



StreetNet Newsletter



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

StreetNet Welcomes SEWA during their Field Visit to South Africa

StreetNet International welcomed their affiliate SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) during their field visit to Durban in August. They have also been to Johannesburg. SEWA, an organisation based in India has been selected by the Government of India for the implementation of a project called "Strengthening African People's Organisations and NGOs." where five countries are selected in Africa. South Africa is one of the countries nominated.

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is a union of almost 1.8 million women workers of the informal economy. Founded in 1972 by Ela Bhatt, a labour lawyer and organiser, it has grown from a few thousand women in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, into a national and international movement of self-employed women workers. SEWA was started because it became clear that the mass of workers, and especially women, had no fixed employer-employee relationship, some did not have any worker rights.

The exchange visit was organised with the assistance of StreetNet International. There were twelve women participants from SEWA, most of who are group leaders. They had interacted with different cooperatives, unions, NGOs and member-based organisations. There have been several



Ela Gandhi (in the middle, with the cream top), and the women from SEWA

exchange visits between SEWA leaders and their African counterparts with the intention of learning from each other and supporting collective action in these countries.

As this is the first time that VimoSEWA and its sister organisations are undertaking a project of this kind, it is felt that a proper understanding of the needs of disadvantaged and poor

people, especially women, in each country is critical. SEWA have always initiated their work with a people-centered or "bottom-up" approach. They expect to collaborate with local organisations in each country to assess the needs and priorities of people, what exists and what inputs are required.

The study will be carefully developed and implemented looking into all 5

aspects, which are microfinance, microenterprise, micro-insurance, health and child-care and capacity-building.

Over the years, SEWA has used this integrated and comprehensive approach, which helps women, and their families become self-reliant. Thus, one over-arching, comprehensive needs assessment is the first step of this project.

For each of the 5 major action areas, separate activities have been planned as given below, which will be adapted for the five countries:

1. Micro Finance - promotion of self-help groups to provide integrated financial services (savings, credit, insurance and pension), their capacity building and extension of financial literacy.
2. Micro Enterprise and Livelihood Promotion - examining what is feasible, markets etc. and then helping organisations set up their own viable micro enterprises.
3. Micro Insurance - developing plans

for extending micro insurance to local communities, especially women, and then capacity building to help local organisations implement this.

4. Health and Child Care - developing appropriate systems (tailored to local conditions and needs) to reach local communities, especially women and children, with basic primary health care, including health education and life-saving information. Capacity-building for leadership, management of their own activities and running their own organisations.
5. Capacity - building for leadership, management of their own activities and running their own organisations

One of their highlights was the meeting of Ela Ghandi, who is the granddaughter of the late Mahatma Gandhi. She is also a peace activist and was at the forefront of great changes for South Africa. SEWA was founded on the basis of Gandhi's principals, including the making of natural and animal-free clothing, which is one of the projects they run. "

Meeting Ela, was like meeting Gandhi and it was very emotional and touching experience to visit the place where he once lived," the group commented.

They also agreed that the people are very talented in the informal sector and this should be highlighted more often. One of their concerns was about the lack of social protection available for these workers. Social Protection Floors is based on a basic package of securities, which is proper healthcare, food security, childcare and public infrastructure. Public infrastructure consists of access to water, sanitation, proper trading spaces, waste disposal and transport.

SEWA has previously hosted a workshop with the assistance of StreetNet. StreetNet is a Durban based worker organisation that represents their affiliates on a national and international level. SEWA will be completing their assessments so that they can return to assist further in the five action areas, which will be adapted to meet the specific needs in South Africa.



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Report on Field Visit to El Salvador and Costa Rica

by **Mónica Garzaro Scott**, StreetNet Organiser

The Central American area includes the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. StreetNet International has affiliates in three countries: Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In the countries visited there are organisations working with street and market vendors as well as organisations working with other sectors of the economy.



The visit to San Salvador, El Salvador was from 23 to 26 July 2013 while that to San Jose, Costa Rica from July 30 to August 2, 2013.

EL SALVADOR

Among several organisations visited, FESTIVES, The Independent Workers' Federation, is one that organises self-employed workers. Herminio Guevara, Secretary -General, with the support of the Confederation of Democratic Workers (CTD) and its Secretary General, José Amaya, gave me the opportunity to meet street vendors in

their workplaces and markets. I talked to several vendors about their situation. Many of them have made their lives working in these positions for over twenty years. This is quite an achievement if you take into account the ongoing persecution and threats by the local government to resettle them elsewhere. Other problems faced are the lack of social security cover, criminalisation of the sector, and few opportunities for dialogue to present viable alternatives to local and national authorities.

FESTIVES brings together informal sector unions throughout the territory of El Salvador. They have a decision-making structure based on a Federal Congress, which meets annually, as well as a Board of 9 members who are elected at each Congress. In the board various women are secretaries and although there is no specific commission or secretary on gender issues, they believe in equality between men and women. Currently, they are negotiating the acceptance of the Special Law for Self-Employed Workers, which will recognize informal worker rights the state has so far refused to recognise and ultimately, favourably affect the lives of workers in this sector in 262 municipalities.

COSTA RICA

I met with several organisations in Costa Rica and spoke with Katia Gil, Co-ordinator of ILO's Project on the Informal Economy. The project began in October 2012 and aims to help street vendors, domestic workers and workers in micro-enterprises with low productivity, through the establishment of a platform for tripartite dialogue. The long-term goal is to promote compliance with labour rights of workers in the informal economy, create and strengthen mechanisms for workers to have access to social protection and to fully exercise their rights. Among the components of this project is the technical and organisational capacity of workers.

I also met with Miguel Marin, Secretary-General of Central CMTC; the Costa Rican Workers' Movement, and Randall Zuniga, its Secretary-General as well as Katia Barquero, Organising Secretary of the Union of Stationary and Related Proprietary Traders (SINTRACOPEA). I was informed of the great growth of the autonomous self-employed sector in Costa Rica due to neo-liberal policies. SINTRACOPEA accompanied me to visit several vendors' workplaces. During this time, local police were doing a review of the positions of workers in the sector they call "proprietary stationary". The sellers claimed that infringements of arbitrary measures are criminalised, for example, going a few inches over the regulated size of stalls.

SINTRACOPEA was created in 2010 in order to defend market vendors and to enable them to negotiate with municipal authorities, alternative solutions to problems facing them. It also provides free legal advice to all



Street Vendors trading in San José, Costa Rica



Street Vendors trading in San Salvador, El Salvador

members who may require it. Other initiatives are general and technical-professional training for their members.

Finally, I was interviewed on a radio program by CMTC, which gave me the opportunity to explain who StreetNet International is, and the situation faced by street and market vendors internationally.

The protests for change in Brazil, street vendors and the 2014 FIFA World Cup

By Maíra Villas-Bôas Vannuchi

Many people who have been following the wave of political protests and change taking place in the Middle East, Turkey, Wall Street and other places around the world lately, have been wondering what is happening in Brazil since June. The international press broadcast amazing pictures of thousands of people taking to the streets saying "Enough!" to the abuses of public power. Such abuses have always come from the private sector, in the form of excluding the poor, rising prices, corruption, leaving people with fewer rights and the whittling away of welfare benefits for the people.

During the first weeks of June, all kinds of people gathered in the streets. The fuse for the social uprising, was the rise in the public transport fares in São Paulo. Young people who had never hit the streets nor claimed political change, old conservative people fed up with the Labour Party, workers who could not stand one more price rise without any visible improvement in or rise in wages, stopped whatever they were doing to claim their rights. They were accompanied by the social movements which had called for the protests initially, and who have always been in the streets, protesting. The social groups, well acquainted with

wound in democracy, and diminished people's social rights under the guise of nationalism, hovered about us. The diverse and diffuse mass of protesters began to make it clear that that were not represented by any political party or political stream, under the slogans "No parties!" A major criticism against the partisan party politics of today is that their supporters usually infiltrate right-wing demonstrators to harass social movements, burning red flags, attacking militants and expelling members of any political organisation.

The demonstrations continued expanding and gaining ground, reaching the big cities in all regions of the country, even in the interior. The situation became such that President Dilma had to offer a few compromises from the government, claiming that the government was listening to the voices from the streets. The immediate achievement was that all the cities managed to bar the public transport price rise.

You might be asking where the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the street vendors come into all this.

We of the social movements, conducted a self-evaluation as to why we were unable to inspire the same kind of mass support and popular uprisings during our protests, after the huge numbers of protesters returned to their normal life, leaving politicians really pressured and worried. We noted two important factors - the increase in public transport fares, (subsequently barred in most cities), and the misuse of public money. The protests occurred at the same time when the Confederation Cup was going on. For those who don't know, the Confederation Cup matches take place in all countries which will host the FIFA World Cup, with the apparent objective of testing the countries' infrastructural suitability for hosting the World Cup, as well as the countries' ability to manage the event, initially on a minor scale.

This is where the importance of the World Cup Popular committees lies. Set up initially at the end of 2010 in Rio de Janeiro from the leftovers of the social organisation mobilised for the Pan American games of 2007, the popular committee structure was spread to all the 12 host cities and gathered different social organisations in a horizontal non-partisan structure. Seeking to cover all



The protests in Brazil do not have an easy and understandable explanation. They were not for a common objective, but expressed a common feeling: the way things are, cannot be. It was disturbing for the social movements to share space with conservative and unpoliticised people.

We distrusted them and were anxious that the popular uprising could be manipulated by the elites for bringing down the Labor Party (PT), which has indeed committed many mistakes, but is doubtless far better than the right wing parties. However, the feeling generated by a gathering of 500 thousand people in the streets, screaming "The giant has woken up!" and "Enough is enough!", has shaken the hearts of those who have been struggling for years against social apathy and for a fairer world.

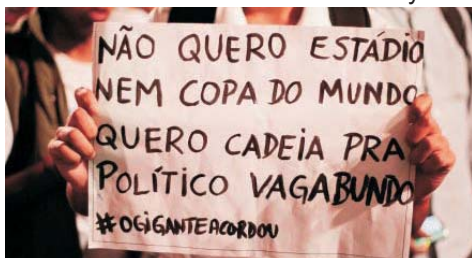
political debate and struggle, found that they were confronted by a fierce, passionate, and excited crowd and struggled to reconcile this picture of a mass of people, usually politically indifferent, standing up to fight for justice. The "newbie" protestors picked up their old Brazil flags, used mainly to celebrate football victories, and wrote down their demands on cardboard sheets. A multiplicity of claims arose, but their claimants came together in one common song-the national anthem.

We members of the social movements froze in fear. In spite the poetry in front of our eyes - of people casting aside their apathy, taking over the streets and the popular support for their demonstrations - the phantom of a recent military dictatorship which crushed the Brazilian Left, made a deep

spheres of society affected by the World Cup, the popular committees conducted activities aimed to report human rights violations and to strengthen the mobilisation of social groups affected by the commercialisation of public spaces and the social gentrification “required” for hosting the FIFA World Cup.

Many of the street vendors' organisations which participated in the StreetNet international World Class Cities for All campaign in Brazil, participated in the popular committees, side to side with the housing movement, with the organisations working against sex tourism and children rights violations, with the construction workers, with human rights organizations and others.

The catastrophe of investing a huge amount of money in an event shaped to include a few and for benefiting the great capital in a country where people die at hospital doors awaiting medical care and starve when the drought kills food crops and growth, was of course highlighted in the June popular uprisings, building mass resistance to the Confederations Cup. This phenomenon happened in such a way that Pelé, the great soccer player of all times, went to the media asking people to get out from the streets to support the Cup, appealing to the national passion of Brazilians for football. Of course, we supported it, and suffered a defeat in the final against Spain and then celebrated when we won the match against the current world champions, but the damage was done. The contradictions and indignation expressed in cards like those below were seen all around the country.



Don't want stadium nor World Cup. Want jail to tramp politicians. #The giant has woken up



“When your child gets sick take him to the stadium”



Porto Alegre: “SOS camelódromo”. Asferap members in a meeting at the legislative municipal chamber (July 2013)

The people went back to their lives and the social movements organised and kept their agendas going, pressuring the government and gaining ground. When the governments went to hear the voice from the streets, the emerging peoples' movement was not there anymore. What remained was the social movements that have always been there, in the same place, claiming for improvements and protecting rights' violations.

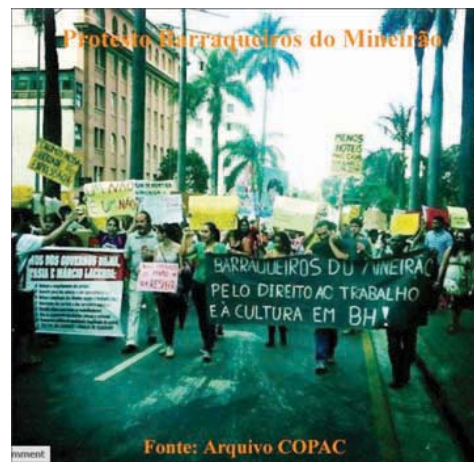
The cities continued in peace and organised social groups have gained strength and space in the political arena. Thereafter, we received reports from street vendors' organisations in Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, which actively took part in the protests and in the social mobilisation, strengthened after the mass protests.

In Porto Alegre, the ASFERAP, besides going to the streets during the protests, used the political moment to highlight the arbitrariness and injustices held against the street vendors in the popular markets of the city. They also protested against the privatisation of public spaces which were given to the official sponsors of the World Cup, preventing the work of street vendors of the central city.



Porto Alegre: Juliano Fripp, member of the Asferap during a protest in Porto Alegre: “Fortunati (mayor) give back the popular shopping for the street vendors!”

In Belo Horizonte, the ABAEM formed by street vendors who sell around the stadium, joined efforts with the Popular Committee of the city and participated in all its protests. During the occupation of the municipal legislative chamber, the popular assembly approved the constitution of a work group of the street vendors who would negotiate with the mayor and the state governor, thus concluding successfully, the agenda of the street vendors in the Belo Horizonte protests and developments.



Belo Horizonte: “Street vendors of the Mineirão (stadium) for the right of labor and for the culture in Bella Horizonte”

In Rio de Janeiro we heard reports of members of the AEFO participating in the protests, before the state government seat. The MUCA also participated in all the activities of the popular committee including camping in front of the mayor's house.

In São Paulo the forum of street vendors, supported by the Gaspar Garcia Centre for Human Rights, in addition to participating in the protests, also helped to pressurise the Mayor to define, with their participation, a municipal street vending plan.



São Paulo: “Enough of lies” and “Why police against workers?”

We are still in assessing the impact of the mass protests in social organisations and society. But one thing is certain - we have just witnessed a turning point and the political scenario of Brazil is now extremely favourable for the street vendors to fight for and ensure their rights in the FIFA World Cup next year.

Nothing for us without us!

StreetNet hosts Eastern European Regional Workshop

by Oksana Abboud, StreetNet Organiser

On 22 July 2013, StreetNet International conducted its Eastern European Workshop for its affiliates from Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

The main objective of this workshop was to raise the awareness of StreetNet affiliates around issues such as social protection floors, negotiation forums for street vendors and the Social Solidarity Economy.

However, since the 4th International Congress of StreetNet International adopted the resolution for a fifth Regional Focal Point (RFP) for Europe and Central Asia, the participants of this workshop had to first start discussions on the issue of focal point organisation in their region.

The workshop was opened by Pat Horn, StreetNet's International Coordinator, who introduced the agenda and its aims, and solicited the expectations of the participants. Mubara Niyazova, deputy-Chairperson of the Trade Union of Commerce who had replaced Damira Dolotalieva, also welcomed the workshop participants

There were 8 participants representing StreetNet affiliates from 3 Eastern European countries (Moldova, Ukraine, Azerbaijan), from the Kyrgyz Republic of Central Asia and one participant from UPTA (Spain) who represented the only Western European affiliate of StreetNet. The aim was for UPTA to start engaging with and getting to know the other StreetNet affiliates in Eastern Europe.

A leader of a trade union of market vendors from Kazakhstan, whose organisation is not yet affiliated to StreetNet, also attended the workshop.

During the workshop, Pat Horn briefed participants about the StreetNet policy, its structure and priorities. She also presented a

short history about it.



For the rest of the day, the workshop focused on the following:

- * the Social Solidarity Economy, its aims and how it works. Good examples of this economy from Latin America and India were outlined;
- * the Social Protection Floor document, "SPF for the Working Poor", developed by

WIEGO and StreetNet. This document outlines the ideas of and thinking behind the SPF, its components, package of basic securities, the ILO Recommendation 202, "formalisation of the informal economy" issues drawing attention to 7 elements of formalisation identified by workers from different sectors of the informal economy.

The subject of a Model Framework for collective bargaining at local level was also presented and discussed during the workshop.

Participants from Moldova, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Ukraine indicated that there is as yet, no such kind of established forums to negotiate on behalf of informal workers. However, they highlighted that there was a big need for such forums in order to protect informal workers' rights. The advantages and disadvantages of such forums were also specified.

The Central Committee of the Trade Union of Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic the only union which has considerable experience in negotiating forums - and other representatives of this Union, shared their experiences with other participants, as to how they had managed to reach the point where they could negotiate with municipalities, and further, how they maintained being such a respected union at the City level.

Mubara Niyazova told the workshop about the Dordoi Market Union's successes and shared an important example of the Union's success : this was when the Union proved to the local Tax Office that the local city budget could be increased not "by raising the rental payment for traders" but by payment of low taxes by all the traders. This case was a big achievement for the Union and subsequently, its membership began to grow very fast.

The Dordoi Market is the largest international wholesale and retail market in Central Asia, with around 30 000 engaged traders and about 10-15 thousand additional supportive service staff. The Union comprises around 13 000 members (vendors and porters) and has a very positive and strong reputation both inside and outside the city market.

The vendors sell a wide range of products, from food to manufactured goods (fabric, clothing, electrical goods, toiletries, handicrafts) both domestic and imported. The vendors also provide services such as hairdressing, foreign currency exchange, phone services and food



Eastern European Affiliates together with Pat Horn at Dordoi market



FTUEU Representative presents working group on RFP

delivery.

However, since the textile industry is well developed in Kyrgyz Republic, the domestic garment products dominate in the market and are popular because of their better quality and price.

A very good experience was shared by Natalia Cera Brea, UPTA's Legal Department Officer, who focused mainly on the Law on Autonomous Workers in Spain. The existence of such a law solves the problems of self-employed workers in terms of their legal recognition. After being officially registered as an "autonomous worker", a self-employed worker is automatically covered by social security.

At the end of the day the participants discussed the issue of the Regional

Focal Point for Europe and Central Asia and agreed that this subject requires more study and discussions among affiliates in Europe and Central Asia.

Pat Horn emphasised that the first stage of RFP discussions was initiated by StreetNet's Secretary, Cesar Garcia Arnal, who represents UPTA. He submitted a position paper on his proposal, regarding the location of a RFP for Europe, to the International Council Meeting in May 2013. In such proposal, he reflected UPTA's position, highlighting that a Western European country would be a good location for a RFP as most of the influential international institutions are based in Western Europe, namely in Brussels.

The discussion on this topic was not

intended for the making of a final decision by the Eastern European and Central Asian Affiliates regarding the RFP for Europe and Central Asia.

Representatives however, succeeded in agreeing on some very important requirements which should be taken into account when making the final decision in this regard. These included :

- the RFP should be in a Russian-speaking country;
- Convenience in entering the country (visa issue, duration of travelling) would be a persuasive factor.

All the attendees evaluated the workshop positively and noted that it was a great opportunity for them to acquire new skills and knowledge as well as to share their experiences.

Sub-regional Trade Union Meeting held in Issyk-Kul Kyrgyzstan

by Oksana Abboud, StreetNet Organiser

During July 23-25, 2013 ITUC/PERC, in cooperation with ACTRAV (ILO Moscow Office), organised a sub-regional trade union meeting which aimed to get together high level representatives of national trade union centres from Eastern Europe and Central Asia to discuss informal employment (IE), identify national priority actions and develop recommendations to the ITUC-PERC and ILO from the region, to be taken up in the ILO standards-setting process and priorities for international/regional work.

The informal economy is not a new phenomenon in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. It also existed during the Soviet Union (USSR) era before the communist system collapsed. However, it was just less visible and not that rife. It was persecuted by the State's repressive methods and it was quite easy for persons to be imprisoned for informal economic activities. The main factors leading to the growth of the informal economy in the former USSR were the transition from collective farming to private farming and migrant labour.

The informal economy in this region has its roots in many sectors of the economy and is highly represented in agriculture, trade, the service sector, construction, tourism and transport. Since it's growing all over the world, the national unions of



this part of the region have also started to be more concerned on informally employed workers. This was less attractive to them, for example, ten years ago when the ILO raised this issue as one of the unions' concerns.

Around 30 trade union leaders attended the meeting from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Ukraine. There were also representatives of different international organisations, such as FES, AFL-CIO Solidarity Centre and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

The event was welcomed by Mr. Asylbek Toktogulov, Chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan and by Mr. Sergejus Glovackas, the Senior Specialist at Workers' Activities/ILO Moscow Office, who noted that the it provided a very important moment for discussions which would frame the discussion format at the forthcoming ILO Conference in June 2014, which will consider the subject of formalisation of informal employment.

During the first Session, the ILO experts introduced the problem overview. Mr Alan Pelce, the Senior

Specialist on Labour Standards at the ILO Moscow Office, outlined the most important ILO norms and standards relating to informal employment. He noted that there is no unique definition of informal employment as this issue is very specific and varies from country to country. However, the ILO Conventions and Recommendations have a universal nature and relate not only to employees but also to all workers despite the character and particularities of their labour activity. He also pointed out that these norms are not obeyed in practice and that the higher the level of informality, the higher that the possibility of violation exists.

Mr. Pelce presented the chronological development of the ILO norms related to the workers engaged in informal labour relations and mentioned all the Conventions and Recommendations directed at regulating the labour activity of separate groups of workers, in a manner such that this created conditions for the formalisation of their labour relationship. These issues are related to Convention 177 on Home Work, Convention 189 on Domestic Work as well as the last ILO Recommendation 202 on Social Protection Floors.

Prof Krastyo Petkov from the University of the National and World Economy of

Sofia City, Bulgaria, showed the linkages between the informal economy, corruption and taxation systems in his presentation. He showed why the IE is growing, defined main factors for its growth in the world and provided an analysis of IE in the European Union. He focused on civil society and trade unions which he said, are rather weak, making it difficult to solve the challenge of informal employment as well as the elimination of corruption. These elements are tightly connected with each other. Prof Petkov also mentioned “the organisation of home-based workers” in Bulgaria which is a good example of self-organisation for this category of workers. He also pointed out that trade unions in their turn, have to find a way of dealing and organising informally engaged workers as well.

Stanislaw Cieniuch, Director of the AFL-CIO Solidarity Centre Office in Kyrgyzstan, gave a short presentation focusing on the legal aspects dealing with the informal economy. He emphasised the rule of law which has to prevail in any government while developing country policy and elimination of corruption.

The second session was dedicated to the trade union experience in relation to the IE.

Anton Leppik, ITUC/PERC Advisor, presented the PERC approach towards the informal employment issue. He underlined that the PERC focuses on two aspects of the informal labour relationship. On one hand, it focuses on the representation of the IE's interests and working with self-employed and “forced” self-employed workers, through preventing discrimination, the creation of workers' organisations and the promotion of collective bargaining negotiations. On the other hand, its focus also concentrates on the non-acceptance of undeclared labour in the formal sector and the need to develop measures to formalise labour relationships through social dialogue mechanisms.

He also stressed some positive as well as negative effects of informal employment and defined the most vulnerable categories engaged in informal labour relations (women, children and retired people) in the region.

The union leaders gave a short presentation about their approaches and experiences in their own countries, and about trade unions starting some common initiatives with social partners and state institutions in preventing shady



Oksana Abboud, StreetNet Organiser and Pat Horn, International Coordinator during the opening of the Sub-Regional Meeting



Representatives of the ILO/Moscow Office and the ITUC/PERC welcome the Sub-Regional Meeting

schemes of labour payment. They also talked about their organising experiences in relation to the representation of self-employed workers of “free professions”.

The following day's sessions concerned sectoral approaches, drawing attention to the international organisations and how they deal with informal workers.

Kirill Buketov, IUF representative, shared the IUF position on the informal economy, which is strong about social protection for all workers irrespective of their formal or informal labour relationship.

StreetNet International also made its input at the meeting. Oksana Abboud, Organizer for Europe and Asia, presented a general overview of StreetNet's structure. Pat Horn, its International Co-ordinator, emphasised the main priorities and activities StreetNet is currently dealing with viz the Social Protection Floor and

model framework for collective bargaining at local level.

Since the meeting was aimed at developing some ideas and recommendations from the region in terms of informal employment, the participants were tasked to work in groups and to identify the national level instruments and policies which formalise their work. During the last day of the meeting, they had to identify their national priority actions and actors and develop recommendations for the ITUC/PERC and ILO from the region to be taken up in the ILO standards-setting process and priorities for international / regional work.

In conclusion, it can be said that StreetNet International and its allies became more known and visible in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This is why there is great hope and potential to work more effectively and successfully in this region, paying attention to organising informal traders and affiliating them with StreetNet International.

Regional Meeting of the Americas Social Solidarity Economy and Women Leadership

by CTCP

The Confederation of Own Account Workers of Nicaragua, the Focal Point of StreetNet International for the Americas, completed the "Second Meeting of Own Account Workers and Street, Market vendors promoting Social Solidarity Economy" activity during the 25th to 29th August 2013.

This event included participation of 14 countries of the Americas: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Cuba, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, USA and Canada.

In addition, the Executive Committee of the National Front of Workers participated, the largest trade union federation of Nicaragua, of which the CTCP is a member.

The meeting discussed important issues in the development of the sector regarding the implementation of the Social Solidarity Economy, specifically the participation of our sector and the Leadership of women in our organisations and a review for a more efficient operation of the Americas Focal Point.

We had the participation of senior officials and specialists in the field of Social Solidarity Economy. One of them, Mr. Pedro Haslam, Minister of Economics, Community, Cooperative

and Associative; and PhD. Orlando Nuñez, Advisor to the President on issues of Socioeconomic development, whom from a practical standpoint, explained the application of public policies. They described the process of implementation of the policies that strengthen social relations and self-management solidarity between workers and the government.

To illustrate this process we conducted a field visit to a women's cooperative in the city of San Francisco Libre, Department (Province) of Managua, where participants had the opportunity to share the experience of a group of women who have come together to strengthen their efforts and influence their own economic and social growth.

The Social Solidarity and Self-governing Economy would not be an alternative to capitalism nor is the reaffirmation of the so-called formal economy, which is in decline, the social, solidarity and self-governing economy we practice as own account workers, street workers, at home workers and as many other names people have given us, is to build a new model of economic and social development committed to life, workers, humanity and the environment.

In this new political context women's participation plays a key role in the struggle for the liberation of our people, hence the need to provide the

necessary space for them to play the different roles of integration from the family, community, the union, not only as a mother, wife and companion at home, but also doing more to overcome obstacles, improve participation and leadership.

Raising awareness of the society we want is the best contribution we can give to the women continuing the fight to raise their self-esteem, participation, leadership and above all to end the domestic abuse and workload. In this sense we have to support women leaders of flagship programs such as the companion Leonor Corea, Director of "Usura Cero" Program, which funds and promotes the association of women and economic activities around leadership and economic and social projection. Just as the companion Justa Pérez, union leader and deputy in the National Assembly, who shared the whole perspective of growth within a union, the difficulties and progress that this process has been.

This meeting was a success, and brought us together again, we have strengthened as sister organisations who fight for better working conditions for our members and because we identify these commonalities, and the progress that we have to continue working inside and outside of our organizations, to strengthen the presence and industry recognition and inclusion in development programs in our respective countries.



International Council Meeting At Conakry - Making Way For The Future

by César García Arnal -
StreetNet International Secretary

I must admit that I could not have imagined a meeting as productive as it was intense, that happened at the recent International Council Meeting of StreetNet International in Conakry, Guinea. This was my first meeting as International Secretary of StreetNet. I found this International Council meeting exhausting but rewarding as it provided me with an opportunity to meet my colleagues and to get acquainted with their cultures.

There were many issues that there were addressed at this meeting. Others were not discussed as the agenda was very full and time passed very quickly to include all items. However, I would like to comment on some of them, as in my humble opinion, they can be definitive for the future of StreetNet International.

First, I want to highlight the importance of having good organisational communication and media relations. StreetNet, despite being the most important organisation in the world for and in the defence of street vendors, does not have a presence in the media world in keeping with its significance. The difficulty of access to new technologies, social networks or media that are central to "making great news", renders the news that StreetNet makes daily, anonymous. We all need to engage with each other and share our news, so that we can inform the world of our actions.

Another issue to highlight, which



flows from a resolution of the International Council meeting, is the implementation of a system of collaboration among member associations, to provide information to immigrant vendors who decide to pursue their livelihoods in other countries. The StreetNet International Secretariat, with the support of the

President and the Executive Committee, presented a report proposing the creation of a protocol between associations for this purpose. The report was approved and StreetNet is working on this matter.

Young people are also another matter I would like to draw attention to. They have significant value: they require a "voice", and should be listened to, should be organised and should have the opportunity to propose alternatives for the future. They look at life differently, have concerns and proposals for addressing these. Health, poverty, employment, family life and the future are aspects of life that trouble our youth. StreetNet, with the approval of the President and its Exco, presented a proposal for a youth structure in the "bosom" of StreetNet. I hope that by the next Exco meeting which will take place later this year in Madrid, we will have already started work on this proposal.

Another issue that was discussed at the meeting of the International Council, was access to future financing. The times are changing and we need to adapt to these. It is necessary that StreetNet's

projects department is strengthened, as there are great opportunities to run international programmes that will benefit our members. However, towards this end, we should surround ourselves with good professionals who will seek these projects and support us in their implementation. Our donors grow fewer and our organisation cannot depend on them.

For this reason, the StreetNet International Secretariat and the President have begun to hold meetings with teams of professionals who dominate the international arena, and who will support us in this task. In November, they will present a proposal for a study that we will conclude indicating our organisation's most pressing political needs, avenues of financing and different projects that can be undertaken, to StreetNet's Exco.

Finally, work outstanding in which all elected bodies and member associations must be involved, is towards the adoption of the resolution by the ILO in 2014 on the informal economy. We should all, as members of StreetNet International, speak with our governments, ask for their support, explain our needs and get them to sign the recommendation, thus paving the way for the future.

I do not want to finish this article without acknowledging the work and effort of our employees, which is very necessary in these times. We cannot dispense them since each and every one has done extraordinary work on behalf of our members. We must find all ways to keep them with us in a work atmosphere of respect and harmony.

Using social media to create an impact

by Sharon Pillay, StreetNet Media and Publicity Officer

Social sites such as Facebook is one of the fastest growing sites, which is estimated to have about a billion users. It is a good platform to post information as news travels fast due to it being so easily accessible and popular.



best practices are shared daily. Social media is essential to brainstorm, to educate and to share knowledge. One can share messages of support, your latest campaigns and info via this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/StreetNet/175851405831761>

Recently StreetNet organisers had sent letters to affiliates asking them to join StreetNet's Facebook page. It is also suggested that organisations have their own pages. If there are a high number of people joining StreetNet's page, the faster messages can be shared by many people. To help us, please encourage those to like our page. One can do this with their Facebook page and personal Facebook account by suggesting the StreetNet page to friends. This can be done by clicking on the invite button that is found on the right hand side of the page.

Social media is one of those platforms where communication, innovation and

Basic strategy tips for social media

1. Post more photos and videos

As important as messages are, photo's and videos have an emotive response. We don't have to think; we immediately react. Text needs to be read, then processed by the brain to be understood. Videos should be between 3-5 minutes to gain maximum attention.

2. Appropriate heading/captions

Captions should be short and capture the subject of the topic. It should also be striking enough to encourage people to share the information.

3. Follow examples of similar organisations

It would help to learn what works for your organisation by also observing similar organisations especially if you want to set up your page, and to increase the number of follower engagement.

4. Posting content and timing

Try to source a variety of content for your page. Monitor your page to check when are most of the users online. Is it during the day, night. People tend to be more active during the week-end. Friday afternoon to Sunday night are peak times, so it would b a good time to engage with the users and post during those times.

5. Make use of links

Links are a good way to boost social traffic. Many social media posts comes from their website links. Sharing too many links is not such a good idea as the website also needs to have different information on there to read and browse on the website itself. Links can be shared from other sites that can provide resources for your topic.



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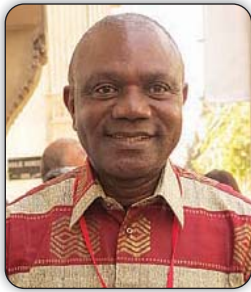
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StreetNet International Organiser visits Eastern Africa: Burundi, Rwanda and Kenya

by Sibailly Douhoure, StreetNet Organiser

As StreetNet International's Organiser and Educator for eastern Africa, I visited Burundi, Rwanda and Kenya, from the 21 July to 6 August 2013.



In Burundi, I participated in the second conference of the National Federation of Transport, Social and Informal Sector Workers, to which I was invited to speak on behalf of StreetNet International. There were about 150 participants and guests present. StreetNet's affiliate, the Union of Street Vendors, was represented by three women.

After the conference, I attended a seminar on July 24, organised by SYVEBU and funded by StreetNet as part of its affiliates support activities. There were 54

participants including 43 women, from 17 localities. The social solidarity economy was the main theme of the seminar. The following papers were presented:

(a) The social economy and solidarity in Burundi: Opportunities and Challenges;

(b) The system of micro-finance in Burundi: Experiences of integrating the informal sector with micro-finance in Burundi;

(c) Membership opportunities of SYVEBU to micro-finance. This seminar enabled participants to better understand the concept of the social solidarity economy and to see real opportunities for street vendors in it.

I went to Kigali, Rwanda on July 28, and met Mr. Lamech Nambajimana of the ILO to learn about the local trade union situation. He advised me to contact the three organisations of workers who are most representative of this region viz. CESTRAR (Central Trade Union Workers of Rwanda), COSYLI-National Council of Free Trade Union Organisations in Rwanda and COTRAF. I met with leaders of CESTRAR and COSYLI and visited the headquarters of their organisations. COSYLI expressed interest in StreetNet and registered one of its affiliated organisations called the Trade Union Network for the Promotion of the Status of the Working Women. The head of COTRAF was at a training seminar organised by the ILO in the interior of the country. The purpose of the mission was to make StreetNet International known in Rwanda and to investigate any potential relationship with operational organisations.

On August 1st, I went to Kenya and was met at the Jomo Kenyatta Airport in Nairobi by Wilson Maina Mwangi, the Secretary General of KENASVIT. I travelled to Kisumu on the same day.

I visited Tom Mboya College, a training institution run by COTU, the Confederation of Workers of Kenya. The College is located in Kisumu, 550 km from Nairobi. I met with Mrs. Rosemary N.O. Meyo, the College's Director and Mr Onyango Ngolo, head of its library. Mr Ngolo explained the history, objectives and services offered by the College.

Snippets of the SYVEBU seminar



Guests watching the cultural event before the opening ceremony outside the conference hall



A cultural event during the opening ceremony inside the conference hall



At the opening ceremony, Sibailly Douhoure, StreetNet organiser was invited to speak on behalf of StreetNet

The College is located on a large piece of land with offices, a library, classrooms, a multi-media room, a dining room, accommodation for students and a space for sports. The training charges are very low. This College could provide a framework for the training of StreetNet trainees and also to develop and disseminate specific training courses in the field of the informal economy.

After my visit to the Tom Mboya College, I went to the office of KENASVIT's affiliate in Kisumu KITES. Here I engaged in discussions with the president, Antony Kwache, other local leaders and members in the streets. My next stop after Kisumu was the national headquarters of KENASVIT in Nakuru located about 260 km from Nairobi. I spoke with some leaders and staff as well as the National Co-ordinator, Francis Kapere, the Urban Representative, Kariuki Muraya and the Accountant, Eunice Wangui Muiruri.

The visit to the two communities gave me the opportunity to observe first hand, the management capabilities of StreetNet affiliates and the struggles of the street vendors themselves in these cities.