

Strengthening trade unions in the context of globalisation

First and foremost, the trade union movement provides training in solidarity. It expresses the wish of working people to pool their apparently individual situations, and thereby serve the communities they represent. More than anything else, therefore, the trade union movement is the manifestation of a form of solidarity that links individuals seeking to combat injustice collectively, and acquire the dignity to which all workers may justifiably aspire.

This solidarity is articulated at all levels: at the educational establishment level, regional level and country level, and between the trade unions in individual countries through their affiliation to confederal trade union centres.

It manifests itself at the international level in response to dramatic events such as Hurricane Mitch, which has had a profound effect on our affiliated organisations in Central America. It is expressed in a more fundamental and ongoing way in the context of development cooperation programmes.

This special dossier is devoted to development cooperation. It is intended as an additional means of making people more aware of the need to promote such activities at international level, particularly in the context of a globalised economy that is affecting the organisation of education systems and altering the conditions of trade union struggle.

The aim of any genuine policy on development cooperation is that all countries should have trade unions that are independent, democratic, responsible, representative of their members, and aware of the issues and challenges facing their communities.

When, at its meeting in October 1997, our Executive Board adopted a policy paper for this area of work entitled "For a Transparent and Constructive Partnership", and when the Washington Congress in July 1998 unanimously adopted a resolution recom-

mending that adequate financial resources be made available, they provided a framework in which development cooperation activities could be carried out.

Education International is not the only body involved in such activities in the education sector. Many affiliated organisations are working closely with EI on similar activities both in developing countries and in countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe.

Valuing human resources plays a decisive role in an individual development strategy at the level of an education project, an enterprise or a trade union.

Trade union structures are important, as are the financial resources that need to be mobilised; moreover, the objectives to be attained determine the collective project that is to be accomplished. However, nothing can really be achieved unless there is an improvement in the knowledge and skills of trade union leaders and members. That is what development cooperation is all about. ♦

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Elie Jouen
Deputy General Secretary

INTRODUCTION

Development Cooperation: behind the scenes



When it started about 25 years ago, development cooperation was an adventure characterised by long journeys and difficult communication. Much has changed over the years. Perhaps the biggest change is the disappearance of the spontaneity and optimism, and maybe the naivety. This article from Wouter van der Schaaf, Coordinator Development Cooperation, seeks to address some of the challenges facing the teacher trade union movement in the area of international solidarity.

In 1997, the EI Executive Board adopted the EI policy document on development cooperation, which maps out new directions for the coming years. The EI Congress in July 1998 also adopted a resolution on development cooperation. However the debate on development cooperation within EI has not ended there. On the contrary: in a changing world, the trade union movement is facing new challenges and international cooperation has to adapt to new realities. Moreover, development cooperation is a constant learning process. At least, it should be, since working methods are sometimes outdated. Those who implement the cooperation are often bound by regulations long outdated or not adapted to reality.

Is international solidarity ready for the 21st century?

"Basically, this is one of the major intellectual challenges for all of us in the teacher trade union movement", says Elie Jouen, Deputy General Secretary of EI. "We have to be constantly on the alert and open-minded in order to improve the quality of our work; to put our practices to the test of a number of fundamental principles, such as transparency, democracy, equality and self-reliance. Yes, these words may sound big and very general, but they all have a real meaning, which we can and must turn into reality in our development cooperation activities. If we don't succeed, these words will become superficial and hollow."

Since the beginning of international cooperation, strengthening the trade union movement has been a primary goal. How to achieve it was often a matter of trial and error. Not surprisingly, since development cooperation is often a confrontation of two different worlds with conflicting interests and, in all circumstances, a fragile relationship in which money, survival, political interests - and sometimes 'clientelism' - are major components. In that

sense, development cooperation is a complex mixture of down-to-earth professionalism with sharp criteria and politically motivated activities. Unlike many other types of cooperation between NGOs, in the trade union movement, the drive is towards programs decided upon democratically, which implies a longer process.

Until the fall of the Berlin wall, the swing of the pendulum often went to politically-inspired activities. A drastic change occurred in the 90's. A business-like approach has become dominant, with measurable goals, impact assessment, and strict adherence to budget lines - a major shift in the relationship initiated by the cooperating community, and to which the recipient community could do little else but adapt. The EI affiliates in the industrialised world also found themselves confronted with newly imposed criteria, outlined by programme sponsoring governments without the involvement of the labour movement. The challenge is to meet these criteria without cutting off the possibility of offering immediate assistance.

New terminology and integrated approach

Did the change in terminology over the years disguise the real and unchanged relationship in development cooperation activities? In the past, words like 'donors', 'recipients' and 'assistance' were used. Since it was felt that this placed too much emphasis on inequality, 'cooperating partner', 'host organisation' and 'cooperation' are now used instead. But has the dependency upon donor-driven rules not increased over the years? Developing countries are still not really partners on an equal footing in the debate on the type and content of cooperation. Regulations are often imposed by the donor community and guided by the priorities of the donor countries, despite all good intentions. It is the challenge of EI to promote opportunities for unions in developing countries to express their views on cooperation. However, they, for their part, should use that opportunity to speak up openly rather than merely accept gratefully.

Projects are no longer considered as isolated activities but as an integrated part of all the activities of the recipient organisation, both in content and financial terms. Sometimes the project continues year after year without either partner addressing the fundamental problems of the recipient union, since they do not want to be seen to interfere. Sometimes it is called a success while the union may go from crisis to crisis, lack growth and lose the confidence of its members. Or, despite the project being properly audited at the end of the budget year of the



cooperating organisation, the union itself has often not reached that stage of planning and accountability. A double system therefore emerges, one oriented towards the donor and one for internal use. In such a situation, the challenge is to bring about a change in the organisation as a whole.

The strength of a union is its capacity to convince workers to become members, and trust the union to handle a small portion of their salary. How can unions expect to gain that trust if its leaders are constantly fighting among themselves or are too close to political parties? The success of unions in South Africa and Brazil can largely be attributed to the strong will and integrity of the unionists and the confidence of the members in their leadership. The donor community was only able to contribute to the reinforcement of the union because the union itself had laid a solid basis in the country.

Nowadays, development cooperation is less one-dimensional, simply because of its complexity. A greater knowledge, through many years of experience, teaches all involved that cooperation can have many, often negative, side-effects. For instance, the effect on the internal political balance within an organisation or on its financial dependency. One of the hardest things is to find out what are the side-effects of cooperation. But to not make the effort can lead to unpleasant surprises. *"The regular contacts I have with unions in developing countries make me increasingly aware of the limited knowledge I have",* says Lärarförbundet Sweden's International Secretary, Margareta Axell, who has worked on teacher development cooperation for more than two decades. *"We have to be modest, to listen and try to understand that development cooperation is only an additional factor to what happens in the organisation itself."*

The difficulty of handling funds

Often the capacity is there and only a small push is enough to bring about change. But ownership should lie with the host organisation. *"When people themselves make the choices and contribute financially to the program, it becomes their program. They take pride in the activity. A gift is fine, but it always implies that it is someone else's",* says specialist on development cooperation Ferka Öry.

It is not the availability of the money which is the major problem. It is the lack of capacity to absorb and handle the funds. In that respect good governance is one of the key factors. But is good governance easy when a union is suddenly confronted with an influx of funds ten times higher

than their own income? This will constitute one of EI's major challenge in the coming years: to help unions in developing countries build a solid and coherent organisation, which can influence education policies and defend teachers' interests. This requires that all partners, including cooperating organisations, take it upon themselves to work closely together. *"Too often I note a 'bi-lateral' approach from the donors",* says Jo Ritzen, former Minister of Education of the Netherlands, who now works at the World Bank as special adviser on education. *"Many are working with one and the same organisation without wanting to know about the activities of the other donors. A fragmentation inspired by the desire to gain a higher profile."*



Development cooperation should be able to address a great variety of needs: long term, short term and the many that are unforeseen. One way of meeting this demand is to widen the tasks of the EI Solidarity Fund. In general, teacher unions have great feelings of solidarity and a quick readiness to act. In comparison with other international trade secretariats, one of EI's biggest achievements is this active involvement of teachers and their unions, which enables it to cater to the many needs which have been identified.

At EI, the close relationship between host organisations, cooperating partners and EI offices contributes to transparency and the spirit of cooperation. Decades of international solidarity among teachers have brought about changes in the individual lives of teachers and their organisations. Thousands are trained every year. Dozens of unions have gained strength and their capacity has increased. However, membership has higher expectations than ten years ago. Teacher unions have to face up to the challenge of achieving ever better performance in serving their membership. The role of development cooperation is to contribute to that ongoing process. Teacher unions in developing countries have an enormous potential and it is our common goal to make effective use of that potential. ♦



Wouter van der Schaaf
Coordinator Development Cooperation

WORKERS' EDUCATION



By far the greatest proportion of development cooperation within the international trade union movement is concerned with workers' education, reflected in both budgets and project activity.

We aspire to a trade union movement that is built on firm foundations of self-reliance, democratic participation at all levels of organisation, and independence from state, employer, or political party control. For this to be a reality, trade unions require levels of skill, understanding and confidence throughout the organisation - built on strong programmes of membership education.

The broad priorities for support to trade unions in developing countries (and indeed in former communist States) are concerned with capacity-building. In other words, the ability of trade unions to conduct their own affairs, strengthen their collective bargaining capability, provide union services, represent members' interests and so on. This includes everything from collecting and accounting for membership dues, research and policy, through to engagement with international trade union organisations.

Above all, such trade union development requires sustainability - to achieve lasting democratic strength without forever being dependent upon external support, whether from stronger trade unions in other countries, or from development agencies.

Hence for unions struggling to build their own capacity, whether those in their infancy or more established unions facing new and challenging conditions, the first step is the establishment of membership education programmes.

Almost without exception, development cooperation with trade unions in the South or East is initiated through initial contact with international trade unions (with the International Trade Secretariats, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, or with regional bodies), with national trade unions in other countries with access to financial support, or with the International Labour Organisation. The vast majority of co-operation programmes are financed from state funds from those countries where government policy recognises the importance of trade unions as agents of sustainable international development - mostly in Europe, North America, and more recently, Japan. Such funds are rarely made available directly from governments, but are accessed by the ILO, international or national unions, specialist agencies (such

as IFWEA and its affiliates), or NGOs on behalf of their cooperation partners in developing countries.

Until the late 1980s, with the collapse of the major communist regimes, development cooperation through trade union education was significantly skewed (and in some cases, corrupted) by the pressures of cold war politics. Third world trade union organisations were frequently the battlegrounds for the 'hearts and minds' of workers, with education programmes as surrogate armies. At worst, it was little more than a marketplace for buying and selling political influence.

With the collapse of the WFTU¹, and the reformation of the international cooperation programmes of western unions - particularly in the USA, the ground has been cleared for a rethink of the principles of trade union education development cooperation.

The new priorities in the 1990s have been to strengthen the internal capacity of democratic unions in the East and South, and to build the capacity of the international trade union movement as a whole to respond to economic globalisation. This includes the regeneration of unions in industrialised countries, having to re-learn basic organising skills to reverse their decline in membership and influence.

The shape of trade union education cooperation programmes over the next decade is far from clear, but there are a number of discernible emerging trends.

Fundamentally, there is a new emphasis on building the organising strength of the trade union movement. Many trade union educators now believe that basic organising skills - recruitment and retention of members, organising in new workplaces and new industries, organising amongst women workers, part-time workers and so on - had been neglected in favour of more ideologically-driven curricula. This view has been considerably strengthened by the major shifts in leadership and policy in the AFL-CIO towards basic organising strength, reflected in their influence within international federations on priorities for development cooperation. Old models of union solidarity from the strong North to the developing South are shifting, with the recognition that new global economic conditions demand international cooperation based on mutual assistance.

At the same time, new programmes and techniques are emerging in response to globalisation. In general terms, there is a shift from international cooperation as a specialist area inhabited by 'international officers',

towards the internationalisation of day-to-day trade union activity. As successive waves of industry and employment are touched by the processes of globalisation (through structural adjustment programmes, privatisation, liberalisation of trade, deregulation of financial markets, and further empowerment of transnational corporations), international collaboration becomes an essential part of collective bargaining and campaigning.

This presents an enormous educational challenge, requiring new skills and techniques. Processes of globalisation are complex, fast-moving, and - if treated insensitively - profoundly demoralising.

The best traditions of the workers' education movement are in the commitment to 'student-centred' learning methods. Adapting these traditions to global concerns - both in content and form - is not easy.

Put crudely, it is very difficult to ask a group in Germany or Bolivia, for example, to discuss from their own experience the problems faced by trade unionists in Indonesia - unless of course they had the (highly unlikely) direct experience of meeting Indonesian trade unionists. The answer might be to simply invite Indonesian trade unionists to attend the course, or to move the entire course to Jakarta. This would certainly provide a rich and rewarding learning experience, but - replicated across membership education programmes across the world - would bankrupt the trade union movement (and poison the planet with aviation fuel).

This problem is perhaps most strikingly evident in education work to support international collaboration between workplace union representatives within specific transnational corporations. Many International Trade Secretariats give high priority to building 'world councils' of trade union representatives, leading to possibilities of truly international collective bargaining agreements, yet have neither the financial or staff resources to organise a more than a fraction of the important TNCs working in their industrial sector.

Solutions might be found in the exploitation of communications technologies, and there is growing interest within ITSS, the ILO, and indeed IFWEA, in exploring new forms of distance learning that can cheaply and effectively deliver international participation in workers' education programmes without compromising democratic principles². This seems set for major expansion, as more and more unions gain experience in using Internet technologies.

For unions in highly industrialised countries, where telecommunications infrastructures are well developed,

there are enormous opportunities emerging from teleconferencing, use of remote video etc, although for the foreseeable future they are unlikely to be available for more than a tiny few in developing countries.

There are also signs of new trends in the delivery of workers' education programmes in international cooperation. For many in developing countries and Central and Eastern Europe, the traditional experience of workers' education has been of workshops, courses and seminars run by education specialists from Europe or North America - held normally in the country of the funding institution, or in the 'recipient' country/region. In some cases, the education programme has consisted of little more than a presentation of 'best practice' industrial relations systems from the donor country.

In some circumstances, this can be entirely appropriate, but there is increasing sensitivity and awareness that education methodology derived from trade union experience in the North is not always appropriate in the South or East. It is argued by some, for example, that education programmes on structural adjustment for emergent trade unions in Eastern Europe have perhaps more to gain from participation from Asia or Africa than from western Europe. There is also a growing emphasis on regional (or sub-regional) managed programmes.

Ironically perhaps, it is also increasingly recognised that one of the highest education priorities in international cooperation is the need for programmes on globalisation designed for trade unions in the industrialised (or post-industrial) economies of the North. Moving away from traditional 'client-recipient' models of cooperation between North & South, new possibilities arise for education programmes to be truly cooperative - with northern trade unions finding themselves with as much to learn as to contribute. ♦



Study circle in India

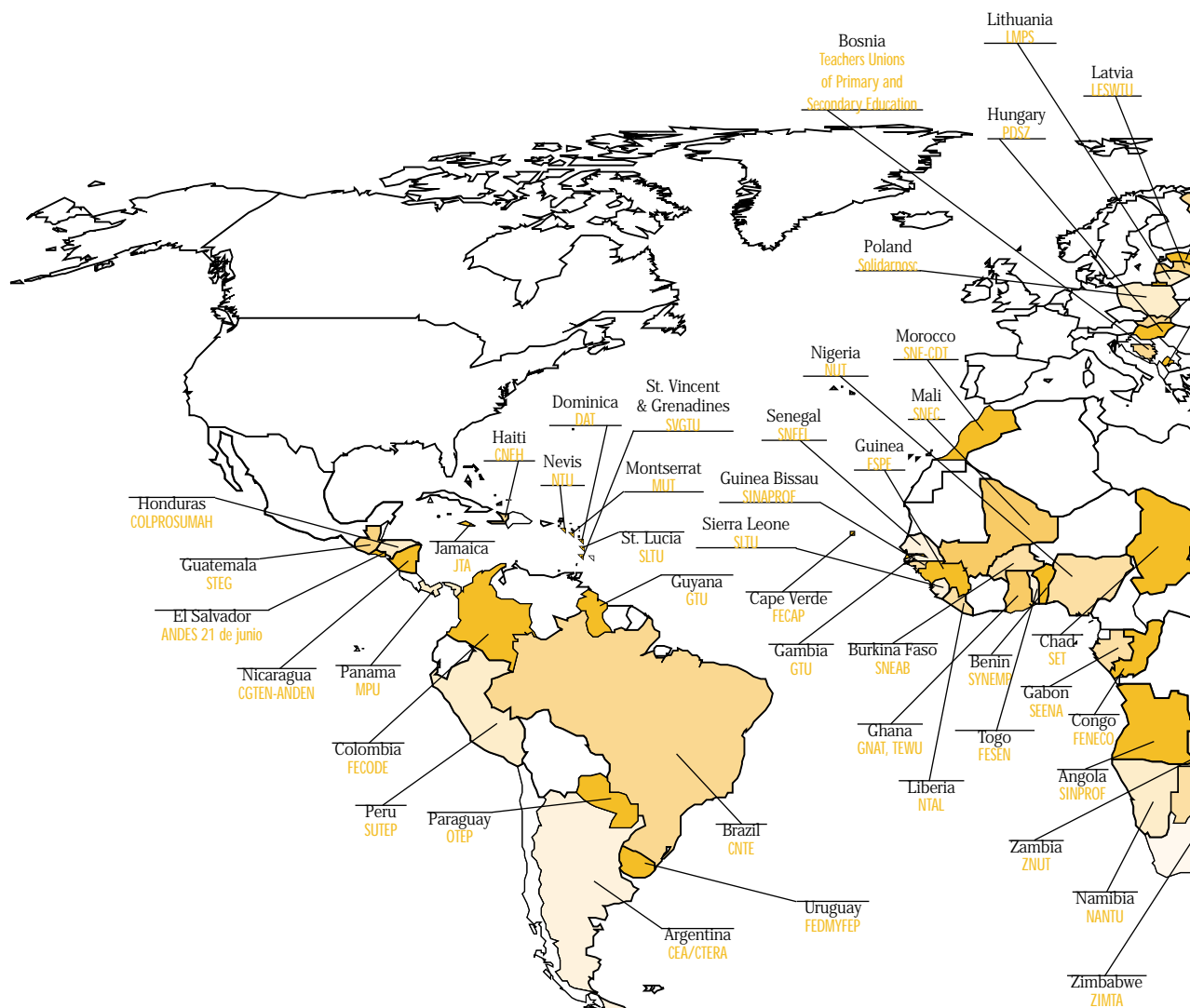


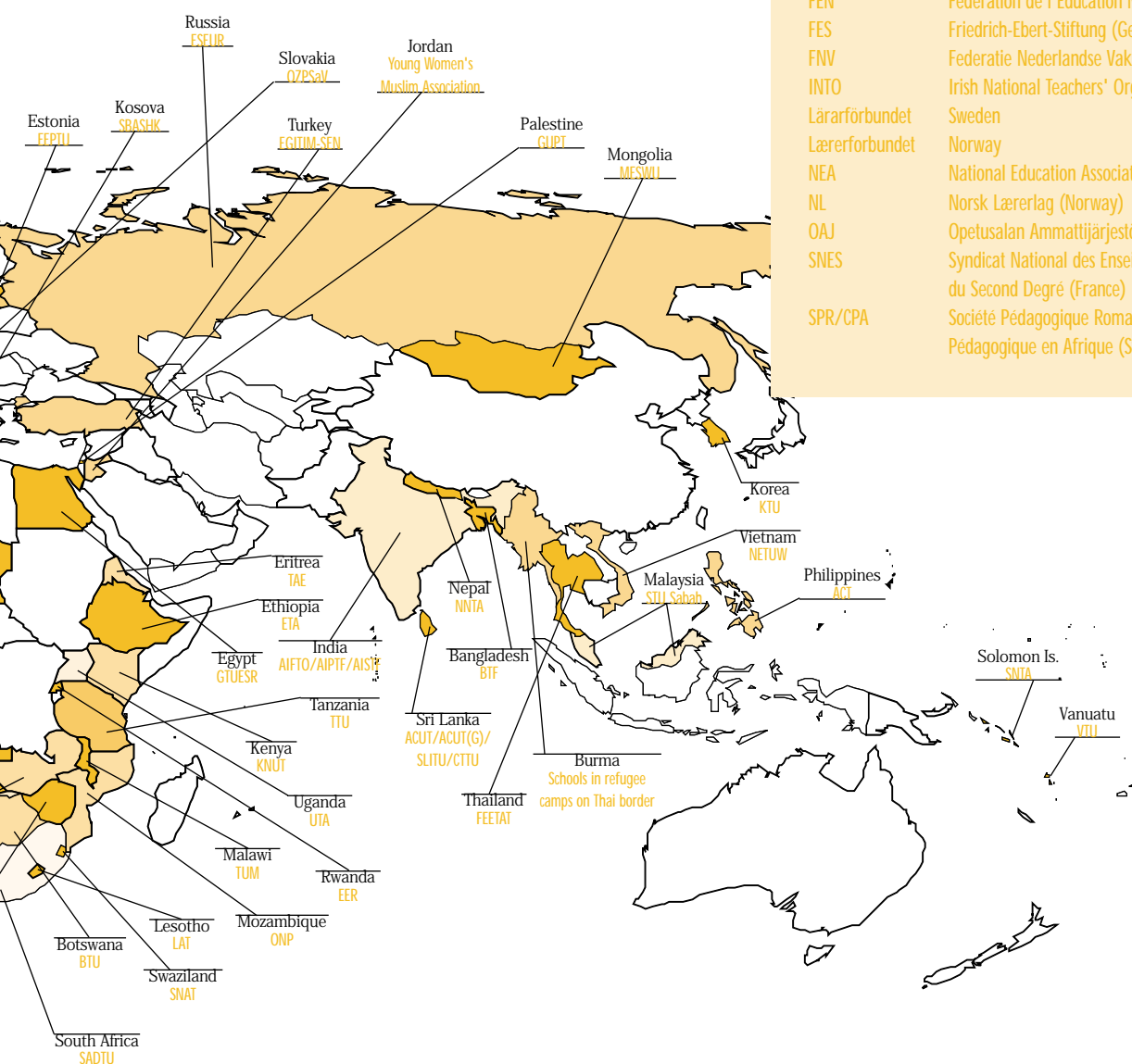
Dave Spooner
General Secretary
European Worker's Education
Association

2 See for example, the International Study Circles programme of IFWEA - www.ifwea.org/isc.

Development Cooperation Programmes

This map gives a survey of the partners involved in the programmes. The survey focuses on programmes at national level and is based upon the information received on the programmes implemented in 1998. Any comment is welcome and will be inserted in the survey of development cooperation programmes published on the EI Website.





Cooperating Organisations:

AEU	Australian Education Union
AFT	American Federation of Teachers (USA)
AOb	Algemene Onderwijsbond (Netherlands)
ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland
CEQ	Centrale de l'Enseignement du Québec
CTF	Canadian Teachers' Federation
DLF	The Danish Union of Teachers
EIS	Educational Institute of Scotland
GEW	Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft (Germany)
FEN	Fédération de l'Education Nationale (France)
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Germany)
FNV	Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (Netherlands)
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Läraryrbundet	Sweden
Lærerforbundet	Norway
NEA	National Education Association (USA)
NL	Norsk Lærerlag (Norway)
OAJ	Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö (Finland)
SNES	Syndicat National des Enseignements du Second Degré (France)
SPR/CPA	Société Pédagogique Romande/Comité de coopération Pédagogique en Afrique (Switzerland)

Equality and development cooperation: plenty of work to be done

Not many organisations and institutions include gender equality in conjunctural analyses of countries that will be hosting cooperation activities. These analyses help to formulate strategies and also design programmes and projects aimed at fostering sustainable, comprehensive development. Sadly, the trade union movement is no exception.

"Equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace."

Beijing Platform for Action, UN, 1995

It is still common practice in trade union circles to see gender inequality as separate, as something that has to be discussed in the context of "programmes for women", rather than as a social phenomenon that is all about us, and as a massive obstacle that has to be overcome. Some organisations, it is true, have made headway by carrying out activities that establish a link between the notions of development and equality, but they are in a minority.

EI believes that the issue of gender equality must be systematically incorporated into conjunctural analyses. However, we should not imagine that women are all the same, and the effect of any activity on women must be examined in terms of different groups such as women living on their own, migrant women, refugee women and elderly women. Otherwise, we are in danger of having a distorted, one-sided view of the situation we are trying to address. What is more, how can we properly assess the outcomes of a project, and the benefits it provides to all of our affiliates, if we are not aware of the role that gender inequality has played from the outset?

Fortunately, thanks to the work of numerous colleagues, university teachers and researchers, both men and women, we now have studies that draw attention to the blindness that pervades the issue in the field of development cooperation, and stress how this dimension must be worked in at all levels.

It is argued in many studies that, for the long-term realisation of such objectives as access for all men and women to high quality education, reduced levels of poverty, respect for human and trade union rights, environmental protection and the handing over of responsibility to women, cooperation strategies must help to influence relations between men and women in the right direction, and thereby make a key contribution to development.

Men and women have different social roles which, far from being set in stone, are in a constant state of evolution. These roles are determined by such factors as social background, culture, historical, religious and ethnic circumstances, life cycles and sexual orientation.

How much even-handed cooperation is there between men and women? How deep-rooted is the rivalry between them? Do women have places where they can think together, draw up proposals, and take initiatives that are then brought to everyone's attention with a view to integrating them into the union's overall policy?

When a project is at both the design and evaluation stages, it is important to be aware of information that helps us have a clearer idea of how men and women get involved in union structures, decision-making mechanisms, processes that set up union bodies, membership drives and training programmes.

Practical experience, not to mention numerous studies and documents, demonstrate that attempts to marginalise and isolate women have serious political and concrete repercussions. Doubt is cast on whether it is possible to achieve the objectives of certain development cooperation projects if a gender analysis is not done.

The initiative to link equality and development cooperation does not only focus on the situation of women, and it is not only women that the initiative is trying to change. The objective is to bring about a fundamental change in the uneven and unjust relations between the sexes, and achieve full citizenship for both men and women.

It follows that designing programmes and projects of development cooperation that include the notion of gender equality presents education unions with a challenge and a problem. However, the progress that we make will not be confined to our lifetime, and will contribute to the establishment of just, democratic societies.

The purpose of this article is to stimulate a larger number of EI affiliates to take the issue on board, and include the question of gender equality in all their activities linked to development cooperation. ♦



Marta Scarpato
Coordinator Equality



Regional women's seminar in Costa Rica.

AFRICA

Development cooperation has made its impact



The hope we had that democracy was going to open up all areas of human engagement has not been fully realised. In some countries, human and trade union rights are extensively abused, opposition parties are stifled either by law or by overzealous security agents and greater participation in governance by the people is still a dream.

Despite the difficult terrain in which African teachers' organisations still operate, development cooperation has made its impact. A good number of member organisations are now influential on the national scene. Through the training programmes, teachers have gained an increasing awareness of their rights; membership has increased, culminating into strong and highly representative organisations poised to influence national policies. Added to this is the increasing awareness by teachers and their organisations of their role in promoting quality education.

However, education unions in Africa are under serious threat. Globalisation, technological revolution, education reforms, structural adjustment programmes, debt crisis, civil strife are of great concern to African teachers. Human and trade union rights are extensively abused. Education is part of the solution to this crisis and development cooperation helps teachers and their organisations to meet the challenge.

The dilemma however, right from the beginning, was the perception of the concepts of "development" and "cooperation". Development for whom and for whose benefit? Who determines the mode of cooperation? What are the benchmarks for effective cooperation? How far is Africa using her own experience and background resources to engender development? Is there any dominance in the partnership? Who decides and who pays for what? These are some important questions that tend, whether deliberately or not, to influence development cooperation programmes.

For several decades, EI and its predecessor organisations have consistently maintained a high profile in Africa through development cooperation programmes that were putting the emphasis on assistance and search. By assisting, EI does not impose its ideas but shares experience and African teacher unions developed strong partnerships with colleagues in the "developed world".

Capacity building has been the key issue and countries such as Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Namibia, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Niger and Togo, to name a few, have been strengthened. Several organisations have reduced their level of dependency. Although it must be acknowledged that others have increased their dependency due to harsh political and economic conditions, as well as internal problems.

The multiplicity of unions in some countries has hampered their influence and power. Invariably co-operating organisations have been placed in a dilemma as to how to cope with such increasing diversity.

The delay in the payment or non-payment of teachers' salaries has weakened the financial base of member organisations, hence their lack of adequate self-financed programmes and activities. The objective of self-reliance therefore is still a dream.

Africa's current emphasis and approach to development cooperation is that of consolidating past gains made by organisations and building on them.

Conditions for successful development co-operation

- Clear policy perspective, conceived, addressed and respected by all parties;
- Clear profile of the co-operating partners with their real and imagined objectives, needs and concerns;
- Consensus on the approach to implementation including programme content, methodology, resource persons, funding;
- Improved co-ordination of the co-operating organisations to avoid duplicity;
- Improved evaluation system both internally and externally with a more efficient and reliable system for performance management and quality assurance;
- Regular consultations;
- Finally, we must be careful not to be too paternalistic.

We must work with organisations rather than individuals.

Funds must be channelled directly to project accounts and EI regional office must have the mandate to see how project accounts are operated. This middle man role of EI Africa is important to both co-operating organisations and the member organisations in order to avoid some of the pitfalls that have beset cooperation in the past.

Another challenge is the inability of some unions to undertake action, or certain types of activities, due to lack of personnel training or resources. The need for self examination by the unions on the one hand and that of surmounting the problem of unions' internal officers is crucial to co-operation.

Finally, some member organisations have far more programmes to contend with while others remain with little or nothing. Complaints about discrimination in terms of project allocation have risen in the past. Efforts should be made to classify organisations according to their level of development. In this way, EI would clearly identify the areas where more resources and programmes should be allocated. Of course without prejudice to the guidelines/criteria to which some co-operating organisations are bound when public funds are involved. Union funds could be made available to countries in desperate need for development enabling a fair distribution of development efforts creating an atmosphere of trust amongst all member organisations. ♦

Emanuel A. Fatoma
Coordinator
EI Regional Office for Africa

LATIN AMERICA

New enemies, but development cooperation keeps going

Development cooperation in Latin America has come of age. The 1980s were marked by support for trade unions in their struggles against military dictatorships, but development cooperation nowadays mainly focuses on helping teachers' organisations to resist the onslaught of neo-liberalism.



Following the damage caused by hurricane Mitch, EI has decided to coordinate the distribution of the funds being donated by teachers' organisations. The damage is extensive. In Nicaragua alone, 335 schools were destroyed, 6 teachers killed and 555 badly affected.
© Gamma

When EI was formed in 1993, the ruling dictatorships had already given way to elected governments and, following peace agreements, the majority of guerrilla movements were no longer engaged in armed struggle. With that, one of the components of development cooperation – support for trade unions fighting military dictatorships – came to an end.

Trade unions under military dictatorships

As one of the objectives of dictatorships was the elimination of all forms of socio-political opposition, a large number of Latin American trade unionists either disappeared or were murdered. Teachers' unions in the front line of civil opposition were among the most persecuted groups. Development cooperation was vital if education employees were to carry on their trade union activity, and their unions to develop independent, pluralist activity.

Paraguay was a good example of this: although the dictatorship had eliminated all forms of independent trade unionism, development cooperation aid was able to strengthen and develop the organic structures of education employees' trade union organisation at national level.

In many countries such as Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador, the trade union education and logistic and administrative support offered by development cooperation enabled teachers' unions to maintain their independence. It was not always easy, and many organisations were tempted by the revolutionary ideas and messages of guerrilla groups. Thanks to development cooperation, teachers' unions remained loyal to their

objectives and demands, and survived until after the revolution.

The neo-liberal foe

It would be a mistake to imagine that threats to independent, democratic, pluralist trade unionism dried up when the Cold War, the military dictatorships and armed conflict came to an end. Neo-liberalism is now the new enemy of the trade union movement in general, and of education employees' unions in particular since governments are their employers.

A large number of Latin American governments continue to see trade unions as an obstacle to the neo-liberalism that they are forcing on their countries as fast as they can. Trade unions form no part of the liberal strategy; that is why they have to be undermined, circumscribed or destroyed. This is particularly true of teachers' unions as they have been strongly opposed to attempts to "modernise" the education sector.

Teachers' organisations, with their longer tradition of struggle and greater capacity for drawing up claims, are probably the best structured trade unions. The liberalisation and privatisation of public education and the administrative restructuring of education have not progressed as speedily as governments predicted; this is due to the fact that trade union opposition has forced a mechanism that liberal governments thought they had so carefully maintained to come off the rails. To this day, most governments have an express or tacit policy of pursuing reform in education systems without caring one way or the other about the consent or opposition of trade unions in the sector.

Developing greater capacity for drawing up claims

Teachers' unions must play an active part in the reform of education systems by methodically making alternative suggestions in support of high quality public education available to all. This will require trade unionists to acquire training in, and knowledge of, the latest advances in teaching, principally with regard to new communication technology and deregulation and flexible arrangements at the workplace.

Over the last ten years, thanks particularly to the coordinating role played by the EI, inter-union cooperation has led to considerable progress in what were until recently no-go areas such as the training and involvement of women in trade union activities, combating child labour and all forms of discrimination, and respect for the values of Indigenous Peoples and their inclusion in trade union claims.

As in other regions, development cooperation is a steady, on-going process with long-term objectives. ♦



Napoleón Morazán
Chief Coordinator

EI Regional Office for Latin America

A learning experience for all



The Asia-Pacific Region is a very vast and diverse area with 59 member organisations representing a membership ranging from as small as one hundred to as large as two million. While a few of them are developed and effective, many are weak and do not operate as organisations but more as movements which champion issues from time to time. In many countries, there is a multiplicity of teacher organisations.

Structural problems

Most member organisations are financially weak and a number of them lack good governance. Some lack basic infrastructure and administration facilities. The dues which are paid are very minimal and collection procedures are extremely poor.

While women constitute more than 50% of teachers and members, their participation and role is small, especially in leadership and in decision-making bodies.

A number of organisations, particularly in the South Asian sub-region, have had the same leaders for a long time, some of them being the founder-leaders of organisations which are 30 years old. The leadership is not trained and is not capable of meeting the new challenges that teachers and education are facing. Many teachers do not want to be identified with unions and are more comfortable with professional teacher organisations.

The teachers and union members are ignorant about trade unions and their importance. Teacher organisations do not grow due to disunity and internal leadership conflicts. Many organisations are involved in partisan politics.

Systematic teacher organisation development project

The development cooperation activities undertaken in the region had to address the above concerns, which varied from organisation to organisation. In the early days, activities were carried out on an ad hoc basis which did not bring about the desired result. It is only after the introduction of a more systematic teacher organisation development project (TOD), implemented over a longer period of time, that tangible results were noticeable.

In the beginning, many of the older teacher leaders did not believe in courses and training but, after seeing the

results, more unions became keen to participate in training activities.

In the past, development cooperation focussed only on training for the top leaders. This was changed so that leaders at lower levels were also trained and, in some instances, the rank and file members. This strategy has shown tangible results and a number of unions will soon be able to take off and stand on their own feet.

Because most teacher organisations were weak, the thrust of the development cooperation activities was to strengthen and develop the organisations.

The project activities in these countries have addressed awareness building, leadership and union skills, union finance, promotion of women, disunity in the profession, including providing infrastructure facilities.

As a result of development cooperation over the last ten years, a number of organisations have developed and are now able to address the challenges they face. The result is as follows:

- in many organisations new and young leaders have emerged and replaced the old ones
- many organisations were able to establish infrastructure and a good administration
- better financial situation
- improved numerical strength
- joint projects in some countries help to bring unity
- Women's Network Activities were found to be very helpful in bringing about unity, cooperation and understanding besides promoting the gender issue.

Because of the cooperating organisations' selectivity, some needy organisations were left out. In a few instances, there is more than one cooperating organisation assisting an organisation, which can create duplication. The various reporting, evaluation and planning systems of the different organisations also cause confusion and problems sometimes. Resource persons with insufficient information and lacking in-depth knowledge about the organisations are sometimes not very helpful.

The EI regional office has been playing a significant role in co-ordinating the activities between cooperating and recipient organisations. A sizeable amount of time is required to oversee good implementation of the activities. A lot of supervision and monitoring is necessary to keep the activities in line with their concepts. ♦



Shashi Bala Singh
Coordinator
EI Regional Office for Asia and Pacific

The development of skills is still critical

The Caribbean holds a unique position in the EI structure in as much as it is part of the North American and Caribbean region. It consists of a chain of islands located directly between North and South America with a total of 20 EI-affiliated organisations.

The majority of these unions are over 50 years old, English speaking, with the exception of Haiti, and have a membership ranging from 66 to 19,000.

The fact that a teacher union is present on each respective island is a very significant development for teachers and education in the region. In addition to teacher unions at the national level, there is also a grouping called the Caribbean Union of Teachers, CUT, which represents the collective views of teacher unions in the region.

Role of development cooperation

Development cooperation has played a tremendous role in shaping and strengthening the teacher unions in the Caribbean. It has focused on professional development, trade union education and institutional support. To date, most unions have an office and some basic equipment. The majority of them have successfully negotiated a collective agreement to improve members' salaries and conditions of service. They are recognised and respected by their local governments and ministries of education. In recent years, the unions have managed to establish a very good working relationship with their education ministries.

Over the years, the unions have grown in strength with a great emphasis on professional development, membership education, and improved organisational structure. They have thus managed to provide a wide range of services and benefits to their members.

The teacher unions have been operating within serious financial constraints. In many instances their revenue is restricted to membership dues, which are limited given the level of salaries and potential membership. For example, a teacher union with an actual membership of 100 members and a potential of 150 members can only slightly increase its income. There are five of these unions in the region: Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Nevis, and St. Kitts. By virtue of its location, the Caribbean is a very popular tourist resort and consequently the cost of travel and accommodation is very high.

Teacher unions are very grateful for the support that they have received over the years from their cooperating partners.

Future of development cooperation in the Caribbean

At present and for the future, teacher unions need to develop their capacity to be sustainable. They need skills in the mobilisation and recruitment of members and in generating

the necessary revenue to render their organisation self-sufficient in material and human resources.

Another critical area for the leadership is the need to develop skills in negotiation and collective bargaining. Unions are very much concerned about their ability to generate enough resources to be able to sustain, maintain and also increase their capacity to function effectively. They are now prepared to move beyond their national boundaries to foster and strengthen the regional body in its ability to serve as a core for the collective leadership and representation of teachers on educational, social and economic issues.

In recent times, special emphasis has been placed on the training in gender issues. The Canadian Teachers' Federation has been instrumental in this program. The need for gender equality at all union levels is becoming a constant feature in teacher training. Another area of focus is the need to create a balance between professional and trade union activities, and training within the unions.

Development cooperation in the Caribbean will remain necessary for a long time, despite the positive effects it has had in teacher unions. The north-south cooperation of the past has given rise to greater south-south cooperation, and unions are exploring new ways of strengthening their south-south cooperation to be resourceful and sustainable. But they need support to acquire the skills to build their own internal capacity. A collective approach on the part of the cooperating organisations is essential. The cooperation should be systematic and based on the identification of the unions' needs. There are major areas to be addressed, such as the capacity-building of small unions, development of skills in collective bargaining, membership education and recruitment, as well as professional growth and development. Development cooperation should include evaluation and needs assessment of the teacher unions. EI has a major role to play in ensuring that its members benefit from this service, which is crucial for the development of teacher unions and the general advancement of education. ♦

Over the years, the unions have grown in strength with a great emphasis on professional development, membership education, and improved organisational structure.



Virginia Albert
EI Coordinator Caribbean