



AFRICAN TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENT NETWORK TRADE UNION PARTNERSHIP MEETING

2 - 3 MARCH 2016 - LOMÉ, TOGO

Objectives

The objectives of the meeting were:

1. To have a mapping of trade union development cooperation in Africa
2. To analyse trade union development cooperation in Africa on the basis of the trade union development effectiveness principles and the TUDEP tool
3. To improve the coordination and coherence of trade union development cooperation initiatives in Africa

Participants

A total of 27 participants (11 women and 16 men), came together at the offices of ITUC-Africa, Lomé, Togo from 2 – 3 March:

4. 14 from ITUC-Africa affiliates CNTB-Burkina Faso, CSTM-Mali, CNT-Niger, CSC-R.D. Congo, UDTS-Senegal, COSATU- South Africa, CESTRAR-Rwanda, CNTS-Senegal, SATUCC-Durban, EATUC-Tanzania, OTUWA-Nigeria, COSI-Benin, GFL-Ghana, BCPA-Benin
5. 8 from Solidarity Support Organisations (SSOs): LO-Norway, CFDT-France, CFDT-France, CGT-France, CSC-Belgium, LO/FTF-Togo, ISCOS-Italy, CNV-The Netherlands
6. 4 from the ITUC-Africa Secretariat
7. 1 from the ITUC- Brussels office

The workshop was organized under the auspices of the African Trade Union Development Network.

Day 1 of workshop – 2nd March 2016

Opening

The workshop was opened by the General Secretary of ITUC-Africa, Kwasi Adu-Amankwah, the Partnerships Officer of the Trade Union Development Cooperation Network, Brussels, Diego López González and the Executive Director of the Africa Labour Research and Education Institute, Hilma Mote.

After the welcome and opening remarks, participants had a round of introductions and also presented their expectations for the two-day workshop.

ITUC-Africa Priorities in the area of Development Cooperation

Following the opening, the first presentation touched on the priorities of ITUC-Africa. This was done by Adrien Akouete, Deputy General Secretary of ITUC-Africa, who highlighted the priority areas of the organisation for the next four years following its congress in 2015. The seven areas include:

8. Human and Trade Union Rights
9. Peace and Security
10. Strengthening trade union internal democracy and promoting trade union unity
11. Organizing – women, youth, informal workers and migrant workers
12. Social Protection
13. Climate Change and Environment
14. Africa's Structural Transformation

The presenter emphasised that we should reflect on how development cooperation can strengthen the capacity of African trade unions to make them real actors of development. In this endeavor it is important to avoid that trade unions are transformed into NGOs dependent on partners' subsidies. The mobilisation of internal resources through affiliation fees and contributions is therefore important. In this context, we should reflect on how partnerships can effectively contribute to the development of the labour movement in Africa.

As way forward, the presenter proposed a move towards a more effective and efficient trade union cooperation to enable beneficiaries to become real autonomous development actors, for which political will is vital.

Mapping of Trade Union Development Cooperation Projects in the Region

After the presentation of ITUC-Africa priorities, a mapping of trade union development cooperation was presented by Hilma Mote, outlining the various projects supported and implemented. The mapping was presented under sub regional basis giving information on the number of projects, key areas of work and the organizations involved.

The conclusions of this mapping were that the sub-regions with the largest number of projects are Western Africa and Southern Africa, followed by Eastern Africa. There is very little trade union cooperation in Northern and Central Africa. Western Africa is the region with the largest number of SSOs working with a large number of different organizations per country, followed by Southern Africa. There is more concentration in the other sub-regions.

It was however noted, that the mapping was a first attempt and information should be completed.

Mapping of trade union development cooperation projects in Africa - Group Work

After the presentation, participants were divided into different groups comprising SSOs and African trade unions to discuss in more detail the programs carried out by each organisation and to identify the specific projects being implemented by other partners in the respective countries.

Trade Union Development Effectiveness Principles

The final session of the first day ended with a presentation by Diego López on the eight trade union development effectiveness principles and the criteria to comply with each principle. He emphasized that the principles are interrelated and all contribute to sustainability. Amongst these, the principles of democratic ownership, autonomy and coherence are prioritised.

Largely, discussions following the presentation affirmed that the principles are well accepted by unions and partners alike. The questions of autonomy and transparency however were highlighted as areas to be looked at in working towards more efficient cooperation. Essentially, participants emphasised that applying the eight principles is a good way to address challenges and build efficiency.

Day 2 of workshop – 3rd March 2016

Trade Union Development Effectiveness Profile (TUDEP)

Day 2 started with a presentation of the [Trade Union Development Effectiveness Profile \(TUDEP\)](#) by Diego López. The TUDEP is a tool that was developed to promote dialogue amongst trade union partners for more balanced partnerships. It assesses how far trade union principles are incorporated in the cooperation amongst partners. It is composed of two questionnaires with 52 questions each, one to be filled in by the supporting partner and the other by the receiving partner. Once the questionnaires are filled in, the results on compliance with each of the principles can be visualised in a plot. On the basis of the results of the plot, it is recommended to select two or three principles on which the unions will work to make their development cooperation more effective. Organizations that have used the tool have found it very useful, as it allows partners to better understand each other and meet half way (respecting their autonomy, democratic ownership, etc.) and brings about mutual respect and accountability. It identifies weaknesses, strengths, advantages and disadvantages, and contributes to progress in union work.

Overall, it was concluded that the TUDEP tool is well accepted by both supporting and receiving partners. The presenter indicated that ITUC is working on a TUDEP light, with a reduced number of questions, so there will be the possibility of having either an in depth analysis or a lighter analysis.

Analysis of development cooperation in Africa with the TUDEP tool - Group Work

Following the presentation on the use of the TUDEP tool, participants were divided into groups of SSOs and African organizations to put it in use on the basis of their experience in development cooperation. Each group filled in a questionnaire and responses were further collated into the tool to show a visual image (plot) of assessment of cooperation between supporting and receiving partners.

The conclusions of this were that the African organisations found lower levels of compliance for the principles of sustainability, coherence and inclusiveness and equality. The SSOs found lower levels of compliance for the principles of sustainability, autonomy, and inclusiveness and equality. It was therefore evident that the results from both African organisations and SSOs were not substantially different. Furthermore, it was brought out that there were different perspectives on the compliance with respect to the principles of democratic ownership, autonomy and transparency.

Plenary discussions attempted to analyse why lower levels of compliance with specific principles and different perceptions were observed.

With respect to *sustainability*, the main issue identified was dependency related to dues collection. Regarding *autonomy*, it was highlighted that funders identify their own priorities which sometimes may be different from the priorities of unions. With respect to *inclusiveness and equality* it was identified that this agenda is more donor-driven so it is harder to sustain these issues after projects end. In addition, it was remarked that some SSOs demand policies from organizations which they themselves do not have, such as gender policies, it is therefore important for partners to practice what they preach to also present good examples. On *transparency*, participants underlined that receiving partners are requested to be more transparent and open for audits than supporting partners; the process therefore lacks reciprocity in this sense and remains a one way instead of a two-way process.

Other comments arising from the discussions drew the attention to the fact that partnerships should go beyond projects and enrich organisations through the exchange of experiences (politically, socially and economically). The question of why centres which have been supported for a long time remain weak also came up. Strengthening organizations is necessary so they become good vectors of development. Partners should review their strategies to strengthen unions and enhance organising and collective action, but SSOs also depend on funds from the North and also have guidelines to meet. In addition, it was noted that there are existing power dynamics even within unions which must be addressed.

To end the session, it was concluded that the exercise is relevant to share information, identify shortcomings and build on good practices. The need for complementarity in terms of geographic and thematic areas was stressed. An important point arising was the need to promote trade union unity (intersyndicale) in countries where fragmentation is rife.

Mechanisms to improve trade union development cooperation in Africa - Group Work

In moving towards more concrete measures at improving trade union development cooperation in Africa, participants were once again grouped to deliberate on ways to implement compliance with the principles. Each group selected two principles to deliberate on.

The elements highlighted to improve compliance with each principle were:

For democratic ownership: Setting up a framework for supporting partners and receiving partners before defining priorities, establishing a joint monitoring and steering committee.

For autonomy: Strengthening the self-financing capacity of unions and improving communication on the sources of funding from both receiving and supporting partners.

For inclusiveness and equality: South-South exchange programs on engaging marginalised groups; capacity building and sharing of information; campaigns; the development and use of tools to ensure gender and youth are mainstreamed in projects and key discussion of all their detailed reports by the General Councils of organizations.

For sustainability: Reinforcing the synergy between Anglophone and Francophone unions; building capacity on accountability; setting the priorities of programs in a way that grants ownership; including a sustainability clause that goes beyond financial sustainability; sharing of best practices on dues collection, and education and training on climate change tailored to contributing towards environmental sustainability

Conclusions from the Workshop

Before the close of the workshop, participants had the opportunity to assess the proceedings of the two days meeting. Generally, participants expressed appreciation to ITUC and ITUC-Africa for organising the workshop and giving them the opportunity to share practices and share a good methodology towards reinforcing cooperation and partnerships within Africa. There were specific demands to carry out a mapping and a similar workshop process at sub regional level, especially in the sub-regions of Eastern and Southern Africa.

Most of the participants expressed deep appreciation for the breakdown of the TUDEP tool, which until the workshop was complex for many. It was observed that the tool can be used in-house within organisations.

A few participants highlighted the limitations of the mapping which although a good initiative, did not give a full picture of ITUC-Africa affiliates.

A strong recommendation that came out of the assessment and final remarks from affiliates was the need for more transparency from supporting partners. Better coordination among SSOs was also encouraged to avoid duplications and contribute to building strong unions.

It was also noted that current issues such as structural transformation and climate change can only be addressed through partnerships. Nonetheless, there is the need for unions to



remain autonomous in pursuing these partnerships. Importantly, it is necessary to build capacities of trade union organisations to ensure their sustainability. The need for trade unions to unite in thinking and in action was stressed, and the importance of the support of partners to projects that encourage trade union unity, instead of creating division and fragmentation, was strongly emphasised.

The workshop ended with the concluding remarks from the General Secretary of ITUC-Africa.

