

Social dialogue for decent work

The ACV-CSCi development cooperation programme

1. IN BRIEF

What ?

ACV-CSC promotes implementation of the Decent Work agenda at worldwide level through structural cooperation with a good number of trade union partners in the South. A limited number of those partners are part of the ACV-CSCi development cooperation programme allowing to them to strengthen their capacities in the areas of workers' rights and social dialogue.

Who ?

ACV-CSCi was established as the Institute for International Workers Education, by ACV-CSC in 1991. ACV-CSCi is responsible for accompanying and supporting partners in planning, monitoring and evaluation of successive development cooperation programmes. These programmes are partly financed by Belgian development cooperation authorities and partly by ACV-CSC

How ?

Trade union partners involved in the ACV-CSCi development cooperation programme are themselves responsible for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating capacity strengthening activities in their respective organisations and countries. These activities enhance capacities for negotiation, as well as organizational and institutional capacities, and help partners to more successfully promote decent work at local, enterprise, sector, national, regional and international levels.

Why ?

Interests of workers in the North are inextricably linked to those of workers in the South. Further development of the international movement, and close collaboration between trade unions in the North and in the South, are helpful in the fight for a fairer globalization. Belgian development cooperation authorities recognize and support the valuable contribution thus made to eradication of poverty and development in the South.

What is the Decent Work agenda ?

The concept of "Decent Work" has been formulated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and is used by trade unions to voice their aspirations for social justice and a fairer redistribution of wealth.

'Decent Work' entails the following :

- productive work which has been freely chosen
- with an income that is meeting household needs
- with a replacement income in case of unemployment, sickness, accidents, old age, pregnancy, disability
- respecting the rights of workers to organise themselves in movements and trade unions, and to participate in collective labour negotiations
- providing equal treatment regardless of sex, age, origin, political adherence or religious belief
- guaranteeing hygiene and safety at the work place.

Many countries in the South have put in place a 'Decent Work plan', with specific objectives, indicators and timelines for progress in the areas of employment, workers' rights, social dialogue and social protection. These national Decent Work plans have been developed and are being implemented by local authorities, employers and trade unions, with the support of the ILO.

2. THE 2017-2021 PROGRAMME IN A NUTSHELL

What's new ?

As of 2017, the ACV-CSCi development cooperation programme is part of a wider programme led by World Solidarity. World Solidarity (WSM) is the NGO of the Christian Workers' Movement, focuses on Social Protection, runs a much wider development cooperation programme in the South, and partners with trade unions, mutual health insurances, women's organisations and organisations of youth in about 21 countries. The ACV-CSCi programme complements the WSM programme by focusing on social protection, as well as by extending the number of countries covered.

The partners ?

The principal trade union partners of the ACV-CSCi development cooperation programme 2017-2021 are KSBSI (Indonesia), CLC (Cambodia), CNT (Niger), CSC (RD Congo), CTH, CSH, CTSP (Haïti) and CASC (Dominican Republic). In these countries, collaboration is often extended to include other trade unions.

What is the overall aim ?

Improvement of living and working conditions of workers with precarious employment statuses (including women, youth, domestic workers, farm workers, workers subcontracted by transnational companies, migrant workers,...) (and their families) of both the informal and formal economy.

What is expected of partners ?

Partners promote social dialogue and workers' rights in line with specific needs in their respective countries, and do this at local, enterprise, sector, national, regional and/or international levels

How does the programme help to them to do so ?

With

- (1) a South component : funding and support for capacity strengthening activities
- (2) a South-South component : organization of opportunities for learning and exchange at international/southern level
- (3) a North component : involvement in political actions in Belgium supporting efforts of partners in the South

What do capacity strengthening activities entail ?

Research and publications
Internal as well as external awareness raising
Training and follow-up of members, activists, leaders, and staff members on various topics
Learning exchanges with other relevant trade unions

Development and implementation of new systems and strategies for social dialogue as well as for organizational and institutional development

What are the main points of attention concerning social dialogue ?

The study of socio-political and socio-economic realities
Workers' rights
Formulation of policy proposals
Representation skills
Consultation and negotiation skills
Violation of rights
Conflict management
Dispute resolution

What does organizational development entail ?

Improvement of representativeness, internal cohesion and financial autonomy - in order to strengthen social dialogue

What are the main points of attention concerning organizational development ?

Recruitment and organization of members
Membership administration
Internal communication
Mobilisation and management of human, material and financial resources

What does institutional development entail ?

External communication through media
Development and organization of campaigns
Forming alliances among trade unions and with other civil society actors (like NGOs)

What is the importance of institutional development ?

Improved publicity, visibility, recognition and support enhances the position and effectiveness of partners in defence of workers' rights and social dialogue

What type of learning opportunities does the South-South component offer ?

- (1) Bilateral exchanges between 2 partners from different countries for exchange on their good practices
- (2) International workshops for exchange on good practices between all partners
- (3) Invitation of Southern experts by individual partners
- (4) Regional/continental training seminars on international instruments and the ILO
- (5) International seminars for training and adoption of joint positions for relevant ILO decision-making processes
- (6) Participation in political actions of national and regional networks on social protection of partners of WSM

And who organizes these South-South activities ?

Bilateral exchanges as well as working with Southern experts is organised by partners themselves. Continental and international workshops are organised by ACV-CSCi in collaboration with strategic partner organisations ITUC-Africa, ITUC-Latin America (CSA), South-African trade union FEDUSA, and Brazilian trade union UGT. In Asia, continental/regional workshops are organised by trade union partner KSBSI of Indonesia.

3. MORE INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES (2017-2021)

IN AFRICA :

Trade union partners CSC of the Democratic Republic of Congo and CNT of Niger, support the **implementation of ILO Recommendations 202 and 204** - on Social Protection and on Transition from informal to formal economy. They aim at the establishment of conducive national frameworks for all workers with precarious employment statuses in both the informal and formal economy. By the end of 2021, 172 450 such members in Congo and Niger (30% women) should have gained access to workers' rights (formal employment, social protection and social dialogue) while their income security has improved.

Establishment of conducive national frameworks involves promotion of legislative and administrative reforms in favour of wider access to national social security funds for old age, occupational diseases and health care ; reduction of the number and volume of taxes imposed on informal economy workers ; and upward adjustments of inter-professional minimum wages. It also involves the establishment of national consultation platforms, in which trade unions take part ; revision of social security codes ; as well as adoption and implementation of national policies on youth employment, minimal social protection floors, and national employment (emphasizing the importance of green jobs for workers in the informal economy).

National strategies include **socio-economic research** on rights, on application of recommendations 202 and 204, and on gender equality ; publication of **newsletters**, running of **awareness campaigns**, and **training** of union members and leaders on rights ; member **recruitment drives** and **representation of interests of members** in consultation with employers, governments, national social security institutes, mutual health organisations, labour inspectors and social security inspectors. African partners also aim at conclusion of memorandums of understanding concerning **sustainable development programmes with extractive industries**.

IN ASIA :

Trade union partners KSBSI of Indonesia and CLC of Cambodia combine efforts in promoting workers' rights and social dialogue for workers in precarious labour situations **within transnational companies operating in Asia and their supply chains**.

One of the main strategies includes **building national as well as regional trade union networks** within such companies. This strategy is headed by KSBSI, and is implemented in collaboration with CLC and other partners of ACV-CSC in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, China, Burma, Vietnam and Laos. Networking between leaders at national and regional levels is primarily aimed at mapping of transnational companies and their supply chains all over Asia, gathering and comparing of Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) of each company in different countries, and exchanging of strategic information concerning these companies.

Networking also includes exchanging on successful organising practices, as well as best practices and best results in **negotiation with national or regional management** of the transnational companies and their supply chains. Another important strategy consists of **participating in political actions** organised by network partners of WSM at continental level in favour of legal and administrative reforms ensuring the right to social protection, as well as in actions headed by the Asian Clean Clothes Campaign.

Thus, by the end of 2021 KSBSI hopes to have signed 221 CBA improving workers' rights for all workers in transnational enterprises operating in Asia and their supply chains – including 185 Indonesian companies. KSBSI also hopes to ensure that 578.000 of its members and other workers in precarious labour situations obtain work contracts of indefinite duration, access to social protection and minimum wages (while minimum wages will continue to be adjusted on a yearly basis).

By the end of 2021, CLC hopes to have signed CBA improving workers' rights for all workers in 58 Cambodian companies of transnational enterprises operating in Asia and their supply chains. 2.117.500 workers (75% women) in precarious labour situations should have obtained work contracts of indefinite duration, minimum wages of at least 250 US, and access to social protection.

IN LATIN-AMERICA

Just like in Africa, partners in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, aim at **implementation of Recommendations 202** (on social protection) **and 204** (on transition of informal to formal economy) in favour of workers' rights and income security for all workers with **precarious employment status in the informal and formal economy**. Latin American partners **explicitly include social economy workers and workers in Free Trade Zones** within these categories.

In the Dominican Republic focus is on **revision of the labour code and the law on social security** - towards inclusion of informal and social economy workers as well as towards improvement of the social security cover. In Haiti focus is only on revision of the labour code, but aims to ensure all pertinent conventions and recommendations of the ILO (whether ratified or not) are included in the code, especially those with regards to labour inspection, maternity/parental leave, working hours, night shifts, social protection, domestic work, informal economy, and dismissals.

Here national strategies include **socio-economic research** on rights, on gender equality, on application of recommendations 202 and 204, and on conditions allowing for ratification of conventions and legal/administrative reforms ; publication of **newsletters** and development of **websites** on rights ; **training** of members, militants, shop stewards, leaders and support staff on rights, socio-economic and legal issues, collective bargaining, pertinent conventions of the ILO, leadership, gender, corporate social responsibility, conflict management and conflict resolution ; **training of trainers** ; development of **digitalized databases** on membership ; enhancement of internal democratic practice and sound organizational management ; running of **awareness campaigns** ; representation of interests of workers with various parties ; and close **follow-up of violations** of rights.

Thus it is hoped that by the end of 2021 workers' rights and income security as guaranteed by the labour code and the law on social security will have been extended to at least 314.425 members in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. It is expected these members will then have written contracts, minimum wages, safe and hygienic work environments, training opportunities, and access to social security, while their work hours will be respected.

As will be clear from the focus in Africa, Asia and Latin America it is of great importance for partners to be able to contribute to relevant decision making processes on the agenda of the ILO for 2017-2021 : (1) the revision of existing norms (such as conventions on fundamental rights), and (2) the development of pertinent new instruments, such as conventions or recommendations concerning workers' rights in global supply chains, migration of labour, atypical forms of work, decent work within the world of sports, and low carbon economies.

4. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How do ACV-CSC and ACV-CSCi select partners ?

ACV-CSC partners with autonomous, democratic and representative trade unions – members of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). In line with ACV-CSC's main values, its partners recognise the importance of grassroots trade unionism, as well as the importance of dialogue over action.

In order to be part of the ACV-CSCi cooperation development programme they also need to be of strategic importance for the promotion of decent work in their countries, as well as at regional or international level. They also need to be committed to partnering with ACV-CSC in favour of workers' rights and social dialogue. And in order to be able to carry out the programmes, they must have adequately experienced personnel and a capacity for further development.

Where can I get more information on ACV-CSCi, its current development cooperation programme and partners ?

For more information see the projects directory on the website of the International Trade Union Organisation. For specific questions, please contact the international department of ACV-CSC (international@acv-csc.be or +32.2.244.36.00).