The PSC meets for the first time, notes progress and challenges, pins results chain and indicators

The PSC meeting. Before the seriousness of the #covid19 fully sank in ... Only a few wearing masks, at the airport or in planes. People look at a masked person differently, as if one were sick.

In a hotel far, far from the madding crowd. That doesn’t mean we don’t escape after hours and visit our favorite haunts.

Nine participants (five women) from ITUC-AP, DGB BW, ATUC and the project attended the meeting at Avani Atrium Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand in 25-27 January 2020.
The project created a Project Supervision Committee (PSC) with members from ITUC-AP and ATUC. The PSC will meet regularly for supervision, strategy and assessment and monitoring of project results.

This was the first PSC meeting. PSC meetings assess and monitor project implementation: for updates on activities and results; progress towards indicators; assess challenges and lessons learned, and propose solutions moving forward; review indicators and the monitoring plan.

ITUC-AP General Secretary Shoya Yoshida stressed in the opening session that the ITUC-AP/DGB BW Project is part of the ITUC-AP work plan for women and youth. As the project entered its second year, good concrete results in Southeast Asia could be shared with other subregions.

DGB BW consultant Indira Gartenberg mentioned the ongoing protests in India including where women were leading against rape and sexual harassment. Project Manager Dom Tuvera, shared that ATUC proposed addressing women and youth concerns in a consultation for a draft ASEAN Human Resources Development Declaration to be adopted in 2020. The invitation (only the second) for ATUC to participate in a meeting to consider a Declaration resulted from the advocacy meetings between ATUC and the ASEAN Secretariat in December 2019.

Milestones

Dom led the review of the project milestones.

Progress on indicators and outputs/deliverables

The meeting noted remarkable progress and information on the activities of WYRs and their organizations after the October part 1 training. ATUC Deputy General Secretary Cedric Bagtas and ATUC Youth and Women Committee Co-Chair Sunday Pheng noted the range of activities already done this early.

Many WYRs hit the ground running; others, without waiting for formal plans, conducted preliminary activities and meetings – evidence of tremendous excitement and enthusiasm generated.
Review of project indicators

Cedric led the discussion on what he called deconstructing the indicators, simplifying the indicators (breaking down components) for easier understanding and implementation by the PMT and the trained WYRs.

What is this Results chain, again?

Indira led the discussion on the Results Chain, in her simple instructive way. Based on the group's experience in monitoring, she emphasized the need to adjust monitoring strategies to get the desired results. Monitoring results themselves could be used in public dissemination of what organizations are doing on women and youth concerns.

The discussion reviewed the importance of doing Results oriented Monitoring (RoM). The project covers many areas related to each other, and people do many things, but focusing monitoring on a few observation areas could simplify things and get better results.

Indira related what is happening in other DGB projects elsewhere in Asia, stressing on sustainability of project actions.

Challenges and lessons learned

Countries have their differences – histories, culture, demographics, economic and social conditions, stages of development.

Unions have theirs, too. Mix of members. Priorities and interest. Differing competencies. Some more active than others. Financial conditions.

Committed leaders would not be enough; other leading persons in the organizations need to be convinced. There will be various perceptions of WYR capacity, and there could be pushback from other office holders and members. How to demonstrate that young, mostly women, union people could be emerging leaders and have great contributions to unions?

Challenges and lessons learned:

- Language barrier/communication problem
- Different levels of capacities
- Degree of leadership support
- Link with ITUC-AP W/Y committee members
- Reporting
There was excitement as the team discussed preparations for part 2 of the women and youth leadership training in Bali in February 2020. The group checked the training outline, made a quick walk-through of the TCM and materials, and assigned TCM topics among training team members.

Getting information and reports on the activities of trained WYRs and their organizations is a continuing challenge. How to devise a form simple enough for WYRs to fill out, yet enough to obtain required data?

The tracking questionnaire was improved to address the challenges and lessons learned. The tracking questionnaire would be validated in the Bali part 2 training of the WYRs.

Sunday pointed to WhatsApp for continuing conversations among leaders, trainees and other stakeholders, which could be used for ‘on-time’ reports. Reading posts of others on what they are doing could exert peer pressure on others to do the same. Sustaining interest is another matter.

Review of schedule of activities

The PMT integrated the 2020 activity plan with sub-regional and national activities. Some activities, such as national workshops and NPC meetings, are being scheduled back to back.

Moving Forward: ITUC-AP and ATUC programs and activities

Anna presented the ITUC-AP platform of action for gender equality (2019-2023) with four strategic actions: (1) Count us in the trade union movement; (2) Count us in the leadership, policy and decision-making; (3) Count us in the economy; and (4) Count everybody in. The project falls under strategic action 2 on leadership.

Keiko shared the thematic areas of the ITUC-AP Youth Charter which is the voice of young workers and their decisions. She said proposals under the charter includes (1) participation in decision-making processes, (2) functioning youth structures and ensuring youth autonomy, and (3) leadership development which are relevant to the project.

The ATUC Youth and Women Committee Action Plan adopted in August 2018 includes increasing youth and women representation in unions among four priorities. The other three are engagement in improving labour migration policies, participation in campaigns on gender-based violence and OSH, and participation in Sustainable Development Goal 2030 processes at various levels.

Both charters can be found here.

Other matters

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We loved the food, often. The taste of hotel food still lingers. We were, and are, content.

Then off to group and individual jaunts.

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Fourteen participants (eight women) from Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU) and one interpreter attended the NPC meeting on 30 January 2020 at the imposing, columned LFTU training building in a new area in Vientiane. The participants represented youth and women from various departments in LFTU -- women, youth, media including the TV division, inspection, organizing, technical (office cabinet) and international departments. The Project Manager represented ITUC-AP.

International Director Inpeng Meunsevith expressed appreciation to ITUC-AP/DGB BW for supporting the meeting and relayed the commitment of the LFTU President. LFTU recognizes the important role of women and youth in strengthening trade unions.

Amphayvanh Manola, a WYR who attended part 1 of the women and youth leadership training, shared that the training equipped participants with various knowledge and skills in preparation for taking up more responsibilities, while giving them the chance to learn about labor and other issues in other countries.

Dom opened the meeting by presenting the deconstructed indicators operationalized in the first project supervision committee meeting and monitoring workshop on 25-27 January 2020 in Bangkok.

In LFTU, the participation of women and youth is around 25%. This low participation rate can be traced to the union structure, policies and challenges.

The meeting agreed that, to increase this rate, the union constitution must be amended to raise women and youth representation. There should be leadership training program at all levels to prepare them for taking up more responsibilities.
Sixty percent of workers in the country are youth. Drug-addiction and indifference to the union are among problems, hindering their contribution to economic development. Innovative strategies to encourage the youth to join the union need to be developed.

To organize, a team of LFTU organizers goes to the factory level to set up unions. The organizers collect workplace issues, including non-payment and low wages, no separate toilets for men and women, safety and health at the workplace, transportation for workers, as basis for demands during negotiations with employers.

To get a better understanding of the situation of women and youth participation, LFTU will complete the shorter two-page baseline survey forms prepared by the project for central and provincial levels.

Two breakup groups identified four priority indicators and activities that would contribute to their achievement. Targets would be women and representatives from different union levels including 10 grassroots or factory union level from hotel and beverages, plantation and garments.

**Group 1 Indicators 1 and 6**
For indicator 1 -- Target and key activities: Women and youth representation will be increased to 50%, divided equally between women and youth. This will be accomplished by proposing rules/regulations applicable to all (four) union levels: (1) federation at central level; (2) provincial, capital, ministry and agency level; (3) district, municipality and sector level; and (4) grassroots level.

*LFTU sees at least 50% of the participating affiliates would have modified their internal w/y regulations, procedures or structures and have increased w/y representation to at least 35% of the membership of their chosen governing bodies – by the end of 2021.*

For indicator 6 -- Target and key activities: Women and youth, 24-45 years old, will undergo capacity strengthening on decision-making. Participants will be 50% women and 50% youth.

*By the end of 2020, at least 30% of trained WYRs have participated in decision and policy-making bodies of their unions or in CB and other negotiations related to w/y concerns.*

**Group 2 Indicators 4 and 5**
**Target and key activities:** 100 WYRs (50 women, 50 youth) from LFTU central level and 50 WYRs (25 women, 25 youth) to undergo training on assertiveness and leadership, trade unionism and workers’ rights, and skills training to advance from their current responsibilities.

This will enable LFTU to meet Indicator 4: By the end of 2020, at least 50% of trained WYRs have new or higher positions or responsibilities in their organizations.

**Target and key activities:** Forty WYRs (20 women, 20 youth) from the national and ministry level and another 40 WYRS (20 women, 20 youth) from grass root level will meet to discuss their concerns and their participation in their unions and society, and submit proposals to their leaders on how to address these concerns. Training or orientation on related laws will help them advocate for related social and labour standards.
Six participants (three women) attended the meeting on 1 February 2020 at Coffee Culture in Phnom Penh. Three were trained WYRs from the three affiliates in Cambodia. In the opening session, CLC President Ath Thorn committed that CLC will implement the project as agreed during the ATUC Executive Council meeting in July 2019; the project will help strengthen the capacity of women and youth in the three affiliates in Cambodia. The Project Manager represented ITUC AP.

Yin Moliny, Leng Senghong and Chhun Pen, among the WYRs who attended part 1 of the women and youth leadership training, shared that the training equipped them various knowledge and skills in preparation for taking up more responsibilities and tools to use in their day to day work as trade unionists.

Dom presented the deconstructed indicators. Dom stressed that the NPC should identify priorities based on the indicators and that the unions themselves would pan and implement the activities.

### Indicator 5: By the end of 2020, at least 30% of WYR have started social dialogues with relevant government agencies on selected w/y and other social and labour standards.

LFTU will have a mix of women, youth and senior leaders in its NPC, for better understanding and coordination, to include representatives from relevant government ministries. Inpeng will report the results of this meeting to the LFTU President and report on decisions to the ITUC AP. The NPC will then finalize the action plan with targets and key activities.

Then, it was back to the workers hotel for Dom, through wide tree-lined streets, and on to the airport for home.

Cambodian affiliates have modest ambitions and great expectations

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Dom presented the deconstructed indicators. Dom stressed that the NPC should identify priorities based on the indicators and that the unions themselves would pan and implement the activities.
In plenary, the participants identified specific targets and activities related to indicators 4 and 6 and brainstormed the following activities after discussing the situation of women and youth in their unions:

- Quick survey, to determine the situation of women and youth representation in their unions and identify participants in the national workshop

- National workshop – women and youth representatives (WYRs), led by the six WYRs trained by the project, from the confederations, federations and basic (company level) unions will discuss their concerns, including the following, and come up with their proposals: Transportation safety and health and safety at the workplace; Work injury and workplace insurance benefits; Stronger regulations against use of short term employment contracts by employers; Equal pay for work of equal value in the construction sector; and Ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment at work

- Unions, with their WYRs, will monitor working conditions in workplaces, propose and negotiate or help negotiate any improvements and report changes back to the focal points and to their confederations

- The focal points and sub-national WYRs will help their organizations engage relevant government ministries in social dialogues to address the concerns identified in the national workshop

- WYRs will popularize and use the project-developed training curriculum manual in their trade union and information dissemination activities

The participants agreed on the composition of the NPC: all WYRs trained by the project, Pheng Sunday from CLC as Co-Chair of the ATUC Youth and Women Committee (YWC), representatives in the ATUC YWC, focal points for labor migration, Yang Sophorn as member of the ITUC-AP Women Committee, and one representative each of the leaders of the three confederations.

The participants will present the recommended composition of the NPC and the proposed targets and activities to their leaders. As Secretary of the ITUC-Cambodia Council, CCU will chair the next meeting of the NPC. Leng Senghong, one of the trained WYRs from CCU, will take the lead in the preparations for the national workshop.
FFW has 200,000 members. The Governing Body (GB) has 32 members with four elected women. The chair of the Women Committee sits on the GB. The constitution and by-laws (CBL) will be amended to establish the Youth Committee in a constitutional convention in July 2020. The amendment also encourages the creation of youth committees in all local unions.

FFW has an organizing team of six members with one woman. Each local (workplace) union has its own collective bargaining team. The composition of bargaining teams vary – A union in a rubberized goods manufacturer: all 16 (5 women) board members plus shop stewards; A union in pharmaceutical contract manufacturing: 14 (3 women) board members plus shop stewards; A union in a private research university: 6 (5 women) panel members plus 1 observer.

The union in the telecommunications company ratified its CBL in January 2020, giving equal number of men and women officers recently. The current union president was from the youth committee.

Eleven participants (eight women), including the two trained WYRs from FFW, the chairs of FFW women and youth committees and the education director attended the meeting on 5 February 2020 at the FFW building. The Project Manager represented ITUC-AP.

FFW President Sonny Matula addressed the opening session, expressed FFW appreciation and commitment to implement the project, expecting that the project will help FFW build the capacity of its women and youth members.

Michelle Pacubas and Joana Tuban, the WYRs who attended part 1 of the women and youth leadership training, provided a short description of the training which built their knowledge and skills in preparation for taking up more responsibilities and tools to use in their day to day work as trade unionists.

Dom started discussions by presenting the deconstructed indicators.
In plenary, the participants identified specific targets and activities related to indicators 4 and 6 and brainstormed the following activities after discussing the situation of women and youth in their unions:

- Quick survey to identify five local unions to send participants in the national workshop

- National workshop – women and youth representatives (WYRs) from the five local unions led by the two WYRs trained by the project will undergo leadership training using the project-developed training and curriculum manual and discuss their concerns, including ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work and mental health and the workplace, and come up with their proposals

- After the workshop and with the help of FFW, the WYRs will monitor working conditions in their workplaces, propose and negotiate or help negotiate any improvements and report changes back to the focal points and their federation

- The WYRs will help FFW engage relevant government ministries in social dialogues to address the concerns identified in the national workshop

The participants agreed on the composition of the FFW Project Committee: Michelle Pacubas and Joana Tuban (WYRs trained by the project), the Chair of the FFW Women Network, the youth representative, the women representative. The education director was assigned as the PC coordinator.

FFW will designate its focal point who will take the lead and help in preparing proposals and activities.
Training in the time of COVID-19

10 - 16 February 2020, Bali, Indonesia

Even the threat of coronavirus disease or COVID-19, could not stop these 28 women and youth representatives from taking their leadership journey to the next level.

For the second time, these trainees from seven (7) countries in Southeast Asia met in Bali, Indonesia on 10 - 16 February 2020 for the ITUC-AP/DGB BW Women and Youth Capacity Building (Part 2) and Financial Training.

Their journey started in October 2019 — a five-day program designed to empower women and young trade unionists build their confidence and prepare them for leadership ahead. It provided a good starting point for participants to explore shared leadership challenges in unions and elsewhere.

Now in its second phase, the program dug deeper into the core of the curriculum focusing on improving their communication, advocacy and campaigning, and bargaining/negotiation skills. Delivered in five days, the training utilised highly participatory, interactive and creative methods with an emphasis on experiential and immediate application of learning in a fun and engaging environment.

The program started on a high note drawing loud cheers from the training team as participants recalled how they used newly-acquired knowledge and skills from Part 1 to accelerate their leadership development. Reflecting on their initial progress, the ITUC-AP/DGB BW Project Management Team (PMT) noted that trainees "were off to a very strong start, exceeding our expectations". Concrete results were reported in areas of advocacy and social dialogue; leadership structures, positions, and policies; inclusion of women and youth concerns in negotiations, among others.

Inspired by these success stories, the training added more practical exercises to further build participants’ readiness for more challenging roles and responsibilities. Including both hard and soft skill building, participants went through different stages of team development, advocacy planning and project implementation.

And if that’s not enough, Project partner, DGB Bildungswerk, joined in on the fun and excitement helping participants gain a better understanding of the project financial regulations, requirements, activity planning and budgeting and documentation.

Equipped with this toolbox of skills and knowledge, these leaders-in-training are coming your way.
Feature story:
Three WYRs show where they come from, and where they are headed

Our union faces for this issue, one from KSPIIndonesia, another from the Indonesian elektronik/elektrik sector, and one from LCThailand, have things in common: they are all eldest in their broods, faced serious challenges in life, and all like movies and music.

Meilani Widyastuti

Meilani says the Bangkok (Oct 2019) and Bali (Feb 2020) training drilled these into her mind: Women and youth are important in the trade unions, they should increase their participation in the unions, including in decision making, but they need to learn other trade union issues, outside of rights and obligations. A pestering question: What should women and youth do to increase their numbers and participation in unions?

Meilani Widyastuti was widowed in 2017. That left her to mind three young boys. They had to move in with her parents.

She had to cope, ‘Life is not easy but never give up.’ She completed Senior High School and was on the way to a University degree majoring in Management Human Resources, until marriage and a thesis got in the way. She takes public transportation between work and home for ‘two and a half hours (depend on the traffic)’.

She, who loves singing, would like to be the ‘best mother in the world and successful in career’.

That would not be difficult for Meilani who started with KSPI in 2004 (because ‘I care about women issues’), and ‘proud to be in the KSPI/CITU Woman Committee for 2017-2022’, working hard to activate the confederation’s women and youth committees.
Aekkarat Sumramjit

Aekkarat moved 450 kilometers from his hometown in Surin to work as a production staff in an automotive parts company, Able Sanoh Industries (1996) Co. Ltd., in Ayutthaya, Central Thailand in 2006. He lives in a dormitory, 15-20 minutes from work.

It was not difficult for Aekkarat to move up, with his Upper Secondary 6 Social Studies Program education background. He joined the union in 2008, was its secretary in 2009-2011, and rose to be union president in 2011.

He serves in the company’s Employee Committee and Company Welfare from 2011. And on to the confederation Labor Congress of Thailand (LCT) as assistant treasurer from 2013.

Aekkarat made new friends from different countries during the women and youth leadership training in Bangkok (Oct 2019) and Bali (Feb 2020). He cited the exchange of knowledge and experiences on improving unions, appreciating the discussions on raising women and youth representation in union governing bodies, the use of social media, creating interesting content to build better public understanding of unions, building networks for various campaigns.

He observes that women and youth in his country are not daring to act in trade unions. ‘We must cooperate to build strong women and youth labour.’ He suggests ‘creating opportunities for women and youth to advance in their career and in entrepreneurship’ and ‘creating a network for women and youth development’.

That would not be difficult for Aekkarat who says he is ‘friendly and fun’, while ‘helping society and conducting labour activities’. In this COVID-19 pandemic, Aekkarat has produced Thai infographics on CoVid-19 to help trade union members to ‘understand, act correctly’.

Oh, yes! Brother Dom remembers Aekkarat was one of LCT’s six delegates to the ATUC youth rally in 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

And just like that, Aekkarat, who would like to be remembered as a good ‘labour leader’, is serving his last nine months as ‘youth’ by ITUC standards. He turns 36 in March 2021.
Pipin Supinah says ‘Keep moving to improve prosperity because in the future there is still hope and hope.’ That’s the guiding norm for their family. Husband Sutamto who drives, and two daughters (one is a nurse, another will graduate from college this year).

Pipin would like to be known as a good organizer, ‘to solve industrial relations problems’, especially in the elektronik and elektrik company in Bogor, Indonesia where she works.

She had been participating in trade union activities in the company since she started work as staff in the ISO, K3 (occupational safety and health) and the environment section in 1992 after senior high school.

Chair of KSPI’s women committee, she cares deeply that ‘female cadres will disappear when they get married and have children’. Women who have been active for a long time have to be replaced. She says it is not easy because contract employees or those in outsourcing are afraid to participate in union activities; they are afraid of being terminated.

She appreciated a lot of learning from the WYR training in Bangkok and Bali. What really stood out for her is getting insights on why women and young workers are not as active in unions as they should be and probable solutions to the issue.

In this pandemic, she focuses more on helping workers deal with return-to-work problems, including asking the company to prepare measures needed by employees in order to avoid contracting Covid-19. To monitor members outside the factory, ‘I have virtual meetings similar to what we in the project do from time to time’.

She hopes workers continue contact with the union and members even when they no longer work in the company. She loves ‘gathering with many people’. And ‘walking in mountainous areas or forest’.