted a labour legislation on domestic work such as Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Karnataka, provide a strong example for other states to follow.

The synergy between WSM's partner organisations strengthens this domino effect. AREDS for instance is mainly active in one state (Tamil Nadu), the CFTUI encompasses some local unions of domestic workers such as in Andhra Pradesh or Mumbai and is active in 10 states all over India. The CWM-I works predominantly in South-India, and YCW-I in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra whereas the NDWM is active in 23 states all over India.

PROMOTING SYNERGY AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

WSM has mobilized its partners worldwide and utilized its experience in political work at the level of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to promote the rights of domestic workers. In December 2009, WSM organized at Asia level a continental workshop around domestic work in Trivandrum, Kerala. The ACV Federation Food and Services and Migrants Forum Asia (MFA) were resource organisations, both well acquainted with the decision making process at ILO level. The Asia workshop gave orientation to a WSM position statement, and after consultation with the other continents, WSM drafted its political agenda in line with the Trivandrum statements. WSM also involved its partner in Peru (YCW-Peru), in Niger (Confédération Nigérienne des Travailleurs-CNT and Mouvement des Travailleurs de Niger-MTC) in their work towards the International Labour Conference.



In addition, WSM's sister organization, the Christian Trade Union ACV-CSC included the NDWM in its delegation at the International Labour Conference. Jeanne Devos travelled twice with WSM/ACV-CSC to Geneva to defend the Convention on domestic workers. First in 2010, when the Conference had to decide whether domestic work would be dealt with through a Convention or through a Recommendation. The difference is that a Convention is binding for those governments that ratify it and recommendations aren't. As a result of the strong lobby work, the Conference voted for a Convention, which has been a first success for the Indian domestic workers and WSM.

Also in 2011, Jeanne Devos travelled to Geneva, now to discuss on the contents of the Convention. Interestingly enough, whereas in 2010, the Indian government took a strong position in favour of a recommendation and against a Convention; in 2011, the position of the Indian government changed towards a constructive attitude and finally a 'yes' vote during the Conference.

CONVENTION 189 A MILESTONE FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

There is still a long way to go in the defence of domestic workers' rights. But the establishment of a worldwide convention of

the ILO on domestic work and the symbolic role that India has played herein is an important milestone. The fact that the synergy between WSM's Indian partners has contributed to this success story is another important milestone for civil society in India and for the relationship between WSM and its Indian partners. "Without the help of the other WSM partner organisations, we could not reach this result," declared a NDWM participant in an evaluation meeting on synergy in May 2012. This provides a practical example of how working in synergy, can lead to results that would have been difficult to achieve as individual organisations.

Furthermore, the synergy is still alive. AREDS, CFTUI, NDWM, CWM-I and YCW-I closely follow-up the ratification and implementation of the convention. The convention has already been made more accessible through its translation in various local languages. In addition, as a first practical results of the convention 189, the Government of India decided to include the domestic workers in the Health Insurance Scheme called Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY). Also the state governments of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar announced more favourable legislation for domestic workers including improved pay and working hours. Other states in India are also on their wheels to move forward on this issue.





**4. THE POWER OF COLLABORATIVE ACTION
RESEARCH IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS
AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS IN TOGO**

The partner of WSM in Togo is SADD-Solidarité et Action pour le Développement Durable. It is a small NGO, but its force resides in the principle of synergy: getting different actors around the same table. It supports and promotes economic, social and cultural rights (DESC-droits économiques, sociaux et culturels) by serving as a platform between a variety of social actors in Togo, ranging from social movements, Trade Unions (TUs), youngsters, human right organizations, to governments and employers' organizations.

SADD is a citizens' movement that has been created in 2001 by ex-leaders of the Youth Christian Movement (YCM). It is inspired by Christianity, fostering the liberation of men and women. By investing in education and training of vulnerable groups, SADD seeks to empower people to become the actors of their own liberation.

SADD invests in action research to get a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of what they are working on, i.e. work conditions in free export processing zones (EPZs), labour rights in private edu-

cation institutions or the juridical dimension of labour in Togo. Based on this research approach, SADD plays a facilitating role in fostering exchange and debate.

The collaboration between Worldsolidarity and SADD in Togo has been directed towards mainly three dimensions: improvement of work conditions in free export processing zones; awareness-raising on teachers' labour rights in the private education system; and the organization of a social solidarity forum of workers in Togo. In each of these, synergy has been the key emphasis of SADD.

Free export processing zones or the so-called "zone franchises" are juridical isles in a country, where predominantly foreign companies enjoy favourable investment conditions, including limited taxes and flexible labour legislation. Whereas the situation of workers in Togo is already very precarious, in these zones, this is even worse and characterized by a lack of labour contracts, low wages, working weeks of 60 hours, unpaid holiday, dismissal without rights, no access to social security, absence of TU rights, etc.





SADD conducted a study, in collaboration with TUs that are active in these export processing zones and used these findings to campaign on the precarious working conditions in these zones. The campaign aimed at raising awareness among the own workers and their DESC; but also towards employers' organizations, governments and the wider public. This has taken the form of radio or television shows where people testify about working conditions in the "zone franche" and the ministry of labour has been invited to comment on the issue.

A second collaboration between WSM and SADD takes place in the domain of private education. In Togo, a distinction is made between public and private education. Traditionally, trade unions have been more active in the public education system; and are relatively absent in private education, encompassing both religious and secular schools. Private religious schools in Togo are found all over the country and include Islamic, Catholic as well as Protestant schools. Private secular schools on the other hand are concentrated in the big agglomerations, such as the capital Lomé (where around 80% of private secular schools are situated). Furthermore, in rural areas, both public and private religious schools are highly absent, because of which there is a large presence of so-called private local initiative schools ("écoles d'initiatives locale"). In 2008, SADD started a campaign to raise awareness on precarious working conditions for teachers in private education.

A third domain in which WSM collaborates with SADD is the organization of a social solidarity forum for Togolese workers. In 2012, it will be the fourth time that SADD organizes this forum. An interesting element is the broad approach, where all sectors of society, ranging from trade unions, employer organizations, the ministry of labour, churches, youth movements, NGOs to human right organizations, participate in a broad debate on the defence and promotion of DESC in Togo. The forum therefore helps to build bridges among a variety of social organisations through reflection in an open debate. Since 2004, SADD takes the lead in this process: elaborating a programme, inviting organizations, developing communications towards the press, etc.

By working in synergy with other actors, SADD has been successful in achieving concrete results. In the export processing zones, trade unions have been established and the existing labour law has been revised. In the field of private education, minimum salaries for teachers increased, trade unions have been established and the first steps in the negotiation of a collective agreement have been taken. And also the social forum gained credibility over the years, resulting in 2010 in the presence of the Minister of Labour during the three days of the forum.

WSM has been an important international ally, opening up doors at the policy level, but also being involved in political work to highlight the seriousness of the issues that SADD is working on.



SYNERGY IN THE FORM OF COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH

SADD applies an expert approach, investing in action research to get a state-of-the-art knowledge on the various issues at stake. They conducted action research on work conditions in export processing zones in Togo (e.g. on the types of contracts; salaries, working hours, paid holiday, social security, trade union rights, etc.); on private education (such as payment of salaries, the pedagogic framework, quality of education, social protection, work relations, etc.); or on labour legislation in Togo (e.g. the “code de travail”, collective agreements, decrees, etc.). SADD undertakes this research in close collaboration with its main partners. In the case of the work on labour conditions in export processing zones, the Confédération nationale des travailleurs du Togo (CNTT), the Confédération syndicale des travailleurs du Togo (CSTT), the Union nationale des syndicats indépendants du Togo (UNSIT) and the Union général des syndicats libres (UGSL) have been strongly involved in the study. Such collaboration was instrumental for finding access to important legislations, identifying cases and people to interview and for the analysis and formulation of policy recommendations, etc.).

USING RESEARCH TO DEVELOP AWARENESS ABOUT LABOUR CONDITIONS

Research results serve as input for broad reflection and debate, to begin with at the level of the workers themselves. People working in the “zone franche” for example, often lack education and knowledge on their own rights. To address this challenge, SADD and its partners have organized conversation groups (e.g. among teachers in confessional education), diffused research results developed instruments on how to set up a trade union and translated labour legislation (the “code du travail”) into local languages, etc.

The diffusion of research results is also taking place through the media, both radio and television, as written press. SADD is recognized for giving input to the debate. They deliver new insights to workers to stand for their rights (e.g. through training on their rights in export processing zones), and provide convincing information to hold governments accountable on labour conditions in Togo. One of the main dimensions of the social forum is to follow-up policies and hold governments accountable on their promises (such as the 2006 “Accord politique et globale”).

In addition, as radio is very popular in Togo, SADD organizes documentaries and radio debates, where government officials from the Ministry of Labour or Social Protection are invited to comment on findings of their research. Also testimonies of workers that suffer precarious working conditions are important inputs for public reflection on labour conditions.

In the field of education, SADD organized workshops to discuss the impact of labour conditions on the quality of education with the heads of the Catholic and Protestant schools, and the foundation of private schools ("fédération des fondateurs des écoles privées").

USING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH TO INFORM ACTION

In one instance, after a strike for better working conditions at the factory Sprukfield in the Togolese "zone franche", 120 people had been dismissed without any notification. Further research by SADD and its partners into working conditions at the factory unearthed serious violations of labour rights. It was shown that even after four years of employment, workers still didn't have written contracts. At the same time, workers had to work between 57 and 63 hours a week (corresponding with 17 to 23 hours of supplementary unpaid work a week); were not entitled to paid holiday or maternity leave. Also, salaries were paid in cash without receipts, elections of trade union representatives were not allowed, safety measures were insufficient and 98% of employees were not covered by the national social security scheme (Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale-CNSS). The investigation into working conditions at Sprukfield has been the basis for further political actions, such as starting negotiations with the direction, a demand to conduct labour inspection, the establishment of a reconciliation committee and the eventual reintegration of the 120 illegally dismissed workers!

Studies carried out by SADD have also been picked up by human right organizations who managed to use their international networks to make them also available in neighbouring countries. As the Togolese government is very concerned about its international image around human rights, the synergy with human rights organizations is found to be effective.

Because of the Catholic background of SADD (being founded by ex-members of the YCWs), the Catholic church in Togo has been an important ally. They have been actively participating in radio debates that were organized by SADD and picked up their writ-

ings. As the Catholic church is an important political force in Togo, their opinion counts.

OPENING-UP TOWARDS THE OTHER

SADD does not only represent the agenda of trade unions but also invites human right organizations, employer organizations or government officials to the debate about labour conditions. Whereas trade unions in Togo may have a more contentious nature, using their political power to put pressure on governments or play a role of opposition, SADD builds bridges towards "the other". An important result of this approach is the elaboration of a joint charter and communication of the social forum among the various civil society organisations' involved (trade unions, churches, environmental NGOs, human right coalitions, youth organizations, etc.). This multi actor approach is rather innovative in a country that historically has been marked by conflict. For more than 40 years, the family Gnassingbe ruled the country. In 2005, president Faure Gnassingbe took over when his father Eyadema Gnassingbe, who had been in power since 1967, died. This resulted in large election fraud, more than 400 deaths and thousands that fled to neighbouring countries Benin and Ghana.

Because of this contentious setting, also for SADD, it has been difficult in the beginning, being intimidated and even receiving threats. Over the years, however, their open approach, towards engaging into a debate with a variety of societal actors, has been fruitful. Nowadays, employers and government officials do assist SADD's conferences, debates or radio emissions. To say it in the words of the director of SADD: *"the government understands that we do not denounce to denounce; but to propose:= to advance"*.

EXCHANGE AMONG EQUALS

SADD is characterized by an "exchange among equals" approach. For example, SADD organizes peer to peer exchanges between workers from within and from outside the free export processing zones. This allowed workers from within these zones to learn about labour rights that exist outside these zones such as a "loi de travail" that defines minimum salaries, paid holiday, maternity leave or access to social protection. Similarly SADD organizes debates and exchanges among workers where they question why one worker has the right to establish or take part in a TU, and others don't? The same exchange among equals is organized in the field of education. Teachers of the public education system share their experiences and rights with those in private education.

The proximity of experiences and concrete alternatives motivates workers in these discriminated sectors to engage in the defence of their rights.

THE BACK-UP OF AN INTERNATIONAL ALLY

WSM has played an important role in accompanying SADD in its work on the defence of DESC in Togo. Although, the trust in SADD increased over the years; this has been more complicated in the beginning. In 2006-2007, members of SADD have been intimidated and received threats. WSM visited the ministry of labour to highlight the seriousness of these threats which resulted in an increased attention of the government towards these harassments and a decrease in the number of threats over time. Also in the organization of the social forum, the back-up of WSM facilitated the contacts with policy makers. The solidarity of an international ally opens doors at the level of policy makers and enhances the credibility of the partner.

WSM did also accompany SADD through trainings on political work, how to dialogue with governments, prepare political statements and build alliances with other civil society organizations.

IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS

Working through synergy has helped SADD to contribute to improved working conditions and trade union rights.

In the sector of private education: the minimum salary increased (in Catholic schools with 60%); contracts were modified from 10 to 12 months; schools started bi-partite negotiations; trade union delegates have been consulted by the school direction to collaborate on campaigning regarding labour rights; and a collective convention on private education is announced by the Togolese government to be discussed in parliament in 2012. Furthermore, a collective of 10 trade unions, SYNESPLAC-Togo, has been formed to pursue this convention.

In the "zone franche", three trade unions have been established (USYNTRAZOF, SYNATRAZOF et SYLITRAZOF) representing around 1700 workers. This is a milestone for the labour movement in Togo as this representation in the "zone franche" permits them to include the defence of their rights in their political work at the national level. These trade unions are recognized by the administration society (SAZOF) and the employers organization (ASOZOF) of the "zone franche" and already intervenes in the mediation of conflicts such as abusive dismissals. They also accompanied SADD in lobbying towards a modified labour legislation (towards a "code de travail"), which has been achieved in 2011!

The social forum on its turn resulted not only in an increased cohesion among various civil society actors, but also in the establishment of a committee that follows-up the implementation of political engagements of the national government.





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