



Streetnet International publishes this newsletter in four languages offering affiliates information and opinions

NEW MANIFESTO



New Manifesto workshop held in New Delhi during July

New Manifesto Regional Campaign Planning Workshop-New Delhi

The National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) organised the second of a series of regional planning workshops for the New Manifesto Campaign on behalf of StreetNet International. The workshop was held in New Delhi on the 8-9 July and brought together representatives of street vendors' associations from Bangladesh, Korea, Nepal, and India. The objective of the workshop was to improve campaigning skills, develop national action plans around the New Manifesto and explore possible region-wide actions around the New Manifesto.

The workshop commenced with participants sharing some examples of successful campaigns. The National Association of Street Vendors (NASVI) from Nepal, explained that when the government began to evict thousands of vendors from Kathmandu in 2008, they started organising a

campaign of protests including the threat of closure of all the markets. In response, the Kathmandu mayor agreed to talk to them and promised that within 6 months, the municipality would draw up a vendors' policy. However, since that time the government still continues to evict vendors in order to widen streets and "beautify" the city. So NASVI will need to start to campaign again.

NASVI explained that in India, they have been running different campaigns for the last 12 years. The current major campaign is to press for the adoption of a Central Law for Street Vendors. In March and April 2011, NASVI launched a postcard campaign. All the member organisations of NASVI were asked to send postcards to the National Minister of Urban Housing and Poverty Alleviation calling for the Central Law. Over 2 million post cards were sent out. ►

22 NEW MANIFESTO CAMPAIGN

The workshop identified the following key campaign areas:

- Strengthening vendor organisations with special focus on women vendors
- Registration of vendors and space allocations by the municipality so that evictions would end
- Basic services for vendors, such as drinking water, sanitation, waste management
- Social security, access to health services, child care facilities
- A fair taxation system
- A specific law to cover the rights and obligations of street vendors
- Skills training, legal training and access to credit and
- Integration of street vendors into urban development plans.

Each organisation then drew up its own action plan on the New Manifesto. More information about the action plans can be found at the StreetNet International Campaigns blog site - (streetnet.campaigns.blogspot.com)

The workshop concluded with a discussion around alliance-building with other street vendors' organisations in the region. A coordinating committee was set up to advance this work. Dr. Rahman from the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, NASVI coordinator Arbind Singh and NASVI Programme Manager, Vinod Simon, facilitated the workshop. ■



Korean delegation

KENASVIT hosts the New Manifesto Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya



Delegates at the New Manifesto Workshop

The New Manifesto Campaign Workshop was held in Nairobi, Kenya, on the 18-19 July 2011. The event, funded by Street Net International and hosted by StreetNet affiliate, the Kenyan National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders (KENASVIT), was successful in bringing together participants from various African nations to develop campaign plans of action to create a living manifesto that voices the demands and rights of informal traders across the globe. The African nations represented included Ghana, Swaziland, Tanzania, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This event was the third campaign planning workshop organised this year, as earlier there had been a Latin American workshop in March 2011 and an Asian workshop in early July 2011. There are plans for a fourth workshop in West Africa in early 2012.

The workshop was opened with an inspiring and informative address from Richard Muteti, the informal sector representative on the Youth Board in Kenya, who has played a large role in designing and pushing for the Medium and Small Enterprises Bill in Kenya, an important piece of legislation that will create a much-needed legal framework for the informal sector. Pat Horn, Street Net's International Coordinator, then outlined the purpose and phases of the New Manifesto Campaign. She emphasised that the campaign is a bottom-up collection of demands and rights from informal traders to ultimately create a national manifesto that will be incorporated into an international one. Participants went on to discuss elements of a successful campaign, while sharing and comparing campaign experiences across issues and countries. ►

Afterwards, the workshop split into two groups to brainstorm and synthesise demands for street and market vendors, an exercise that will certainly be useful to replicate during the large-scale collection of inputs from informal traders. By the end of the day, the group had classified their demands into overarching themes, and created a national campaign plan of action for each country represented.

On the second day, participants presented their national campaign plans of action. The following sessions discussed tools for the plans. Anne Matondo from the Democratic Republic of Congo, outlined tools for action, and then there was a briefing on social media tools for the campaign. The plans of action were discussed in light of the issues brought

up during the course of the workshop, including the media, the consideration of group-specific demands (women, youth, persons with disabilities and persons living with HIV and AIDS), and the process of creating the manifesto itself. The workshop was closed with a passionate address from Professor Winnie Mitullah, whose research and efforts contributed significantly to the founding and success of KENASVIT. After reflecting on experiences and knowledge gained, Pat Horn and Simon Nasieku gave some closing words. In the afternoon, participants went to Muthurwa Market to meet with vendors at their workplaces. Overall, the workshop was a huge success and KENASVIT expressed its gratitude for the opportunity to host such an event. ■

KENASVIT organises seminars for disabled street vendors



Street vendors with disabilities get informed about their rights at a seminar in Kenya Kisumu.

Many disabled street vendors, like other people living with disabilities in Kenya, are not aware of their rights as stipulated in the 2007 Disability Act. Even though the government recognises equal rights for all citizens, the disabled still feel marginalised and this is partly because of lack of information on their rights. To try and address this, KENASVIT, with support from one of its partners-UUSC- organised several seminars to sensitise its members living with disabilities on their rights as stipulated in the Disability Act of 2007 and in the new Constitution. Seminars were held in Nairobi, Machakos, Migori and Kisumu.

On 22 September in Migori and on September 23 in Kisumu, members and potential members of KENASVIT participated in seminars for disabled persons. Salome Kimata, director of United Disability Empowerment in Kenya (UDEK), gave a thorough assessment of the Disability Act from 2003. This included an examination of the establishment of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, how it secures rights and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities, equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities, as well as provide for matters necessary with respect to the Disability Act.

Although the Act was enacted in 2003, many workers were not aware of its existence and have therefore not been able to claim their rights. Ms. Kimata stressed the importance of knowing this Act. As she said, 'information is power!'

The rights that persons with disabilities should enjoy, according to the Act, place them on an equal footing with persons with no disabilities. This is not because persons with disabilities are special, but because they have special needs. Among the rights are the right to education, the right to dignity, the right to accessibility, mobility and assistance, the right to information, housing, to own property and the right to justice. The Act further encourages employers to hire persons with disabilities and motivates them by giving businesses an economic incentive of a 25% reimbursement of a disabled person's wage. At the same time, it is required that companies have 5% disabled persons among its employees. Besides this, a person with disabilities is exempted from paying income taxes. In order for persons with disabilities to be able to enjoy these rights, they must register as such. At the seminars in both Migori and Kisumu, Ms. Kimata strongly spurred the participants to be proactive and take advantage of their disability. To register and to download the Disability Act, please visit: <http://ncpwd.go.ke/recourses/>. ■



REPORT: SEMINAR ON INTERNAL DEMOCRACY IN ORGANISATIONS

Between 12-14 July 2011, CNTS and SUDEMS, both affiliates of StreetNet International (SI) in Senegal, organised a seminar on internal democracy in organisations. Brainstorming on union democracy, SI presentations and group work, helped the participants to examine the organisation, functioning and activities of their unions in relation to their constitutions and related commitments, such as the regularity of congresses, election of leaders, other statutory meetings such as the Council or Executive meetings, payment of fees including annual SI affiliation fees, regular financial audits, management transparency, information and training, women's leadership, services rendered to members, dialogue with social partners, and the participation of women (at least 50%) for activities funded by SI.

After this step which gave an idea of the current democratic role of each organisation, participants made recommendations for better prospects of organisational democracy, and pledged to closely monitor the situation in their respective organisations. Actions to be undertaken include facilitating access to information by members, ensuring payment of membership dues, holding regular meetings, involving members in various activities, organising visits to workplaces, holding conventions in accordance with periods specified in statutes, and holding training seminars.

Twenty members of CNTS and SUDEMS (of which 15 were women) from several localities in Senegal, participated in the activities that took place at the CNTS training centre for domestic women, inaugurated on the 26 May 2011. All participants said they were satisfied with the discussions of the central theme as these helped them to understand the meaning of union democracy.

The events were inaugurated by Mody Guiro, Secretary-General of CNTS, in the presence of Fatou Bintou Yafa, President of CNTS' Women's Committee. Mamadou Fall, Secretary General of SUDEMS, spoke on behalf of the co-ordinating committee of the two StreetNet International affiliates in Senegal. Mr. Assane Thiam, President of the Federation of Aprons Merchants of Senegal, also spoke on behalf of the street vendor members of his organisation. The Director General of the Central Fish Market was represented at the ceremony by his Human Resources Director.

Visits were made after the 3 days of seminars. The first visit was organised at Pickine in a suburb of Dakar, where the central fish market which supplies several countries in West Africa with fish, is located. The second visit was organised at the site of Pencumè, Senegal. It is a centre for fish processing, specialising in dried fish. The centre is run by a women's co-operative. The last visit was to Dakar's central market called Sandaga. Here we met and talked with women vendors plying their trade, along Lamine Gueye Avenue. ■

WOMEN STREET AND MARKET VENDORS OF KINDIA COMMIT TO COMMEMORATING ALL AFRICA DAY.

StreetNet International organised two training workshops in Guinea. The first was held in the capital city of Conakry, from the 13-15 June. The second took place between the 17-19 June in Kindia, a town 135 km away from Conakry.

The main objective of the workshops was to strengthen the capacity of leaders of associations of the informal economy, to organise. Participants themselves examined common problems, and identified partners with whom they could discuss these. They identified the following as the main problems informal workers in Guinea face, viz high municipal taxes, lack of market spaces, markets built without storage facilities and toilets, unhealthy market environments, regular harassment on the streets by the municipal police, inadequate income, lack of access to credit, illiteracy of many members, and lack of training for the management of their activities.

The participants particularly expressed their satisfaction about getting information relating to StreetNet International's activities. They decided to make every effort to ensure that All Africa Day on the 25 May each year would be a day of activism in the future. Although the date had already passed this year, the women participants at the seminar in Kindia, pledged that they would organise a demonstration to demand negotiations with the local municipal authorities to discuss problems they encounter in the market. The StreetNet organiser for the region, Sibailly Douhouré who had facilitated the two workshops, strongly encouraged them to make this event a reality, and expressed StreetNet's readiness to provide necessary support.



Both seminars were attended by a total of 40 participants of whom 32 were women street and market vendors. They led most of the groups formed during the group work.

This is the first time StreetNet organised local activities in Guinea for the members of CNTG whose leaders and participants expressed their appreciation for this gesture of international solidarity. After the two workshops, visits were made to the market in Kindia and the headquarters of the association of handcraft makers of Kindia. The tours that were conducted in Conakry included the Medina market where many street vendors are being organised in association with the CNTG. Another visit was paid to a co-operative that has a small unit manufacturing traditional soap in Conakry. The co-operative also carries out dyeing, horticulture and the marketing of its products. It has about 80 members.

The town of Kindia, which hosted the second workshop, is the headquarters of the local union of workers in Kindia. Its role is to co-ordinate the activities of the different sectors represented, including the informal economy. According to Elhadj Alsény Camara, the local secretary of the union in Kindia, street vendors play an important role in the trade union of the region. ■



Participants at training workshops held in Conakry and Kindia



REPORT ON MEETING OF STREET VENDORS, AND FAIR AND MARKET WORKERS IN SOUTH AMERICA

INCASUR, Buenos Aires 17 and 18 March, 2011

Oscar Silva, StreetNet International President and Secretary General of SIVARA, Argentina, welcomed participants to the Meeting. He provided background information regarding the meeting, including that relating to the establishment of StreetNet International (SI) in Latin America. He said that because of the importance of Central American organisations, SI had created a focal point organisation for the region in 2009, the responsibility for which falls on CTCP, Nicaragua. With this information in mind, the Meeting sought to promote the incorporation of new organisations into StreetNet International. To this end, representatives of organisations linked to this issue in Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, were invited, as well as a special guest from Colombia. COB Bolivia had also been invited but they could not attend.

The meeting was attended by the following organisations:

SIVARA, Argentina, represented by Oscar Silva, and 15 members of this Union

ACESP, Sao Paulo, Brazil, represented by José Artur Aguiar and Janette Pereira da Silva

SINTRALOC, Chile, represented by Hardy Vallejos Ramirez and Bertha Rojas

UGT-I, and the Organising Secretariat member of CUT, Colombia, represented by Pedro Luis Ramírez, UGT-I, Alfredo Manchola Rojas, UGT-I, and Gilberto Martinez, CUT, respectively

FOTSSIEH, Honduras, represented by Vilma Arevalo

CTCP, Nicaragua, represented by Adrian Martinez, Orlando Mercado and Jessenia Lovo

FNOTNA-CROC, Mexico, represented by Margarita Martínez López

SINTECOSIN, Paraguay, represented by Gumercindo Galeano and Maria Cespedes

UNAPESCA, Paraguay, represented by Vertedero Cateura and Bernardo Zarate

AFFE, Uruguay, represented by Lucia Melnikov Gadola

PIVCU, Uruguay, represented by Fernando Gallardo.

The event was also attended by:

CSA, represented by Laerte Teixeira, head of the Secretariat of Social Policies.

ISCOD / UGT Spain, represented by Aida Rodriguez, their representative in South America.

FNV Netherlands, represented by Miriam Berlak, FNV's representative for Latin American countries.

During the two-day event, the experiences of individual countries were discussed and different patterns of work identified. The draft strategy on Social Solidarity Economy (ESS) was also discussed and adopted.

Results

1. A structured survey was conducted on the characteristics of the various organisations.
2. It was agreed to incorporate the issue of direct sales workers and their issues.
3. There was agreement to commence work on developing an archive of documentation on national and local experiences, and the regulation of workers represented by StreetNet. It was also considered important that an analysis of the new constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador should be included, with organisations already contacted asked to conduct such assessment.
4. Drawing on the background and experiences of South America and Europe presented at the meeting, it was agreed to promote similar initiatives in sub-regional coordinating and union councils (CCSCS in the Southern Cone, CCSA in the Andean region, and CSUACC and PSCC in Central America and the Caribbean).
5. The Social Solidarity Economy (ESS) approach proposed by CTCP-Nicaragua was considered significant for the work of StreetNet International in Latin America and the Caribbean and will be incorporated as a subject of future activities.
6. The idea of creating a library of films on topics presented by StreetNet was raised, its starting point being the two films presented at the meeting. SIVARA offered to edit the material collected in previous seminars. ISCOD-UGT offered to incorporate one prepared in 2009 about their experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean. ■

CTCP-FNT elects a new National Executive Committee

The Second Extraordinary General Congress of the Confederation of Self-Employed Workers was held in the auditorium of Solidarity of the General Confederation of Education Workers, CGTEN-ANDEN. It was attended by delegates from six federations of the CTCP-FNT.

Delegates from trade union organisations of the self-employed from Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, belonging to RED SEICAP, attended the event as special guests.

The Congress made changes to the statutes, unanimously approved the merger of three new federations and elected a new National Executive Committee.

The participating federations were: the Federation of Money Exchangers of Nicaragua, the Mobile Phone Sellers' Workers' Federation, the Federation of Bus Stop Vendors, the Federation of Workers in Miscellaneous Crafts, the Federation of the Self-Employed from Managua Department FESTRAMA and the Nicaraguan Federation of Transport FETRATRASNIC

The National Executive Committee was elected for the period 2011-2014 as mandated by the Department of Trade Unions, Ministry of Labour. It is composed as follows:

- 1) General Secretary - Adrian Martinez
- 2) Vice General Secretary and Secretary for International Relations – Orlando Mercado
- 3) Secretary of Organization, Acts and Agreements – Marvin Marengo
- 4) Secretary of Education, Training and Academic Success – Manuel Reyes Castro
- 5) Finance Secretary – Ernesto Ortiz
- 6) Secretary for Women – Flor de Maria Avellan
- 8) Secretary of Health and Safety – Sandra Flores
- 9) Secretary of Economic and Social Affairs – Hazel Carolina Torres
- 10) Secretary of Labour Affairs and Conflicts – Luis Roberto Berrios

Also elected was a Supervisory Board whose members are :

- 11) Fiscal Affairs – Bayardo Mayorga
- 12) First Speaker – Marcia Marchena
- 13) Second Speaker – Maria Teresa Sanchez Aburto.

The National Executive Committee was sworn in by Altamirano Eduardo Zapata, Secretary-General of the Confederation of Fish Workers. ■

ZIMBABWE CHAMBER OF INFORMAL ECONOMY ASSOCIATIONS (ZCIEA)

Input of the activities done so far by the organisation to its members, for consideration in the Streetnet News letter.

ZCIEA embarked on the continuous rights awareness programme for its members and follow up measures on the areas we once had the awareness campaigns.

This programme took place from the 4 – 11 of July 2011, and it covered the following areas: Mutare, Marondera, Chartworth, Beitbridge, Bulawayo, Plumtree and Binga.

The facilitating team members were: Phillip Sanzvenga, Beauty Mugijima, B.Moyo Muvhami, Tendai Kokera, Wisborn Malaya, Sibongile Chakbva, Charity Mandishona, Nyaradzai Mutami, Givas Maririmba, Edward Manning, & Abel Watungwa.

The team was paired into four groups because the workshops were run concurrently.

The objective of the workshops was to:

- 1) Continue to educate the informal traders about their rights to trade and policies and bylaws which lead to their harassment and arrest.
- 2) Revisit some areas to hear of the progress, or and results of the rights awareness training programme.



22 REGIONAL STRUCTURES

Results of the workshops

1] In the new areas we conducted the awareness (Binga, Chartworth, Marondera), the informal traders there have already gone on the drive to fight for their rights to trade, shelter etc, from their respective local authorities. In binga they have already mobilised themselves to fight not pay three taxes within one area fish and capenta trading. In Chartworth the facilitating team was briefly taken for questioning by the police after the positive effects of the workshop.

2) On the areas were revisiting, In Bulawayo the Municipality is now giving people market places to trade on within the CBD without being harassed, also

the members have started a low income housing scheme.

3)In Plumtree the councillors have since given residential stands to members of zciea because of this drive, the local authority and zciea leadership in the area are now having negotiating platforms with an enhanced communication.

4)In Beitbridge the membership has grown and the traders are still fighting for their space within the area.

5)In Mutare the members are now working on the application for space to low income housing scheme. Harrassments by local authorities has been reduced.



ZCIEA's social security and pension fund for the informal economy planning workshop in Gweru.



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CTCP-FNT ADVANCES IN ITS FOCAL POINT WORK

As StreetNet International's focal point co-ordinator for Latin America, CTCP-FNT participated in a meeting of South American organisations, The meeting took place between the 17 - 18 March 2011, in Buenos Aires, Argentina with the participation of fifty unionists who were representatives of the following organisations: Sivara (Argentina), ACESP (Brazil), UGT-I (Colombia), SINTRALOC (Chile), FOTSSIEH (Honduras), FNTNA (Mexico), CTCP (Nicaragua), UNAPESCA SINTECOSIN (Paraguay) and AFFE (Uruguay). Present also, were representatives of the CSA and the international trade union co-operation (ISCOD-UGT and FNV).

The theme of this meeting was: "For the Regional Unity of the Vendors." Included in the issues of organisations grouped in alliances, StreetNet moved for employment and social inclusion of the self-employed.

The youth of CTCP-FNT attended a meeting of the Southern Cone

Jessenia Lovo, coordinator of the Youth Committee of the CTCP-TNF, participated in this meeting as part of thr efforts by Nicaragua, to integrate young people into the unions, as young people in many areas, constitute a significant presence in the trade unions in Latin America.

The 50 delegates from different organisations had an experience which, it is hoped, will be reproduced in their organisations.

Managua was the location of the VIII Meeting of the SEICAP Network

The Network of Trade Unions of Workers of the Social Solidarity Economy of the Americas, RED SEICAP, held their Eighth Meeting in Managua. Attending the event were representatives from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.

At this meeting, the socio-economic problems faced by self-employed persons in the region, (calculated at about eight million) as a result of structural adjustment measures since the implementation of a neo-liberal economic model in the 1990s', were discussed.

As self-employed workers from Central America and the Americas, we are fighting for the implementation of public policies directed at the sector at regional level, said Adrian Martinez RED SEICAP Coordinator.

VISIT TO PARAGUAY AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING AND ORGANISATION WORKSHOP

Adrian Martinez, Nicaragua CTCP-FNT

We received the invitation to participate in the Planning and Trade Union Workshop organised by UNI America and FAECYS, and held in the City of Encarnacion on the 1st July 2011. The workshop was attended by guests who were representatives of trade and informal sector workers from Asuncion.

In order to fulfil an organisational commitment to StreetNet International (SI) and the need to advance the process of affiliation to establish an SI focal point organisation for the Americas, we attended the event.

The CTCP-FNT participated with a clear understanding that the strength of workers lies in unity and solidarity, and that the institutionalisation of trade unions has to strengthen their capacity to be self-sufficient and challenging.

This makes it possible for our struggle to transcend our borders and enable us to deal with a neoliberal economic, social, and political model, that corrupts individuals and institutions socially since it promotes market disputes. Such a model is premised on the idea that whoever dominates the market has power.

The aim of the workshop was to discuss the planning and organisation of unions. Issues addressed were:

- Institutional strengthening
- Impact on public policy
- Union training
- Visibility of the union and its work

The need to strengthen the union based on the four pillars identified by the participants was stressed, with emphasis on strengthening unity and solidarity amongst workers.

The visit to Paraguay

There are five trade unions in Paraguay, three of which represent most of the workers, viz CUT, CUT Autonomous (CA) and the CNT. Of these, only CUT and CNT promote union organising work with informal workers. In the case of CNT, it has formed the National Union of Informal Workers which has legal status, but a low level of organisation. It is also not very active. On the other hand, the CUT has started unionising workers in this sector and has formed two unions, ►

22 FIELD VISITS

the artisans of Liberty Square, and food sellers from the Plaza de la Democracia.

The demands of informal workers in Paraguay are the same as those of informal workers all over the world. These relate to the lack of union representation, evictions, seizure of their goods, and lack of stability in their jobs. They are constantly confronted by these, and in the majority of cases have not been able to resolve these challenges due to lack of timely guidance and appropriate support.

Meeting with Ruben Cortina and Eduardo San Román

Having evaluated the workshop and its outcome, we analysed the situation of workers in the trade sector, as well as that of informal workers in Paraguay, and reached the following agreements

- To conduct joint union organising initiatives between UNI America, FAECYS and StreetNet International in Paraguay, with commercial and informal workers, using the existing organisational structures as a benchmark.
- The support that UNI America and StreetNet International could give to strengthen the organisation of trade unions and informal workers would be in kind (materials) and would be directed at conducting training or union meetings. ■

LIBERIAN STREET VENDORS' ORGANIZING WORKSHOP

In 2009, Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organizing (WIEGO), was approached by REALIZING RIGHTS as a potential partner to develop work in Liberia. WIEGO subsequently worked with Realizing Rights in holding workshops in Liberia in 2009. The initial focus was around waste-picking and waste collection in Monrovia.

A year later, the emphasis shifted to the problems facing street vendors and the need to assist and encourage dialogue between the vendors, authorities and other stakeholders. One of the conclusions of the workshops and other meetings held, was that National Petty Trader Union of Liberia (NAPETUL) needed urgent assistance to develop its sustainability, the capacity to be more effective in organising and democratically representing Liberian vendors and traders, and in so doing, creating opportunities for constructive dialogue and negotiation with authorities.

WIEGO therefore agreed to organise a workshop specifically for NAPETUL with two closely related

aims: first, to strengthen the organising capacity of NAPETUL, and second, to explore the potential for a longer-term partnership between NAPETUL, the Liberia Labour Congress (LLC), Ghana TUC and StreetNet International.

The workshops were held in Monrovia from the 16–18 May 2011. Twenty people from NAPETUL, including 7 women, 2 representatives each from the LLC and Ministry of Commerce and Industry, participated in the various workshop activities.

Key Issues facing Street Vendors in Monrovia

The NAPETUL participants undertook a group exercise to identify the six most important issues facing the street vendors at present. The following are the key issues that emerged from group presentations :

- Police Harassment . This is overwhelmingly the most important issue.
- Respect and recognition from the authorities
- Access to credit
- Access to favourable spaces for vending ie being provided with a decent work environment
- On-site warehouse facilities
- Business skills development
- Access to education for vendors' children

The group exercise was followed by a discussion on what the vendors themselves perceived as the key benefit from joining NAPETUL. This was clearly and most obviously the need for NAPETUL to successfully lead a campaign against police harassment.

At a seminar amendments to the Statute of NAPETUL to improve its operation were discussed. The seminar also discussed cooperation between the LLC, Ghana TUC, NAPETUL and StreetNet International. The workshop was facilitated by Dave Spooner of WIEGO, with the collaboration of other partners viz Ghana TUC represented by Rose Kwei and Dogbe Adom, and StreetNet International represented by Sibailly Douhoure. Sibailly Douhoure, who works within StreetNet International as Organiser in West Africa, used this opportunity to organise field visits from May 12–14. He met with the President of NAPETUL at NAPETUL's headquarter and they visited the main streets of Monrovia, where the majority of street vendors are members of NAPETUL.

NAPETUL has about 1200 members all in Monrovia, involved in the selling of stationery, sales of phones, clothes and other items. NAPETUL exclusively organises street vendors. ■

REPORT OF STUDY VISIT TO SEWA

By Gaby Bikombo

During March 2011, Monica Garzaro Scott, organiser for the Americas, South and Eastern Africa, and Bunana Gaby Bikombo, membership administrator of StreetNet International (SI), undertook a study visit to the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and its various departments, to learn more about them, their organising strategy and the many activities in which SEWA is involved.

Like anyone who visits SEWA, we were impressed by SEWA's size (6 offices in Ahmedabad) and the amount of groundwork done. It is clear that SEWA has a very close relationship with its membership because all our meetings were well attended and women participated actively in discussions. Their employment policy of hiring 85% of staff from their constituency (vendors and other informal workers) is also impressive.

Their non-violent strategy, based on Gandhian philosophy which advocates negotiation and advocacy over aggressive measures, has yielded favourable results and is probably something that can be recommended for other affiliates who often fight and reach a deadlock, the end result being that their members lose out.

- SEWA campaign team: SEWA has adopted "campaigns" as one of their organising strategies. They have campaign team members for street vending, the natural market sector as well as for the waste recycling sector.
- SEWA Bank: This is a cooperative bank that was started in 1974 as an urban bank to overcome problems caused by money lenders. Their activities include micro saving, micro lending and micro insurance. Their loans cover a number of items such as housing, short term loans, etc. The interest rate for the loans varies from between 12% and 18% with insurance (from an insurance company) depending on the purpose of the loan. The loan insurances are covered by insurance companies that are willing to insure informal workers and therefore work with SEWA Bank.
- VIMO SEWA: This is their insurance programme. It operates micro insurances dealing with assets insurance, accidental death and life insurance. This programme started in 1992 with SEWA Bank but it now operates as an intermediary between their members and the insurance companies that have agreed to cover informal self-employed workers, and obtains commission from them.
- SEWA Academy. This was created in 1991 and has been training and developing the capacity of

SEWA members in areas like leadership skills, research, communication, documentation and literacy. They have also contributed to educating their members about using the SEWA Bank system.

SEWA is clearly very rooted and therefore very active, in Ahmedabad than in other cities, and in the State of Gujarat than in other states. SEWA Bank is one of the programmes that run only in Gujarat. The amount of resources used for organising is impressive, with 43 paid staff organising in Ahmedabad alone.

SEWA Bank which is a co-operative bank, should inspire StreetNet's plans for a social and solidarity economy, and its sustainability. It is very important to learn more about the challenges SEWA faces in its day to day activities since it has become a very influential and strong association for workers in the informal economy of India. ■

Overview of the AFFE and Special Fairs in Montevideo, Uruguay

By Lucia Melnikov

Over the past few months, a draw has taken place to allocate spaces at Special Fairs. An agreement was reached with the authorities that an executive member of AFFE would always be present at any draw made, not only to ensure that the awards are made properly, but that the AFFE would work with the staff of the office which adjudicates and allocates places.

At the last draw, an official who has historically treated street vendors unfairly, did not allow members of AFFE to be present.

For this reason a meeting between AFFE and the director responsible for the specific municipal area where the Special Fairs take place, was held on Thursday, the 14 July 2011 to correct this situation, which we consider to be **serious and irregular**.

AFFE's leadership has also held several discussions regarding regulations around the holding of the Special Fairs. Part of the latest talks is to negotiate areas to ensure that vehicles can be parked without obstructing traffic flow, and to create a friendly environment for the people who are coming to buy at our fairs.

Another aspect was the refusal of permits to several participants to trade at the Special Fairs. The reason advanced for this was the late payment towards permits, for three consecutive months. For years AFFE has been negotiating for the cost ►

22 ON THE AGENDA

of permits to be reconsidered, since many participants are engaged in precarious work due to the seasonal nature of their work, much of which is subject to highly variable weather conditions. In the past, several agreements were reached, allowing for the payment of arrear monies for permits. This time round, we took remedial action, making sure that participants who had paid their arrear monies, were allowed to assemble their wares at the fair timeously. This was indeed a victory for the AFFE, as the same official who had ignored the AFFE's suggestions regarding the draw, had given instructions that the

"late payers" should not be allowed in for ten days, even though they had paid the monies they owed! AFFE decided it would not budge on this issue. AFFE executive decided not to negotiate further agreements as those concluded in recent years in this respect were considered sufficient.

In June, the AFFE had discussions at a dinner with the directors of Social Security. The purpose of this meeting was to ask questions, make suggestions, and to communicate with the authorities.■



Stallholders being harassed by police in Libertador City -Venezuela

LIBERTADOR MUNICIPALITY, VENEZUELA DENIES VENDORS PERMITS TO SELL FOOD IN THE PLAZA VENEZUELA

At the beginning of his administration, the Mayor of Libertador City, Jorge Rodriguez, approved Decree No. 62, which restricted the activities of independent workers in the informal economy. The authorities are applying the decree unreasonably. To date, the permits of 61 hot dog vendors have been invalidated, and those of sellers of other items suspended for up to six (6) months. Amongst these are trade union leaders. A case in point is that of a Venezuelan citizen, RUTH CORTEZ SANDOVAL, ID No V-9.119.087, who is an independent worker in the informal economy and the Secretary-General of the union SUTRAVENPEHS. She sells hot dogs, hamburgers and soft drinks on Avenida Lima Plaza, Venezuela, Parroquia El Recreo, Municipio Libertador Capital District. Her permit was revoked because she belongs to a union. The representative of the affected workers considered the measures taken by the Mayor, JORGE RODRIGUEZ, as

harassment. She explained that the Directorate of the Informal Economy of the Libertador Municipality has a policy of intimidation of workers who sell fast food.

She believes that the attack on them is the result of a complaint made in PDVSA La Estancia, about the eviction of workers from the boulevard of Sabana Grande, when the Paseo Capitalino Road was under repair. She said, "We are not opposed to the recovery of the spaces, but they (the authorities) have to respect the workers, giving them alternatives so that they can pursue their activities; the affected workers are fathers and mothers who are demanding respect for their rights, which have been violated. For a month they have been without work; the rent for parking space is expensive and since they are not trading, they could even lose their spaces. They call upon all authorities, civil society, national and international institutions to show solidarity regarding this problem which is growing and affecting a significant number of workers".

IT IS ENOUGH! WITHOUT LABOUR JUSTICE, THERE IS NO SOCIAL PEACE!■