Organisational Capacity Assessment

WORK PLAN

**Introduction**

Union growth is set as one of the three main strategic goals of the ITUC following its 3rd World Congress.In this sense **“organising”** is one of the priorities of trade union work. Capacity development strategies undertaken by trade unions contribute to organising through fostering stronger unions. After many years of trade union development cooperation work on capacity development, reflections need to be deepened on the impact of this work. Several trade unions and Solidarity Support Organisations (SSOs) have already undertaken such evaluations of capacity development. It now becomes pressing to put together the different experiences and work on common **Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) frameworks** that will serve the trade union movement in its capacity development strategies. The development of common OCA frameworks will contribute to evaluate these strategies and to shape new strategies with clear objectives, results and indicators.

**Background**

Following the work of the TUDCN on the Trade Union Development Effectiveness Principles (the drafting of the Principles and Guidelines and the elaboration of the Trade Union Development Effectiveness Profile -TUDEP) and the research “Insight into the Results of Trade Unions’ Development Work”, several organisations manifested their interest in going a step further.

This implies deepening the reflection on the relation between trade union solidarity projects and the impact of those on the actual partner organisations, specifically in terms of structural improvements. In other words, the question that we should tackle is to what extent our solidarity programs contribute to the strengthening of partner organisations, and how (on what criteria) we can assess it. Trade unions have already clear cut points of reference in this respect[[1]](#footnote-1), linked to their very nature of representative and membership based organisations. However, there is no common approach when it comes to assessment. Quite surprisingly, during the elaboration of “Insight into the Results…”, it was registered that TUs are currently using different methodologies and instruments in the field of OCA[[2]](#footnote-2). Therefore, the elaboration of shared OCA frameworks will help us to build up a coherent approach in supporting organisations, and also to strengthen joint ownership in trade union cooperation.

**Objectives**

The objectives of the work to be undertaken are:

* To establish a shared trade union framework on Organisational Capacity Assessment.
* To develop joint criteria for capacity building/organising strategies in the trade union movement.

**Methodology**

The TUDCN Working Group on TU Partnership will be the point of reference for this work. In addition to online work, an OCA seminar will touch base and set the scene, bearing in mind the following:

* First, the elaboration of OCA criteria serves the primary purpose of evaluating capacity building strategies so as to improve them[[3]](#footnote-3) for organising and to elaborate new National Trade Union Development Strategies.
* Second, democratic ownership has to be guaranteed, this involves the direct implication of partner organisations throughout the process.
* Third, previous work and specially the TU Development Effectiveness Principles[[4]](#footnote-4) should be taken into account.
* Fourth, a trade union methodology implies the use of concepts that are applicable to the trade union movement and its dynamism, OCA having mainly been used by NGOs and in “classical” development cooperation settings.
* Fifth and last: things have to be kept simple and practical.

**Activities**

The starting point will be a mapping of the different OCA frameworks used by trade union partners and the analysis of their effectiveness as well as the problems found. This will be followed by a seminar in March in which the debates will be presented and discussed and the basis for the work will be set. Work will continue online towards the elaboration of common criteria and a Partnerships Working Group meeting will take place in the month of October. The overall aim is to reach common conclusions by the end of 2015, launching a shared TUs framework on OCA, with policy guidelines for the trade union movement.

The **different steps** for the activities that will take place throughout 2015 will be:

1. **Stock taking on OCA frameworks used by trade unions and SSOs**

At the beginning of this work we had gathered ten different OCA frameworks used by trade unions and SSOs. More frameworks are used and these will have to be compiled. In this process it is important to see with the different organisations which frameworks work well and what the problems encountered are. This will be done during the months of January and February.

1. **Sharing OCA frameworks used by trade unions and SSOs**

The sharing and exchange of views on the different OCA frameworks prior to the seminar is important to set the basic context and launch the discussions. This will be done throughout the months of February and March.

1. **OCA Seminar**

The OCA seminar will take place the 19th and 20th of March. In this seminar the different OCA frameworks will be presented and discussions will take place to establish the basic framework/s, setting the key principles and the most relevant themes that will be the backbone of the guidelines.

1. **Development of TU Guidelines on OCA**

Based on the recommendations in the OCA seminar, the work to develop the TU Guidelines on OCA will take place during the months of April to December. This work will be undertaken mainly online.

1. **Work review**

A meeting of the TUDCN partnerships working group will take place during the month of October in which the undertaken work will be reviewed and the necessary corrections will be made. The Open Coordination Meeting in September will also help to review the work.

1. **Finalisation of Guidelines**

The guidelines will be finalised by December and will be presented to the TUDCN General Meeting for approval in 2016, after which a publication will be issued.

**Timeline**

**The timeline will be the following:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL  | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV  | DEC |
| 1. Stock taking on OCA frameworks used by trade unions and SSOs |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Sharing OCA frameworks used by trade unions and SSOs |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. OCA Seminar |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Development of TU Guidelines on OCA |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Work review (TUDCN partnerships working group and OCM) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6. Finalisation of Guidelines |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

1. For instance increased membership; collecting dues; political autonomy etc… [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A mapping of 10 OCA frameworks used by different SSOs was done in the “[Insight into results of trade unions’ development work](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/trade_union_principles_2013_en_web.pdf)” research. This already sets a basis for the work to be done on OCA. In chapter 3 of the publication a framework on OCA was elaborated based on the “Five Capability Model”, contextualised and adapted on the basis of the 10 different OCA frameworks analysed. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The elaboration of good baselines for trade unions is especially relevant here. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Trade Union Principles and Guidelines on Development Effectiveness](http://www.ituc-csi.org/trade-union-principles-and?lang=en) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)