

*Promoting decent work for sustainable development and  
enhancing coordination and effectiveness of TU partnerships*

External evaluation TUDCN-ITUC - Programme 2013-2017

Summary of main conclusions and recommendations



## *Relevance and added value*

1. It can be concluded that at overall level the TUDCN is considered as a relevant network by TU and TU related organisations for different reasons: for its role in advocacy within the development cooperation environment, for responding to the need to engage in the larger development agenda, for strengthening the voice of TUs in development debates at international and regional level., for its stimulating role regarding exchange, learning, bringing forward updated information, for its complementarity with other actors, for its support to the ITUC priorities.
2. The added value at organisational level lies often in the use of materials and tools being developed by the TUDCN, and to which many TU themselves have also contributed. Another added value is the possibility to jointly learn and exchange while meeting other TU and TU related organisations at diverse meetings.
3. Although the relevance and added value of the TUDCN is overall recognized, there are still some challenges to overcome: in the three continents (AP, AF, AM) TU indicated that the focus is sometimes still too much Europe oriented or too little linked to regional and national priorities. At the same time there is a call to strengthen TU more at the national level, besides working at the global and regional level, in order to increase the added value of the TUDCN for the member TU.

## *Effectiveness*

### *SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1: To improve effective participation of developing country trade unions in policy dialogues on development*

Main Result: TU's increase capacity to be more representative, autonomous, democratic

1. The TUDCN programme under evaluation has contributed to increase effective participation of developing country trade unions in policy dialogues on development, mainly at global and regional level. The TUDCN has started discussions at regional level (AF, LAM and AP) on how to bring this also at the national level. The increasing awareness at global and regional level of the role of TU in the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2030 at TU level could facilitate this process in the future.
2. More coherence should be further build between the advocacy and the capacity development component, both in terms of country focus and in terms of affiliates involvement.

### *SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2: To promote the Decent Work Agenda – including social protection, Democratic Ownership and Equality, in development strategies of national, regional and international institutions*

Main Result: trade union positions are considered within Institutional processes and relevant institutions at all levels work with trade unions as social and development partners in their own right.

1. Based on the progress reports and confirmed by the interviews, it can be concluded that the TUDCN programme 2013-2017 has made considerable progress to achieve this objective i.e. to promote the DW Agenda including social protection, democratic ownership and equality in development strategies of national, regional and international institutions, in the first place at international level, secondly at regional level and still to a lesser extent at national level. The latter is work in progress and was getting more attention by the end the programme with e.g. the development of the template for the TU national SDG reporting.
2. Main strategies applied to achieve this specific objective have been: 1/ develop position papers and related instruments to enable advocacy on development issues e.g. on social dialogue; 2/ build capacities at the level of TU and 3/ work towards participation, advocacy, contributions regarding the promotion of Decent Work in development policy at different levels.
3. Although capacity building on advocacy at national level was not explicitly included, the evaluation revealed that a need for more skills development on advocacy still persists, including on how existing tools could be translated at the national level. (e.g. position papers, study on social dialogue, the work in progress on the SDG indicator monitoring tool, etc). The evaluation stresses the importance of regional (and global) meetings where TU members can learn and exchange from each other to strengthen their capacities and deepen their TU relationships.

*SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3: To improve the effectiveness of TU international cooperation – TUs partnerships*

1. TUDEP tool: those using it have found it an effective instrument (a bit too long though but a shorter version has been developed recently). At this moment it is being applied to a limited extent, mainly by African TU, Belgian and French SSO, but hardly not by TU of the other regions. It is still too early to conclude about the use of the recently adapted (lighter) version of the TUDEP.
2. Evidence based research, newsletters, uploads of articles etc. all contribute to information sharing with TU members. This sharing of information is highly and unanimously appreciated by all the interviewees of this evaluation (TU and TU related organisations/institutions).

## *Efficiency*

1. The budget shows that for the programme period under evaluation no regional budgets were managed by the regional networks, as activities were coordinated by the global secretariat. This was confirmed by the interviews at the headoffice in Brussels as well as in the regional offices. Considering the importance of the global development processes of the previous period (post 2015 development process), the approaches and methods used are most probably the most efficient and effective ones. At the same time the evaluation revealed the need to work in more decentralized way within the regions, and to establish a better linkage between the global, regional and national organisations.
2. Overall it can be concluded that most of the methods and instruments for cooperation and communication have been developed and used in an efficient way. Some instruments have not proven its efficiency and effectiveness at wider level yet, such as the TUDEP, and the project database. The website is very informative but difficult to use, and documents and reports are sometimes fragmented and without a date, which makes them difficult to read.

## *Sustainability*

1. There has not yet been an in-depth discussion within the TUDCN about how the network could achieve financial or institutional sustainability, meaning how the network will be still able to achieve its objectives without or with less external funding, at global, regional and national levels. Since this programme 2013-2017 is already the third programme supported by the EC, it is important to work towards a sustainability strategy for the future.

## *Final recommendations*

### **1/ Balancing overall coordination with a more decentralized way of working**

It is recommended to work towards a strategy which would allow to execute the new 2017-2020 programme in a way that still allows overall coordination by the TUDCN secretariat, but also takes into account the request from the regions (as indicated by the ATUDN, the RSCD and also the Asian Pacific region) to work in a more decentralized way, which should increase regional participation and representativeness, improve inclusion of the regional priorities and agenda, and regional responsibilities for actions: ownership and mutual responsibility for the TUDCN programme and participation at all levels are key words here.

### **2/ Emphasize capacity development at all levels**

Although not much foreseen in the programme under evaluation, many interviewees have expressed the need for capacity development at national level with regard to development topics, and how to advocate on this. It is true that the TUDCN is a global/regional programme, however efforts will not have the desired result in the long term if national TUs are not sufficiently capable to take up the development topics in their work at their level. Capacity development at all levels including the national level is key.

### **3/ Strengthening partnerships from a more global perspective**

The third specific objective 'partnership strengthening' is relevant and important in order to build a stronger TUDCN network. However, how this has been done so far under the current and previous programmes is very much according to the 'traditional' ways to increase effectiveness of development cooperation (from a donor-receiver perspective). In addition to this TUs do not act in an isolated way; building relations with multistakeholders and cooperate with CSO platforms are an important part of the TUDCN work. This part of the work is also related to the creation of partnerships, although this is a bit 'hidden' in the program.

### **4/ Ensure that learning (CD on development topics) is more than training and exchange**

To develop more integrated learning processes, the capacity building processes could include – beside of trainings - follow-up activities like coaching, peer-to peer learning, exposure visits, etc. to ensure the application of the new skills and knowledge at the lower levels (sub-region, national). Therefore, it is recommended that these issues are discussed and analysed together with the regional networks, which are the best placed to put these follow up systems in place.

Adequate space should be provided for reporting and sharing from national and regional level also in the context of global and regional gatherings. Participants at global and regional events of the TUDCN could be encouraged as much as possible to share their experiences with others, in order to learn from successes but also from failures (what works, what not and why not). At the same time It is also important to think of alternatives already available e.g. to make use of the mailing lists that are there precisely to make TU connected, sharing best practices and/or stories (besides the newsletter).

### **5/ Translate available sources of information at global level to the regional and national level in order to optimize them**

Evidence based research, newsletters, uploads of articles etc. all contribute to information sharing with TU members. This sharing of information is highly and unanimously appreciated by all the interviewees of this evaluation (TU and TU related organisations/institutions). This source of information could be more optimized if e.g. used at capacity building events or to stimulate discussion about it during regional meetings on how to use it at regional, national level, or by publishing updates on how others have used it etc.

### **6/ Maintain the focus on the development agenda of the TUDCN while keep on looking for complementarities with the overall ITUC priorities.**

The relevance and added value of the TUDCN has been clearly stated by TU members in the course of the evaluation. The choice for a network focusing on development (cooperation) within the ITUC has resulted in the explicit support of ITUC for the TUDCN strategy. It is suggested where possible to concretize this support as much as possible in agenda setting, campaigning, political work and capacity development, while maintaining the focus on the development priorities of the TUDCN.

### **7/ Create a sustainability strategy**

It is recommended to develop a sustainability strategy, which addresses the organisational, institutional and financial dimensions of sustainability. The first step is to start a dialogue on sustainability with the regional networks and eventually other actors at international, regional and national level. At institutional level it is important to gain more support in the regions by linking the development topics to their own priority topics. At financial level a strategy is needed to become gradually less dependent on external funding. The mobilisation of internal resources and external revenues needs to be carefully planned, defining concrete objectives, milestones and activities.

### **8/ Optimize further the working modalities**

Methods and instruments developed were generally used in an efficient way. Physical meetings have proved their effectiveness and efficiency, and have been optimized in the course of 2013-2017. Some of the instruments could be further optimized in the future like the website, the project database (this is also linked to its effectiveness), the TUDEP tool (also linked to its effectiveness), the concrete translation and use of research studies and other publications towards the region (or vice versa).

**The Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN)** is an initiative of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), bringing together affiliated trade union organisations, solidarity support organisations, regional ITUC organisations, the Global Union Federations (GUFs), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC). TUDCN's objective is to bring the trade union perspective into the international development policy debates and improve the coordination and effectiveness of trade union development cooperation activities.

Le **Réseau syndical de coopération au développement (RSCD)** est une initiative de la Confédération syndicale internationale (CSI) réunissant des organisations syndicales affiliées, des organisations de solidarité, les organisations régionales de la CSI, ainsi que les Fédérations syndicales internationales (les fédérations sectorielles - FSI), la Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES) et la Commission syndicale consultative auprès de l'OCDE (TUAC). Le RSCD a pour but de traduire la perspective syndicale dans les débats sur la politique en matière de développement international et d'améliorer la coordination et l'efficacité des activités syndicales dans le domaine de la coopération au développement.

La **Red Sindical de Cooperación al Desarrollo (RSCD)** es una iniciativa de la Confederación Sindical Internacional (CSI), que agrupa a diversas organizaciones sindicales afiliadas, organizaciones solidarias (OS), organizaciones regionales de la CSI, las Federaciones Sindicales Internacionales (FSI), la Confederación Europea de Sindicatos (CES) y la Comisión Sindical Consultiva ante la OCDE (TUAC). El objetivo de la red es aportar la perspectiva sindical a los debates políticos y mejorar la coordinación y la eficacia de las actividades sindicales relacionadas con la cooperación al desarrollo.



dce@ituc-csi.org

+32 (0) 2 224 02 25



@TUDCN\_RSCD



/TUDCN.RSCD