

Mondiaal.

Magazine about Mondiaal FNV's work in 2018

*Domestic
workers show
us their faces*

ILO treaty-in-the-making

*An end to
hitting*

*“The poverty
in India
shocked me”*

Jeroen Brandenburg
FNV Agrarisch Groen
(Agricultural sector)

Mondiaal 

Photobook Change!

The unique photo book 'Change!' acquaints you with projects supported by Mondiaal FNV. And with the people involved in these projects: the workers, their families, the trade union people and the employers. The book shows how they bring about positive change in working conditions, in health and safety and in combating child labour.

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International trade union work, it works!

2018 was a year that showed many different faces in trade union work worldwide. In this glossy magazine - Mondiaal FNV's annual report for 2018 - we show by way of our activities not only that international trade union work and international solidarity still work, but also that there is much that still needs to be done.

An illustration that it works was the meeting that I had at the end of last year with the South Korean trade union leader Han Sanggyun. My Korean namesake was in prison in South Korea on account of his trade union work. His release is a fine recent example of how trade union power is still crucial. We met in Copenhagen during the International Trade Union Congress (ITUC). Han was there as a free man, released after years of wrongful imprisonment. He thanked the FNV for all the support, the solidarity and the pressure that had been exerted on the South Korean government to secure his release. Seeing him there made me realise once again that it really does help to write letters, and for people to all act together internationally and give their support to trade unions and individuals in need of it, people like Han Sang-guyn.

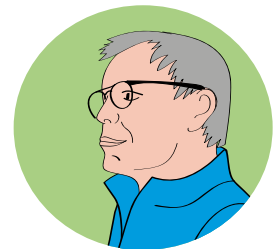
His release was a wonderful success, and one that gives a taste for more, because there's still a lot that needs doing: in Iran there are numerous trade union leaders in prison, in Colombia attacks on trade unions are the order of the day and in Zimbabwe things are still very much amiss following the departure of Mugabe. Just a few examples from a long list.

The world is changing. Sometimes for the better, but often for the worse too. In many places in the world there is the spectre of excessive capitalism, increased inequality and the undermining of our rights. And, sad to say, sometimes scapegoats are sought and then feelings turn against, for instance, migrants. Maybe more than ever before, this day and age calls for solidarity and international cooperation. Much still to be done, then, by Mondiaal FNV.

The involvement of so many of our Mondiaal FNV people is a source of support for everyone involved in the work, the many loyal donors, those who attend the meetings and the members of the working groups and the writers' network. And that's what we need: people who show their involvement by actively taking part, each in his or her own way.

Many thanks to you all.

Han Busker
President of Mondiaal FNV



In this edition



On the cover

Ignacia Vilma de la Cruz Santiago (65) from Peru began working as a domestic servant for a family in Lima at the age of twelve. During the 46 years that she worked there, she was physically and mentally abused by the family's children. After the death of their parents, the children threw Ignacia out of the house. Trade union Sinttrahol, of which Ignacia is a member and which is supported by Mondiaal FNV, helped her recover the pay owing to her. Her story is by no means an exception. Nine unions for domestic workers in Peru protect the interests of people like Ignacia, with ever increasing success stories. *Read more about this on page 24.*

Photo: Evelin Lavi Almonacid

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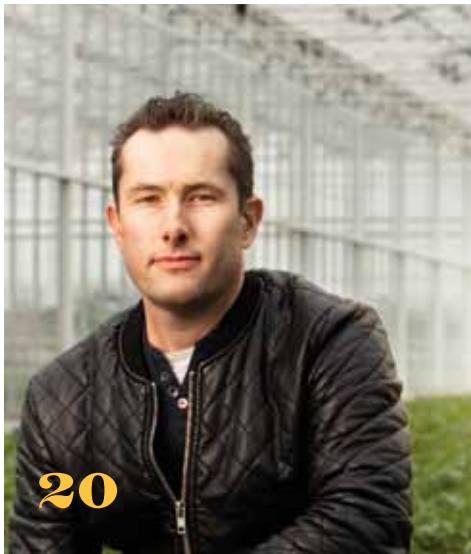
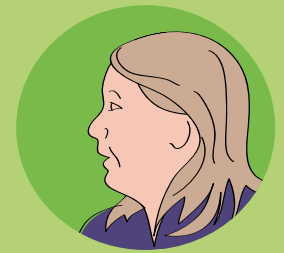
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Ostrich tactics

1 On an industrial site in Jakarta in Indonesia, a group of brave women are waiting to be given their own office. What the women have in common is that they all work in the garment factories on this industrial site and that they have suffered or are still suffering from sexual intimidation or violence. They decided to join together and stand up against violence in the factories, including by setting up a hotline. To do this they need a room they can invite other women to and one that's more-or-less anonymous. As things are at present, they have to manage with the security guards' booth, right in front of the entrance to the site, which thousands of people go past every day. Hardly a safe situation. And the management has long been promising a new office. But this has yet to materialise.

2 In the meantime, at the ILO in Geneva, representatives of governments, companies and trade unions are holding discussions on a new treaty against violence in the workplace. The unions are striving for a convention that applies to the widest possible group. A lot of talking and a lot negotiating is taking place. About the definition of violence and of workplace, about whether vulnerable groups should be given extra attention, and in particular about whether this should be a convention or a guideline, the latter being much less strict. The Dutch government and Dutch business community would rather go for a guideline, because just imagine ...

But that burying your head in the sand no longer works is fortunately what increasingly more companies worldwide are realising. You can't in all conscience sell clothing that's made in the factories in Jakarta where these same brave women are still waiting for a simple little office. You can no longer be blind to the abuses in the shipbreaking industry, in the palm oil plantations, in the production of the fruit for our supermarkets. Mondiaal FNV favours working with companies that are prepared to strive for increasing sustainability in their production chains. We are addressing the wider Dutch public to make it clear that as a consumer you don't have to be an ostrich. You have a choice. But most importantly we favour working with all those trade union men and women who – often at the risk of their own lives – make every effort to stand up for trade union rights, human rights and a more equitable economy. They are absolutely the opposite of ostriches. Heroes.

Karen Brouwer

Managing Director Mondiaal FNV



Higher wages with a dark lining in Bangladesh

Hard work under strenuous working conditions for a paltry wage. Life is still a struggle for the garment industry workers in Bangladesh. Although the minimum wage was raised from 5,300 taka (56 euros) to 8,000 taka (84 euros) a month at the end of 2018, because of high inflation and an increase in the cost of living, this was of little benefit to the average worker. What is more, the unions were bypassed during the negotiations.

In Bangladesh, a new minimum wage is set every five years, via regulatory measures established from within a minimum wage council. Textile union IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC) had initially proposed 16,000 taka, based on an analysis of the cost of living. However, last summer the government decided to expel the IBC representatives from the council and appoint its own people in their place and in their opinion 12,020 taka was sufficient. In the end, the government decided to set the new minimum wage for the next five years at 8,000 taka.

“It was simply published in the government Gazette. It was a case of like it or lump it”, says Ruben Korevaar, who advises the IBC on behalf of Mondiaal FNV. “The figure is still a long way from a living wage. But the unions have decided to not take action immediately, but to work towards a higher wage via the social dialogue structures.”

In the photo, taken in a Mark Mode factory in the Bengalese city of Gazipur, two women are checking garments and cutting off threads.

Photo: Catrien Ariëns



#stopviolenceatwork

Towards an ILO treaty

June 2019 will present an opportunity for an important step to be taken in countering violence and intimidation in the workplace worldwide. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is to make a decision regarding a treaty that requires all countries to introduce legislation to address ‘violence and harassment in the world of work’. In recent years, Mondiaal FNV has worked hard towards achieving a powerful mandatory ILO treaty.

Photos: Liesbeth Sluiter

Factories and other workplaces are often unsafe locations for women. In an overcrowded bus or train on their way to work, they not infrequently have to fend men off. Managers demand sex in exchange for promotion, and at work they are treated to suggestive remarks, catcalls and hissing. To say nothing of assault and out-and-out rape.

Invariably the perpetrators get away with it. Of course a woman can go the police if she has been assaulted or beaten up. She can report it to the police and hope that this will result in punishment of the perpetrator. All too often, though, there is a lack of evidence and at the end of the day, she ends up being the one who finds herself in the dock. And added to that is the shame and the risk of being judged by those around her: 'What was she doing there?', 'Wasn't she asking for it?' or the awful 'What did you expect then! In other cases of violence and intimidation, recourse to the police can be as good as ruled out. In many countries there is no law against catcalls or hissing or against an 'accidental' hand on a butt, or against constant comments about one's appearance. Making a complaint to the management seldom leads to any measures being taken. Yet, such behaviour can turn 'a nice job' into daily torment.

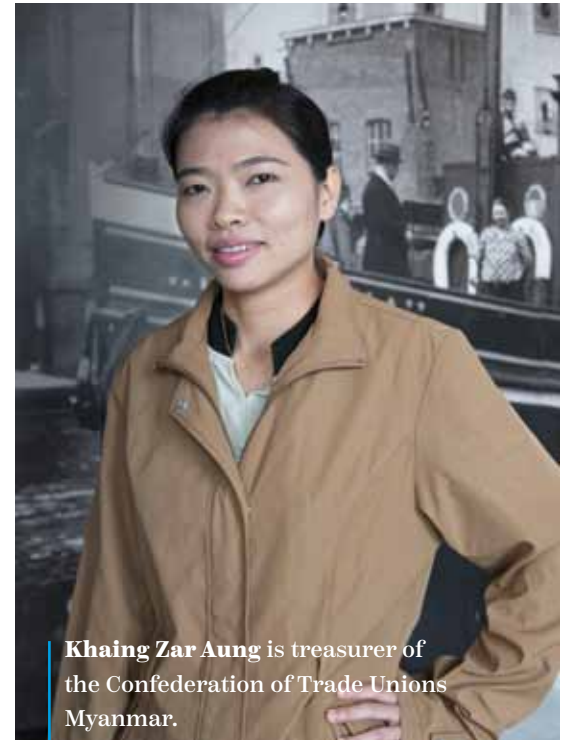
Besides individual responsibility on the part of the perpetrators and a need for awareness of the consequences of this sort of behaviour, there is a large onus of responsibility on employers, whose duty it is to provide a safe work-

ing environment. And on governments, who have a duty to draft appropriate legislation.

Change is in the air. Hopefully, steps can soon be taken to combat violence and intimidation in the workplace. In June 2019, the International Labour Conference (ILC, which is the parliament of the International Labour Organisation ILO), will be voting on an international standard that countries will be required to implement in the fight against violence and intimidation in the workplace. The ILO is the only UN organisation in which workers, employers and governments make decisions jointly. 'Tripartite' - three parties - is what it's called.

The ILO standard-in-the-making refers to violence and harassment in the world of work. The title, indeed, does not refer specifically to women. While women and girls comprise the bulk of the victims, there are other groups that are also vulnerable: caregivers, migrants, domestic workers and LGBTers (see inset 'With or without 'vulnerable groups?' on page 9). The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) estimated that globally a third of the women over fifteen have experienced sexual or physical violence. It is the most tolerated form of violation of labour rights, concluded the ITUC.

In recent years, Mondiaal FNV - with its partners - has exercised pressure to have a powerful treaty adopted in June 2019.



Khaing Zar Aung is treasurer of the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar.

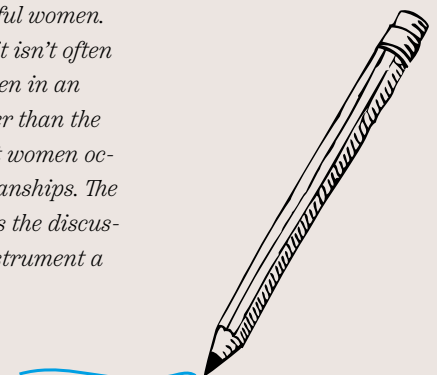
"Sexual violence fits into a pattern where women are second-class citizens. If a family does not have enough money for a son and a daughter to study, it's the daughter that's out of the running. As a woman, you acquire many responsibilities for family and the household and if you have a husband and children, it is really difficult to improve your position."



Wilma Roos of Mondiaal FNV was one of the negotiators during the ILO conference in June 2018 and kept a diary for herself.

***I have to make sure** I get there early: room 18 in Geneva's stately Palais des Nations is too small to offer all the representatives of employers, employees and governments from all over the world a table as well as a chair. In this room, discussions will go on for two weeks in the context of the annual ILO conference on a new instrument to tackle violence and intimidation in the workplace. I am surrounded*

by a big group of colourful women. This is rather unusual: it isn't often that the number of women in an ILO commission is larger than the number of men and that women occupy important chairmanships. The #MeToo discussion gives the discussion on this new ILO instrument a new urgency.



... Diary of a negotiator

“If you zoom in, things turn out to be trickier. Take, for example, the word ‘workplace’. What is that precisely?”

At first sight, it would seem an uncontroversial issue. After all, who wouldn't be against violence and intimidation? But if you zoom in, things turn out to be trickier. Take, for example, the word 'workplace'. What is that precisely? The fact that a production hall falls within the definition is clear. An office is also a workplace: no further discussion needed. But a living room where a home worker peels prawns, rivets buttons or sews shirts for a customer? And what about the bus you take on your way to work? Should that also fall within the definition? From the moment that travelling to and from work also counts, then this straightaway means a responsibility for employers to take measures to ensure that the bus journey is safe. No wonder that employers would like to keep the definitions as narrow as possible, while on the other hand, the trade unions would like as many cases as possible to be covered by the new standard.

Tug of war

The tug of war as to precise definitions and terms makes the process of achieving a strong ILO treaty highly obscure for outsiders. For insiders too, incidentally! Behind certain formulations there often lies a hidden world of negotiations and compromises. Added to that, everything is complicated by the huge number of actors. Within the ILO, negotiations go on between workers, employers and governments. These three parties can then be further broken down into a number of different countries and regions all potentially with opposing views.



Eutopia Ngido, consultant in Tanzania, works among others for Mondiaal FNV.

“If you have been beaten or raped, you can produce a doctor's certificate, but how do you prove that someone has been standing yelling at you? The elders, who administer our traditional forms of justice, will never encourage a woman to talk about it. And most women tend to accept that. Otherwise they'll be faced with more rows and fights at home.”

A first point giving rise to lively discussion is what precisely is understood by violence and intimidation, and how important it is to see both of these in combination. Precisely because intimidation can take many forms, ranging from sexist comments and internet bullying to unwanted touching, and can degenerate into violence that can have a physical, psychological, sexual and

economic impact on victims, this combined view is important. A huge pile of amendments fills my table, helping me follow the heated discussion. In the mornings, we are by ourselves: together with our trade union sisters and one or two brothers, we go through the whole text and all the amendments. In the afternoons, the employers come and sit opposite us, while the governments take their place to

our right. From that moment only the spokespersons speak and I take frantic notes on the positions that have been adopted. This helps me to see where extra lobbying is needed. During the breaks, the important thing is to bring these lobbying points to the attention of the right persons. Approaching the representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs is easy: Wiebren van Dijk is so tall that he towers

above everyone else and he is extremely accessible. The employers' representative is more difficult to find; I suspect him of quickly disappearing after the sessions. Could it be that he is trying to avoid speaking to me? I app him and make an appointment.

With or without 'vulnerable groups'?

One of the most contentious issues that the participants at the ILO meeting in June will have to reach agreement on is that of the 'vulnerable groups'. Because, besides women and girls in general, more groups can be identified who run the risk of becoming victims: caregivers, migrants, domestic workers and LGBTers (LGBT stands for lesbian women, gay men, bisexual persons and transgenders).

At the beginning of the process of establishing the ILO standard, pressure was exercised from different quarters to have these vulnerable groups as far as possible referred to by name in order to actualise their protection. However, the naming in particular of the LGBTers escalated into a painful question. During the first round of negotiations, in June 2018, the African countries in particular were 'not amused' that so much emphasis was being placed on this group. In many African countries, the existence of sexual minorities is simply denied. "This is a Western problem", is a frequent contention. Wilma Roos was involved in the negotiations in Geneva in 2018 on behalf of FNV. "At a certain moment, it became clear that the African countries would vote 'en bloc' against the convention if the LGLBT community were referred to explicitly in the text. It was then the choice between a text in which the vulnerable groups are not explicitly mentioned and no agreement at all." The ITUC, with pain in its heart, then decided to agree to the compromise text, in which sexual minorities are only implicitly referred to, explains Wilma Roos. "As ILO, we just can't afford not to reach an agreement."

The negotiations in Geneva are tough. The fact that the African countries are blocking inclusion of the LGLBT community is for the employers, including the Dutch employers, in fact a reason for urging the case for these groups to be named. Wilma Roos: "You normally never hear employers talking about the rights of sexual minorities, but they are now presenting themselves as the champions of tolerance because they hope this will cause Africa to turn its back on the whole process and that as a result the whole covenant will not get off the ground."



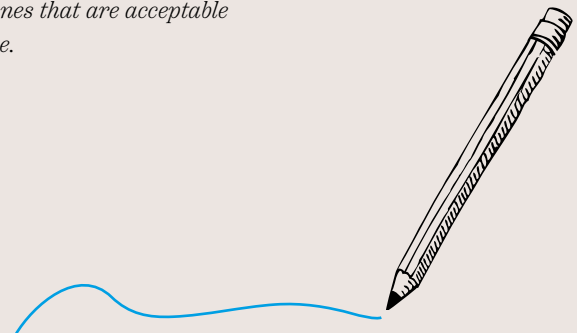
Nazma Akter, President of Sommito Garments Sramik Federation, a trade union in Bangladesh's garment industry,

"The norm is for women to keep silent and accept everything. They are subjected to catcalls out on the streets and comments are made about their appearance. Men forbid their wives to stand up for themselves at work, as they are afraid they'll want to too much of a say in things at home too. Many women who are following leadership training, stop when they get married. Otherwise they lose their husbands and their family."

Within the employees' group there is a lot of discussion as to how the instrument can be as inclusive as possible. The new instrument has to apply to all working people, in the formal as well as in the informal sector, in the towns as well as in the rural areas and in all countries. Behind me I feel the energy of the public gallery, which is almost completely filled with female

workers from the informal sector. In particular, familiar faces from the International Domestic Workers Federation make their voices heard. They share with us the most poignant examples of domestic workers who have been raped or murdered by their employers. In the negotiations with the employers and governments it seems not easy yet to find the right words to - on the one hand -

ensure this inclusiveness and on the other ones that are acceptable to everyone.



... Diary of a negotiator

“Under the pressure of #MeToo, the risk of non-completion of the treaty suddenly became a whole lot greater.”

In the case of issue such as violence and intimidation, contrasting views are not only economic but certainly cultural too.

At the International Labour Conference, the Dutch government operates within the EU group. Alongside this, there is also the African group, the Latin American group, etc. Wilma Roos, policy officer at Mondiaal FNV, took part in the negotiations in Geneva in June 2018: “The groups each endeavour to speak with one voice. The Netherlands – the Rutte cabinet – is in fact not in favour of a convention (an obligatory treaty), in contrast to the majority of the EU countries. The Netherlands will attempt to steer the EU point of view more in its own preferred direction, but expectations are that the Netherlands will, in the end, conform to the EU view.” This process of finding compromises and looking for majorities will produce ample opportunity to exert an influence on the process. Mondiaal FNV is making a significant contribution. Wilma Roos: “The proposals put forward by the ILO office are subject to amendments; these are huge piles of paper. For these amendments, all the parties attempt to get support from within the other parties. There is a constant to-ing and fro-ing, lobbying, hustling and manipulating. Emotions sometimes run high.” The lobbying mainly takes place in the run-up to an ILC. In the Netherlands, meetings between representatives of government, employers and workers (FNV and CNV) take place several times a year at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment to

Blue report

The talks that take place during the annual ILO meeting obviously do not begin from square one. The ILO office ensures there is a basic text to work from, which is based on research on the subject and previous negotiations. Preceding the annual ILO conference (usually in May/June), intense discussions are already taking place within and between the various parties. In March 2019, the process has entered its last phase. Early in March, a last draft report is published (the so-called blue report). This was preceded by the white, brown and yellow reports. In the run-up to the ILC in June 2019, the blue report is discussed and commented on by all possible parties. Here and there discussions have also taken place between parties as to where agreement might be reached and where substantial pressure is still needed. Ultimately, a two thirds majority will be needed in Geneva in June for a treaty. Whether that will be successful? Several of those involved are none too sure. Wilma Roos: “It would be the first time in history that an ILO process to negotiate a treaty has failed. That would be disastrous.” As well as being a terrible birthday present for the ILO, which will be celebrating its centenary in 2019.

Domestic violence is another point that generates a great deal of discussion. Various studies have demonstrated that domestic violence has a considerable impact in the workplace and a very negative influence on safety and productivity. In some countries, such as the Philippines and Brazil, legislation is already in place regarding the impact of domestic violence in the workplace, dealing with such is-

sues as paid leave and a six-month employment guarantee for victims of domestic violence. Because the employers’ spokesperson finds this point highly unimportant, I decide to tackle our Dutch employer representative about this. However, it proves very difficult to convince him sufficiently of our points of view on this subject. “Surely employers cannot in all honesty be held responsible for all the problems that employees

encounter?” is the reply. The fact that reducing the impact of domestic violence in the workplace may potentially also have a positive effect for the employer just doesn’t get through. In the end, after heated discussions and negotiations, it proves possible for everyone’s responsibility to be expressed in the convention text in a good way, so that employers and governments are also able to assent to it.

prepare for the negotiations within the ILC. For the representatives of the trade unions this is a highly appropriate place to attempt to sway the government's position. Wilma Roos: "Many of the discussions are about whether the ILO standard should take the form of an obligatory treaty - also termed a convention - or of non-binding recommendations. We are in favour of a treaty. The employers would prefer to have nothing at all, but failing that, then non-binding recommendations. The government would sometimes seem to be listening mainly to the employers." At the beginning of the process of developing the ILO standard (the so-called 'standard setting process'), the #MeToo issue erupted all over the world. Cases of sexual abuse and intimidation suddenly became much more difficult to brush under the carpet. The ILO process was put under a microscope. Jan van der Velden is Deputy Head of International affairs at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment: "Under the pressure of #MeToo, the political risk of non-completion of the treaty suddenly became a whole lot greater. In these circumstances, recommendations were no longer sufficient and pressure was increased to secure a proper treaty."

A positive change of direction

In April 2018, Minister Koolmees wrote a letter to Parliament, expressing what was initially a noncommittal viewpoint by the Netherlands. Wilma Roos: "Via FNV's political contacts, we succeeded in arranging for questions to be put in Parliament. There was also a threat of a

motion. To pre-empt such a motion, Koolmees backed down and sent a second letter to Parliament, leaving the way open to the possibility of the Netherlands consenting to a convention, subject to certain conditions." The success of the lobbying by the trade unions did not go unnoticed by the Social Services officials. Jan van der Velden: "I don't believe FNV missed any opportunities in lobbying for a convention. An example of how clever they were is having the previous Minister of Social Affairs, Asscher, put questions to the current Minister Koolmees." Van der Velden, with a smile: "We don't know for certain, but we suspect that the FNV was behind this." Incidentally, the positive 'change of direction' by the Netherlands is not set in stone, warns Wilma Roos. "The influence of the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers on the government continues to be very strong. On top of that, State Secretary Tamara van Ark, Member of Parliament for the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), is responsible for the occupational safety and health policy. We fear that she will be much less flexible with regard to the ILO process."

Social Services official Jan van der Velden outlined the room that might be available: "The Netherlands is only in favour of a treaty if it is formulated in a very precise and targeted manner and if, by contrast, the accompanying measures leave substantial room for individual countries to choose their own 'national' approach."



Mary Viyakula, works for the Indian organisation SAVE.

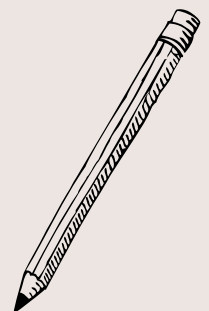
"Family and community keep inculcating into women that assault and rape are the fault of the victim. Women cannot bring this out into the open, because that would damage the family reputation. They have no option but to regard the assault as their destiny. They don't talk about it, the act is covered up. Many of the victims start to doubt it themselves and feel torn apart. They swallow all the misery, which begins to fester inside and sometimes culminates in suicide."

The employees' delegations work on till late every evening, despite the fact that the coffee bar and the restaurant have long since closed. In the afternoon, I stock up on enough biscuits and cakes to stop me having to carry on working on an empty stomach. The fact that the room is full even after everything is closed illustrates the huge level of involvement on the part of all the participants. The intensive work sessions are, however, exacting their toll. During

the course of the week, my eyes become smaller and smaller and around me I see the delegation becoming more and more tired.

The first week of negotiations concludes on a positive note and on Saturday evening a breakthrough appears to have been reached: it was agreed by a large majority that further negotiations would take place on the basis of a convention, supplemented by a recommen-

dation. Much to my amazement, the vote is overturned in the second week; the list of workers who are especially vulnerable to violence and intimidation proves an insurmountable stumbling block. Inclusion of the group of LGBT workers in this list appears in particular to be a bridge too far for many countries and the negotiations are broken off. Fortunately, negotiations will be resumed in 2019: a whole year to lobby for a successful outcome.



● Wilma Roos

In addition to the lobbying to get all the parties in the Netherlands to work together for as strong a treaty as possible, Mondiaal FNV also supports unions in other countries in lobbying their government for an effective policy against violence and intimidation in the workplace.

Gender Platform

In Bangladesh, for example, Mondiaal FNV partners have set up the so-called Gender Platform. The Gender Platform is financed by the Strategic Partnership (between Mondiaal FNV, CNV International and the Fair Wear Foundation). In the past few years, the Gender Platform has lobbied the government of Bangladesh to have measures against violence and intimidation in the workplace introduced into their national legislation. Ainoon Naher, a professor of Anthropology at Dhaka University, is coordinator of the Gender Platform: "Back in 2007 already, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh gave a ruling that the government had the duty to take measures against sexual violence in the workplace, but this has never been implemented. We began by lobbying for the Supreme Court ruling to be complied with." In collaboration with a group of lawyers, the Gender Platform drafted a proposal for new legislation. "We then went out and had as many of those involved as possible read the text and asked them for comments. This ultimately produced a new version, which we took to the government." The result of all the lobbying is that the Bangladesh Parliament will soon be debating the bill. Independently of the outcome of this debate, it is already a remarkable success, says Naher without any false modesty.

Synchronously with the lobbying for national legislation, the Gender Platform in Bangladesh also lobbied for a strong position to be taken by Bangladesh with regard to the ILO process, says Naher. Prior to the ILO meeting in June 2018, the organisation BILS, a partner of Mondiaal FNV, and member of the Gender Platform, organised a workshop on the ILO process and the various subjects that might be raised. Partly as a result, of this workshop, Bangla-

desh is now taking the procedure of achieving a stronger ILO standard extremely seriously, says Naher. An indication of this is that Bangladesh sent an impressively large delegation to the ILC in 2018. "Unfortunately it is not clear to us yet what the government's position will be with respect to this contentious issue during the next ILC: will it be a recommendation or a real convention."

In other countries, too, Mondiaal FNV has helped unions take part in the ILO process. In some cases it was all about strengthening the lobbying of the national government; sometimes local unions needed help in order to be able to take part in the complex ILO process. In a few cases, Mondiaal FNV was instrumental in enabling union representatives to participate in the process in Geneva. The Global Union Federations IndustriALL (manufacturing and mining) and ITF (transport) and the International Trade Union Confederation ITUC are actively engaged in helping national unions put the issue of violence and intimidation on the agenda.

Position

Wilma Roos: "In 2018, a Gender Platform South Asia was established at the initiative of ITF. Following the example of the Gender Platform Bangladesh, the trade unions in all the countries in this region are conferring on a joint position on the ILO standard." The South Asia platform was in fact a consequence of the disappointing participation by South Asian countries in the ILC in 2018, says Roos. "We wanted to prevent this happening in 2019. The South Asian countries have now formulated a joint position on the basis of which they propose to enter the negotiations in June." In the Netherlands, the 'final push' for a strong treaty was launched in January 2019. Under the hashtag #stopviolenceatwork, the FNV began a petition to persuade Minister Koolmees and employers' organisation VNO-NCW to support the ILO treaty.



Agnes Vroegh, process operator in a factory and member of the Executive Board of the FNV.

"In one of the factories where I worked, a colleague repeatedly stroked his hand down my body. I told him I didn't appreciate that sort of behaviour. The man approached the boss and tried to blacken my name. I then decided to submit a complaint of sexual intimidation to the personnel department. The employer tried to appeal to my better nature with comments like: it's not as bad as all that, is it! The man's got a wife and children, after all. In the end, nothing was done about my complaint and I left the factory. It made a huge impact on me because it was never settled. It was left to fester."

Child labour-free cocoa

From 5 to 13 December 2018, active members of FNV Cacao (Cocoa) and staff members of Mondiaal FNV travelled together to Ivory Coast. The aim of the visit was to exchange experiences in Ivory Coast and Ghana on fighting child labour in the cocoa chain. Dick de Graaf, cocoa expert and active FNV trade unionist, shares a few moments of the visit.

Photos: Dick de Graaf



1. On the first conference day, everyone introduces him or herself. Looking at the group, I'm the oldest. And that's definitely worth mentioning in the African context.

2. In the village of Kongodia, on the border with Ghana, virtually the entire adult population has gathered together for a meeting about cocoa and child labour.



3. The chairman of the local cocoa cooperative strongly advocates a national, democratic farmers' organisation in Ivory Coast, truly able to express farmers' voices at government level.



4. One of the two farmhands at the cocoa plantation in Kongodia is sitting all by himself. I make sure that he is not forgotten when the trade union T-shirts are being handed out.



5. During a visit to the Cargill Cocoa location in Abidjan, we share experiences about the union facilities, the negotiations for the collective bargaining agreements and the participation of women in trade union work.



6. And after every meeting a group portrait is taken. All of them are workers and union people from Ivory Coast and Ghana. All involved in the processing of cocoa beans. We understand each other perfectly.



Projects worldwide

In 2018 Mondiaal FNV had 162 ongoing projects. This magazine includes examples of the projects and this map highlights a number of these.

Albania, Mali, Morocco, Uganda *AOb Teachers' Union*

Studies show: education for girls is of benefit to the whole community

In 2018, the AOb Teachers' Union, Education International and Mondiaal FNV investigated the projects combating child labour and school dropouts. What emerged was that our projects in Uganda, Mali, Albania and Morocco are opening many doors of local, regional and national authorities as well as for social dialogue. Furthermore, the projects are generating more members for unions and a greater involvement by teachers. It also emerged that communities are now looking with a fresh pair of eyes at the value of education for girls, as a result of which they are now taking action to prevent child marriages and teenage pregnancies.

Colombia *TUCP*

Participation in social dialogue in energy sector

The USO (Unión Sindical Obrera de la Industria del Petróleo) is the oldest trade union in Colombia. Via the USO, Mondiaal FNV supports the Environmental and Mining Energy Social Roundtable (MSMEA). The aim of this project is to conduct social dialogue about the future of the mining and energy sector, not only looking at economic factors, but also at the conditions for workers, the environment and the impact on the regions.

Latin America *FNV Solidarity fund*

Recognition and regulation of the work of sex workers

Mondiaal FNV supports REDTRASEX LAC, a regional network of organisations of sex workers in Latin America and the Caribbean. The focus of this first project is on strengthening the organisation: drawing up a strategic plan, education of the affiliated organisations and lobbying for acceptance and regulation of the work performed by sex workers, for example through recognition by the ILO.

Zimbabwe *FNV Solidarity fund*

More members for Zimbabwean representative in informal economy

ZCIEA (Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations) represents the interests of workers in the informal economy, such as street vendors. Informal workers form almost 95 percent of the labour force of Zimbabwe. This project focuses on increasing the membership of ZCIEA via innovative technological applications.



Israel, East Jerusalem *FNV Solidarity fund*

Work and rights for Palestinian and Arab women

Arab women in Israel and Palestinian women in East Jerusalem live under miserable conditions, not only because they have poorer access to the labour market in comparison with men, but also on account of their Palestinian or Arab origin. Mondiaal FNV supports the Israeli NGO Workers Advice Centre (WAC). This organisation encourages and trains the women on the road to employment, organises them and is involved in collective advocacy.

India *MONDIAAL FNV FUND*

Development of child labour-free zones in natural stone sector

The coalition Stop Child Labour and its partners, including Mondiaal FNV, focus on eradicating child labour in the supply chains of various sectors. One of these sectors is natural stone. We support the project in the natural stone sector, under which BWI India and BWI-member unions in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh are setting up two new child labour-free zones and maintaining two existing ones.

Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka *TUCP*

Workers become organised in constructions projects in South Asia

The working conditions in large infrastructural projects that are financed by development banks are extremely poor. The Building and Woodworkers International (BWI), organises and represents the interests of these workers. The aim of this project is to organise and lobby on behalf of the workers in the five participating countries for compliance with labour rights by the big development banks and their shareholders.

East Africa *TUCP*

Improving the social dialogue

In East Africa, we are working alongside the East African Union Confederation EATUC and three national trade union confederations in Uganda, Rwanda and Ethiopia to make an effective social dialogue a reality. At regional level, we focus, for example, on the development of strategies for unions to represent informal workers and to set up a system to collect data on the East African labour market that can be used in negotiations. At national level the focus is on enhancing a tripartite social dialogue, one way of which is by enlarging the capacity of trade union federations to negotiate on labour law and the minimum wage.

Ethiopia *STRPART*

Tackling abuses in Ethiopian garment industry

In the rapidly growing garment industry in Ethiopia we focus on a living wage, improving labour rights and conditions and combating violence against women. For instance by supporting IndustriALL and the Ethiopian trade union confederation CETU in organising a workshop for trade union leaders, Ministries and clothing brands and by supporting research into violence against women in Ethiopia. We do this in the form of a 'Strategic Partnership for Garment Supply Chain Transformation'.



Number of projects per fund in 2018*

90

TUCP = Trade Union Co-Financing Programme

22

FNV Solidarity Fund

13

Mondiaal FNV Fund

33

STRPART = Strategic Partnership for Garment Supply Chain Transformation with Fair Wear Foundation, CNV International and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

4

AOb Teachers' Union (four projects, which are carried out in several regions)

*Based on disbursements.

*Worker at palm oil plantation dies, company
pays costs and promises improvement*

Ibu Laom's long and painful ordeal

Palm oil plantations in Indonesia are still using paraquat, a herbicide that is banned in the EU. The potential consequences are shown by what happened to Ibu Laom.

Photo: Chris de Bode

In May 2017, Ibu Laom got a pain in her stomach. The 48-year-old resident of the Indonesian island of Kalimantan, who belonged to the indigenous group of the Dayaks, went to the clinic at the palm oil plantation where she worked but they were unable to find anything. The local health centre prescribed medicines for stomach complaints. In January 2018 the pain got worse. Ibu also began to experience difficulty in breathing. One day she coughed up blood and she was rushed to hospital. Because she wasn't on the permanent workforce, she used the name of her brother, who did have a contract at that company, in order to be able to use the company's ambulance.

Disposable types

The X-rays at the hospital showed that her lungs were affected. 'Fluid build-up, was the diagnosis in the medical summary. On 24 January she was operated on and fluid was removed. In February she was given follow-up treatment. The costs were so high that Ibu was forced to sell her and her husband's house and land. The proceeds of the sale were 25 million rupees (approximately 1,500 euros). The couple then moved in with one of the children. Her employer did not concern himself in any way about the sick woman, including financially.

After the operation, the symptoms did not diminish. On the contrary, Ibu suffered increasingly from shortage of breath. On 12 June 2018 she died, at the age of 49. Her husband, who worked for the same company, had lost a tremendous amount of weight and had developed serious skin conditions.

Ibu and her husband worked as sprayers, which means walking over the plantation with a heavy tank (fifteen kilos) on your back to spray herbicide. The sprayers have to pay for the tanks themselves. One of the herbicides used is paraquat, a product whose use was banned by the EU in 2007 because it is so toxic, for

humans too. Among the results of exposure to it are lung problems, for example oedema (build-up of fluid) and fibrosis, connective tissue deposition that increases the effort of breathing.

The sprayers received no training, their work was not supervised and there was far too little equipment available. The company's face masks were the disposable type that you can buy in any shop. Many sprayers knitted gloves themselves to protect their hands. The company did not carry out any health checks, did not provide their employees with any form of social security or protection nor provide healthy toxicity-neutralising food and drink.

“Company acknowledges link between working conditions and Ibu Laom's illness”

Ibu Laom had worked for the company since 2010. Like many other female workers, she had no labour contract. On palm oil plantations, the sprayers are generally women. The men harvest the palm nuts from the high trees, using long poles with a sickle attached. This, too, is strenuous work, for which you have to constantly stretch yourself beyond your physical limits.

A local NGO that Mondiaal FNV works with, Link-AR Borneo, got wind of it via the union on the plantation, dug into it and started keeping a record on the case. This landed in the hands of Mondiaal FNV. Mondiaal FNV visited the

plantation and saw that paraquat was still being used. This despite the fact that the plantation was about to undergo the certification process by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), an initiative to increase the sustainability of the sector, which is also a major source of environmental damage. The conditions on certified plantations tend to be somewhat better.

“We heard about this in May 2018, just after Ibu Laom had died”, says Marijn Peperkamp of Mondiaal FNV. “Shortly afterwards we attended an RSPO meeting, where we got into conversation with one of palm oil's major customers. The company, which does not wish to be named, had shortly before this published the names of companies from whom they sourced their palm oil. Ibu Laom's employer was among them. There was, in fact, another company as intermediary link. The latter company then paid a field visit to the plantation and saw that the findings by Link-AR Borneo were correct.”

Unique agreement

This led to a unique agreement last November, which was concluded between the plantation's parent company, the trade union and Link-AR Borneo, the thrust of which was that the employer had to make retrospective payment of Ibu Laom's medical expenses and outstanding wages to the surviving relatives. Agreements were also reached to work together to bring about a safer and healthier workplace on the plantation, with more and better protective equipment. There was also a commitment to the effect that the trade unions would be able to operate freely on the plantation. “This new policy must be put into practice this year”, says Marijn Peperkamp. “This is obviously small consolation to Ibu Laom's surviving relatives. But for the rest of the palm oil workers, in particular the sprayers, this work-related accident has, after all, had a positive result.”

Short messages



Maryam (16, Mali) is back at school again

"I dropped out of school at the age of thirteen so that I could save up for my dowry. I went to Bamako, the capital of our country, where I worked as a housekeeper seven days a week for fifteen euros a month. The union SNEC had meanwhile started a project in my village all about the importance of going to school and getting an education. My friends from Wakoro, the place I come from, called me to convince me that getting married at my age was maybe not such a good idea. My parents were persuaded as well. To cut a long story short: I went back home and went back to school again. I am determined to finish my schooling before I even think about getting married." Back in her home village, Maryam has committed herself to stopping others from dropping out of school. Commissioned by the global sectoral union Education International and Aob, and with the support of Mondiaal FNV, Nora Wintour carried out research into the results of endeavours to combat child labour via teaching unions. In Wintour's opinion, the attempts by unions to put child labour on the agenda have had an effect in a number of ways: as well as reducing school drop-out rates, the unions saw their membership increase and the relationship with the local councils improve.

Peru is poldering now as well

A historic moment for Peru with its culture of fighting - this hug between the chairman of the employers and the chairman of the workers on the occasion of the establishment of the Peruvian Foundation of Labour on 12 June 2018, in which the Netherlands was a driving force. Since 2014, Peruvian employer and employee delegations had paid a number of visits to the Netherlands; to the SER, the Dutch Labour Foundation (Stichting van de Arbeid) and the FNV. In this process, Mondiaal FNV worked closely with DECP, Mondiaal's counterpart of the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW), focused at employers' organisations.

In Peru, collective bargaining agreements are often accompanied by strikes and actions. However, the boxers' gloves now really appear to have given way to the conference table. Several agreements have already been concluded without the need for any strikes. The new three-year bargaining agreement at fruit and vegetable grower Camposol (November 2018) is a good example. It was agreed that after working for Camposol for four years, workers would be given a permanent contract. Everyone was given a wage increase dependent on the number of years of employment. Among the other agreements were: everyone is now entitled to work clothing, food supplements for pregnant women and there will also be a birth control campaign and a programme to combat violence against women.

The Asociación para el Trabajo has become almost an exact replica of the Dutch Labour Foundation. According to Samuel Machacuay, Secretary to the Board, not only the 'kitchen table talks' have been copied, but even the jargon. "Here we talk about 'modelo Polder'."



Exchange of textile unions

The members of the Indonesian textile union FBLP proudly show their colleagues the famous banner, which says: 'Sexual intimidation-free zone'. The FBLP women had a long fight to be given this spot for their banner, at the entrance to the industrial zone KBN Cakung, just outside Jakarta. A permanent warning that sexual intimidation is not tolerated here.

Twenty representatives of textile unions (from Ethiopia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India and Indonesia) met together in Indonesia from 6 to 10 August 2018. The object of the meeting, organised by Mondiaal FNV, was for unions to learn about combating sexual intimidation and violence. The representatives from Myanmar, for instance, told stories about how they managed to persuade the fashion brands - in their case H&M - to be open to complaints from workers. The activists from Bangladesh spoke about the involvement of the informal textile sector in union work. The Indonesians spoke about the radio station Marsinah FM run by the union, where talk shows on sexual intimidation are often broadcast. Rosa van Wieringen of Mondiaal FNV says: "One of the successes of this exchange is that the participants have become absolutely convinced of the urgency of the problem. For example in Ethiopia, where previously the problem was scarcely acknowledged, they are now busily setting up a lobbying plan."

Glimmers of hope in palm oil sector Colombia



Greater attention to safety and good working conditions. This is the result of a number of recent developments within the palm oil sector in Colombia.

Over the last few years, this South American country has developed into one of the largest palm oil exporters in the world. However, this has been accompanied by land conflicts, poor working conditions and serious environmental damage as well as a deteriorating trade union climate.

Nevertheless, the past year saw glimmers of hope. Already in 2017 and after years of strikes and labour conflicts, the company Palmas del Cesar signed an agreement with the Ministry of Labour guaranteeing a permanent contract to 225 of the six hundred employees. The result was a demonstrable improvement in working conditions, says Hilke Jansen, who is engaged in this issue at Mondiaal FNV. “In a workshop that we held with workers at palm oil plantations, someone from Palmas del Cesar was the only one to score ten.”

A study last year into the palm oil chain by the Colombian trade union institute ENS also paid immediate dividends. “Clear recommendations were made, for example that greater attention should be paid to the position of women on the plantations and that better use should be made of the unions’ health care committees”, says Hilke Jansen. “The report also increased awareness of unsafe situations faced by workers and it led to the sharing of best practices.”

Following a grim 3-week strike at another palm oil producer, Indupalma, at the end of last year, a committee was appointed to see whether permanent contracts could be given to 1,400 employees working for subcontractors.



Geraldine Espinoza Vilela, secretary of the Peruvian company union Sindicato Único de trabajadores de Medifarma, looks back on the process of nullifying her dismissal.

“Last June, I was able to get back to work again. That was a year and three months after my dismissal by Medifarma (a pharmaceutical company in Peru, ed.). In February 2017, we had founded the union Sindicato Único de trabajadores de Medifarma, of which I was secretary. A month later I was dismissed. They claimed that my production rate had dropped. This was based on a fake evaluation and which I challenged in court with trade union support. Last year the court ruled that Medifarma must reinstate me.”

“The case was still in progress when I went back to work again; in October I finally won. I had worked for Medifarma for nine years and had always acted in solidarity with colleagues and so I received a huge amount of support from them, financially as well. I used the period when I was not working to be active on behalf of the union and to study. The return to work was emotional and I celebrated this with family, colleagues, the union and sympathisers. I received a great deal of support from experienced trade union leaders.”

“This extraordinary experience has taught me that you can’t achieve victory without a fight. Happily this has only made my confidence in the union stronger.”

Mondiaal FNV supports unions in Peru, such as Sindicato Único de trabajadores de Medifarma.



**Jeroen Brandenburg, union official FNV Agrarisch Groen
(agricultural sector):**

“When inspectors arrive,
the people simply remove
the children from the fields”

Photo: Harmen de Jong

As shelf stacker, he was already campaigning for the FNV at the age of fifteen. Years later, as FNV union official, he managed to wrangle a solidarity contribution out of the employers when it emerged that child labour and modern slavery were taking place in the Indian plant seed sector. Together with some of the active members, he went to India last year to see with his own eyes what problems are taking place in the seed industry and what could be done about them. Welcome to the world of ‘tiger’ Jeroen Brandenburg, the militant FNV Agrarisch Groen union official.

Jeroen, last year we interviewed Han Busker. You are a little bit less well known, so please would you introduce yourself. Is there an animal species that you'd like to compare yourself to?

“A tiger. Once I’ve got my teeth into something, I want to win my case and see a result. Besides that, I can’t bear to see injustice. And I’m a doer, not an academic. I’d rather take on something concrete, such as in the solidarity project about seeds.”

Just for the record: how did you come to be at the FNV?

“As I said, I’ve been a member since I the age of fifteen. When I was a shelf stacker at Albert Heijn supermarket, I used to take part in campaigning activities. I always say I was a born fighter, even though I’m only 33, hah hah. I worked for temporary employment agency Vedior as consultant and later as branch manager, and as FNV active union member was involved in the takeover of Vedior by Randstad, where I became redundant. Mariëtte Patijn, who was my FNV official at the time, drew my attention to the vacancy for a union official and that’s how I found my dream job at the FNV. I’ve now been working here for ten years. Time flies.”

As official of Agrarisch Groen, what kind of things are you working on at the moment?

“A recurring theme is the excessive flexibilisation. This is a somewhat recurring theme in my career, because it also features prominently in the employment agency business. Amongst other things, I took part in protest actions at floral bouquet company Sierafor in Oegstgeest, where there was an attempt to use bogus constructions to replace Dutch employees by Polish ones. We are at present mapping out pricing in the chains in the floriculture and seeds industry. Who is actually earning the money and at whose cost?”

What is typical of the seed sector?

“The fact that they don’t compete in terms of price but in terms of added value. A great deal is done in the way of research & development. Unlike the rest of the sector,

you find a large number of works councils. There is an emphasis on social concern and here I have a lot to say about human resources policy. So for me, visiting the seed sector is always a therapeutic outing.” Nevertheless, in 2015 the National India Working Group issued a report on the abuses in the seed sector. This made mention of child labour and modern slavery in India, including suppliers to Dutch companies.”

Was this new for you?

“Yes, it was. And I think for the producers too. There are ten large seed producers in the Netherlands, which all import seeds from abroad. It is a fairly nontransparent sector, with a large number of subcontractors. Many large seed companies state in their contracts that child labour is not permitted and have this checked up on by organisations such as the Fair Labour Association, who, however, had not had not encountered anything amiss. Obviously, as soon as inspectors arrive, the first thing the people do is remove the children from the fields. There is, however, a difference between agricultural seeds (like wheat) and vegetable seeds (like tomatoes). The former sector is less rigorous with the regulations and does more bulk production than does the vegetable seed sector.”

Was the report a shock for you?

“Yes, absolutely, my positive feeling about the sector did suffer a bit of a blow. Workers in the Netherlands were taken aback too. You work for a reputable company and then you hear this... There was also disbelief. At seed companies in North Holland it has always been something of a tradition for fifteen-year-old children to help out, by doing a bit of weeding, for example. People began wondering whether things might be worse than that. I then came up with the idea of asking the employers for a solidarity contribution to combat child labour. It is a utopia that you can totally eradicate child labour, but you can at least diminish it.”

“
*I am a
doer who
cannot
bear to see
injustice*
”

How was your proposal greeted?

"I had included 'child labour' in the title, as if its existence was already a fact. People had a problem with that. When I replaced that by 'social dialogue', they were able to go along with it and together we found a compromise. Thirty thousand euros was reserved, half of which was paid for by the employers. I involved Mondiaal FNV and active sector members in the details of the plan."

Last July you and three active members and three Mondiaal FNV staff members went to India. How did that go?

"An eye-opener. New. Exciting. The preparations alone. One active member was not allowed to go by the company, claiming they were already doing enough on the issue. It was all three activists' first trip outside Europa. We had lots of laughs and lots of fun, but more than anything else we were shocked at the poverty and the huge contrasts. From a hypermodern city like Hyderabad you arrive in a village where everyone lives on scraps, but where you are given a tremendous welcome, with flowers and music. You see how strenuous the work is, how little medical care there is... And of course there's the caste system. In the Netherlands, if you're born poor it doesn't mean you'll necessarily stay poor the whole of your life, but not so there. I've developed a deep respect for the passion and the fighting spirit of the union officials there, because if you fight for things like a living wage your position and your life are in jeopardy. They regularly wind up in jail."



The FNV delegation with Jeroen Brandenburg visits a seed company in India.

What struck me in the report was that farmers who were interviewed on behalf of the unions were afraid that the unions would take away their children.

"There are many contradictions here, between villages as well as between castes. A lot of rumours, too, that now find their way via WhatsApp. You might, I think, compare that with those stories about Poles coming to work in West-Friesland, area in North Holland, and that they're

afraid that their jobs will be taken or that women will be harassed."

What was the most vivid impression you were left with?

"During the course of a meeting in a small room, three union officials began singing a song about trade union rights. It was the union song of the TVVU, the federation of farmers' unions we work with. I don't know what it meant, but the room sang along with tremendous enthusiasm. No, definitely not a good idea for me to go down that path. I wouldn't get through the first round of The Voice. We have a different way of trying to raise people's enthusiasm. We now make vlogs, including about the bargaining agreement for greenhouse farming, with Polish subtitles. That works better than pushing people into small rooms."

How will the seed project go from here?

"The trip gave me the strength and the energy to fight for a more sustainable sector. We have to work towards a situation like the one in the garment sector, where the chain has been mapped out and sound reciprocal agreements have been made. The problem in the Netherlands is that retailers like Albert Heijn and Jumbo all talk a lot about sustainability, but want to keep the prices so low that collective agreements get worse rather than better. Flowers, meat, milk, they want to have it all on the shelves at rock bottom prices. That's why even in the Netherlands you'll come across exploitation, underpayment and miserable working conditions. And consumers become accustomed to this, whereas it's other groups that have to pay the price."

You have spoken out against an agreement for international corporate social responsibility (ICSR) in the floriculture and seeds sector. Why?

"I'm afraid that we are being used as 'token women', that they'll hang a tag on products, implying: things are OK here. Whereas many companies here don't even have a works council! The problem with these ICSRs is that they focus primarily on other countries, while the situation in this country needs improving too. But that's something the employers don't want just yet."

How far have things got as regards mapping out the chain?

"The research into the situation in India and the chain as a whole has been completed. The researchers at Basis & Beleid now recommend further research that will zoom in on the cooperation between Indian and Dutch companies and how to improve this. We would like a structural contribution from the employers and will be raising this in the new collective bargaining negotiations this year."



“
I was shocked by the poverty and the huge differences in India
”

Photo: Harmen de Jong

What in particular do the farmers in India need?

“One of the biggest problems is that it is not easy to make price agreements. A further factor is that farmers have to borrow money for equipment and pesticides. Up to 20 per cent interest is charged for this. If there’s a poor harvest, they get into debt. This has already caused several cases of suicide. Maybe we need to create a fund for farmers who have been hard hit by climate change. We also need to promote social dialogue there, so that Indian workers in the agricultural sector are better equipped to fight for a living wage.”

How do your members view chains of this sort? Do they see them mainly as a threat, because of the possibility of jobs disappearing, or are they eager to help make the chain more sustainable?

“The themes they care about the most are making the chain more sustainable and a living wage. The members also want to eradicate excesses like child labour, because of the image of the sector. Nobody wants to work for a company that does not adhere to the regulations.”

How are things with the three active members who went with you to India?

“They are acting as if they were ambassadors: they tell their story at the Dutch seed companies and on the works council platform. The trip has made them begin broadening their views, their awareness of what is going on in the sector has grown and they have become more militant.”

The thirty thousand euros have all been spent. What now?

“This gives you a taste for more. I am hoping for a follow-up contribution from the employers, to enable us, together with Mondiaal FNV, to continue this project. One idea is to bring active Indian members to the Netherlands, for instance to train them. Another thing that could provide added value is if we take part in the Seed Council in India, a body that seed companies and NGOs participate in. And I would also very much like to do a solidarity project in the flower sector, where they work a lot with African companies. The situation in that chain is much worse than in the seed sector, so that is a still greater challenge. And I love challenges...”

Peru ratifies ILO Convention on domestic workers

A resounding victory for the nanas, or nannies

As one of the last countries in South America, last year Peru ratified ILO Convention 189. Fine work by the 'power ladies' of the unions for domestic workers. And now the last step, legislation...

On 14 June 2018 it was D-day in Peru, when Parliament approved ratification of ILO Convention 189, which sets out rules for decent work for domestic workers (see inset). "Considering the political situation there this was quite remarkable", comments Astrid Kaag, who is engaged in this issue at Mondiaal FNV. For years, Peru has been caught up in corruption scandals, which have been the downfall of various presidents. "The unions of domestic workers have managed to exploit this political chaos for their own ends", says Kaag. For example, they managed to win over Fuerza Popular, the party of Keiko Fujimori, who was also accused of corruption. Traditionally, that party feels little concern with domestic workers, but they changed course in order to gain favour with the ordinary man/woman.

GIRLS

Peru was one of the last countries in South America to ratify ILO Convention 189. Although the country has had a law on domestic work for some fifteen years now, this does not amount to much. The country has 550 thousand domestic workers, 99 percent of them women. These tend to be girls or women of Indian origin from rural areas, who only speak Quechua or Aymara. Marcolina Infante Ramirez once told us while on a visit to the FNV how she as a nine-year-old was given to a lady from the big city by her mother, who had another eleven children to support. Her mother was given two months' salary in exchange (sixty

dollars). "You're selling me!", she shrieked, when being parted from her mother. Marcolina is now an official for the trade union Sinttrahol in the capital Lima, which is supported by the FNV.

SEXUAL ABUSE

The girls and women often live in with the family, work twelve to sixteen-hour days and only have Sundays off. 95 percent of them have no labour contract. They usually do not earn more than 400 sol a month, around 100 euros: way below the Peruvian minimum wage. Furthermore, they are regularly the target of aggression and sexual abuse. Many a master of the house or eldest son has indulged his desires on the nana (nanny) or ama de casa (housekeeper). Resulting pregnancies in many cases end in abortion or the child being given up for adoption.

HARD LEGWORK

The growth of the middle class in Peru has led to an increase in the number of domestic workers. In the meantime there are nine regionally organised unions of domestic workers, which are affiliated to the largest trade union federation CGTP. Organising domestic workers is no sinecure. 'Hard legwork, is what Leddy Mozombite Linares, the President of the National Federation of domestic workers Fenttrahop, calls it. Approaching the domestic workers at home is risky, because many employers do not approve of trade union membership. For this reason, trade union officials

WHAT IS ILO CONVENTION 189?

ILO Convention 189 regulates the rights of domestic workers. The Convention was adopted on 16 June 2011 and became effective on 5 September 2013. The tenor of the Convention is that domestic workers have certain rights, including a contract, a minimum wage, regulation of working hours, access to social welfare, and protection against discrimination and abuse. Up to now, the Convention has only entered into force in 25 countries, most of them in South America. Peru was one of the last countries to ratify; only Suriname and Venezuela remain. Countries that have not ratified include the Netherlands, the USA, Canada, Great-Britain and France. Among the countries to have ratified are Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal and Italy.



Photo: Jan Banning

stake out parks on Sundays and via written messages draw employers' attention to the rights of their personnel. All in all, this does not lead to a high rate of unionisation. For example, trade union Sinttrahol in the capital Lima only has seven hundred members out of 350 thousand domestic workers. For many, the membership fee of three sol (eighty euro cents) a month is in itself prohibitive. And yet the unions achieve success. Kaag recalls how on visiting the office of Sinttrahol, she saw an expensive white leather sofa set. This turned out to have come from an employer who had lost a dismissal case. "Evidently she was unwilling or unable to pay and the sofa set was appropriated and she was free to come and collect it on payment of what she owed."

ANGEL

In addition, Sinttrahol and other unions recently began campaigns to increase respect for domestic workers. They post items online, including video clips about 'las invisibles', the

invisible ones. In one of the videos a girl says: "In my house there is an angel, who helps us with everything. But she is invisible to my parents." In the background, you can see the image of the domestic worker gradually fading away. It's good that Peru has ratified ILO Convention 189, but where do we go from there? "The Convention has to be converted into new legislation in Peru", says Kaag. "The unions have their ideas on this all ready and are now talking it over with parliamentarians. Key components include the pension, which practically nobody saves for, and the monitoring of compliance with the law. But this remains a vulnerable group, which has to keep on asserting its rights. This is why I am very proud of these intelligent power ladies in unions like Sinttrahol, who refuse to let others run rings round them. While many of them have only had a few years of education, they communicate with Ministers with the greatest of ease."

WHAT IS THE IDWF?

From 16 to 19 November 2018, the IDWF, the International Domestic Workers Federation, held its second international congress. Domestic workers and their representatives from all over the world had come to Cape Town for this event. Among the resolutions that were adopted were for the strengthening of the organisation, against violence to women and for good care, including child care, for domestic workers. The IDWF was founded in 2013, the year that ILO Convention 189 went into effect. In the meantime, 69 organisations from 55 countries have become members. A total of 600 thousand domestic workers have become affiliated. In 2006, as co-organiser of a conference for domestic workers, Mondiaal FNV was at the root of both the Convention and the IDWF and still supports IDWF projects.

On the road to financial independence

“Pick the low-hanging fruit”

Membership fees form the financial basis of every trade union. But what if the members only earn one or two euros a day? The amount of money that these people have left over and can manage without obviously isn't enough to build up a modern union from. Tendayi Matimba, financial project manager with Mondiaal FNV, helps unions in poor countries towards financial independence.

Unions that represent poor workers are not really economically viable, concluded the Zimbabwean Research Institute Ledriz in 2017. The members cannot really afford enough to keep the union afloat financially. The conclusion was that this means that trade unions in poor countries will always remain dependent on donor funds, which was bad news for Mondiaal FNV. One of the basic principles of Mondiaal FNV's policy is that ultimately unions should be able to stand on their own feet, with the aid of support. “Fortunately we don't allow ourselves to be easily discouraged”, says Tendayi Matimba. To help the partners of Mondiaal FNV on the road to financial independence, Matimba organised the first part of a training programme for leaders and staff of partner unions in 2018. The training programmes took place in Kenya in November 2018. Participants were leaders of trade unions from Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Uganda. “The aim of the training programme is to give the union leaders knowledge, awareness and insight into the financial resources available”, says Matimba. During the course of the programme, the participants are presented with the three-step plan that they have themselves developed: One: straighten out the financial administration system. Two: see what savings can be made. And three: look for alternative sources of income.

Rules of the game

The training programme in Kenya was concerned mainly with the first phase: ensuring that the financial organisation is in order. With the focus on financial planning, accountability, auditors' reports and ensuring that the rules of the game are sound. By rules of the game

Matimba means for example that when purchasing new furniture, at least three tenders should be obtained. That there should be agreements regarding approval and payment of invoices and of course money management. And that the internet needs to be safe, so that no undesirable visitors can gain access to the financial administration system. An added advantage of clear rules is that greater efficiency is automatically ensured.

Savings

In phase two, unions go in search of the so-called low-hanging fruit to cut costs. Matimba gives a few examples. “Phone calls outside the country can easily run up to fifty dollars. But they cost nothing via Skype or WhatsApp. Faster internet is slightly more expensive, but saves a lot of time.” It all sounds very obvious but picking the low-hanging fruit can quickly save 5 to 10 percent of costs, according to Matimba's calculations. Another expense item where savings can be achieved is that of conferences, to which in Africa often some two hundred to five hundred people may be invited. “These people all have to eat and sleep somewhere, which is very expensive. Underfunded unions would do better to arrange this differently.”

Solar panels

In the third phase, unions learn how to find extra sources of income. “For example expanding service provision, such as a tax service, but also providing collective insurances, negotiating collective reductions on certain products (for example solar panels, mobile telephones and similar) or developing savings and credit facilities.”

“

A good trade union leader is not necessarily a good businessman or woman

”

These sorts of activities may potentially generate revenue, but even more importantly: they not only bind existing members to the unions but may also induce people to become members. “New members also means more income”, says Matimba.

A number of African unions are already fairly well on the way to financial independence. Matimba quotes the example of Ghana, where a number of unions offer collective insurances, and this is attracting new members and holds on to them longer too. The union federation has its own building, which houses all the unions. This in itself produces savings and in addition to that, part of the building is rented out to other organisations. This, too, generates income. “What is important here is that in the development of products, a union should be led by the market, and not by the trade union agenda”, warns Matimba. “A good union leader is not necessarily a good businessman or woman, so the task of generating income should be given to somebody else in the union. Make sure, too, that the commercial activities are in line with your mission as trade union and with the needs of your members.”

“

It all sounds very obvious but picking the low-hanging fruit can quickly save 5 to 10 percent of costs

”



Photo: Carel de Wilde



Nailin Aung, Assistant General Secretary of Myanmar Industry, Craft and Service Trade Unions Federation (MICS).

“In the past year, the minimum wage in Myanmar rose from 3,600 to 4,800 kyat (2.80 euros) a day. An increase of over 30 percent! A fantastic result of the negotiations, but nonetheless we weren’t in celebration mood. Research has shown that a worker needs a minimum of 5,600 kyat for basic necessities. Someone who has to live from the minimum wage quite simply lives in poverty.”

“The problem is that the employers see the minimum wage as a maximum wage. To be able to make ends meet, a worker has to do overtime. That means not doing the regular 48 hours, but 60 or 65 hours a week! That’s what the catch is. Following the increase in the minimum wage, some employers increased the production targets. This means that workers not only have to work harder, but there’s also less overtime and so less income for the workers.”

“We have handed out thousands of leaflets at factory gates, explaining the rights of the workers and what they have to do if their rights are being infringed. A total of over a hundred and thirty complaints were received. We were able to solve a substantial number of them. A good side effect was that we received over two thousand applications for membership.”

Mondiaal FNV supports the strengthening of the Myanmar Industry, Craft and Service Trade Unions Federation (MICS).

IMPRISONED RELEASED

A few examples of violations of trade union rights, wrongful arrests and imprisoned trade union activists in 2018.



Chinese workers arrested for founding trade union

More than thirty workers at Shenzhen Jasic Technology Co., Ltd. have been arrested, reported the organisation GoodElectronics in August 2018. The workers had founded a trade union, which the management did not take kindly to. The workers were dismissed and then arrested on suspicion of “provoking trouble”. According to GoodElectronics, the workers had followed correct legal procedures when founding their union. Students at twelve Chinese universities started a petition out of solidarity with the workers. But these students were then faced with intimidation and threats by national security staff. The leader of the solidarity team was detained on 11 August 2018. Lawyers have been warned not to take up the case of the Jasic conflict, or else they risk losing their licence.



Iranian teacher sentenced to ten years

The Iranian teacher and official of the Iranian Teachers’ Trade Association of Tehran (ITTA), Mohammad Habibi, was sentenced to over ten years’ imprisonment and 74 lashes for taking part in a peaceful gathering on 20 May 2018. The global sectoral union Education International (EI), of which ITTA-Tehran is a member, is demanding ‘the immediate and unconditional release of Mohammad Habibi.’ On 20 May 2018 the organisation International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI) reported that a gathering organised by the ITTA-Tehran was attacked by undercover agents. Thirteen participants, including Habibi, were arrested. At the time of his arrest, Habibi was on bail from a previous arrest in March. All of the participants except Habibi were freed one day later.



Esmail Abdi back in prison

Last year we reported on Esmail Abdi, a leader of the Iranian teacher union. In July 2017 he was arrested by Iranian security forces and was thrown into prison. Great was the jubilation when he was released on 9 January 2018. However, the jubilation was short-lived. On 20 January he was re-arrested. As trade union leader, Abdi campaigned for free and accessible education for everyone. After his arrest, he was sentenced for ‘crimes against national security’. In April 2018, Abdi went on hunger strike. The global union federation Education International organised a petition for his release.



Protest against murders in Colombia

In the first half of 2018, as many as 123 leaders of social movements in Colombia were murdered. On 28 June, in the south of the province of Cauca, armed men forced peasant leader Carlos Hidrobo Navia to get off his bike. They then executed him. The next day, another peasant leader, Iván Lázaro, from the region of Córdoba, was assassinated. These are just a few examples from the report ‘All The Names, All The Faces’, presented by the Colombian NGOs Cacep and Indepaz on 6 July 2018. According to the Global Rights Index, which is published annually by the International Trade Union Confederation ITUC, Colombia is still the most dangerous country for trade unionists. Perpetrators for the most part escape justice. The peace agreement that was signed between the Colombian government and the revolutionary armed forces of Colombia (FARC) in 2017 has scarcely given rise to any improvements. And things do not look good for the coming years either. In 2018, the right-wing Iván Duque, an outspoken hard-liner, was elected president.

Thai journalist Somyot Prueksakasemsuk released

On 24 February 2018, the Thai court reduced journalist and trade union activist Somyot Prueksakasemsuk’s sentence, as a result of which he was released after seven years. In 2013, Somyot had been sentenced to ten years’ in prison for lèse majesté. At the time, he had already spent two years in pre-trial detention. The FNV sent a letter of protest to the Ambassador of Thailand calling for the accusations against Somyot to be dropped. In the past, FNV has worked with Somyot: he once coordinated a trade union project for Mondiaal FNV.

Trade union rights worldwide

The ten countries where trade union rights have been violated the most in 2017/2018: Algeria, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Colombia, Egypt, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, Saudi-Arabia and Turkey. The total number of countries where trade union activists were wrongfully arrested or imprisoned rose from 44 to 59. Source: ITUC Global Rights Index 2018



Han Sang-gyun released (on bail)

In 2017 the South Korean trade union leader Han Sang-gyun won the FNV Trade Union Rights Award. He was unable to collect it himself because he was serving a 3-year prison sentence for allegedly causing 'obstruction' during a large demonstration in the Korean capital Seoul. Mondiaal FNV and other national and international trade associations have always pushed for his release. In May 2018, the KCTU, the union that Han is President of, announced his release. He has been let out on bail, after serving two years, five months and twelve days. The big demonstration that at the time took place on 14 November 2015, was directed at the then President Park Geun-hye. She, meanwhile, is in prison on charges of corruption. "For the past three years, millions of workers across the world called for the release of Han Sang-gyun. He is now out of prison. He will be welcomed home not only by the people of Korea, but by workers worldwide.", said ITUC-President Sharan Burrow, delighted after receiving the news of his release. On the opening day of the Olympic Winter Games in February 2018, the FNV had urged people via social media to call for the release of Han Sang-gyun. FNV-President Han Busker sent the South Korean President an urgent appeal to release Han. KCTU General Secretary Lee Young-joo, on the same charges as Han but who had been in prison for 'only' six months, was also released, a month later.



Death threats in Colombia

A week before the Colombian parliament was due to debate the murder of and death threats against trade unionists, leaders of the Colombian trade union SINTRAVIDESCOLS received death threats. At the end of August 2018, National President Jaime Cárdenas, and Carlos Zuñiga, Eduard Lenis and John Paz, all from the same union, received a letter from the paramilitary group Auto-defensas Gaitanistas de Colombia, calling upon them to leave the city of Cali within 24 hours. Orders had apparently been given to murder them. It was the fifth death threat against Jaime Cárdenas and the fourth against his colleagues. The global sectoral union UNI sent a letter to President Iván Duque urging him to guarantee the protection of the Colombian population.



... and threats in Chili

In August 2018, union leaders of the Chilean copper mine Codelco received death threats on account of their union activities. On 22 August 2018, Miguel Veliz, leader of trade union No. 3 of the Codelco mine in the Chilean Chuquicamata, had a stone thrown at his car. Veliz: "The stone had a message attached to it with anti-union slogans. They are trying to scare us off our union work – but they won't succeed." Union No. 3 is part of the Copper Workers' Federation (FTC), affiliated to IndustriALL Global Union. The FTC National Governing Board said in a statement: "We are outraged by these anonymous acts to intimidate Codelco workers. Such violence generates fear and endangers people's safety." The President of the Gabriela Mistral Union of Professional Workers and Analysts was also threatened. On 21 August she received death threats in a phone call on 21 August, and was told not to attend negotiations organised by Codelco's management.

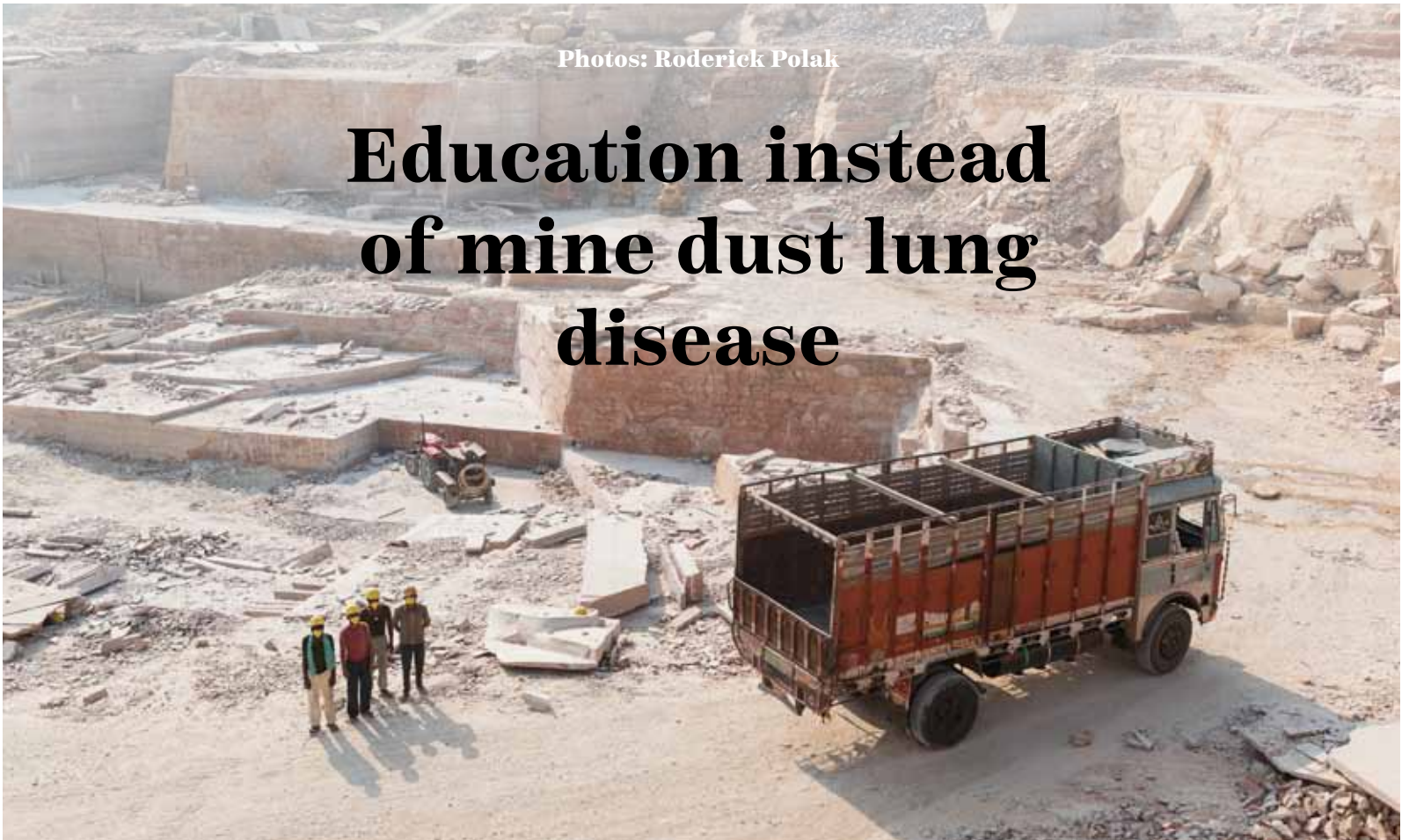


Zimbabwean trade unionists arrested

On 11 October 2018, officials and members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) were preparing for a big demonstration against an increase in the tax on electronic transfers and the rising costs of basic commodities, which would hit the already impoverished workers particularly hard. In an attempt to stop the demonstration, some hundred and fifty policemen surrounded the offices of the ZCTU the same morning. At least 35 of the Zimbabwean federation trade unionists were beaten and arrested, including the federation's President Peter Mutasa and Secretary General Japhet Moyo. The International Trade Union Federation ITUC and the global sectoral union IndustriALL called for their immediate release. About 20 protesting workers were arrested in Mutare and 13 in Masvingo.

Photos: Roderick Polak

Education instead of mine dust lung disease



In the quarries around Jodhpur, natural stone is extracted for houses and gravestones; 40 percent goes to the European market.

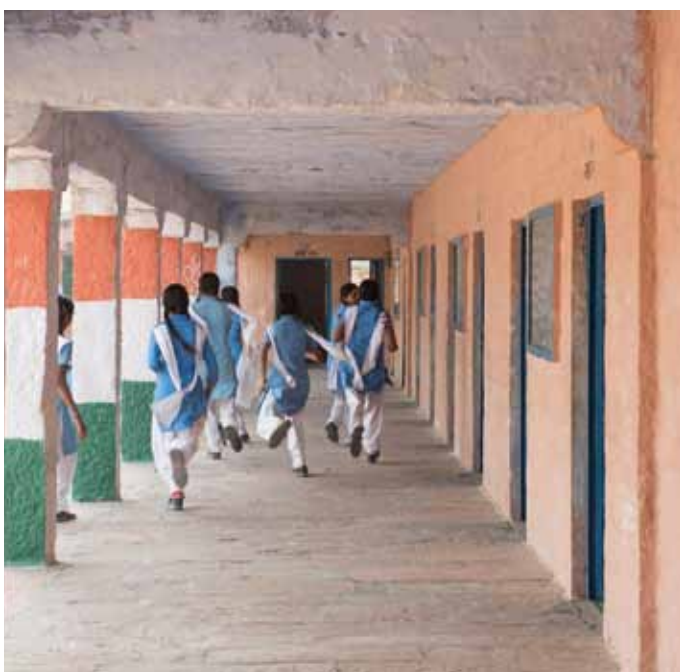


Owner Balaram takes a look.

More than 1,500 children in the Indian district Jodhpur will now be going to school instead of to the stone quarry. This is thanks to the efforts of the local trade union. Their families will now escape the vicious circle of poverty and poor health.



Shushila and her sons.



Shushila (38) and her three sons (18, 16, 14) stand in front of the door of their little house, beaming away. "My sons have achieved what I'd hoped for", says Shushila. "All three go to school and are doing their best." The two youngest go to secondary school, the oldest is studying trade. Their youth and their future look a whole lot different from that of Shushila and her husband. They had little or no education and have worked in the stone quarry since their very early years. They experienced at first hand the toll taken by this strenuous work: Shushila's husband has bad back pain and her father-in-law has the incurable lung disease silicosis (mine dust lung disease).

The turnaround, for this family in particular, was brought about by the local union RKPNS. They were instrumental in ensuring that wages went up by 30 to 50 percent, which means that parents can now afford to send their children to school instead of to the mine. Via campaigns and home visits, the unions emphasised the importance of education. They also worked on better working conditions, medical research and resources to improve miners' health. "If a parent is unable to work because of illness, there is a greater risk of a child not being able to carry on going to school", says trade union leader Bhati, who himself worked in quarries from his fourteenth year of age.



Owner Balaram (on the left) was not happy with the union at first. "Now I know that a healthy and satisfied employee produces better work and that's good for the company as well."



Medisch rapport van een man met silicose.



The union is committed to promoting the use of dust masks, to prevent mine dust lung disease.



Education for the younger children takes place partly outside in the open and partly in a bus that comes around six days a week; this, too, was organised by the union.



Trade union leader Bhati standing among the miners. The rate of unionisation is 90 percent.

Years ago, one time when Bhati went to collect his monthly wages from his boss, he was told that he hadn't worked 28 days but only 18. Bhati protested, upon which his boss threatened him. In two days Bhati ran 145 kilometres to a safer area. And yet he believes profoundly in working together. "The key words are bonding and awareness."

Mondiaal FNV supports the global sectoral union Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI), which, together with local unions, fights against child labour in the Indian stone quarries.



SUCCESSES FOR PORTERS AND GUIDES IN NEPAL

An occupation with an immediate payoff

Photo: Shutterstock

Tourism is Nepal's most important economic sector, but men and women who work in tourism have a difficult life. When they got nowhere talking about higher wages, porters and guides occupied the office of the employers' organisation. And, sure enough, that helped.

The union activists UNITRAV (Union of Trekking Travels Rafting Workers Nepal) proudly waved their red and blue trade union flag displaying the mountain and pick-axes. They are standing in front of the office of TAAN, the Nepalese tourist and employers' organisation. Meanwhile colleagues are winding chain locks round the entrance gate, to prevent anyone going in or out. On 26 November 2018, we wrote that the occupation of TAAN had begun. It proved to be a remarkably effective occupation. Just three days later, the

employers gave in to UNITRAV's demands. The salaries went up by 25 percent, and a death benefit and a holiday bonus were introduced. Promises were also given that action would be taken against illegal guides and against extra taxes imposed by local authorities. An outcome that regular negotiations three months previously had failed to achieve.

LANDSLIDES

"An occupation quite like this is rather unique", comments Wilma Roos, policy officer for South Asia at Mondiaal FNV. "Many UNITRAV members, like porters and guides, work on their own and in rather isolated places. It isn't easy to get them all together. But conducting such an occupation is their only means, because striking is not an option. Because the union does not have a strike fund, the strikers immediately find themselves without any income at all." The

unionisation rate in the sector is low: of the 300 thousand workers in tourism, 35 thousand are members of UNITRAV. Only 4,500 of them, particularly airport workers, pay any fees: the rest simply don't have the money. Workers in tourism in Nepal face a whole range of problems. The porters and guides generally work informally, as self-employed persons. They are in a situation of fierce competition one with another and exploitation by travel agencies engaged in a true race to the bottom. Not only do the agencies often pay less than the minimum wage, but they also base their payments on an estimate of the length of the journey. "This estimate is not always accurate", explains guide Lal Bahadur Jirel in a video that travel blogger Daisy made for Mondiaal FNV: "Sometimes something happens that means that the journey is longer. We don't get paid for that." Examples may be landslides,

accidents and loss of or damage to the equipment.

ON FLIP-FLOPS

The working conditions are lamentable. While tourists set off into the Himalayas in pricey climbing boots and with carbon walking sticks, many a guide walks on flip-flops. Despite the fact that he or she carries much more than the tourist - up to as much as fifty kilos. Along the way, the porters and guides are allocated the worst places to sleep in the hotels or else they sleep in little tents, despite it being fifteen degrees below zero. All this means that they cannot carry out their profession for long. "The majority have to stop work like this at the age of 35 to 40", is Roos's estimate. Women are faced with discrimination, intimidation and sexual violence. There are often no separate provisions for them. Although some 20 percent of the workers in the sector are women,

only 850 of them are members of UNITRAV. A fine initiative is that of the three sisters who founded 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking 25 years ago, where mainly women work. The principle there is that female porters are allowed to carry a maximum of ten kilos and male porters a maximum of thirteen kilos. In a quarter of a century, 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking has had zero accidents.

STAGED

When calamities occur, it is often happens that guides and porters are simply left behind: the rescue helicopter only airlifts the tourists. Incidentally, what came to light last year was that a good many calamities are staged: it emerged that in the first five months of 2018 alone, travel insurers paid out 6.5 million dollars too much on questionable rescues. By deploying helicopters unnecessarily and claiming fake treatments, helicopter firms and hospitals try to a cash in on the rapidly growing tourism industry. UNITRAV has been holding protest actions against this, too. After the huge setback as a result of the earthquake of 2015 when numerous villages in the mountains were destroyed and many guides and porters were killed, tourism is once again booming. It is the most important industry in Nepal. In 2017, approximately one million tourists travelled to this Asian mountain state. If the leftist government has its way, that will be over two million in 2020. This rapid growth increases the risks of malpractices, which is why, after a brief interval, Mondiaal FNV has once again resumed its cooperation with UNITRAV, with the focus on social dialogue. Because of a new federal structure in Nepal,

this dialogue now has to be conducted at three levels: national, regional and local. The targets will also include increasing the unionisation rate, strengthening UNITRAV and improving the social security provisions. In terms of the latter, the government has already taken the necessary measures. In addition to Mondiaal FNV and the ANWB collective bargaining agreement, the necessary funding also comes from the Trade Union Cooperation Programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

SUCCESSES

The first successes have already been achieved. For example, a few relatively good collective agreements have been concluded and the unions have won several court cases. These often relate to compensation for guides and porters who were underpaid or who had been killed in accidents. The number of accidents among guides and porters is four times as high as among tourists. Other achievements are the cleaning actions set up by UNITRA, aimed at making the Himalayan slopes pristine white again. As far as Wilma Roos of Mondiaal FNV is concerned, seasonal work is another major focus. The climbing season only runs from September to December; outside this period, guides and porters have scarcely any work. Some move to Japan or the Middle East. "I would really like there to be an arrangement like the one in neighbouring India, where labour migration is curbed by a law that entitles seasonal workers to a hundred days' paid work outside the agricultural season", says Roos.



Natalia Robledo Contreras (24) works as child minder and cleaner in the Netherlands and is an active union member of FNV Migrant Domestic Workers.

"The greatest gain in 2018 is, in my opinion, that we as FNV Migrant Domestic Workers have become more visible. We're more familiar faces to the member's council and the general board of the FNV and are better known by the outside world because we take part in symposia and talk to politicians. As a domestic worker outside the country, you are basically afraid of visibility. You always have the fear that on your way to work you'll be detained by the police. If you're undocumented, you're often sent straight off to immigration detention, where you're searched, everything is taken away from you and you are unreachable by the outside world. So you act with the utmost caution and try to attract as little attention as possible. But more and more members have the guts to say: I may be undocumented, but I exist. I'm not causing you any problems, I'm doing my bit!"

"For me personally, 2019 in particular is a good year, because after a twelve-year battle (Natalia came to the Netherlands from Chile with her parents when she was seven, ed.), I finally got a residence permit at the beginning of March. That means that for the next five years I can live in the Netherlands legally and I can start working legally. In September I'm going to university, to study law, because then I can use it to change policy and help people."

FNV Migrant Domestic Workers, whose members come mainly from Africa, Latin America, the Philippines and Indonesia, strives for the ratification by the Netherlands of ILO Convention 189 and concluding a collective bargaining agreement for migrant domestic workers.

Agricultural union GAWU fights against child labour in Ghana



Photo: Bertine Lamers

Where do you draw the line between 'helping out a bit on Mum and Dad's farm' and child labour? That is a relevant question for many small cocoa producers in Ghana. A play review.

The father works his son to death. With a more than man-sized sack of cocoa beans on his shoulders, the boy drags himself along over the brick-red coloured earth. The boy practically disappears beneath his burden. He is exhausted. "Hurry up!" the father shouts.

That's one possible version of child labour: a son or daughter forced by parents to work gruelling hours with them in the family business. In this case, the farm of a small cocoa producer in the Ghanaian township of Boamang, half-an-hour's drive from Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti-region. We say possible, because in this case both the father and the son are amateur actors. They are acting in a play that is being performed in the playground of St. Mary's Primary School, just outside Boamang.

The play was written by the headmaster of St. Mary's, Anthony Afrifa. The actors are mainly pupils of St. Mary's. One of them plays a judge, others a policeman, teacher or nurse. It is no coincidence that child labour is the subject of the play; child labour is a much-discussed subject in Boamang. One reason is because of the efforts by the national Ghana Agricultural Work-

**All's well
that ends well ...**
at least in
'headmaster'
Afrifa's play

ers Union (GAWU). This union has fought against child labour in the Ghanaian agricultural sector for over ten years. Often these are cases of children who are put to work on commercial plantations; in the cotton industry, the palm oil industry or the cocoa industry. But more often, it's a case of children helping out in the smallholding or farm of their parents. This is also what happens in Boamang, where child labour is found largely on small cocoa farms, especially during harvest time.

"The line between helping out and child labour has in any case been crossed if the children no longer attend school", says Corrie Roeper of Mondiaal FNV. Together with Bertine Lamers, Roeper was in Ghana in December 2018 to investigate the work of GAWU. The essence of GAWU's approach is that the whole community has to be involved in the fight against child labour. And that is just what happens in Boamang. The most important organisations and authorities of the town or village; the chief, the headmaster and headmistresses, the health care workers, the religious leaders, the council leaders and even the police: everyone is persuaded of the fact that child labour is unacceptable.

And that's why the residents of Boamang have turned up in large numbers here today. A couple of hundred people, each and every one in his or her 'Sunday suit'. Many in the audience are children who attend one of the three primary schools in the town. They can be identified because every school has a different uniform. The district head is there too and the village chief and the pastor. They are sitting under a faded red and black striped canvas awning. The adults are sitting at the back on benches and plastic chairs, the children at the front on the ground.

The play has been cleverly thought out, observe the Mondiaal FNV staff. There are a lot of changes of scene, which ensures that it never becomes boring. And it opts not to take the easy way out and, for example, also shows that a school career is no guaranty of a good job. In an interlinking scene we see a school leaver time and time again being rejected during a job interview. The text of the play is witty and recognisable. The audience cheers when the father is reported to the police because he doesn't allow his children to go to school. There is great hilarity and a knowing nodding of heads to the man or woman in the next seat when the father tries to bribe a policeman. And enthusiastic applause at the end when the judge speaks words of wisdom: the son must go to school and father is given a fine.

All's well that ends well. At least in the play.

**Tessema Heramo,
Head of the Education and Training
Department of the
Confederation of
Ethiopian Trade
Unions (CETU).**



"The government has for years tried to tamper with labour legislation. Very much against our wishes. Most particularly because we saw that their intention was to water down legislation for the workers. Halfway through last year, 2018, the government had finally got it sorted and put forward new draft legislation. And it was, indeed, as we had feared: under the new law the workers would be worse off than under the old law."

"In the tripartite negotiations we couldn't come to an agreement. The government drew a red line, to use its own words, thereby indicating that certain matters in the draft would not be accepted for discussion. We did then what we have never done before: we threatened a national strike. We compiled a list of nineteen points on which the new legislation would be disadvantageous for workers. We demanded that these points should be taken off the table. For us, this was our red line! At the same time, we mobilised our members and they proved to be in support of our hard approach. And we enlisted the help of the media. Several articles were published clearly stating our position. The negotiations have not finished yet, but in the meantime we have secured seventeen of the nineteen demands!"

Mondiaal FNV supports CETU, including by means of a training programme for active members of the affiliated unions.

Quick returns!



5,519 households received food assistance (rice)

3 million rupees

Calculation applies to the months April up to and including September 2018. For years, the APVVU, the union for agricultural workers in the Indian federal state Andhra Pradesh, has worked to ensure that the social service provisions actually reach the people for whom they are intended. To ensure that seasonal workers are able to take part in the employment programme, to ensure that poor families are eligible for food assistance, that the elderly receive a pension and so on. And sometimes the APVVU has to battle with the authorities in order to get the provisions up to the required standard, like

for example in 2009, when it was thanks to union initiatives that the Supreme Court of India ruled that the government had to pay the minimum wage to participants in an employment programme. In short, the history of the APVVU is paved with greater and lesser successes. Mondiaal FNV supports the APVVU in this.

At the end of last year, the project coordinator of APVVU, Poguri Chennaiah, began doing some calculations: how much does APVVU's work actually generate for the people? He was flabbergasted at the result!

6,210 families compensated for loss of harvest after drought



12 million rupees



143 villages connected up to a water supply



6 million rupees



364,820 seasonal workers reached in employment projects



2,181 households received housing subsidies



146 million rupees



2,215 pensions paid out

1 million rupees

5.253 million rupees



63 villages connected up to the sewage system

20 million rupees

Total 5,443,244,500 rupees

€ 68,584,628

Calculation applies to the months April up to and including September 2018

#hetzitmenietlekker campaign

(I don't feel comfortable about it)

HETZITMENIETLEKKER GIVES TIPS ABOUT ETHICAL CLOTHING. HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR CLOTHES HAVE BEEN MADE IN A DECENT WAY? WITHOUT CHILD LABOUR, WITH A LIVING WAGE AND FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION? TODAY'S DILEMMA: TOO CHEAP. SHALL WE DO IT OR NOT?



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About Mondiaal FNV's work

Mondiaal FNV is a foundation affiliated to the largest employees' organisation in the Netherlands, the FNV. Mondiaal FNV helps employees and trade unions, particularly in developing countries, to campaign for real jobs and better working conditions. How do we do this?

We do this by giving direct support in the form of a financial contribution to specific projects and by means of support for research, lobbying and campaigning. Mondiaal FNV also gives colleagues in developing countries a voice in the Netherlands by providing educational information, organising actions and lobbying in The Hague.

Strengthening employees and unions

Our current programme was launched in 2017 and will run until 2020. This programme focuses on:

- Improving social dialogue at national and regional level.
- Improving terms and conditions of employment in a number of production chains

Trade unions that operate effectively and are able to carry out their work freely are indispensable in achieving an equitable distribution of income and wealth. Unfortunately, this is in many countries not the case: the trade union rights are not respected and employees are put under pressure to not stand up for their rights. Social dialogue between employees and employers is the basis for improving labour rights. Our programme supports creating or improving social dialogue by helping unions to become a strong social partner and by working together with employers' organisations and government.

As the economy becomes more and more a world economy, employees are more often becoming part of the global production chains spread across a large number of countries and sectors. In these chains, employees are largely invisible because traditional industrial relations are disappearing. Mondiaal FNV therefore supports unions and employees in four global production chains in improving their skills, creating real jobs and defending the fundamental rights of employees.

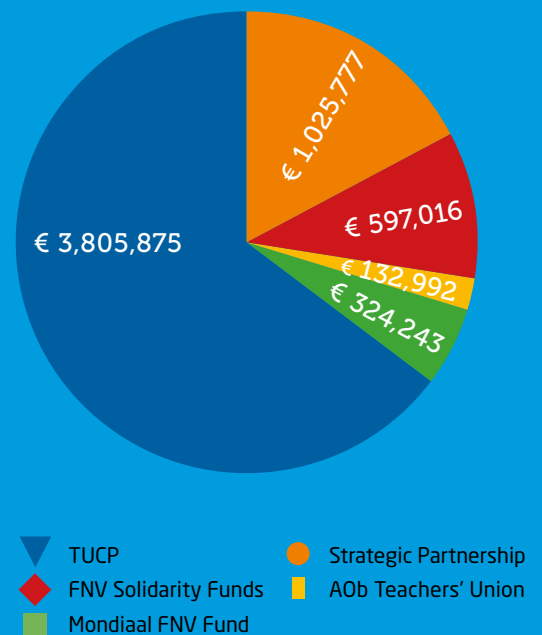
The four global production chains are:

- Agriculture (palm oil, cocoa, fruit/vegetables and seed cultivation)
- Shipbreaking
- Construction
- Clothing production

Financial resources for support to trade unions

Mondiaal FNV supports a hundred and fifty to two hundred projects on an annual basis. The funding for this comes primarily from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the framework of the Trade Union Co-Financing Programme (VMP) and the Strategic Partnership for Garment Supply Chain Transformation. Other sources are the FNV Solidarity Fund, to which 0.7 percent of the FNV membership dues go, and the Mondiaal FNV Fund, which receives donations from members and non-members and contributions pursuant to collective bargaining agreements.

Funding of the projects in 2018



Our mission

Mondiaal FNV contributes to economic growth, which is of benefit to everyone and leads to a more equitable distribution of income and prosperity. Mondiaal FNV does this by enabling democratic, representative and independent unions and labour-related organisations to promote decent work and livelihood security for everyone.



Many Ugandan flower companies have a Dutch management and they export some 80 percent of their flowers to the Netherlands. The working conditions at these companies are often poor: including low wages, sexual intimidation and health and safety-related issues.



FNV official René Kouwenhoven gives on-the-spot training to Ugandan flower union UHISPAWU officials on the whole process of negotiating as well as with regard to wages. With great success, says Kouwenhoven: “In the last few years, UHISPAWU has grown from 1,000 to 5,000 members and has successfully secured a 20 percent wage increase in the sector and improved the terms of employment of the workers.

Watch the video ‘Towards a higher salary thanks to social dialogue’ via <https://www.fnv.nl/mondiaal-fnv/english/publications-and-videos/videos>

— Maarten —

