

Strong Women, Strong Unions, and Strong Society

Introduction and background

The BWI 2019 Global Women's Leadership Meeting, was held from 2 to 4 September in Skopje, North Macedonia. **It brought together close to 40 women trade union leaders from 20 countries in Asia, Africa and Middle East, Latin America, and Europe.** Nine of the participants were under 35 years old.

Addressing the challenges faced by women in the workplace, in society, and in their trade unions has been a major priority of BWI from its foundation, based on work already done by its predecessor organisation. At the BWI Founding Congress that was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in December 2015, the BWI committed to establish strong, independent, autonomous, gender-fair and democratic trade unions in all countries and adopted a goal



for gender-mainstreaming and establishing women's structures at regional and global levels; something that was reaffirmed at its most recent World Congress in Durban in 2017 in the form of statutory changes to ensure greater representation of women in BWI governance structures. Gender equality was incorporated in the **"Build, Defend, and Advance"** Strategic Plan for 2018-2021.

Opening Session

In opening the meeting, Rita Schiavi (UNIA-Switzerland), Chair of the BWI International Women's Committee, placed the meeting in context, saying, "as all of us know, when women face challenges or difficulties, we do not give up. We do not complain. We do not put blame; in short, we just find solutions."

She also set out the objectives of the meeting:

1. To take stock of women in key national and local leadership positions within BWI structures – building successor generation database;
2. To train and provide leadership, organizing, and campaign skills for identified women leaders;
3. To strengthen the BWI statutory women structures – regional women's committees and the global women's committee;
4. To strengthen and further develop a global women's network for campaigning and organizing support at different levels in BWI so that they play an active role in all BWI campaigns, particularly to focus on gender equality; and
5. To intensify the BWI's global campaigns for gender equality.

In emphasizing the need to ensure that women are in key leadership positions, nationally, regionally, and globally, Schiavi highlighted the success at the 4th BWI World Congress that was held in Durban, South Africa in December 2017, where the delegates passed changes to its statutes that called for at least 30 percent representation in global BWI structures, resulting in the election of seven women to the BWI World Board.

She stated, “We achieved victory in Durban and were successful in winning our long campaign for 30 percent representation. Now we must move forward to do so at the regional levels of BWI. More importantly, we need to develop and mentor a new generation of women leaders to ensure that we can occupy the seats which we worked so hard to achieve.”



The meeting was welcomed by Ivana Dimitrova, Executive Committee Member, SGIP-Macedonia and Vice-Chair of BWI European Regional Women's Committee and by Zhivko Mitrevski, President, SIDEMK-North Macedonia which represents workers in the wood and forestry sectors. FES Skopje provided support for the meeting and its Resident Representative, Eva Ellereit, greeted participants.

Introductory Session:

Common Vision of What is activism? Why be an activist?

The discussion on activism was moderated by Zamaney Menso (FNV-Netherlands). Participants looked at whether trade unions need to have activists and whether trade unions should be active in the community.



Activists play a leadership role even if they were not in full-time positions. Encouraging and helping women become active in their trade unions is, therefore, an essential step towards increasing the involvement of women and strengthening trade unions. Trade union activism and visible presence in communities is also seen as valuable for a more favourable context for unions and for union women to build an enabling environment for organising.

To provide overall context for the meeting, a presentation outlining the **Global Trends of Women** was presented. It was also intended to help facilitate subsequent discussions.

The presentation outlined some global trends for women on the wage gap, occupational segregation, unemployment, and sexual harassment and violence. Although there has been progress in some countries, trends showed persistent wage gaps and segregation.

Concerning sexual harassment and violence against women, where figures are available, they show disturbing levels of violence and harassment regardless of region or level of development. Most experts agree that reported figures considerably under-estimate the real



level of abuse and violence because of underreporting, much of it due to fear.

The presentation was followed by a panel that focused on the regional trends of women and responses. The panel was composed of Brigitte Schulz (GBH-Austria), Ana Laura Lemos (UOLRA-Argentina) and Georgina Smedley (TWU-Ghana) who participated via skype. Anna Andreeva, Regional Campaign Office for BWI European Region spoke on behalf of Lesya Husak (PROFBUD-Ukraine), who was unable to attend due to a medical emergency. It stimulated a participant discussion followed by brief reflections and comments from the panel.

Brigitte Schulz explained that, in Austria, the gender pay gap is one of the major challenge women face. She stated, “In Austria as is the case in other countries throughout Europe, the gender pay gap does not only impact women during their work life, but women are further discriminated

against when they retire, as they receive lower pensions. Our union works closely with BWI affiliates in Germany and Switzerland as part of the sub-regional women's network to share strategies and best practices to resolve problems impacting women.

The gender pay gap is also a problem for women in Argentina according to Ana Lemos. She stated, "With a 30 percent wage gap in Argentina,



it is not only women who face the consequences of this discrimination. It impacts their families. Less pay means less food on the table. Less pay means less disposable income to have a decent quality of life. The struggle to end the gender pay gap is everyone's responsibility."

Georgina Smedley who participated via skype, stated: "When people ask me, why be an activist? I have very simple answer—activists live longer and more exiting lives. I think this is very convincing argument to be a trade union activist."

Skills Training Session:

What is Organising?

The session was based on a presentation by Zamaney Menso (FNV – Netherlands), who also moderated the discussion. The participants' exchange was preceded by a panel presenting organising case studies by Songul Cakir (Tarim Orman-Is-Turkey), Handan Kalkan (YOL-IS-Turkey), Annethe Athanasiadis, (SUNTRACS-Panama) and Rugayah Hamdan (UFES-Malaysia).



The panellists emphasized the importance of organizing and reaching out to women to build trade unions.

This was reiterated by Annethe Athanasiadis, SUNTRACS-Panama, who stated, "We organize in order to strengthen our union, because if we do not organize workers, it would be a great weakness for us as an organization and as a movement to improve lives of construction workers and their families."

Songul Caki explained that the union reaches out to women in both government offices of the Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture as well as women in the forest and rural areas. Songul Cakir stated, "It is of course challenging to go out in the field, but this is where women work and if we want to talk to them about the important role the union can play in improving their lives, then this where we will go."

Handan Kalkan mentioned the union's attempts to outreach to women workers in road and building and construction sectors to recruit them into trade unions, identify major issues of concern with women workers, and to inform them on how the union can assist them in solving these problems. She explained "From now on, our goal is solving the problems of working women, standing together with them in the struggle for their rights and preventing gender discrimination."

Recognizing that the youth is the future of the trade union movement, Rugayah Hamdan outlined her union's organizing program geared towards youth. In addition to conducting organizing and trade union awareness trainings, the union has created both a youth and women's committee to ensure that the commitment is institutional. She stated, "It is natural for young people to want to belong to something and as unions, we need to let them know that the union is a place for the youth and women. We need to let them know that the trade union is the



place, where, we as young working women can fight for our rights."

The presentations and discussions covered the issues of the reasons to organise, of what does organising consist, and elements necessary for successful organising campaigns.

Open Public Forum:

“Women Hold up Half the Sky”

The forum was open to the general public in North Macedonia including other trade unions, women's organizations and civil society groups actively engaged in promoting gender equality. It also offered an opportunity for BWI representatives to understand the key issues having an impact on women in North Macedonia and to connect with attendees.

In his opening remarks, Ambet Yuson, BWI General Secretary addressed how women have changed BWI. He stated, “The struggle of BWI women has advanced beyond 30 percent representation. BWI women are changing how we work and how we fight. More and more union victories are being led by women as leaders, as organizers, as

couraged to enter what is considered a male-dominated industry; however, many women are defying tradi-

and refugees are under attack and they are susceptible to exploitation from traffickers, recruiters, and employers. Women are also under attack by misogynistic politicians. Women are also exploited by employers who pay less than our worth. Trade unions need to collaborate with civil society



negotiators, as shop steward, and as member activists. Women are now in the forefront of BWI campaigns. There can be no real union victories without women,”

The opening was followed by a roundtable discussion, which was moderated by Milan Zivkovic, of FES Skopje included speakers from trade unions and civil society organisations addressing the status of women in Macedonia. The panel was composed of Ljatifa Shikovska of Ambrella representing civil society and Ivana Dimitrova (SGIP-North Macedonia) and a representative of SIDEMK-North Macedonia representing trade unions.

Ivana Dimitrova explained the realities of lack of women in the construction sector in North Macedonia. She stated, “Women are not strongly en-

tions and work in various construction trades. In addition, we foresee changes in the construction industry as in other countries with more mechanization and digitalization in the future. This will provide greater opportunities for women to enter the sector.”

Ljatifa Shikovska described the work of Ambrella, which is a nongovernmental organization working for the social integration and empowerment of the Romani population in North Macedonia. She stated, “Ambrella focuses on social

organizations on issues of migrants' rights and gender equality. Together, we can do more.”

During the discussions, Smritee Tamang (CCUPEC-Nepal) stated, “Women hold half the sky, but we are not flying in the sky, we are still on the ground. There is no discrimination in the sky, but it is on the ground. We have to fight against it on the ground.”

In responding to the lack of women in the construction industry, Yajaira Guzmán (SUNTRACS-Panama) stated, “I am a woman, I am 27 years old, and I am welder. If I can do this work in Panama, women everywhere can do it. We need to break stereotypes that women are weak and cannot work in construction.”

The Public Forum was covered by national mass media, including MRT National television in North Macedonia ensuring wide media coverage of the event.



inclusion through programs on education, human rights, and gender equity. We work to empower women by conducting trainings, organizing in the community, and providing assistance and support.

In her response to the roundtable discussion, Rita Schiavi, Chair, who is also Chair of BWI Working Group on Migration emphasized the need for strong trade union and civil society partnerships. She stated, “Migrants



Roundtable:

Stop Gender-Based Violence Campaign

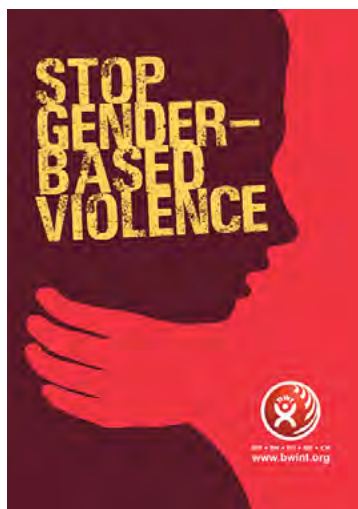
BWI joined with the rest of the global union movement to campaign for an international standard on violence in the workplace. It establishes that “everyone has a right to a world of work free from violence and harassment”. In other words, this is not a matter of good practice or responsible behaviour, but rather, a right. It, and a lot of hard work in the Committee at the 2019 International Labour Conference, resulted in the successful adoption of the **Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190 (2019)** and the **Violence and Harassment Recommendation No. 206 (2019)**.

The lead discussant was Chidi King, Director of the Equality Department of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), who was the Secretary of the Workers’ Group of the Committee that developed the instruments.

She explained that, although the Convention and Recommendation apply to women and men, it recognises that violence and harassment are often linked to the weak power of women in the workplace. The Convention is to be applied regardless of employment relationship and whether third parties are involved. Now that the Convention has been adopted, even though it was approved by an over-whelming margin and with support of representatives of governments, employers, and workers, a major effort will be required to assure widespread ratification.

In that campaigning context, after a brief explanation by Rita Schiavi of the effort in Switzerland, national case studies were presented by Ida Ricci (FILCA-CISL-Italy) and Ivana Dimitrova (SGIP-North Macedonia). The discussion was moderated by Rita Schiavi.

According to Ida Ricci, at least one in five women face physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner during her lifetime



in Italy. It is because of this that the Italian trade union movement has joined the broader women’s movement to stop violence against women. Her confederation, CISL launched a campaign called “Together” against harassment at workplaces. She also stated that the Italian unions actively campaigned for and participated in a series of parliamentary hearings prior to the adoption of a law on gender violence in 2012. In addition, she highlighted the success of the Italian unions negotiating clauses and agreements and Codes of Conduct on sexual harassment and mobbing in the wood and furniture sector.

Ricci emphasized the need for trade unions to collaborate with employers to address gender-based violence. She stated, “We need to work together, particularly more so now if we want to ensure that the ILO Convention 190 is ratified in Italy.”

Ivana Dimitrova focused on the efforts of her union to initiate a campaign at the sub-regional level. Her union, the SGIP hosted a sub-regional conference entitled, “Stop Gender-Based Violence in the Workplace: Causes and Consequences” earlier this year. At the time, close to 100 participants from BWI affiliates in Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia, met to discuss a sub-regional campaign plan.



The participants of the 2019 BWI Global Women's Leadership Meeting provided #Herstories through pictograms to introduce themselves and describe their work, interests and vision for gender equality.





Leadership

Strong Women
Strong United
Strong Leaders





Roundtable:

What is a Leader?

Rita Schiavi explained that the session will identify key qualities of leaders and the identification of leaders. In addition, it will look at the challenges that women face in being elected to leadership positions. The success of women at the World Congress and at the World Board did not just happen. It was because there were strong women leaders. This session focuses on three initiatives to help build and develop women leaders.

Schiavi explains that the **Developing Mentorship Program** is important, but not easy. It takes special leaders who understand the importance of helping younger women become leaders so that women's leadership is sustained and that continued strong



union leadership is maintained. The discussion was based on a series of questions to Blaguna Stojkoska and Ivana Dimitrova of SGIP-North Macedonia and Fatimah Mohammad

and Rugayah Hamdan of UFES-Malaysia

Although the SGIP had no formal mentoring program, Blaguna Stojkoska chose to personally mentor Blaguna as she believed this was the only way to ensure more young women not only joined the trade union but more importantly take leadership positions. She stated, "The decision to be a mentor came from the bottom of my heart and I have not regretted it one single day. Ivana is an important leader in our union, and she is now mentoring other young women"

According to Fatimah Mohammad UFES was exposed to mentorship at the 2015 BWI Asia Pacific Regional Women and Youth Training in Manila, Philippines. Following this, UFES decided to institutionalize a mentoring program to encourage more women to run for elected trade union positions.

She stated, "We established the mentoring program within the union to ensure that we would have a constant flow of women leaders. I have not only mentored Rugayah but also

Ana Rosdiana Binti Syahrani who is a member of the UFES Women's Committee. It is my hope that both Rugayah and Ana will mentor other young women activists."

The second initiative was **Developing Sub-Regional Networks to Promote Women**. Waffa Boltia (GTUBWW-Egypt) explained how the network in the Middle East and North Africa, the Arab Women's network, has developed a sense of community and solidarity. She also reported on how the network was brought into being.

She further explained that women in the Middle East and North Africa continue to face struggles and difficulties as a result of social and cultural factors that prevail across most of the region. Women are dramatically underrepresented in the workplace, with only 24 percent employed, which is much less than the average of 60 percent amongst the OECD countries. When women



enter the labour market, they are confronted with the gender divide in their workplaces along with similar issues as all women globally—sexual harassment and discrimination. In the BWI sectors, men continue to dominate. As a result, the ability of women to be active in trade unions is still impeded by the socio-political structure of most the countries in the region.

In an effort to support women in the region, women from BWI affiliates created the Arab Women's Network. In 2016. She stated, "We are often isolated in the workplace and in the trade unions. The Arab Women's Network has been critical in not only bringing women together but more importantly supporting each other. Today, in the region there are more women elected to union executive committees and this has further empowered us to do more."

The third initiative was the **Developing Women's Empowerment Program**. Ljatifa Shikovska of Ambrela, an organisation in North Macedonia that works with migrants and Romas spoke of her organization's efforts to empower Roma women through education. She outlined the various obstacles Roma women face such as lack of education, access to quality



health care, limited job opportunities, and youth marriages.

Ljatifa Shikovska explained that one of the most important aspects to empowerment for Roma women in North Macedonia as well as other parts of Europe was access to personal documentation. She stated, "Without proper, official identification Roma women are invisible to the state and society. This applies to Roma children as well. Official identification would mean that Roma women can seek jobs and their children can go to school. This is part of the path to empowerment for Roma women."

The three presentations were followed by a discussion where participants provided other examples of developing women leaders.

Skills Training Session:

What is a Campaign?

The session examined the components and timelines of campaigns. They included the development of issues and materials, articulating clear objectives, identifying target groups, networking and lobbying. The discussion was built around a presentation by Anna Andreeva, Regional Policy Officer, BWI European Region and case studies presented by Angeles Fernández (UGT-FICA-Spain) on the Women's Strike, Myla Laja



(BMKQ-Qatar) on Migrant Workers' Rights, Daniela Miloska (SGIP-North Macedonia) on reaching Youth, and Annethe Athanasiadis (SUNTRACS-Panama) on Safety and Health. The discussion was moderated by Ivana Dimitrova (SGIP-North Macedonia).

In her presentation Annethe Athanasiadis explained that SUNTRACS saw campaigns as a vital tool to highlight the demands of the union and to be successful there needs to be strong coordination within the union. She stated, "To carry out a successful campaign we consider it is necessary to bring together all trade union structure levels in order to define the message that we want to convey to our target whether it is workers, employers or government."

Daniela Miloska stressed that organizing young workers is not an easy



task. She stated, "The trade unions are something very new for young workers, so we need to make them curious about trade unions. Our union's campaign in outreaching to youth consists of workshops and trainings as well as communication via social media and one to one at the worksite. We also challenge the youth members of the union by giving them responsibilities which builds further confidence and trust in the union."

Myla Laja presented situations and challenges migrant workers face in Qatar, which will host the 2022 FIFA World Cup Tournament. Although the majority of the workforce in the



construction sector are predominantly men, she said that there are many women who work in administration and human resources in construction companies. She stated that the Filipino Construction Workers Association in Qatar (BMKQ) has been committed to ensuring that its leadership include women from the very beginning.

Angeles Fernandez discussed how trade unions worked with women's organizations, women politicians, academics, and feminists to conduct the first nationwide "Women's Strike" on 8 March 2018 to mark International Women's Day.

Fernandez stated, "Under the slogan of 'If we stop, the world stops', more than 5.3 million people participated in the two-hour walkouts all across Spain to highlight sexual

discrimination, domestic violence, the wage gap, and more importantly to end machista culture in Spain. The strike was unprecedented in terms of mass mobilization and support. It clearly showed that enough was enough."

Skills training:

Social Media as a Platform

This session focused on the experiences of BWI affiliates in using social media in their organizing and campaigning efforts. It also covered the dangers in social media, including "fake news", and stressed that it should be employed in a way that is effective for campaigning and other purposes while avoiding, as much as possible, the dangers.

The Lead Discussant and Moderator was Fatimah Mohammad of the UFES-Malaysia and case studies were provided by Esther Ahmadu (CCE-SA-Nigeria), Smitree Tamang (CCUPEC-Nepal), and Anne Francois Lesceux (ACV-BIE-Belgium).

Esther Ahmadu, who gave her presentation via skype shared the efforts of her union to reach out to women through social media. Ahmadu stat-

ed, "Since our membership is spread across the country, the use of social media especially WhatsApp, has made it easier for us to have our meetings, deliberate and take decisions where and when necessary; thereby, saving time and financial resources which admittedly is always lacking. In addition, with our national centre, the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria we have used visual campaigns via social media under the slogan 'Our Gender Our Strength' to make our voices heard."

Smitree Tamang reported that social media is an increasingly important form of communication for Nepalese people. As of March 2019, the number of monthly active Facebook users in Nepal is 9 million and 61 percent of users are male and 39 percent female. In addition, more than 2.5 million Nepalese use Twitter. CCUPEC has put a lot of resources into communication, not only to its members but to all workers through social media. They regularly post on Facebook and tweet, but they also have regular broadcasts on weekly news as well as conducting interviews with trade union leaders, including BWI representatives, in a broadcast called the "World of Work" that is streamed via Facebook.

Anne Francois emphasized the need for direct communication with workers. She stated, "Although one cannot deny the increasing role of social media as a form of communication, it



cannot and should not substitute for one to one communication. In our union, we utilize social media to complement the direct communication we have with our members on the ground. We use social media to publish our work but not to replace our work on the ground."



Planning Session:

BWI Global Action Plans on Convergence #4 (on gender equality)

The discussion, chaired by Rita Schiavi, which was based on previous sessions, reviewed the BWI global action plan on gender-related activities and campaigns. Participants broke into small groups to examine the Stop Gender-Based Violence Campaign, the Campaign for Equal Pay, the Developing women leaders' program and the Promoting women in the trades campaign.

The group reports were opened by a solidarity video message from Forzet Mugabe, Deputy General Secretary of ZCATWU, Zimbabwe. Forzet stated that at the 2017 ZCATWU Congress five women were elected to leadership positions and women are active in all levels of the union. She also reported that in Zimbabwe more women and in particular young women are taking the lead in the unions as well as the workplace. She stated, "As women become more empowered, they are taking power into their own hands. This is not only in Zimbabwe but throughout Africa, where women are playing an active role to transform



trade unions to be more progressive and inclusive."

Closing Session and Way Forward

Closing remarks were given by Rita Schiavi, the chair of the International Women's Committee and Ivana Dimitrova, the Vice-Chair of the BWI European Regional Women's Committee. They spoke of what they had learned, reflected on the key issues, and highlighted progress

that was made at the meeting. They also sketched out a way forward to advance the agenda.

Rita Schiavi, stated, "For the past three-days, there was incredible energy and a strong sense of solidarity in this room. We heard and shared poignant personal stories on the challenges, women face in the workplace and in trade unions. But what is clear is that we need to increase our efforts to organize and campaign for gender equality."

Participation through Technology

At this year's global meeting, the BWI utilized modern technology to link and connect women who unfortunately were not able to participate due to issues beyond their control. Despite enormous efforts by BWI and FES Skopje, Esther Ahmadi (CCESA-Nigeria), Georgina Smedley (TWU-Ghana), and Forzet Mugabe (ZCATWU-Zimbabwe) were not able to obtain their visas in time to be present at the meeting. However, through skype, facebook, and video messages, they were able to present, intervene and take part in the discussions. Although they were not physically present, their energy, commitment, fighting spirit permeated beyond national borders.



Recommendations

A key output of the meeting was the adoption of a series of recommendations and an action plan based on the three-day discussions for BWI to further improve its programs and policies on issues of importance to women in the BWI sectors such as stopping gender-based violence, campaign for equal pay, strengthening women's leadership programs.

Recommendations for the Campaign against Gender-Based Violence:

The campaign should focus on the ratification of ILO Convention 190 (2019) and structured on four levels:

Global ITUC:

- ▶ Initiate within ITUC the creation of a working group that consist of GUFs, national TU centres, and sectoral unions
- ▶ Make Convention 190 human on the global level (different stories from women based their experience to show why Convention 190 should be ratified.
- ▶ Create a basic campaign framework

Global BWI:

- ▶ Participate in ITUC activities
- ▶ Create campaign materials for BWI sectors based on the ITUC information.
- ▶ Communicate campaign framework to affiliates
- ▶ Initiate storytelling process among affiliates and publicize them on BWI social media

Regional:

- ▶ Lobby C 190 ratification with regional government structures to get them to encourage ratification (for example EU)
- ▶ Public relation and multi-media strategy to raise public awareness about Convention 190
- ▶ Work with political leaders and employers to promote ratification of Convention 190

National:

- ▶ Urge national TU centres to start C 190 ratification campaign:
 - Lobby with government
 - Get support from Employers
 - Public relations and multi-media strategy
 - Public actions

Recommendations for the Campaign on Equal Pay

The campaign message should be - women can do the same work with the same quality as men. Therefore, women need to get the same wages as men.

In our sectors, wages tend to be low, so we need to talk about wage increases for all workers regardless of gender:

- ▶ Initiate campaign for minimum wage increases

- ▶ Develop online wage calculator, so everyone can calculate their decent wage, based on qualification and occupation, and compare with the current wage and wages in different countries. With such calculator it is possible to have a transparent picture about wages and develop a solid platform for the international campaign for wage increases.

It is also important to specifically address the gender pay gap:

- ▶ During CBA negotiations
- ▶ Include women in CBA teams
- ▶ Request wage report from employers with specific data on wages of men and women. If these reports identify a gender pay gap unions can and should use them for action, even if it is not possible to disclose employer reports due to legal regulations; it is always possible to talk about the gender pay gap.

Recommendations for Women in Trades Campaign:

- ▶ To develop women's leadership in construction unions and motivate women to work in construction, the following steps could be taken:
- ▶ Women should be present in trade union governing structures (quota systems)
- ▶ Change structures of trade unions in order to give women more space to promote their agenda (women's committees, councils)
- ▶ Make women equal parts of negotiation teams (not as secretaries)
- ▶ Women should be present in all the trade union meetings
- ▶ Women should have a common communications platform to support each other and share news
- ▶ Vocational training for women in construction

Recommendations for Developing Women Leaders Campaign:

Women should take active role in developing women leaders in the unions by doing the following:

- ▶ Listen to women trade union leaders and learn from their experience (experience is our best teacher, informal mentorship)
- ▶ Use general frame of the campaign for gender equality to develop trade union leaders
- ▶ Urge trade unions to give more responsibility to young women
- ▶ Develop joint education programs for men and women
- ▶ Develop educational programs for students in professional schools
- ▶ Encourage men to take active parts in Stop Macho Culture Campaign
- ▶ Trade unions should organise training sessions on how to be a leader for rank and file women workers
- ▶ Formal mentorship programs in trade unions should be developed
- ▶ Support from men who are sensitive to gender equality questions for women to become trade union leaders



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BWI is the Global Union Federation grouping free and democratic unions with members in the Building, Building Materials, Wood, Forestry and Allied sectors.

BWI brings together around 334 trade unions representing around 12 million members in 130 countries. The Headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland while the Regional Offices are in Panama, Malaysia, and South Africa.

Our mission is to defend and advance workers' rights, and to improve working and living conditions in our sectors. The BWI, above all, has a rights-based approach. We believe that trade union rights are human rights and are

based on equality, solidarity and democracy, and that trade unions are indispensable to good governance.

BWI goals include 1) to promote and defend human and trade union rights; 2) to increase trade union strength; 3) to promote a stable and high level of employment in our sectors; and 4) to influence policy and strengthen the capacity of institutions and tripartite structures in our sectors.

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