



Africa Regional Consultation Workshop: "Transitioning from the Informal to the Formal Economy" - A way forward for Informal workers

by Sharon Pillay,
StreetNet Media and Publicity Officer

The African Regional Consultation Workshop was held on the 13 -14 March at the COSATU House in Johannesburg. The intention of the workshop was to prepare informal workers for the discussions that will take place at the International Labour Conference (ILC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in May-June this year. The workshop was organised by Women in Informal Employment, Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). The COSATU Vulnerable Workers Task Team hosted the workshop.

Globally, a majority of workers depend on the informal economy as a means of living. In South Africa, 1 in every 3 workers is an informal worker. In other countries, it is estimated that 9 out of 10 workers are in the informal economy. The global economic crisis has contributed to the growth of the informal economy, as many people find themselves without jobs and are forced to find an alternative way to make a living. The informal economy has attracted the most vulnerable population groups including youth, older people, migrants, ethnic minorities and women.

At the workshop, informal workers participated in drafting a Platform containing their demands for discussion widely amongst informal workers and trade unionists, and for use at the ILC 2014 in May-June. One of the objectives of the workshop was to identify



Above are the participants of the Africa Regional Consultation workshop. The workshop was aimed at gathering feedback from representatives of domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors and waste pickers on issues relating to formalising the informal economy. Participants travelled to Johannesburg from Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Senegal, and different parts of South Africa, Togo and Guinea

avenues where informal workers can participate and play a meaningful role in the ILC process, before, during and after the ILC, and how trade unions can support them. This will help informal workers gain maximum exposure for their demands

Juan Somavia, former Director-General of the ILO, defined the primary goal of the ILO as the promotion of opportunities for women and men, to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

It is therefore important that informal

workers gain rights and protections as a step towards transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. Workers in the informal economy are vulnerable, as they are often not strongly organised, do not have rights to bargain with employers, government or local authorities. They lack social protection and often suffer from outdated and inappropriate laws and regulations. This results in harassment and a struggle to escape from poverty.

The workshop also gathered feedback from representatives of domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors and waste pickers on issues relating to formalising the informal



Representatives from the International Domestic Workers Federation give a thumbs up for the WIEGO Workshop. They imparted valuable advice based on their own experiences



The opening and welcome was done by Jane Barratt, an Affiliate Support Coordinator and Convenor of the Vulnerable Workers Task Team for COSATU

economy. Participants travelled to Johannesburg from Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Senegal, and different parts of South Africa, Togo and Guinea.

During the closing session at the workshop, feedback from the informal workers was positive. "We have learnt a great deal from representatives who had experience in the ILC. Everyone had a chance to share their views, how the process of participating in the International Labour Conference works and to be prepared. We are empowered and motivated, as the ILO in the past did not take the informal economy seriously. Informal workers are workers as they work for their living. We deserve to have the same rights. We understand it is not going to be easy but we are ready to lobby and hopefully, we will be recognised by the ILO and its constituencies for the important role we play in our countries!!"

Jane Barratt, who is an Affiliate Support Coordinator and Convenor of the Vulnerable Workers Task Team for COSATU, commented that although

she has been a trade unionist for 32 years, learning does not stop. "I have to say in the past two days I have learnt a fortune. The comrades have given me great insight to all their challenges. I truly believe that with your involvement, new energy can be injected into the trade union movement!" she said

Barratt concluded the session by encouraging all present to not be discouraged and to keep on forging ahead.

WIEGO which is an international network that aims to improve the situation of informal workers, especially women, and StreetNet International played vital roles in facilitating the process of bringing people together so that these discussions could take place and participants could take the valuable lessons learnt, back to their countries, and implement them.

There were two other similar workshops that were held in Argentina and Thailand.



Joining the open shop at COSATU House is Juliana Brown Afari, pictured on the right. She is an informal worker and is also from IVHAG - StreetNet Ghana. Sampling some of her clothing is Melanie Samson from WIEGO



Of course there was shopping! Pictured from the left is Thandiwe Xulu, from SASSEWA, South Africa. She also trades. Loving the bead work is Inviolata Chinyangarara, a senior specialist in worker activities in the ILO



Above: One of the tasks the participants had to work on. These are snippets of the highlighted points during their group discussions.

contents

Africa Regional Consultation Workshop: "Transitioning from the Informal to the Formal Economy" A way forward for Informal workers	1-2
Tripartite Meeting of Experts on the facilitation of the transition from the informal to the formal economy : A continuing discussion	3
NOTHING FOR US.....WITHOUT US!	4
ILO Preparatory Workshop	5
GEFONT'S Sixth Congress - Demonstrating change is possible!	6-7
FLOW PROJECT SEMINAR IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.....	8
New Affiliates: SELF-EMPLOYED AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS UNION OF GEORGIA	9
Latin America Region	9
Futteinco	10
Persecuted Ukrainian Leader of Entrepreneurs won't give up!	11
Activities in South Africa and Zimbabwe	12



by **Oscar Silva**,
StreetNet International President

ILO's governing body placed on the agenda of the 103rd Meeting (2014) of the International Labour Conference (ILC), a discussion to 'facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal economy' with a view to making a recommendation. This has developed a number of initiatives and discussions worldwide, one of which was the tripartite meeting of experts started in 2013, in which we participated along with Manali Shah and Renana Jhabvala of the Self-Employed Womens Association (SEWA), and WIEGO. In 2014 another meeting was conducted on Monday, March 30th and Tuesday April 1st, 2014 as a follow-up meeting to the tripartite meeting of experts held in 2013.

The meeting hosted 28 people from different countries of Europe, Asia, America, and Africa, as well as representatives of ACTRAV, CSI, and TUCA. As part of StreetNet, although not acting as direct delegates, were Manali Shah of SEWA and Fatoumata Bintou of CNTS, Senegal.

Tripartite Meeting of Experts on the facilitation of the transition from the informal to the formal economy : A continuing discussion

During the meeting, number of responses received from governments, national unions and employers was discussed. Responses received included 77 from governments; 93 from national unions and 23 from employers. An analysis was made of the proposed conclusions of what the ILO calls "the project of the passage of informality to formality", in order to know what should be included in the recommendation. During the discussion, many weaknesses were evident, a prime one being the lack of views from the self-employed sector, independent workers or own-account workers.

The employers' position is that we are "informal entrepreneurs", "casual business", or "micro-enterprises" and consequently, believe that informality is a technical and formal recording issue. As the results of past consultations had been very poor, we had a long discussion to improve matters. The workers' chairperson said a document was already agreed upon and could not be modified. My intervention was that respecting the agreement did not mean ignoring the marked trend in employers' position, and that as we were in a discussion

meeting, we would have to consider benefits for workers in the informal economy beyond the formalistic technical issues. So changes were made to specific sections of the document to say that they should take measures to strengthen the capacity of trade unions representing workers in the informal economy. Otherwise, the risk was that the ILC would no longer be a tripartite agency discussion-something that would certainly prejudice the informal economy workers. I also requested that they acknowledge unions of workers in the informal economy, noting that StreetNet International has a membership of 52 national unions.

The recommendation cannot be a tool to benefit business and hurt workers in the informal economy. Even Raquel Gonzales, CSI, agreed with the position of StreetNet's President, regarding the discussion as very unbalanced in assessing the status of informal economy workers.

In June, there will be further discussions on the issue and we believe it will not be easy to adopt a recommendation, when there are still many contradictions and conflicting points to be ironed out.



NOTHING FOR US.....WITHOUT US!

By **María del Carmen Aguilar - FENTRAVIG, Guatemala**

WIEGO's Latin-American workshop, "Popular organisation: Key to the integration of self-employed workers sector" This was held on the 18 March 2014. Delegates attended from StreetNet Of the Americas including Maria del Carmen Aguilar from FENTRAVIG, Guatemala; Sandra Flores CTCP, Nicaragua; Luz Maldonado FEDEVAL, Peru, and Gabriel Calandria AFFE, Uruguay. There were also representatives including from waste pickers, homeworkers, domestic workers and street vendors. Gender equality was considered part of the vision and participation in this workshop.

During this workshop, we had the opportunity to share different organisational experiences and realise the great potential that derives from this sector. Colleagues from Argentina, recyclers, gave us a great lesson in life and struggle, sharing their experience on how they recovered their jobs and became their own bosses by creating cooperative organisations to build their own homes through mutual effort.

The discussion on formalising our sector, highlighted that (and we all agreed about this) formalisation is not only imposing direct taxes; we already pay indirect taxes. What we need is the human side to be considered ie the great value we bring to the economies of our countries. Thus our position at the next International Labour Organisation's

(ILO) conference will be that there should be a discussion by and proposals from the same vendor's organisations (self-employed, own-account and independent workers) as we are called, where we claim our human and labour rights. We want the certainty that we will be respected as sectors of employment with the right to organise, and to stop the persecution and humiliation of being labelled as a "problem" for the simple act of selling in a public space, which also belongs to us, because we are part of a subsistence economy that has been created by the socio-political system of our countries.

Against this background, as Latin American organisations participating in the workshop we stated that we agreed that only with class identity, class struggle and organisational

strength will we succeed with our proposals to be heard and taken into account by national governments. It is of utmost importance as organisations of workers in the own-account economy (street and market vendors) to generate solidarity so that we overcome the marginalisation, insecurity and violations of our human and labour rights.

At the workshop a number of representatives of the so-called informal economy met, but we at StreetNet International, are a group that presents major challenges since we are those who work continuously on the streets. Our position as a specific sector also needs to be raised; we risk a danger of uniformity if discussions focus on the "informal economy" as a whole. I hope that the representatives of the Conference of the ILO can make our proposal work. Good luck to them!



Pictured are the participants who attended the WIEGO workshop in Argentina from left to right is Luz Maldonado from FEDEVAL, Peru, Gloria Solórzano from Red de Mujeres and Gabriela Calandria from AFFE, Uruguay



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ILO Preparatory Workshop

The global action-research-policy network Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) recently held three consultative workshops with informal workers, including domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors, and waste pickers in advance of the ILO's International Labour Conference scheduled for June. Funded by WIEGO's law project, these workshops were held in Johannesburg, Bangkok and Buenos Aires over March. In the Bangkok workshop, workers were able to bring forward key common concerns across sectors and an in-depth discussion on the definition and criteria of "formalisation." In Buenos Aires, workshop participants had a busy week inputting into the Platform of Demands as well as visiting cooperatives of informal workers.



Elizabeth Tang of IDWF presents in Bangkok



Workshop Participants in Bangkok



Ada, street vendor from Argentina presenting on rights to education



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

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by César García Arnal -
StreetNet International Secretary

GEFONT'S Sixth Congress - Demonstrating change is possible!

I recently had the honour of representing StreetNet International (StreetNet) at GEFONT's sixth congress in Nepal. GEFONT is the union centre to which NEST is affiliated.

A general observation I make is that GEFONT enjoys an enviable democratic health. If it is not at the least, the main union of Nepal, it certainly is the most respected.

Internal democracy, as demonstrated both in the Congress and in the election of representatives and the composition of the new board, works well in this organisation, including the incorporation of gender issues in the election of officials.

I want to highlight the seamless integration of our affiliate NEST throughout the union organisation and the work they are doing with affiliates. Noteworthy is the involvement of Maya as General-Secretary on the technical side, and Narayan in the political arena. Both are respected by their fellow unions as members, which makes NEST a strong and consolidated organisation. Further, the President of NEST does commendable political work for his organisation.

After participating in the opening of GEFONT's Congress, along with forty other international guests from forty different organisations, I met with leaders of the districts of NEST.

I have conveyed their concern over the activities of the government of Nepal, which has prohibited without prior negotiation, the "business in the street". This decision has led to the displacement of more than 10000 vendors just outside Kathmandu, with the loss of purchasing power for the maintenance of their families. This means 10000 economically dysfunctional families with serious problems of subsistence.

Moreover, the government has decided that in urban areas eligible for vending, anywhere where there are no markets, people can only sell for three hours from

17h00 to 20h00. This also contributes to the erosion of the purchasing power of this group.

Clearly, the Nepalese government is planning to wear out, physically and economically, these professionals, moving them and restricting their hours of work to suffocate them financially. The government had a problem with vendors, and has decided to be blind and deaf to their plight, cutting ties with them through these undemocratic measures.

All this is quite surprising as at the congress itself, the Prime Minister, in a speech of over an hour, repeated more than 25 times "we must change society in Nepal and we are the only political party who can get it." Interestingly, although he promised the establishment of a commission for negotiations between government and vendors, this has never happened. It is a curious way to change society.

The central committee of NEST, composed of the leaders of the major



Executive Committee of GEFONT



Street Vendors during a demonstration

districts of the city, asked us to send letters to the government of Nepal, the Municipality and the main political parties, informing them of our opposition to the measures taken against the street vendors, and offering our support and expertise to find appropriate solutions. StreetNet will definitely respond to their requests.

On the 1st April I had the honour of being the head of a delegation which addressed more than 3000 vendors in Kathmandu. These workers are very unprotected and in need of solidarity greatly.

In my speech, translated into Nepali by my companion Maya, I expressed our understanding of their situation, compared it with the situation in other

countries around the world, and promised that StreetNet would approach the government, through the letters that the NEST Council had asked us to send. We would express in our letters, both our solidarity with the vendors and the desire to work together to try to solve their problems.

From the stands, I sent a message to the government that they should be aware that there is no future for children and young people without work for families. Without peace for the elderly, they could never change the society sorely in need of change.

I was able to tell them that together with the President of StreetNet, ILO had already presented an advocacy document, not yet final, as the

International Council must still endorse it. It is very comprehensive and ambitious, for the sake of all vendors around the world.

Personally, I think the assembly of the ILO should also submit a claim paper, denouncing countries that are abusing the rights of vendors, naming each of them and their actions against this group. The ILO needs to realise that nothing will be derived from these meetings if government policies are based on the elimination of vending on the streets.

It's time to show our strength or we will not fulfil our international work. Our members are not only asking us for training and projects, meetings and travel. I think, they are also calling for action. And of course, StreetNet International has never let its constituency down.

These are difficult times, but with the effort of all moving in the same direction, we can move forward. We must not get lost in discussions that do not benefit all members.



GEFONT Congress in procession



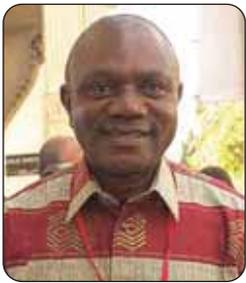
Street Vendors during a demonstration



César García Arnal and the President of GEFONT, Bishnu Rimal



Pictured is César García Arnal during his speech to the St. Vendors in Katmandú.



FLOW PROJECT SEMINAR IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

by Sibailly Douhoure, StreetNet Organiser

In 2011, StreetNet developed a strategy to establish an alliance of organisations of street vendors in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) so that they would be more representative. Local organisations had to be educated in order for them to be effectively involved in the process. After several discussions with the three largest national union affiliates of ITUC-Africa (CSC, UNTC, CDT), a working group was formed to identify associations of informal vendors that exist in the DRC. This phase lasted about three months and helped in obtaining significant information (names of organisations, sectors of activities covered, staff members, lists and contacts of leaders, problems). After the information gathering, the working group prepared a seminar which was held in Kinshasa from 23-25 August 2013.

This activity was to begin the process of building a national alliance by examining issues critical to the success of the alliance : leadership criteria (balance between men and women, conflict of interest, code of conduct); affiliation criteria (types of organisations, membership, verification procedure); policies on foreign vendors working in the DRC; how to stay focused on the needs of the poorest vendors; transparency in financial management; regional balance; creation of a temporary committee from stakeholders in the informal economy with terms of reference and a clear mandate to carry out what must be done within the next 18 months.

The sessions took place at the Rehabilitation Centre for Handicaps located in Avenue des Huileries, District of Gombe in Kinshasa, from the 22 - 24 August 2013. Twenty one persons including 12 women took part in the seminar.

In accordance with the work programme, Pat Horn made a presentation on the process of alliances in Brazil, Kenya with KENASVIT and SAITAIN South Africa. This presentation actually brought to light the different stages and their veracities on the ground

Sibailly Maximilien Douhoure, Organiser for Africa, made a presentation on StreetNet as an example of how to structure an organisation in the informal economy with emphasis on the commitments of the organisation (holding congress regularly, election of officers taking into account the number of women and men, responsibilities of the different structures of the Congress, International Council, Executive Committee, representation of women in the various structures, and activities for affiliates at the local, regional and international level).

Four working groups were formed to discuss the following topics: leadership and management of the process of the alliance, the sector of activity covered, affiliate and staffing issues, regional balance and representation in the provinces. Participants also deliberated on the terms of reference of the interim coordinating committee's mandate and appointed members of the committee.



All the participants who attended.

This committee is composed of 5 members, including 3 women. Angelica Kipulu/LDFC was chosen by consensus as the chairperson of the Co-ordinating Committee. The workshop sessions ended on the 24 August.

According to the recommendations of the meetings, the provisional committee made up of 5 people from informal organisations, has a mandate of 18 months to achieve the following:

1. Popularising the work of the National Alliance
2. Monitoring progress in terms of organisation in the provinces and recruit more associations to ensure inclusion
3. Resolving disputes that may occur between the associations.
4. Supporting associations with problems
5. Temporarily representing informal traders where their voice is needed
6. Reporting to the National Workshop in 2015
7. Preparation of the schedule of events on the process of the unit until the National Workshop in 2015. This includes -
 - a) Discussion of a draft constitution prepared by StreetNet incorporating the conclusions of the 2013 Kinshasa workshop
 - b) Organisation of an inter-trade union meeting for discussion of a programme of organisation in the provinces
 - c) Management of the programme organisation in the provinces.



Pat Horn - StreetNet International Coordinator (left), the Interim Coordinating Committee and Sibailly Douhoure, StreetNet Organiser on the extreme right

New Affiliates

SELF-EMPLOYED AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS UNION OF GEORGIA



In February 2014, the Self-employed and Commercial Workers Union (the Union) of Georgia became a new and full member of StreetNet International. The union has 5000 members and has a great potential for growth.

The Selfemployed and Commercial Workers Union is a non-governmental organisation, which upholds the rights of commercial and self-employed workers. Since November 2001, it has been affiliated to the Georgian Trade Union Confederation (GTUC).

The main mission of the union is to create the legislative basis for the self-employed and commercial workers sector, so as to enable them to defend their labour and social rights and to be protected in their workplaces.

Ms. Miranda Mandaria, its chairperson, is a lawyer by profession and works in a legal department of the Georgian Trade Union Confederation (GTUC).

“The union is quite specific and different from other trade unions by virtue of the fact that this area is one in which it is very difficult to attract members; it's even more difficult to retain them. There is no law which will protect their rights, and most of the time they don't have employers. They have problems mainly with local authorities where they complain about the high tariffs and taxes they have to pay. In addition, 70% of properties are private in Georgia, where owners determine the taxes. In this case, the state cannot interfere and it's extremely difficult for a union to negotiate with the owner”, says Sister Miranda.



Miranda Mandaria, Chairwoman of the Self-employed and Commercial workers Union of Georgia

However, the union together with its leadership, actively protects market and street vendors who often become victims of evictions due to the closing of markets.

70% of Union members are women who actively work on the promotion of women rights in the informal sector in Georgia. They also work on the ratification of the ILO Convention # 183.

Latin America Region

During the Executive Committee meeting that took place in Madrid from 11th to 12th November, three new organisations were accepted as affiliates to StreetNet International. The new affiliates are:



FESTIVES (Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Independientes)

Vendedores de El Salvador), El Salvador. This organization represents nationally the needs and demands of own-account workers. It was created in 2009 and it is affiliated to CTD (Democratic Workers Confederation of Unions). For more information, please contact them at: festives.2010@gmail.com



SINTRACOPEA (Sindicato de Trabajadores Comerciantes Patentados Estacionarios y Afines), Costa Rica. This is a union of workers in the informal commerce sector, created in 2010 and affiliates to CMTC



(Union Center of Costa Rican Workers Movement). Their contact details are: sintracopea@hotmail.com

FUTTEINCO (Federación Unitaria de Trabajadores del Turismo, Economía Informal, Comercio y Afines), Dominican Republic. They can be contacted at futteinco@hotmail.com

Overview of FUTTEINCO



FUTTEINCO is the United Federation of Tourism Workers, Informal Economy and Commerce. It is a federation. The main objective of its activities, is to defend the rights and interests of workers in the Tourism, Informal Economy, Trade and Allied Activities, and improving the economic, moral and social working conditions of all workers.

It was formed as a result of a long period of work dating from the 90s when the National Council of the Informal Economy (CONATRASINF) was founded and later the United Federation of Self-Employed Trade and Related Informal Economy Activities (FUTRACEINA). This process culminated in the founding congress of FUTTEINCO, held on 2 April 2011. This has a radius of action at the national level in the Dominican Republic, and its

principal domicile is Jose de Jesus Ravelo Street No. 56, Second Floor, Villa Juana, Santo Domingo, Distrito Nacional, contact telephone: 809-657-6594??, 809-444-6594. This email is futteinco@hotmail.com. For all purposes, the organisation has as its mission:

- a) To represent its members through its qualified leaders before any institution, organization, public or private persons.
- b) To advise on working conditions to its members.
- c) To organise scholarship schemes, seminars, workshops, professional activities and techniques for the improvement of its affiliates.
- d) To promote and manage development projects and programs, aimed at strengthening the Federation, its members and affiliates.

Since the inception of FUTTEINCO we have been defending the poorest workers in different sectors such as: Street Vendors, workers in the tourism sector, crafts, food, fishing, motorcycle taxi workers, agricultural product vendors and independent textile workers (Tailors).

Among the projects developed by the Federation are the research projects relating to "The Inclusion of Informal Workers into the Social Security from a Gender Perspective". This research was aimed at developing a proposition that demonstrates the feasibility of informal workers having social protection. Another important topic was the study of migrant workers in the province of San Pedro de Macoris, a traditional province for the acceptance of migrant workers, we studied workers mainly in the informal economy in different sectors of the national economy.

FUTTEINCO has been working hand in hand with its president ALBERTO SANTANA, against the ill-treatment of workers in the informal economy, including the specific case of vendors in the informal sector of the economy that advocates a public space for the sale of their products, Another situation arises are with motorcycle taxi drivers. We are fighting to prevent continued harassment and abuse by the authorities against motorcycle taxis driver colleagues around the country. We also want the government to include these workers in fuel subsidy plans because the cost thereof does not allow the economical performance of this work and these colleagues do not even earn enough for one meal a day.



Another case where our federation has spent several years fighting is for the renewal of the licences of vendors in the informal economy in the tourism sector, a situation that has given rise to a series of cases of extortion by authorities located in the tourist areas of the country; after meeting certain requirements by the Ministry of Tourism, this Ministry has not renewed the licences of these workers, despite their meeting all the requirements and the payment of the related taxes.

ALBERTO SANTANA
President



Persecuted Ukrainian Leader of Entrepreneurs won't give up!

by Oksana Abboud, StreetNet Organiser

StreetNet International expresses their concern about Ukrainian leader, Sister Valentyna Korobka who has on a number of occasions been assaulted verbally and physically due to her active civic position and trade union activity in Ukraine.

On February 2014, an unknown male attacked Valentyna Korobka, who is the Chairwoman of the Free trade union of entrepreneurs of Ukraine (VPPU). According to Korobka, this happened because of her civic position, trade union activity, and her active participation on the Kyiv EuroMaidan protest action.

At the end of November 2013, after the Ukrainian officials did not sign the Association Agreement with European Union, the EuroMaidan protest started thereafter to voice the people's dissatisfaction. The protest action took place at Maidan (Independent Square in Kyiv) where the town gathered for important events.

Valentyna Korobka, has been an active contributor of protest actions in the center of Ukrainian capital, Kiev since its inception. She has organised strikes for traders/ entrepreneurs of capital markets. The market traders closed their stalls to go to Maidan to attend these protests. Korobka also regularly organised gathering support for the protesters.

According to Valentyna, on February 7, around 15:00, while on her way to the State Tax Inspectorate to submit the required reports, an unknown young male approached her near her home. She was not in the public view. He asked for the time and when she looked at her mobile phone to check the time, the stranger hit her in the face. He snatched her two phones that she was holding and dropped it to the ground and trampled them.

Korobka said that this "titushka" followed her. (Titushka is a common name for people used in Ukraine for political purposes. They act as mercenaries for the unlawful use of force, as well as for organising



Brave leader Valentyna Korobka in action

provocations and brawls).

"He hit me in the face and pushed me. He also used bad language and said: "That's for Maidan' He had fled from the scene. I was on the floor with a pool of blood around me, and it took a long time to recover. Now I have a constant headaches and pain around my nose area."

Valentyna Korobka did not contact the police because she suspected this assault happened due to her active support of the EuroMaidan protest action. She attended the Sunday People's gathering and informed the protestors about the incident. A policeman has also previously assaulted Korobka where she was seriously injured in 2012, in another protest action. (More information can be found on this link <http://www.streetnet.org.za/show.php?id=372>). The case has made no progress and the accused officer is still on duty.

Prior to the latest incident concerning the EuroMaidan protest, she was verbally threatened for her active position. "The government tries to intimate us one by one but I am not afraid. I don't intend to give up, because I know that together we are the invincible force," Korobka said.

Presently no one was punished for assaulting Valentyna, who still being persecuted and has endured death threats due to her pro-active protection of market vendors.

According to Valentyna, only recently two criminal cases were opened due to persecution and illegal treatment of Valentyna, however still no progress has been made.

StreetNet International supports Valentyna, the leader of Free trade union of entrepreneurs of Ukraine (VPPU) who is also an affiliate and will try its best to assist as much as it can.



Activities in South Africa and Zimbabwe

by **Sibailly Douhoure, StreetNet Organiser**

In accordance with StreetNet International's (StreetNet) workplan for 2014, I spent two months working from its Durban office in February and March to familiarise myself more closely with StreetNet affiliates in South Africa as well as with its affiliates in Southern and East Africa.

These are some of my main activities during this period:

Visit to the leaders of Umbumbano

Firstly, I met with the Umbumbano leaders at the headquarters of StreetNet. They included the President, Mankinto Ngcobo, nicknamed MaMkhize; Secretary Pearl Thokozani Olatunde; and Treasurer Simphiwe Msolo. Along with an interpreter, I also met with officials of Umbumbano at their workplaces in the Muthi Market, and at workshops at the Young Mens' Christian Association (YMCA) offices at the Durban beachfront. I took the opportunity to discuss issues of organising mainly, with them. At the end of February, I had a working session with the leaders of Umbumbano whose annual report will be prepared and sent to StreetNet.

Visit to the South Durban Community and Environmental Alliance (SDCEA)

The SDCEA is a non-governmental coalition of environmental communities and organisations, launched in November 1995. We visited the Air Quality Monitoring Station from a point where we could see the SAPREF (Shell and British Petroleum) oil refinery and the Mondi paper mill. We also visited the area of the Bluff where there were underground oil spills from the refinery pipeline. As a result, families had to evacuate their homes. SDCEA members struggle together for higher environmental standards within industries and for communities that co-exist in South Durban. StreetNet worked with SDCEA in 2011 during the COP17, in activities held in Durban.

Discussion with Thabiso of SAITA

My discussion with Thabiso was on developments within the South African Informal Traders Alliance (SAITA) since its launching in May 2013. Following on this meeting, it was agreed that the next monthly meeting of the Executive Committee would take place at the end of February by telephone, with the support of StreetNet. This meeting took place on the 5th February.



Seen are the ZCIEA Management team with Sibailly Douhoure, StreetNet Organiser after a management meeting

Visit to the office of the Manguang Hawkers' Association (MAHA)

With Thabiso of SAITA, I visited the secretariat of MAHA and had a brief discussion with the acting-Chairperson and three other officials.

Attended South African Municipality Workers Union (SAMWU) seminar

I attended this seminar with 6 MAHA leaders and 4 officials of KhatangThema, the StreetNet affiliate in Lesotho. It took place at the headquarters of SAMWU on February 18th. The work focused on the operation and activities of StreetNet, SAITA, MAHA and KhatangThema. The discussions led to a better understanding of the different organisations. Khatang was represented by 4 participants including 1 woman; MAHA was represented by 6 participants including 2 women.



Workshop held in Rustenberg, South Africa

Meeting with Sam Machini, Provincial Secretary of COSATU

This meeting at which Thabiso was also present, was held in the office of Sam Machini, COSATU Provincial Secretary. We discussed the activities of COSATU in the province, relations between COSATU and MAHA and the situation of cross-border traders between Lesotho and South Africa. It emerged from these discussions, that the issue of cross-border traders requires consultation between the vendors associations, unions, and governments in the SADC region.

Meeting on Vulnerable Workers

I attended a meeting held on March 4th in Johannesburg, organised by COSATU's Vulnerable Workers Task Team.

Other visits

I visited Rustenberg from the 4-9 March, where I facilitated a seminar on negotiations with municipalities, with the leaders of the local association of street vendors.

I also visited the Zimbabwe focal point for Southern and East Africa from the 21-28 March, 2014. During my stay, I met with the ZCIEA Secretary-General, Wisborn Malaya, Lucia Masekesa, ZCIEA President and the technical advisor, Elijan Mutemeri, who runs the ZCTU Informal Desk. We visited the Jambanja Market in Chitungwiza (35km from Harare) where there are around 200 street vendors. ZCIEA fought against their removal from their trading places. I also met with the ZCIEA Management Committee on the 24th March. The main objective of this visit was to set up Skype facilities for the ZCIEA office, and to convene a Regional Focal Point teleconference on Skype.



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