



SOCIAL PROTECTION 4 ALL SOLIDAR MEMBERS IN ACTION



DECENT WORK 4 ALL

SOLIDAR members work in more than 100 countries in the world together with independent, representative and accountable community-based organisations and social movements, social economy actors (namely workers' cooperatives), independent trade unions and local NGOs committed to promote decent work for all with a focus on the most vulnerable and at risk of exclusion groups.

In the framework of the EYD2015 month dedicated to Decent Jobs, this Newsletter's item provides an overview of how SOLIDAR members are bringing about real changes in the life of thousands of people by

- 1) Supporting in-country partners to organise the most vulnerable and more at risk of exclusion workers;
- 2) Campaigning at the national, regional and international level for the full realisation and the implementation of International Labour Standards – in particular freedom of association.

According to SOLIDAR, freedom of association is essential to achieve decent work and the full realisation of the human right to social security.

In this newsletter: [Solidar Suisse work with farmworkers and 'own account workers' in Nicaragua](#), [decent work for traditional mineral diggers in Katanga \(DRC\)](#), [global advocacy to support sugar cane cutters in El Salvador](#), [decent work in the MENA region: focus on Jordan](#), [decent work in the Dominican Republic](#) and [decent work for women comment from Silvana Cappuccio, CGIL, Italy](#).

DECENT WORK FOR THE MOST PRECARIOUS: SOLIDAR SUISSE WORK WITH FARMWORKERS AND 'OWN ACCOUNT WORKERS' IN NICARAGUA

SOLIDAR SUISSE

For SOLIDAR member Solidar Suisse, access to decent work is a core element to combat social inequality and poverty.

To that end Solidar Suisse supports the improvement of working conditions, promotes compliance with labour laws and advocates for social security for particularly vulnerable people. In Nicaragua the most precarious workers are farmers and 'own account workers', which is how taxi drivers and street and market vendors call themselves. Many of which are women.

While the country's 'informal sector' and exports of agricultural products are the main pillars of the economy, coffee or sugarcane plantations often fail to pay the legal minimum wage and street vendors face the danger to be driven from their stalls.

Legal advice and social dialogue: In order to improve working and living conditions of these precarious workers, Solidar supports the efforts of two trade union federations: The Association of Rural Workers (ATC) in northern Nicaragua and the Confederation of Own Account Workers (CTCP) in the capital. Together with Solidar, ATC has facilitated diploma courses for rural workers to become legal advisors. Meanwhile ten offices across the country provide legal advice to more than 20,000 farmers each year. ATC lawyers accompany over 2,000 legal actions of violations of labour rights per year, with a success rate of over 80%!



Moreover, in a social dialogue with the Ministry of Labour and with the private sector, ATC also campaigns for increased minimum wages, and better child-care facilities in plantations. In 2014, together with the national institute for social security, ATC has opened a counter in the northern rural areas of Nicaragua. Since then, social security contributions for farmers have increased with 18%.

Access to social security: The CTCP campaigns for the introduction of access to the social security system for own account workers. In the capital city of Managua, CTCP has pushed through the construction of sanitary facilities near street stalls and has obtained licenses for a small market.

In their daily engagements, CTCP activists have come to experience previously unknown social recognition. Because they make a positive difference to the security and running of frequently chaotic bus stations, markets and road intersections, they are valued by authorities and the wider public alike as reliable persons for any problems or complaints. Now the population recognises their good-quality and transparent services.



This year, negotiations on the inclusion of own account workers into the national social security system have started.

These efforts show that the **improvement of living and working conditions of the most precarious and poor workers can be reached by well-organized workers who advocate for their rights and engage in small concrete improvements as well as in**

political and social dialogue on the national level.

Photo 1) Coffee picker (name not known) on a coffee plantation in the northern department of Jinotega in Nicaragua. On this plantation, ATC could form an organised group of workers. Meanwhile, child-care in the peak season (harvest) is organised by the farm management, the quality of the daily three meals has improved, and minimum wages are paid. ©Solidar Suisse 2013.

Photo 2) Rosa Elena: street vendor on a bus station in Managua. ©Solidar Suisse 2013.

PROMOTING DECENT WORK FOR TRADITIONAL MINERAL DIGGERS IN KATANGA (DRC)

SOLIDARITÉ SOCIALISTE

With the aim of improving living conditions and defend economic and social rights of thousands of men and women in Africa, Latin America and Palestine, Solidarité Socialiste, a Belgian NGO and member of SOLIDAR, promotes decent work working together with its local partner organisations.

Working in cooperation with the Belgian trade union FGTB, Solidarité Socialiste focuses, among others, on capacity building for representative workers organisations and provides support to organise workers empowering them to voice their demands and defend their rights.

In Katanga, the Southern province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Solidarité Socialiste works with the CENADEP to support artisanal mining diggers (around 1.500 people) to organise themselves into democratic associations and networks with the aim of improving their living conditions and enforce their rights.

The region is rich of precious minerals such as copper, cobalt, zinc, gold and radioactive uranium reserves that guarantee the 30% of the DRC's overall budget.

It is estimated that the artisanal mining sector counts on more than 2 million workers in the DRC. It produces 90% of the exported minerals and it represents the direct and indirect source of income of 20% of the Congolese population*. Their working conditions are extremely harsh: they extract the minerals often with bare hands and no safety equipment in tunnels that can go down to 80 meters, without secure structure, without air circulation, without measure and hygiene and illuminated by the beam of a flashlight. Their income depends on the trader to whom they sell the minerals and the number of intermediaries that drain their earnings. They live in villages without water, electricity or minimal hygienic conditions, and under constant threat of deportation.

In order to raise awareness on the living and working conditions of these workers, Solidarité Socialiste has produced a web documentary. It gives voice to the diggers' will to keep organising to defend their economic and social rights, to get access to social protection and decent jobs.

You can find the web report [here](#).



*The Democratic Republic of Congo is included in the geographical scope of the European Commission legislative proposal on "Supply-Chain Due Diligence" standards. Recently the EP voted for EU importers of tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold for manufacturing consumer goods to be certified by the EU to ensure that they do not fuel conflicts and human rights abuses in conflict areas.

GLOBAL ADVOCACY TO SUPPORT SUGAR CANE CUTTERS IN EL SALVADOR

FOS-SOCIALIST SOLIDARITY

SOLIDAR member FOS-Socialist solidarity is active in more than ten countries in Africa, Latin America and the Arab Countries to support democratic and representative labour movement organisations to better defend the rights of most vulnerable workers.

In El Salvador, FOS supports the *Coordinadora sindical de trabajadores azucareros*.

Historically, the sugarcane cut workers (over 30,000 people in the time of harvest) have not enjoyed fundamental trade union and labour rights such as freedom of association, social security, fair wages, adequate working tools and protective equipment. To overcome this situation and give a voice to these workers, on 22 September 2014, the trade union SITRACAÑA was established.

"Independent trade union organizations are key to ensure that workers, informal or formal, have decent work, with access to social protection", Noé Nerio (Coordinadora Sindical de Trabajadores Azucareros, El Salvador).

In January this year, SITRACAÑA filed a complaint to the Committee on Freedom of Association of the ILO. The case concerns the violation of the trade union protection rights, enshrined in national and international legislation (namely Convention N. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise), to the detriment of the members of SITRACAÑA Governing Body and all its members and affiliates.

To support SITRACAÑA, FOS together with SOLIDAR, Solidar Suisse and Solidarité socialiste, organised a global lobbying action to put pressure on the El Salvador government, ahead and during the ILO Conference (ILO ILC), in order to push it to

1. **Proceed to the recognition of SITRACAÑA representatives** in order to allow

workers to claim, through their trade union, their most basic rights and thereby to improve their living conditions and those of their families.

2. Commit to establish a **tripartite social dialogue** to analyse and improve the working conditions of sugar cane cutters and define joint alternatives.

During the ILO-ILC, thanks to the international pressure on the government, the Minister for employment and social security officially engaged to recognise the trade union SITRACANA and to set up a tripartite dialogue for the sugar sector.

Only through a genuine social dialogue, the working conditions of sugar cane workers can improve and the lives of thousands of people be saved, said Noé Nerio.

- The demands of SITRACANA to the Government from El Salvador can be found [here](#).
- The letter from the Government of El Salvador can be found [here](#).
- To know more about sugar cane workers in El Salvador, watch the [FOS video](#) (in Spanish with Dutch subtitles).

FIGHTING FOR DECENT WORK ACROSS THE MENA REGION: FOCUS ON JORDAN

SOLIDAR MEMBERS AND PARTNERS IN THE MENA REGION

Waged and salaried employment has risen over the past decade in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) while both young people and women have experienced more unemployment. The region is recording worrying levels of regional job gap, social protection deficits, expansion of vulnerable informal economy work coupled with increased violations of freedom of association and criminalisation of collective bargaining rights.

SOLIDAR has launched a regional programme, together with its members and partners active in the field, **to advance freedom of association, decent work and social protection across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region**. The program brings together civil society organizations (CSOs) and independent trade unions in the MENA region to foster dialogue with national governments and the EU institutions, develop in-field advocacy initiatives to promote policy change.

The right to organise and the right to strike are the essential basis to ensure decent work. In the last years, employer representatives have been questioning decades of international legal recognition of the right to strike under ILO Convention No. 87. This Convention, which guarantees freedom of association, is one of the most important global human rights treaties. In the MENA countries, SOLIDAR Members partners are working to defend them.

JORDAN - Phenix Center mobilizing against Criminalisation of Right to Strike: The Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies, the Jordanian member of the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), is mobilising CSOs and independent trade unions in Jordan to raise awareness about the criminalisation of the right to strike in Jordan.

The recent amendments of the Jordanian Penal Code proposed by the Government a few weeks ago have led to a criminalisation of the rights to strike. These provisions and amendments (see, for example, provision of Art. 183 of the Penal Code, under which workers employed in vital sectors will be imprisoned if they go on strike) represent a clear violation of international standards, and are in substantial conflict with a number of legal, political, social and economic principles which are considered the basis of citizens' human rights.

The phenix center has prepared a memorandum (in Arabic), in order to progressively collect signatures from CSOs, Jordanian Trade Unions, Jordanian professional associations, in addition to democracy and human rights activists, to mobilise against the entry into force of the proposed amendments. To get involved, please contact [Ahmad Awad](#).

PROMOTING DECENT WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, WOMEN AND MIGRANTS THROUGH SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL POLICIES: ISCOD AND ISCOS PROGRAM IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ISCOD AND ISCOS

In the Dominican Republic Municipality of Higüey, SOLIDAR members – the Italian NGO ISCOS (Trade Union Institute for Development Cooperation) and the Spanish NGO ISCOD – work together with local authorities and trade unions - the Autonomous Trade Union Confederation (CASC), the National Confederation of Dominican Workers (CNTD), the National Confederation of Trade Union Unity (CNUS)- to promote a local sustainable development model aiming at strengthening social capital, poverty reduction, social and economic inclusion of young people, women and migrants.

The program “Higüey Participa”, funded by the European Union, targets 3600 people that will be involved in trainings and vocation education and training on entrepreneurship and self-employment with a focus on social economy. Moreover, 60 grassroots organizations will be strengthened through organizational development and trainings of leaders. The general public will benefit, among others, from the establishment of an Observatory for Decent Work where they will be involved in the identification of policies needed; the constitution of a competitive fund for CSOs to fund micro community projects.

[Here](#) you can find more information.

PARTICIPA HIGÜEY
Un Proyecto de ISCOS con el Apoyo de la Unión Europea

ES LA HORA DE DAR EL PRIMER PASO

NOS PLACE INVITARLE AL LANZAMIENTO DEL FONDO CONCURSABLE EN APOYO A LAS INICIATIVAS DE LAS ORGANIZACIONES DE BASE
MAS INFORMACION EN: info@participahigüey.org

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CNUS ISOOD
SALÓN CONCEJO MUNICIPAL MARTES 30 DE JUNIO DE 2015
AYUNTAMIENTO DE HIGÜEY HORA: 9:30 A.M.

DECENT WORK FOR WOMEN: ESSENTIAL TO FIGHT INEQUALITY.

A COMMENT FROM SILVANA CAPPuccio, CGIL, ITALY

CGIL

With the ongoing negotiations on sustainable development goals and the evaluation of what has been achieved after 20 years from the adoption of the Beijing Platform, 2015 has the potential to be a year of great importance for women in the world.

Women contribute hugely to their families, the economy and the society. Nevertheless, if we look into the current status of women, at the global, regional or national level, many challenges remain that have been even further consolidated by the recent economic and social crisis.

Even European observers agree that today's poverty is directly linked to the '3Gs' factors: gender, geography and generation. This implies that economic growth targets can only be reached if the potential of women is unlocked and if the inequalities between women and men – both in terms of quantity and quality- are reduced.

According to the [ODI](#), equality between women and men, and girls and boys, (from diverse groups) is the most effective strategy to enable the poorest and most marginalised people and communities to improve their situations. Investments in gender equality yield the highest returns of all development investments. On average, women reinvest 90% of their income in their families and communities, compared to 30 to 40% reinvested by men.

At the same time, the risk of poverty can be fought by increasing the participation of women in the labour market due to the following facts:

- Women represent 40% of the global labour force and 43% of the world's agriculture labour. Despite progress, pervasive and persistent gender differences remain in productivity and earnings across different sectors and jobs: globally, women's labour is undervalued and their wages are 70% to 90% of men's ([ODI 2015](#)). In Europe, the average difference is 18%. The reasons can be synthesised as follows: a gap between education and professional career, occupational segregation (especially in the health sector, education and the public sector), family burdens and responsibilities and job insecurity.
- Women' work is concentrated in insecure, atypical and part-time jobs. Moreover, an unequal division of labour within the family and the lack of public services for children and older people are all elements that penalise access to the labour market and career progression.
- Women are overrepresented within the most vulnerable parts of the population: young people, over 50 years, migrants, disadvantaged workers and those with few qualifications.
- Women are under-represented at political level: a flagrant injustice in democratic terms.

This is an anachronistic imbalance, a waste of capacities and resources and an obstacle to development. Relegating women at the margins of economic and political life prevent the development of the society as a whole.

To improve women representation within the labour movement, CGIL supports the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) lead campaign "Count us in!" that aims at reaching more women in trade union leadership positions and concerted efforts to organise and mobilise them in unions. Watch Silvana Cappuccio's [video](#).

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