

Executive Summary External Evaluation Report
LO-Norway's Programme of Cooperation with BWI
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Introduction

LO –Norway commissioned an evaluation of the BWI East Africa project 2006-2009 and a mid-term review of the current project, which runs from 2010-2014.

The objectives of the East Africa gender project fluctuated over the years but can be summarized as follows:

- To strengthen the capacity of BWI affiliates in construction in East Africa to organise and recruit construction workers and to sign recognition and bargaining agreements with employers;
- To promote women's participation in the trade unions, and to integrate gender issues into their policies;
- To strengthen the capacity of BWI affiliates to negotiate gender fair improvements in collective agreements, including decent wages, anti-discrimination measures, OHS protections and HIV/AIDS policies;
- To build alliances with other social partners and gender activists so as to campaign for gender fair policies for the construction sector at workplace, national, sub-regional and regional levels;
- Over the last period, a new area was included related to the environment; the goal was to ensure that unions were involved in national reviews on policy and legislation on gender, the environment and climate issues;

The evaluation is based on an analysis of the narrative and financial reports of the BWI gender projects 2006-2010, various workshop reports, BWI policy documents and research reports as well as a survey of all affiliates participating in the project, based on a questionnaire. (The evaluator also undertook a field mission to Kenya, Tanzania and Ghana carried out from November 9th – November 23rd 2011. The evaluator interviewed BWI headquarters Staff, Jasmin Redzepovic and Jin Sook Lee, and Paul Opanga, former BWI East Africa Coordinator and now Education Coordinator at the BWI Regional Office in South Africa.

I would like to thank everyone who assisted me in the evaluation and during the field mission and in particular Alice Siame (LO-Norway Zambia), Jasmin Redzepovic (BWI HQ) and Joe Macharia (BWI, East Africa), who were extremely helpful at all stages of the evaluation.

Recommendations

- 1. Project Continuation:** The East African BWI affiliates in the construction and building materials sector are relatively weak organisations with a limited financial base. Union density rates are well below potential to organise in the larger companies and the unions have not really been able to address the organising challenges in the sub-contracting chains. Working conditions on site and in the plants are poor to abysmal and rates of pay do not reflect the cost of living. The unions on these grounds alone should be considered priority beneficiaries of international cooperation and the current project should be continued until at least 2014. Consideration should be given to a renewal of the project thereafter, potentially to include the whole of the East Africa Community.

2. **Project Focus:** While gender-mainstreaming should continue as a component of the project, given the small numbers of women in the construction workforce, it should not represent the main focus of the project. In future, the main focus of the project should be organising new members and signing new collective bargaining agreements, and campaigning around multinationals. In practice, this change of focus has already happened on the ground, but the applications and reports have not reflected this shift.
3. **Project Management:** BWI should review its current financial transfer system with a view to reducing the number of intermediary stages, in order to speed things up, make things cheaper and give the partners more time to implement the activities!
4. Consideration should be given to holding annual planning meetings at the beginning of the year with the National Executive Committee of each union rather than holding a regional event mid-year. Regional meetings could focus on campaign and bargaining strategies.
5. **External agenda on bargaining for equality:** The gender equality component of the project should focus on developing a clear bargaining agenda for the sub-region, including a set of model clauses to be negotiated in all new contracts on issues such as maternity protection, recruitment, promotion and access to vocational training, safe transport, sexual harassment and equal pay for work of equal value. This agenda should be communicated to the other affiliates in East Africa with a greater female membership and to BWI Regional and International Women's Committee.
6. New women leaders should be trained as negotiators, particularly in Tanzania where there are many new entrants to the National Executive Committee.
7. March 8th campaigns could focus on publicising the bargaining agenda, and could seek allies among the trade union centres and other women's and human rights' organisations.
8. Consideration should be given to providing a small vocational training scholarship programme to support women wishing to gain a qualification in a construction trade. It could be expected that government vocational training institutes could support this programme after a successful pilot phase. Small focus group meetings could be arranged at worksites or in association with women's groups, to encourage them to take up vocational training. This vocational training should be accompanied by a course on workers' rights and trade union.
9. Materials, such as leaflets or posters, could be developed to support the bargaining agenda on equality, written in both English and Swahili. Consideration could be given to seeking additional funds to produce a documentary on women in the construction industry, either tracking the few women who are currently employed in manual trades or following the lives of those entering vocational training. National centres could be invited to participate.
10. **Organising and collective bargaining campaigns:** The project should continue to support targeted organising campaigns, with a gender perspective, with a view to signing new cbas in strategic companies. **This organising work is in practice the main focus of the project and should be made explicit in the project goals, application and reporting. The project contract should be revised to better reflect these goals.** The extent to which the East Africa unions have the capacity to address issues of sub-contracting requires further analysis beyond the scope of this evaluation.

11. Consideration should be given to providing a short training programme on campaign planning, IT use where necessary, and use of social networking to project partners and coordinators. An electronic library to store and access past and current cbas would be a useful tool for negotiators across the region to consult.
12. Model language could be developed on various issues, such as the responsibility of the main contractor to ensure equality of treatment for sub-contracted workers, HIV/AIDs, safety committees, and potentially issues such as local recruitment of non-skilled workforce, and responsibility of the main contractor to conserve or restore the local environment. Unions organising in government housing corporations involved in public procurement could be trained on the relevant ILO Conventions and BWI policy.
13. **Multinationals or a “China Watch”**: The big issue facing all East African countries is the increasing presence of multinationals in the construction sector. There has been some mapping of the MNEs already. Chinese construction companies have a notoriously poor record on trade union rights, occupational health and safety, quality construction and ethical behaviour. Consideration should be given to establishing a “China Watch” campaign in East Africa which could potentially win the unions considerable visibility and legitimacy and enhance their political influence. The campaign could develop on the basis of the existing construction network and could assist in the development of greater regional coordination, in keeping with the plan to create an East Africa Federation of Construction and Building Materials Trade Unions.

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