

Trade Unions for Social Dialogue

Trade Union Co-Financing Programme 2017-2020 Summary

CNV Internationaal Foundation is a civil society organisation, connected to the National Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CNV) in the Netherlands. CNV Internationaal has worked with trade unions in developing countries since its establishment in 1967. Together with its partner organisations, CNV Internationaal protects and promotes workers' rights by means of a consultative and coherent model, based on Christian social traditions. Social dialogue, trade union pluralism and workers' individual responsibility are key values. CNV Internationaal's mission is to contribute to Decent Work in developing countries by strengthening the position of workers in the formal and informal economy. CNV Internationaal focuses on social dialogue, labour rights in supply chains and youth employability.

Trends and challenges

Current trends and challenges in the world demonstrate the need for initiatives like Decent Work and the Trade Union Co-financing Programme (TUCP). Poverty, combined with vulnerable employment, results in high levels of inequality within countries and leads to a large number of working poor with little access to decent jobs. Women and children are disproportionately affected. Although inequality between countries is decreasing, inequality within countries is on the rise. Large numbers of young people are unemployed or in a job without substantial perspective. Worldwide, unemployment among young people is disturbingly high, which could result in social unrest and large migration flows.

TUCP 2017 – 2020 goals

There is a growing consensus that economic development, when it is not inclusive, is not sufficient to reduce poverty. A way out of poverty and a start to ending inequality is to provide more poor people with access to decent working and living conditions. The new TUCP 2017 – 2020 aims at addressing today's main global trends and challenges concerning human development – poverty, inequality and (youth) unemployment. The programme also contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Three outcomes

TUCP 2017 – 2020 is based on lessons learned in the current programme, "A World that Works", as well as prior experiences. It also takes into account the main needs of the regions the new TUCP will focus on. TUCP 2017 – 2020 will offer a completely different programme than the current TUCP and identifies three long-term outcomes: (1) Strengthening social dialogue, (2) Improving labour rights in supply chains and (3) Increasing youth employability. To enable trade unions to effectively participate in social dialogue processes - in general, in the supply chain and in addressing youth employability - the programme's intermediate outcome has been defined as 'strengthening the capacities of trade union partners'.

New approach

These outcomes contribute to the programme's overall impact, which is 'Reducing inequality and increasing inclusive governance in employment, income and inclusive economic development, leading to a fairer distribution of income and wealth for all.' To accomplish this, CNV Internationaal will change its working method from bilateral relationships to a triangular approach. Regional (and if needed inter-continental) cooperation will be central to the working model, in which CNV Internationaal will participate as a broker, facilitator and driver. Funding

will be provided for shared themes in a regional context. Preferred partners will be assessed to play an important role in shared learning and project management.

Theory of Change

CNV Internationaal has recorded its Theory of Change in TUCP 2017 - 2020. A central feature is social dialogue, in which trade unions have a unique position as social partners and representative membership organisations with the ability to conclude binding agreements. Social dialogue is both an objective in itself and an instrument for implementing objectives. This approach is CNV Internationaal's key added value to the new programme. Effective social dialogue reduces inequality, provides legitimacy and ownership to public policies and enhances participatory democracy based on accountability, transparency and policy oversight. Furthermore, agreements reached through social dialogue are sustainable because of their negotiated nature.

Outcome 1: Strengthening social dialogue

In order to strengthen social dialogue, several intermediate steps are required. Firstly, the government needs to ensure that the infrastructure for social dialogue is in place. This is crucial: without proper infrastructure, effective social dialogue can hardly take place. Secondly, the social partners need to agree on the mandates of the dialogue partners and respect the fundamental freedoms as laid down by the ILO. Social partners need to trust each other to be able to conclude agreements. Good quality proposals by trade unions, skilled and well-prepared negotiators, and committed social partners during the implementation of policies and agreements are all essential to build trust and provide a conducive environment for social dialogue.

Where needed, CNV Internationaal and its partner organisations will apply specific advocacy strategies to help meet the preconditions for social dialogue and to influence negotiation in the process. CNV Internationaal and the trade union partners adopt the 'insider approach' towards decision makers: advocacy strategies are applied that focus on constructive arguments, joint learning, cooperation and persuasion. If this approach fails, the 'outsider approach' will be applied, i.e. campaigning, confronting, forced changes etc.

Outcome 2: Improving labour rights in the supply chains

This second outcome is focused at the following rights of low wage workers in private sector supply chains (formal and informal workers): to organise and bargain collectively, to decent wages, to safe and respectful working conditions, to gender equity and to freedom from workplace discrimination. CNV Internationaal aims at improving labour rights in the following sectors: textiles, banking, agro-food industry, construction, wood, metal and, potentially, mining. In these sectors, CNV Internationaal is well positioned to influence decision-making for the benefit of workers.

To improve labour rights within these sectors, various intermediate steps have been defined.

1. Through action taken by consumers, trade unions, NGOs and business/employer organisations, companies will be made aware of the benefits of responsible business conduct, which will encourage them to negotiate on Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) in agreements.
2. The Dutch covenants that are currently being negotiated via multi-stakeholder dialogue are an important vehicle for progress. The selected sectors are the point of departure for interventions with multinationals and/or small-medium enterprise in these formal and/or informal supply chains.
3. TUCP 2017 – 2020 advocates the ratification and compliance with ILO conventions and the formulation of recommendations if rights are violated.

In addition, governments need to be monitored on the development and implementation of National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights by seeking cooperation with European and national parliaments. Furthermore, the negotiation and implementation of EU Free Trade Agreements needs to be monitored, with special attention to assuring implementation of

monitoring mechanisms through Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the European Parliament (EP).

Outcome 3: Increasing youth employability

The aim of this outcome is to increase access to decent jobs for disadvantaged youth, by actively participating in policy dialogue on youth employability and the development of personal skills. The private sector's commitment, in terms of vocational training and internship programmes is relevant as well. Various intermediate steps are required to reach this outcome. Trade unions and youth organisations need to build negotiation power, which they need to convince governments to develop (youth) employability policies. Government policies need to address the needs and interests of youth and should be based on consultations with trade unions and youth organisations. Furthermore, budget needs to be dedicated to implementing initiatives and programmes geared towards youth employability. Trade unions need a strong voice for the youth to increase the attention on youth employability in negotiations with the private sector. Skills development programmes by employers can be encouraged via multi-stakeholder initiatives on employability, promoting the role of the private sector. Plus, companies will be made aware of and will take up their role in developing youth employability. In the new programme, particular attention will be paid to representing young (potential) workers in social dialogue.

Intermediate outcome: building capacities

In conclusion, the social dialogue approach in TUCP 2017 – 2020 contributes to strengthening social dialogue (outcome 1), improving labour rights (outcome 2) and increasing youth employability (outcome 3). Prior to this, the trade union partners need to build their capacities (intermediate outcome). Therefore, CNV Internationaal has decided to change its method from a bilateral to a regional model. Peer-to-peer learning and sharing of experiences between partner organisations across borders have proven to be highly valuable for results at a national level. The new programme will further strengthen this triangular approach. CNV Internationaal will also focus specifically on leadership capacity development. Under the current TUCP, an extensive leadership programme has been developed, which will be implemented with all partners in the next four years. Financial management will be a focal point as well, to reduce the partner organisations' financial dependence. In the past few years, CNV Internationaal developed several interventions for strengthening the partner organisations' self-financing capacities, such as improvement of financial management within organisations, improvement of membership registration systems (while increasing the number of paying members), the development of self-financing strategies, joint institutional fundraising and the development of fundraising capacities.

Participating countries

In the next four years 2017-2020, the activities of CNV Internationaal will take place in 3 regions South-East Asia, Western and Northern Africa and Latin America. The programme countries CNV Internationaal selected for the new TUCP programme are Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Colombia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, Bolivia, Benin, Senegal, Guinea, Niger, Mali, and Tunisia, The selection is a mix of countries where CNV Internationaal has extensive experience and an established network, as well as new countries, namely Vietnam, Mali, Tunisia, Peru, Bolivia and Nicaragua. Best practices of other countries (resource countries) might be included in the newly adopted regional approach.

Capitalisation of knowledge

Lastly, TUCP 2017 - 2020 will capitalise on the knowledge that is developed throughout the programme. Valuable programme results are gathered in an integrated process in order to share knowledge and raise awareness among key stakeholders about the achievements of TUCP 2017 - 2020. The capitalisation of knowledge also entails (re)using and/or transferring these results. Research reports will be shared, results disseminated and knowledge will be made easily accessible through social media and CNV Internationaal's website.