Examples of progressive development through social dialogue and cooperation

Union to Union gladly participates in highlighting the significant potential that social dialogue has to promote respect for trade union rights and other human rights and to promote cooperation, democracy, gender equality, and support for poverty reduction. Union to Union work in partnership with trade unions worldwide and supports on-site through around 100 trade-union development projects in close to 100 countries, of which several are working for a progressive development through social dialogue and cooperation. Union to Union wishes to contribute with the following examples of how the trade union movement have promoted a progressive development through social dialogue;

Program partnership with the Building and Woodworkers’ International (BWI)

Involved partners

The global union Building and Wood Workers International (BWI), and the Qatar’s Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, which is responsible for delivering the infrastructure for the Qatar 2022 World Cup. Even though Qatar is not on the DAC List of ODA Recipients, many workers at the sites come from countries that are, and BWI’s Swedish affiliates (Union for the Forestry, Wood and Graphical Industries, Swedish Building Workers’ Trade Union, Swedish Electricians’ Union, Swedish Painters’ Union, The Union for Service and Communications Employees) and Union to Union’s long lasting support to BWI in the overall program partnership has thus indirectly supported the following project/result.

Background and challenges

The number of workers engaged on Qatar 2022 World Cup projects is about to reach its peak of 36,000 workers during 2017. A total of eight stadiums are planned for the tournament, and there can be 10,000 workers on site at the same time. Conditions endured by migrant workers building the stadiums for the tournament have been heavily criticised by FIFPro (International Federation of Professional Footballers) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). A discussions between BWI and the Qatar’s Supreme Committee, with the aim to improve the situation, began in March 2014.

Results due to social dialogue

In November 2016 The Building and Wood Workers International (BWI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Qatar’s Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy. The MoU has launched joint labour and accommodation inspections on World Cup projects. The joint inspections will initially focus on projects that are being built by
multinational companies that are headquartered in countries where BWI currently is represented. This means that it will be able to conduct inspections on all workers in any project that involves a company in which BWI has representation, not just workers directly hired by companies in countries where BWI has representation. A joint working group has been formed to manage the inspections and reporting obligations under the MoU. This is an important step to build on the mechanisms currently in place which ensure workers’ safety on projects directly related to the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The MoU also includes health and safety training for the Supreme Committee and its contractors working on World Cup projects and a review and assessment of the Committee’s current Workers’ Welfare Forums, a mechanism developed to deal with worker complaints.

The Qatar’s Supreme Committee Secretary General H.E. Hassan Al Thawadi has brought forward that he considers the first joint inspections with BWI to be a significant milestone for the Committee and the organization’s workers’ welfare journey, and that the agreement with BWI highlights the commitment to ensure the highest levels of workers’ welfare standards and compliance across their sites. The Supreme Committee Secretary General has also said that they are committed to work together with well-respected international partners, who share its vision of achieving sustainable change in this area, and that the feedback from BWI has been constructive and demonstrates the value of entering into this agreement. This is therefore a concrete example of how social dialogue can work as a tool for creating common understanding among key stakeholders on how challenges could be tackled.

For further information:

- The website of Building and Wood Worker’s International (BWI):
  http://connect.bwint.org/default.asp?index=7476&Language=EN
  http://connect.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=7583&Language=EN
- The website of Union to Union (in Swedish):
  http://www.uniontounion.org/historiskt-avtal-ska-radda-byggarbetares-liv-i-qatar

Project partnership with the International Federation of Actors (FIA) and the Moroccan Union of Theatre Professionals (SMPAD) through the project *Empowering performers’ unions*

**Involved partners**

The International Federation of Actors (FIA), UNI MEI’s and FIA’s Swedish affiliate the Swedish Union for Performing Arts and Film, FIA’s French affiliate the Performer Union in France, the Moroccan Union of Theatre Professionals (SMPAD), the Government of Morocco and the political opposition.
Background and challenges

Artists and performers in Morocco are in many cases, due to their professional status, subject to precariousness, with no or limited access to social benefits as well as the possibility of collective bargaining. The following example is an important breakthrough for the sector, which has benefited hugely from a several year long struggle of the unions that evolved into a close collaboration and dialogue between the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Communications and Employment and the representative organizations of the various artistic disciplines, such as our partner, the Moroccan Union of Theatre Professionals.

Results due to social dialogue

In 2016 the Chamber of Deputies in Morocco unanimously adopted a draft law that will significantly improve the professional status of artists, and especially performers, in Morocco. This initiative firmly ties the different artistic disciplines onto the labour code and sets the basis for collective bargaining in the audiovisual sector. It also acknowledges and pledges to respect artistic freedom as well as freedom to organize. It further sets up a process, in consultation with the profession, to identify representative organizations suitable to become social partners and to promote professionally made work, and sets the obligation to use a written contract. This law, which will need to be further complemented by several governmental decrees, is a major step towards the promotion of professional work and minimum terms and conditions for performers in Morocco. It is a decisive step towards collective bargaining, which will ease performers out of their precariousness and give them access to important social benefits. One of the very promising achievements of the draft law is the acknowledgement that artists, and professional performers in particular, deserve a special social security system built around the intermittent and often atypical nature of their employment. The draft has strong political support and there was a historical consensus among all political parties represented in the Chamber of Deputies on this essential issue.

For further information:

- The website of the International Federation of Musicians (FIM): https://www.fim-musicians.org/maroc-status-of-the-artist
- The website of Union to Union, from the Swedish union’s magazine Scen & Film (in Swedish): http://www.unionontunion.org/marockanska-artister-starks-i-ny-lag
Project partnership with the global union Public Services International (PSI) through the project Trade Unions Building Peace and Equality and Promoting Quality public Services

Involved partners

Public Services International (PSI), The Union of Civil Servants (PSI’s Swedish affiliate within this project), PSI’s affiliate in Chad the FSPT (Fédération des Syndicats du Secteur Public du Tchad), the national centre CIST (Confédération Indépendante des Syndicats du Tchad), the teachers’ organisation SYNECS (Syndicat National des Enseignants et Chercheurs du Supérieur) and the Government of Chad. Union to Union supported PSI in Chad during this period through a regional project partnership which also involved PSI’s regional office for Africa and Arab countries.

Background and challenges

In the last two years there has until recently been a period of intense conflict between the government and the trade unions in the public sector where the government is both the employer and lawmaker. During the whole year of 2015, public sector workers, especially from the health sector, witnessed unpaid salaries, cuts in allowances and subventions. In November 2015, the government also passed a law to halt employment in the public sector. Despite calls from the unions for negotiations, the government refused and insisted on implementing these negative changes. As a result, unions undertook strikes that paralyzed the country, and the law was dropped. Repression against union leaders was harsh, with multiple leaders imprisoned.

Presidential elections were held in April 2016, and in the post-election period protests erupted against the candidature of the sitting president, led by various groups, including opposition parties, trade unions, and civil society. This led to the arrest of four leaders, including the president of the PSI-affiliated FSPT, who were released after several days of imprisonment.

After his re-election, the president put in place several austerity measures to take the country out of the financial crisis (brought about due the collapse of the oil price), the main one being abolition of workers’ allowances. The unions were not slow to react and created a broad platform for action. Starting in September 2016, all key sectors of the state were paralyzed by a general strike, provoked by the continued non-payment of salaries and the abolition of allowances. The government showed no willingness to compromise or negotiate and passed a law in December 2016 restricting the right to strike. PSI supported its affiliate, whose members are also affiliated to the UST-national centre, calling on the government to engage in genuine negotiations and for the timely payment of salaries and improvement in working conditions.
At the beginning of 2017, the broad trade union platform composed by UST and its affiliates, the CIST and SYNEC led the struggle on behalf of all the workers with a common list of demands, which included the withdrawal of restrictions on the right to strike, payment of pensions, and a withdraw of the law which reduced workers’ allowances.

Results due to social dialogue

In February 2017, PSI conducted a solidarity mission in Chad and was able to engage all the key actors, including senior representatives of the government on the importance of putting in place a social dialogue to bring stability in the country. In April 2017, the government signed an agreement which announced it would remove the restrictions on the right to strike, make wage payments, and thus allow negotiations with workers to continue in an atmosphere of tranquility. The two parties undertook to continue negotiations, giving priority to dialogue on the basis of mutual trust in order to examine unresolved questions. Considering the context of the situation of the country and previous relations between the government and the unions, this agreement points towards the opening of new opportunities to work together in a way of deeper understanding within the public sector in Chad. Social dialogue has here proven to contribute to conflict resolution in a broader sense. As one of the poorest countries in the world, affected for years by problems of civil instability, proportionally host to one of the largest internally displaced and refugee populations’ world-wide, social dialogue within the state is exceptionally important for the possibility of the country’s overall development.

For further information:

- The website of PSI:

Project partnership with the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF), through the project *IUF Asia Food & Beverage Workers Project*

Involved partners

The global union International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF), IUF’s Swedish affiliate the Swedish Food Workers’ Union, the IUF-affiliated Union of Nestlé Indonesia Panjang Workers (SBNIP), a partner that *Union to Union* has supported for many years, and the company Nestlé Panjang Indonesia.
Background and challenges
Since 2007, the local union at the Nestlé’s Nescafé factory in Panjang, Indonesia has been struggling to negotiate wages through collective bargaining. It is a basic elements of any labour negotiation, but Nestlé management refused, claiming it was not company policy to negotiate wages and that wage scales are confidential. In 2011 53 workers at this factory were fired because they organized and attempted to assert their rights. The 53 were members of the IUF-affiliate SBNIP at the factory and when the bargaining deadlock forced workers to strike, management subsequently promptly fired the 53 key union activists.

Results due to social dialogue
After a long and difficult struggle, fought together with the entire IUF, along with a constant pursuit for a constructive and fair dialogue, the Nestlé Panjang Workers Union successfully negotiated a new collective bargain agreement with the management. The collective agreement, including wages, was signed at Panjang in June 2012, after the reinstatement of the 53 dismissed members and union officers. Then in April 2013, a new collective agreement was concluded. For the first time, union members now had a fully-negotiated wage scale and wage structure with an improved progression rate and seniority adjustments, bringing an effective end to merit-based increments. This was the first collective agreement of its kind in the private sector in Indonesia. In April 2016, the union also participated in a ‘kick-off’ event at the head office Nestlé Indonesia, launching the united committee that negotiated a national, ‘master’ collective bargaining agreement. Obviously, the collective negotiations taken place has also positive benefits for the company in terms of worker commitment, stability and productivity, and improves the labour relations climate by providing an institutionalized and agreed way of managing possible conflicts. Based on this progress, collective bargaining has now been extended to other critical areas vital for positive social development such as gender equality. The aim is to ensure both increased hiring of women in Nestlé factories in Indonesia and equal opportunities for women to access training and promotion. This will ensure more women in the leadership of the local union and at national level, and the involvement of women in collective bargaining.

For further information:
- The website of the global union IUL: http://www.iuf.org/w/?q=node/2425