

MONDIAAL STORIES

2024



ELSA: better collective labor agreements and more members in Uganda

Palm Oil Workers United starts

From conflict to win-win in Peru

MONDIAAL FNV: WHAT WE DO AND WHY

Mondiaal FNV is an organisation that stands for international solidarity and support, and it is affiliated with the FNV, the largest trade union in the Netherlands. We believe that everyone has the right to a living wage, social security, good working conditions, and to collective bargaining. In other words, the right to decent work. We want to achieve prosperity in a fair manner and not through exploitation elsewhere in the world.

That is the reason we support trade unions worldwide, because they can improve the working conditions and lives of many people at the grass roots level. In 2022, we reached almost 34 million people with our global work activities. We strengthen the capacity of our partners, conduct influential lobbying, and link local trade unions with the international trade union movement. We focus on global production chains including in the field of clothing, fruit and vegetables, and palm oil, and we address major topics such as a fair climate transition, gender equality, and social dialogue.

MAGAZINE

In this magazine, we present a selection of stories from our field of activity. They are stories we are proud of, and they demonstrate well what we work on and achieve together with our global trade union partners. For more information about these and other stories, please refer to our website mondiaalfnv.nl.

Cover photo

For ten years, Mondiaal FNV has supported the establishment and development of social dialogue between workers and employers in Peru. As a result, management and trade union leaders in a fruit-processing plant have been able to establish sound relations and constructive consultations. See as well the story entitled 'From conflict to win-win' in this magazine.

Photographer: Roderick Polak.



ELSA PROGRAMME PROFESSIONALISES

TRAINING LEADS TO HIGHER WAGES IN COLLECTIVE
LABOUR AGREEMENTS AND TO MORE MEMBERS

Over the past two years, Mondiaal FNV has been committed to organising the Executive Leadership programme on Sustainability and Alliance Building (ELSA) in Uganda. Union leaders and talented trade union officials have worked on their own leadership style, and have learned to use it to strengthen their unions. They have stated, 'The programme trains and professionalises us as union leaders, after which we can also professionalise our union. In turn, our members will also benefit from this.'

By means of the ELSA training programme, Mondiaal FNV seeks to increase the financial sustainability of Ugandan trade unions. 'It is a comprehensive concept, which may include all sorts of things, but, come what may, it means unions are made more future-proof', says Tendayi Matimba, financial project manager with Mondiaal FNV.

The development of self-knowledge is another major part of the programme. During training sessions, trade unionists get to know themselves better by means of a personality test and other exercises. 'If you want to change an organisation, you as a leader need to make sure that people understand and follow you, seeing why you do what you do. Leadership is based on relationships, both internally and externally', trainer Petra Bosse explains.

'In order to interact with others, you first need to know yourself. Only then will you understand others and be able to better discern what they are thinking and feeling. We call this Emotional Intelligence, and it helps you put together a good and diverse team.'



The programme has united trade union leaders, enabling us to join forces

Peter Bendo
Uganda Textiles, Garments,
Leather, and Allied Workers
Union - UTGLAWU

FINANCES UNDER CONTROL

Many Ugandan unions are having trouble making ends meet. Like our own Dutch unions, they are faced with declining membership numbers, while many trade union leaders have not been trained well enough to manage their unions efficiently. 'In the past, I did not really understand the content of financial audit reports, but still had to sign them', says Stephen Abima, secretary general of the 105,000-member Ugandan Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union (AGTWU). During the ELSA training programme, participants learned to draw up a balance sheet for their unions and how to understand financial reports. 'Now I can discuss in-depth details with our accountant, and also monitor and adjust the union's finances', says the 55-year-old trade unionist.



The ELSA programme has changed my life

Barbara Badaru
National Union of Plantation
and Agricultural Workers -
NUPAW

ELSA PROGRAMME BOOSTS SELF-CONFIDENCE

The training programme has boosted the self-confidence of mainly young, female trade union leaders. 'I used to be shy and scarcely dared to address groups of people', says 32-year-old Barbara Badaru of the Ugandan National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers (NUPAW). 'I was the only young woman among predominantly middle-aged or older men within my union.' By means of the ELSA programme, Barbara gained more self-knowledge and learned to stand up for herself. 'In addition, the trainers taught me various leadership and communication skills and reassured me that I could also be a good leader', explains the young trade unionist who, thanks to the knowledge and skills she acquired, is now better committed to trade union work. She proudly tells how she has recruited 8,000 new members on tea plantations over the past six months, 'I am now confident about addressing large groups of tea pickers, explaining to them the importance of joining the union.'

IMMEDIATE RESULT

Several participants also observed the immediate result of their negotiation training.' During previous wage negotiations,



Shanita Birungi and Barbara Badaru

ELSA SUMMARISED

ELSA stands for Executive Leadership programme on Sustainability and Alliance Building, a training programme organised by Mondiaal FNV. The programme focuses on developing and strengthening the leadership skills of trade union leaders, particularly in the areas of negotiating effectively with employers, organising their trade union more efficiently and making it financially sustainable, and building valuable alliances.

we often adopted an inflexible attitude, focusing solely on our demands', says Peter Bendo, general secretary of the Uganda Textiles, Garments, Leather, and Allied Workers Union (UTGLAWU). However, during the ELSA training, trade union leaders learned that a rigid attitude might antagonise employers, obstructing the negotiations and leading to negotiators returning home empty-handed. Peter immediately put into practice his recently acquired knowledge during a new wage bargaining round and succeeded in landing a significant, structural salary increase.

at previous meetings, where everyone kept themselves to themselves', says Juma Mwamula, general secretary of the Uganda Private Teachers' Union (UPTU). 'However, the ELSA programme encouraged us to share our problems and challenges', the 40-year-old leader explains. 'As a result, we now trust each other, and can appeal to each other for help and join forces.'

Read the full story about the ELSA programme



APPEALING TO OTHERS FOR HELP AND JOINING FORCES

In addition to the knowledge and skills acquired, all participants considered interaction with other union leaders equally valuable. 'I had met most of them



The ELSA programme is professionalising our trade union

Juma Mwamula
Uganda Private Teachers' Union - UPTU



Nowadays, when the auditor comes by, I am able to understand him, and can even check whether he is doing things correctly

Anita Sseruwgi
National Union of creative Performing Artists And Allied Workers - NUCPAW



INTERNATIONAL PALM OIL WORKERS UNITED

TRADE UNIONS FOR PALM OIL WORKERS
UNITE FOR FAIR PALM OIL

Palm oil is a raw material used in many products found in supermarkets, and it literally travels a long way from plantations to our kitchen table. The global palm oil industry, however, causes a great deal of damage to the natural environment, while, at the same time, plantation workers often need to do their job under poor and unsafe working conditions. This needs to change. 'The fight is not an easy one, but we will persevere...!', says Indonesian division leader Hassan.



Because a global chain is involved, improving these conditions can only succeed if everybody throughout the entire chain cooperates. This is necessary because a number of large companies are the decision makers with regard to

relations within the chain, and therefore also regarding working conditions on the plantations. Major players are oil-processing refineries, which are usually very large multinationals with branches in the Netherlands, as well as supermarkets and large food and shampoo brands.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION NETWORK

Therefore, in 2022, Mondiaal FNV started building an international trade union network - 'International Palm Oil Workers United' - with unions from Colombia, Indonesia, and the Dutch FNV itself. Several African unions are likely to join us



I believe in equal rights, as we are all humans

Hassan

Division leader at a plantation on Kalimantan

in the near future. The network was set up in March 2023 during the international palm oil week, which was organised by Mondiaal FNV.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

The network has drawn up a joint strategy to achieve better working conditions on palm oil plantations and in mills. They are holding major companies accountable throughout the chain based on the OECD Guidelines for Multinationals and imminent legislation governing Due Diligence relating to human rights and trade and industry. Part of the strategy is a meaningful dialogue with stakeholders in all phases of the process. Trade unions in production countries should therefore be included in the dialogue with these companies.



Harvesting palm oil fruits in Indonesia



By cooperating, we can exert pressure together and find quicker solutions in the event of conflicts

Raul Patiño Nuñez

Trade union leader in Colombia



Together we have to set things in motion

Nelsón Jiménez

Trade union leader in Colombia

Jorge Enrique Cortes Navarrete, member of the board of Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia (CUT), the Colombian trade union confederation, (left), and Patricio Sambonino, Mondiaal FNV consultant in Columbia, during the international palm oil meeting in the Netherlands in March 2023.



INTERNATIONAL PALM OIL WORKERS UNITED SUMMARISED

Palm oil is a raw material used in many food products, cleaning agents, and cosmetics, and it travels a long way from the plantations to the supermarkets and shops. A number of large, globally operating companies are the decision makers with regard to relations within the palm oil chain, and therefore also regarding working conditions on the plantations. It means that the entire chain will need to cooperate in order to improve these conditions. For this purpose, International Palm Oil Workers United, the international network of trade unions in the palm oil industry in Colombia, Indonesia, and the Netherlands, was established. The network aims to include a number of major African palm-oil-producing countries.

THE PURPOSE OF THE NETWORK

Within the network, participants can exchange experience-related information and learn from each other, while trade unions can also demonstrate solidarity for each other when they are campaigning or engaged in a conflict with a company. After all, together we stand stronger in our efforts to negotiate with major players within the chain, the ongoing goal being that these companies will assume responsibility for improving conditions on the plantations and in the mills.

Read the full story about
Palm Oil Workers United



I see my colleagues working the land, but they do not receive what they are entitled to

Yublina

Supervisor of a palm oil tree plantation nursery in Indonesia

OUR GOALS

We would like safe and permanent jobs for palm oil workers, with a special focus on:

- **Wages;**
- **Job security;**
- **Health and safety;**
- **Trade union rights.**



HOW MONDIAAL FNV CONTRIBUTES TO IMPROVING LABOUR CONDITIONS

- Mondiaal FNV supports trade unions in Colombia and Indonesia (and, since recently, also in Africa).
- These trade unions organise workers on oil palm plantations and in mills, monitor working conditions, and negotiate with employers.
- We support the trade unions in building capacity: for example, to negotiate effectively, to organise more workers, to train women with regard to themes like harassment in the workplace, and topics such as safe and healthy working conditions, campaigning, and research.



FROM CONFLICT TO WIN-WIN

TEN YEARS OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN
EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES IN PERU

Over the past ten years, and supported by Mondiaal FNV, employers and employees in Peru have worked on a systematic change: namely, the development of consultations during which labour issues are discussed and collective labour agreements are concluded. The beneficiaries are the employees *and* the employers. 'It is essential to continue finding each other', they state. 'We have to do this *together!*'

A status quo of contradictions and confrontations served as the starting point of a gratifying journey that led to social dialogue. 'Not very long ago, trade unions in Peru were regarded as the enemies of companies. There was no consultation, and the atmosphere was filled with distrust and violence', says Carmela Sifuentes,

former President of the Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú (CGTP), the largest trade union federation in Peru. Neither the employers nor the employees were interested in arriving at a mutual solution.

PRELIMINARY TALKS

The relations between social partners were tense and appeared to have reached deadlock. A breakthrough was needed in order to make progress. The first step was taken by employers and employees at the national level, with preliminary talks between the CGTP and employers' organisation Sociedad Nacional de Industrias (SNI), which represents the interests of the manufacturing industry



We now really speak the same language

Carmela Sifuentes

Former President of the CGTP trade union confederation

in Peru. 'But more was needed. We had to build a bridge', says Luis Salazar, former president of the SNI.

MONDIAAL FNV GETS INVOLVED

The parties dared to take the next necessary step. In cooperation with the FNV, the trade union federation invited the employers' organisation to travel together to the Netherlands and learn more about the Dutch model of social dialogue. The employers accepted the invitation, and the visit turned out to be the right move. It became an enriching experience for the entire delegation of employers, employees, and trade union leaders. 'We learned a lot', Carmela explains. 'But most importantly, we established mutual trust. When we returned home, we truly were one Peruvian team.'



Social dialogue is essential for the future of Peru

Luis Salazar

Former president of the SNI employers' organisation

EIGHT MAJOR STEPS IN ESTABLISHING SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Samuel Machacuay gives a training

Building social dialogue is a step-by-step process that involves a change in the culture and the system. It starts with a small group that continues to grow, becoming a ripple effect of change, from informal contact to institutional relationships, and involving the sharing of knowledge and experiences with others. We have drawn up a list of the eight major steps and describe them below.

[Click here for the eight steps](#) →



SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN IMAGES

For the past decade, Mondiaal FNV has supported and facilitated Peruvian trade unions and employers in establishing social dialogue. Peru has a history of confrontation and distrust between employers and employees, which often led to conflict and even to violence.



Building social dialogue was a long-term process but resulted in systematic change. Employers and employees are no longer fighting but arriving at sound agreements. How did this change come about?

Watch the short video →



BUILDING STRONG CONNECTIONS

The visit to the Netherlands eventually proved to be a turning point, resulting in a radical change in long-term relations between employers and employees. Luis says, 'In the Netherlands, Carmela and I decided that we also wanted to set up a Labour Foundation (Asociación para el Trabajo) after the Dutch model.' In doing so, the employers' and employees' representatives wanted to formalise social dialogue and make it part of the culture.



This is no longer just about respect but trust and friendship as well. Here is a real group.

Samuel Machacuay
Local consultant for Mondiaal FNV

THE FUTURE OF PERU

Carmela feels they succeeded. 'This week I met Luis again, and it struck me that we really speak the same language, that we understand each other. It does not only apply to us as representatives. I observed the same thing on many other levels, both nationally and within companies.' Luis Salazar adds that the significance of social dialogue should not be underestimated. He says, 'It is essential for a good investment climate, for improving relationships with employees, and for developing mutual understanding. It is essential for the future of Peru.'

Read the full story about the social dialogue in Peru →



What I have learned most from the training is the importance of trust

Geraldine Espinoza
Trade union official

FROM STRUGGLING AND DISTRUST TO CONSULTATION AND TRUST: A TIMELINE

Below is a timeline of major developments in the struggle towards a win-win situation.



Click here for the timeline →



ESTABLISHING SOCIAL DIALOGUE WITH A LASTING RESULT (2012 - 2022)

- Peruvian employers and employees visit the Netherlands;
- Capacity-building for trade unions;
- Training provided by the FNV;
- The DECP supporting Peruvian employers (SNI);
- The SNI and the CGTP doing a traineeship with the Dutch Labour Foundation;
- Several training sessions on Win-Win negotiating with the DECP;
- Setting up a Peruvian pool of Win-Win trainers.

SNI - Sociedad Nacional de Industrias
CGTP - Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú
DECP - Dutch Employers' Cooperation Programme

FROM SOCIAL DIALOGUE TO CONCRETE RESULTS

Trade union official Geraldine Espinoza is representative of the success of social dialogue in Peru. She was initially an ordinary employee who laboured under poor working conditions, worked long days, was forced to work overtime, and became completely exhausted. Together with her co-workers, she set up a trade union that grew rapidly. However, her employer interfered and fired her. But Geraldine refused to give up, and continued her involvement in trade union work. She undertook training, including the FNV's course on social dialogue, which proved to be an enriching experience. She learned that trust, mutual respect, and empathy are prerequisites for social dialogue. When she was able to return to working for her former employer, she gained the trust of the new management. During collective bargaining rounds, Geraldine puts everything she learned into practice, achieving good results such as a bonus, a contribution to training, and a higher wage. The atmosphere in the workplace is entirely different now. There are constructive consultations with the employer, during which Geraldine and her co-workers can table issues and points for improvement in a calm manner and without fear. For Geraldine, this is just the beginning. She is now studying law in order to understand even better what is allowed by law and what is prohibited, and continues to work towards achieving a better understanding between employers and employees through social dialogue.

Colophon

Original text:

Andrea Dijkstra (ELSA programme professionalises)
Astrid Kaag (International Palm Oil Workers United)
Marleen Laverman (From conflict to win-win)

Copy editing: Sander Bouten

Photography:

Jeroen van Loon (ELSA programme professionalises)
Wessel de Groot (International Palm Oil Workers United)
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Mondiaal FNV

Derkinderenstraat 2-8
Gebouw Trivium
1062 DB Amsterdam
The Netherlands
I mondiaalfnv.nl
E mondiaal@fnv.nl



Photo on page 4 and 5:

from left to right: Janepher Nassali, Brenda Oyuga Atieno, Jane Katusabe and Shanita Birungi during a ELSA training.

Photo on page 10 and 11:

The participants from Colombia, Indonesia and the Netherlands visited the FNV during the International Palm Oil Week, March 2023.

Photo on page 16 and 17:

Union leader Geraldine Espinoza (right) and two union colleagues in discussion.

